

# Writing In and About the Performing and Visual Arts

Creating, Performing, and Teaching



Edited by  
Steven J. Corbett, Jennifer Lin LeMesurier,  
Teagan E. Decker, and Betsy Cooper



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Performing and Visual Arts  
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The Across the Disciplines Books series is closely tied to published themed issues of the online, open-access, peer-reviewed journal *Across the Disciplines*. In keeping with the editorial mission of *Across the Disciplines*, books in the series are devoted to language, learning, academic writing, and writing pedagogy in all their intellectual, political, social, and technological complexity.

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For Will Hochman, forever in our hearts.



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# Foreword: Turning to Art to Organize the Chaos

Elizabeth H. Boquet and Michele Eodice

Admiration is the feeling that sustains democracy.

—Doris Sommer

To begin drafting this foreword, we met in a Zoom room and talked face-to-face for the first time in a long while. Michele had the notes from our earliest collaborations on creativity in the writing center. She pulled out one file folder. “2002,” she said. She held one page up to the screen, her laughter audible behind a photocopied image of a karaoke machine and a quote from Geoff Sirc. “Do you remember that?” she asked. Beth didn’t. So long we’ve been doing this work. Sometimes we are tired. Sometimes we feel like we are out of ideas. Sometimes the news gets us down. Sometimes we need to be inspired to do creative work. How are we going to do that? By admiring others.

In her book *The Work of Art in the World: Civic Agency and Public Humanities*, Sommer (2013) writes,

A much stronger feeling than tolerance, admiration is an aesthetic response of surprise and wonder . . . Merely to tolerate is to continue to count on one’s own opinions and simply wait until others stop talking. Tolerant citizens can feel themselves to be the real source of good judgment and imagine that the rights enjoyed by others apparently issue from one’s own generosity . . . Admiration shifts the balance of feeling; it favors others without sacrificing self-love. To admire one’s fellow (artist) is to anticipate original contributions and to listen attentively. (p. 31)

Sommer (2013) considers a number of cases, large and small, in which creative work initiates or supports institutional or bureaucratic innovation. She highlights “pleasure [as] a necessary dimension of sustainable social change” (p. 4) and identifies admiration as “the basic sentiment of citizenship” (p. 6) (in the participatory not the legal sense of that word). The book opens with a chapter on “Government-Sponsored Creativity,” and we might think this is an oxymoron until we read Sommer’s account of Bogota’s mayor Antanas Mockus and his “urban acupuncture.” They began in response to an off-the-cuff remark that Bogota was so far gone, it was time to send in the clowns. Mockus decided, well, that just might work. And it did. He brought in mimes to mock traffic violators. He supported a “Women’s Night Out” complete with “Safe Conduct Passes” that could be clipped

from newspapers for men who needed to venture out. He “[saw] the city as a huge classroom,” according to his deputy mayor (p. 19). During his term, traffic deaths fell, homicides plummeted, municipal income from taxes went up.

Not surprisingly, people wanted to know how to do what he did. How can we make this happen in our place? And Mockus would reply that there are no instructions, no straightforward steps: “*Cultura ciudadana* is not a recipe but an approach,” Sommer writes. “It combines the ludic with the legal and counts on analyses of local conditions” (2013, p. 24). The take-away: “[T]hink adaptively and creatively” (p. 24).

To be able to think adaptively and creatively is a privilege. Creative ways of knowing might be intuitive or learned, but to exercise these ways of knowing requires open-hearted audiences willing to receive your performance. Not everyone has this audience. But everyone needs this audience. So dancers, singers, painters, poets—stay brave. We admire you and what you give us. The everyday work of art in the world gives us hope that one day we can practice a “collective virtuosity” (Dabby, 2017). As “creative leaders” in the field of writing studies (Boquet & Eodice, 2008), we believe this volume offers amazing examples of embodied sites where dance spaces become writing places and writing spaces become activist artist studios become compositions become . . . .

~ ~ ~

We began writing this foreword by talking about our past collaborations on the subject of creativity. We considered the ways the writer/artists in this collection make us think about where writing intervenes in the processes of making art and experiencing art, how they use art to force people to pay attention. We talked about the chapters and about how the world feels tightly wound and simultaneously unraveling right now, about how everyone we know is turning to art to organize the chaos. The talk got a little heavy. Then Michele mentioned that she used the read-aloud function on her computer to listen to one of the chapters. “Before we hang up,” she said, “I want to read the first two lines of this chapter in my robot voice.” So she did and we laughed, because it was funny.

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# Introduction: Create, Perform, Teach!

Steven J. Corbett, Jennifer Lin LeMesurier,  
Teagan E. Decker, and Betsy Cooper

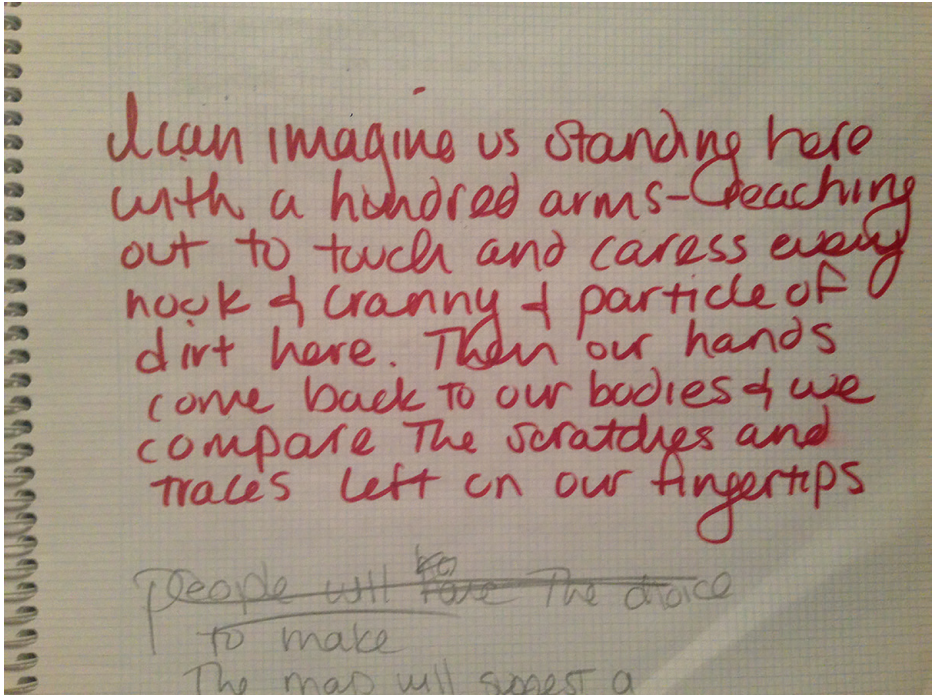


Figure 1. Image from Rifenburg and Allgood "The Woven Body" (2015) (courtesy of Lindsey Allgood).

On December 28, 2015 we launched our Special Issue of *Across the Disciplines* (ATD), "Create, Perform, Write: WAC, WID, and the Performing and Visual Arts." With the click of a hyperlink, readers/viewers were on their way to exploring connections between teaching, learning, writing, designing, choreographing, dancing, singing, directing, acting, drawing, and on and on . . . But our story, while compelling, was left very much unfinished. There were just too many creative avenues we left too lightly treaded. So, we'd like to go on and on . . . For this companion collection, *Writing in and about the Performing and Visual Arts: Creating, Performing, and Teaching*, we've gathered together some of our old friends from the Special Issue, as well as inviting many more fresh faces to the creative party.

Two of the several friends we invited for a redux, Michael Rifenburg and

Lindsey Allgood, included the above word-illustration in their original (2015) Special Issue article “The Woven Body.” The authors begin to scratch at the surface of the word-and-image-experience depth we continue engaging readers with, especially when you consider the “here with a hundred arms —reaching out to touch and caress” they visually and audibly tantalize us with in their original piece.



*Figure 2. “Triple-Exposure, Moonstone Beach,” Mckinleyville, CA (photo by Anicca Cox)*

This collection amplifies and extends several lines of inquiry we began in our Special Issue, including:

- What does it mean to experience, analyze, synthesize, interpret and deliver information in writing in and about the performing and visual arts?
- How have process, creativity, and other writing and pedagogical theories and practices affected how students—in secondary and postsecondary



settings—write, and how teachers coach students to write, in and about the performing and visual arts?

- What theories of learning and performance influence the teaching and learning of writing in and about the performing and visual arts?
- And how has technology influenced the teaching and learning of writing—in secondary and post-secondary settings—in and about the performing and visual arts, including multimodal composition and online arenas?

While staying true to the aesthetic depth of multimedia performance-meditations like Jody Steel's (2016) *Body Image* and sumptuous image/text experiences like Claudia Rankine's (2014) *Citizen: An American Lyric*, we also amp-up explicit treatment of important pedagogical theories, methods, and experiences we began in the Special Issue. Contributors discuss their views of assessment considerations—like the self-assessment implications of the artist statement and ePortfolio, and the group- and peer-assessment methods practiced in the arts of performance and communication for thousands of years. Contributors also draw more vibrant connections to creating, performing, and teaching in high school settings. In their article for the (2012) Special Issue of *ATD* "Writing Across the Secondary School Curriculum," Kelly Hrenko and Andrea Stairs demonstrate how integrating art, culture, and writing is by no means the sole province of post-secondary settings. So many of the same visual, auditory, oral, and written theories, practices, and performance-attitudes saturate the creative experiences of students and teachers (and students-as-teachers) at all levels.

## Our Intentions for this Collection

This collection is intended for teachers and researchers of writing in and across the disciplines, in both secondary and post-secondary settings, and for those outside of writing studies who wish to infuse more writing into their performing and visual arts curriculums and courses. It complements ways of knowing and doing, performed in the Special Issue, for writing studies professionals. It also offers teachers in the performing and visual arts go-to practical designs and strategies for teaching writing in their fields.

Composition and Rhetoric scholars are increasingly doing their part to study and report on connections between creativity, performance, writing, the visual, and teaching (e.g., *Kairos*; *Computers and Composition Digital Press*; *ARTiculating: Teaching Writing in a Visual World*, 1998/2013; Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor, & Otuteye, 2005; Hrenko & Stairs, 2012). Childers, Hobson, and Mullin's collection *ARTiculating* (1998/2013) as well as essays like Kathleen Blake Yancey's "Made

Not Only in Words” (2004) have made us consider questions like “What do our references to writing mean? Do they mean print only?” (p. 298). The move in the recently updated WPA Outcomes for First-Year Composition (2014) to disperse what was the fifth category—writing in digital environments—into the other four categories is a promising sign of our field’s embracing of more than words in communicative performances. It is a sign that, as an inherently interdisciplinary field, we are realizing what Fishman et al. (2005) call for in terms of the larger goal of the “importance of performance and writing” in order “to describe in detail the writing that students are doing and to use that information to question and perhaps to reconceive our understanding of the definition, future, and scope of writing in the twenty-first century” (p. 247). If we further embrace the work of pre-college colleagues like Hrenko and Stairs (2012), and artist-educators like Jacques d’Amboise—dancer, choreographer, and founder of the National Dance Institute (a non-profit organization that coordinates free dance programs for inner-city youth)—we can expand the pedagogical import of the communication/performance connection even further.

Yet peruse any given print writing studies collection—whether WAC, WID, CAC, writing center, or composition—for scholarship on writing in the visual and *especially* the performing arts and you will see/hear/feel a relative dearth. Kathryn Perry’s webtext “The Movement of Composition: Dance and Writing” (2012), suggests both the promise and complexity of learning to communicate with more than words. In her “multimodal attempt to capture and compare both the physical and conceptual movement involved in dance and writing,” readers are offered an intriguing reversal of roles as Perry’s text foregrounds the visual, aural, and kinesthetic—while the textual plays a more modest supporting role. The performing and visual arts have much to offer writing studies in terms of process, creativity, design, delivery, and habits of mind (and body). This collection expands on the concepts and ideas from the Special Issue, especially in terms of writing pedagogy, assessment, and secondary-school connections in the performing and visual arts.

Before moving into the chapters, we, your editors, would like to share why we are so involved in this project. Steven Corbett was warmly welcomed into the domain of research and writing in the performing and visual arts through his partnership with dancer/scholar (and fellow co-editor) Betsy Cooper and her program starting around 2002 (see Corbett, this volume, for details). Since then, curiosity and an appreciation for everything the worlds of acting, dancing, performing, designing, visualizing and vision-questing can offer writers and teachers of writing accompany every creative move he makes and imagines. Jennifer LeMesurier is invested in research that bridges interdisciplinary gaps between performance and writing (see LeMesurier, 2016). The scholarship on bodies, affect, and sensation is a rapidly growing, rich subfield of rhetoric and composition. As more teachers and researchers grapple with how bodies and performance affect their work, she hopes

that these essays will offer starting points for abundant exploration. Many years of working in writing centers has attuned Teagan Decker to the genres of writing valued by various disciplines, including the visual and performing arts. As a teacher of composition, she welcomes the cross-pollination that comes from encountering faculty and students who are writing and researching in the arts because it strengthens her own teaching and ways in which she prepares all students for a multiplicity of possible writing situations. Together, we hope this collection will invigorate, reaffirm, and inspire long-time—as well as fairly fresh—teachers and learners of writing in and about the performing and visual arts.

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# Part 1. Writing like a Performing and Visual Artist: Theory, Research, and Experience



# Introduction to Part One

Several revised “redux” versions of the articles from the Special Issue are showcased in Part One, weaving continuity and cohesion into the fibers of our collection. Part One also offers original performances from several ultra-talented contributors.

## Special Issue Reduxes

In **Chapter 1**, “Transferring Creativity across Disciplines: Creative Thinking for Twenty-First Century Composing Practices,” Sohui Lee and Russell Carpenter synthesize their extensive review of creativity theory literature from a wide variety of disciplines including visual arts, composition, engineering, the sciences, and the humanities. Through their review (succinctly condensed and repurposed from their Special Issue original), Lee and Carpenter argue that creative thinking requires creativity itself in looking outward and more broadly at perspectives of pedagogies across disciplines; in doing so, practitioners and scholars may discover new insights about practices, which may inform performances in their own disciplines such as in the visual arts or writing. In the visual arts, in which creativity is the focus of production and performance, the aesthetic theory of creativity is rich in defining nuanced types of creativity, such as boundary pushing creativity versus boundary breaking creativity. Such theories from the visual arts can provide new approaches for disciplinary practices of creativity. In engineering, creativity is central to cognitive problem solving and scholars offer creative thinking as a heuristic tool and process emphasizing collaboration and systematic divergent/convergent thinking. Here too, the authors find that engineering’s view of the dynamic creative process can incorporate visual and performance techniques, and provide new insight for disciplinary practices already seen influencing composition studies. In presenting principles of applied creativity drawn from disciplinary approaches, and interweaving perspectives from the Special Issue, the authors present new pedagogical opportunities for addressing problems or challenges in written and multimodal projects.

Anicca Cox, in **Chapter 2**, “(Re)Mapping Disciplinary Values and Rhetorical Concerns through Language: Interviews about Writing with Seven Instructors across the Performing and Visual Arts,” presents a case study of instructor voices designed to help writing instructors across the disciplines make the most of the overlaps and divergences in meaning-making in the creative and performing arts. Framed in discourse community theory and Barthesian semiotics, the author details interviews of seven instructors in a variety of visual and performing arts, and from a variety of institutions. The findings here illustrate the interconnected value system of teaching, learning, writing, creating, and producing in the performing

and visual arts. Accessing concerns of embodied discourses, disciplinary expression, criticality and process-based approaches to learning, Cox offers implications of the findings in terms of making the most of what valuable connections we might draw in a cross-disciplinary fashion between writing studies and writing in the performing and visual arts in order to empower student writing, and faculty collaboration and advocacy within larger high school and college communities. Aligning with several of the Special Issue articles and of the other chapters in this collection, the author works specifically to engage, via reporting of instructor comments, discursive framing for “concepts and tools to articulate the value of creativity strategies” (Lee & Carpenter, 2015; and this volume), the value of “performance within multiple genres and spaces” (Marquez, 2015), and pedagogy “to guide students toward a more deliberate analytic and self-critical attitude during their concept developments” (Fowler, 2015). This chapter seeks ultimately to illuminate what practices workers in writing studies might engage in order to teach more effectively and creatively in a WAC/WID framework.

In **Chapter 3**, “Performance Art and Performing Text,” J. Michael Rifenburg and Lindsey Allgood re-focus the colorfully illustrated performance-gaze they took in their Special Issue on Lindsey Allgood’s May 2014 participatory performance titled “Presence: A Performative Exploration of a Place That Will Soon Not Exist.” Performance art is a time-based art form focusing on the body as medium, specifically the body as a destination and vessel through which, on which, and where art can occur. Today, performers explore the blurred, liminal nature between art and life: where does the creative process end and everyday action begin? Like Gerben, Kurtyka, and Henry and Baker from the Special Issue and this volume, the authors illustrate how artists explore these queries through focusing on ephemerality, technology, and site-specificity via scripted or spontaneous, collaborative, and improvised performances. Through offering a detailed study of Lindsey’s inventive process—including her sketches, notes, images, and first-person narrative—and her culminating delivered performance, the authors argue for a more expansive understanding of invention and delivery of text that hinges on the body as a central mode of meaning-making.

For his **Chapter 4** redux, “Collaboration as Conversation: Performing Writing and Speaking Across Disciplines,” Chris Gerben presents a multimodal case study that foregrounds rhetorical performance and assessment as instructors and student participants mingle writing with other (performing) arts. The author takes us on a retrospective trip to an experimental course he participated in as a student in 2001 titled “Turning Points: Collaborations in the Arts.” Framing his case study in theories of authorship and current discussions of multimodal pedagogies, Gerben provides in-depth interviews with the instructor of the course, along with thick descriptions of the complex moving parts that constituted the entire experience. As in Henry and Baker’s Special Issue webtext, Gerben offers views of the action inside



an experimental theater where several YouTube videos produced by fellow students in the course allow readers/viewers to travel back almost 15 years to lucidly relive some of the experimental fruits of students' labors-of-love from that memorable course. Gerben ultimately hopes this chapter will encourage writing studies audiences to continue the call from his Special Issue article for devoting "ourselves to interrogating the composing processes and products that can be developed in both traditional and more experimental courses like this one." With an emphasis on collaboration, performance, and (ultimately) assessment, this piece looks to both expand and challenge what writing workshops can look like in college and high school spaces.

## Original Performances

**Chapter 5**, "OPERAcraft: Intersections of Creative Narrative, Music, and Video Games," from fresh faces Katie Dredger, Ariana Wyatt, Tracy Cowden, Ivica Ico Bukvic, and Kelly Parkes, discusses the challenges and triumphs of interdisciplinary and community-sourced narrative writing using popular emerging technology in the form of a custom-tailored modification of the ubiquitous sandbox video game Minecraft. This project asked that the collaborators balance the technical expertise of an open-source game contributor while also seeing themselves as creative writers of a fantastical story that would appeal to children and young adults. Drawing from scholarship on creating opera; intersections of gaming and composition; multi-modality; mentor texts in the narrative composition process; dystopian young adult literature, and authentic audience, this project demonstrates interdisciplinary work in modern times. English Education, Music Education, Computer Science, and Music faculty collaborated to create an opera sung by undergraduate voice majors and performed by customized video game avatars as puppets controlled by high school students. Adolescents in an extracurricular club created an original opera performed within the newfound Minecraft modification titled OPERAcraft. Starting with Mozart's music and five characters, OPERAcraft inspired students to create a plot, the libretto, the virtual set and the avatars. Students controlled the avatars, including their mouth and arm movement, while soloists sang the libretto (the dialogue to be sung by live musicians that told the narrative) for a live and virtual audience for a twenty-minute operatic performance. The authors deliver a visual treat while offering readers creative, collaborative pedagogical designs between high schools and colleges.

In the 2013 film *Words and Pictures*, high school English teacher Jack Marcus issues a rhetorical challenge to art instructor Dina Delsanto: "Words versus pictures: which is worth more?" To explore this question and to help students develop critical visual literacy from high school to the First-Year Writing classroom Maria

Soriano in **Chapter 6**, “Words, Pictures, and the ‘Nonlistening Space’: Visual Design and Popular Music as Forms of Performance in First-Year Writing,” turns to visual rhetoric—in particular, concert posters. Soriano details how her first-year writing (FYW) students research their favorite bands and listen analytically to the lyrics, instrumentation, dynamics, and tempos of albums and songs. The results of students’ active listening inform their choices of photos, graphics, fonts, and colors as they design concert posters that represent that band or musical artist. After completing the posters, they metacognitively engage with their creative process by writing explanatory essays, which challenges them to transpose each artistic choice into words. Regardless of whether or not students define themselves as “creative,” “artistic,” or neither, listening to music and creating concert posters extends the arts across the disciplines and into FYW, bringing a youthful sense of play (Lee & Carpenter, 2015; and this volume). Beyond having fun, listening to music in class, and learning more about their favorite bands or artists, students invade their own “nonlistening” spaces (realizing Kurtyka’s (2015) creative “vibes” from the Special Issue) with this assignment and construct a recursive continuum between thinking, creating, and writing also applicable to high-school writer

# Transferring Creativity across Disciplines: Creative Thinking for Twenty-First-Century Composing Practices

Sohui Lee and Russell Carpenter

Current academic research in creative thinking explores new ways creativity may be connected with student success from arts education to the sciences. Building on findings from creativity research across the disciplines, our study identifies and describes four approaches in creativity that may be of value as transferable strategies for writing and performance. We offer interdisciplinary perspectives based on available pedagogies that may help faculty relate the transferability of creativity and appreciate the profound role and relevance of creativity in academic thinking, composing, and performance.

During the last decade, primary and secondary (K-12) education through higher education have shown active interest in integrating creativity pedagogy as indicated by broad movements to include applied creativity in rubrics and frameworks for student success across disciplines. In 2010, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) developed a Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric to help faculty evaluate evidence of creative thinking in campuses across the nation. Two years later, the Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and National Writing Project developed “Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing,” which introduces essential “habits of mind” and experiences to intellectually and practically engage students in writing and communicating across a range of disciplines (CWPA, NCTE, & NWP, 2011, p. 1). Creativity plays a fundamental role as a habit of mind necessary for writing, speaking, performing, and visualizing, because “creativity focuses on invention and thinking processes by which students can learn to be astute consumers and creators of information and messages” (Lee & Carpenter, 2016, p. 224). As Hrenko and Stairs (2012) noted in their research on the intersections of arts and writing among K-12 students, creativity can also provide an opportunity to “retell, reinterpret, and redefine” concepts and themes that encourage engagement in the learning process. Beyond K-12 and postsecondary education, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills—a national coalition of educators, policy makers, and business leaders—advocated an educational framework that identifies creativity as core twenty-first century learning and innovation skills, preparing students to effectively communicate in “a tech-

nology and technology driven environment” (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills). Current academic interests in creative thinking and creativity explore new ways we might connect creativity with student success in a variety of public and private environments and invite us to consider domain-general creativity skills—those that apply across disciplines and expand the pedagogical connections between written, auditory, oral, and performance practices and theories. As Corbett and Cooper (2015) argued in their introduction to the special issue of *Across the Disciplines* (ATD), students in performing and visual arts engage in “generative creative processes” that may transfer to writing and vice versa (p. 1).

Composition scholars have been exploring the role of creativity in part because creativity shapes the rhetorical impact on student projects (Ridolfo & DeVoss, 2009; Shipka, 2011) and can supply “fresh approaches” to ways students connect, communicate, and synthesize knowledge in visual, written, and multimodal channels (Livingston, 2010, p. 59; Hrenko & Stairs, 2012; Smilan 2016). Delagrange (2011) noted the capacity and proclivity of multimodal text, in particular, to remix and expose “curious and unexpected connections” through innovation in arrangements and juxtapositions (cf. Kurtyka, 2015). But do the ways we use creative thinking in multimodal composing apply to engineering problems? Or composing plays? Can creative academic practices from one field help another? In exploring creativity in performing arts and management at the postsecondary level, Kern (2006) noted that a comparison may generate useful strategies. For Kern, performance arts involve not only aesthetic creativity connected with body movements but also critical creativity: “Thinking and doing are intrinsically linked within [performance] activity; repetition is never purely repetitive, but always implies creativity” (2006, p. 65). Rules, applied in performance arts and management, work in similar ways as “constraint and resource for creativity” (Kern, 2006, p. 68). Unlike Kern, who found that select performing arts approaches may provide a lens for reimagining management theory, Smilan (2016) argued for a more integrative approach to art in STEM-based lessons, especially K-12 education. Art and science, according to Smilan (2016) are “irreducible to each other” and a creative pedagogy involving the two areas should promote a “synthesis” of visual, experiential, and conceptual understanding (p. 169).

Creativity scholars have been concerned with exactly this classic debate: whether creativity skills are domain-specific or domain-general. Research addressing this debate suggests that both may be possible. In domain-specific creativity, scholars may be experts in a creative-thinking approach that is employed in one discipline. The approach might be taught in courses from departments in that field and the practice honed by its experts. Although domain-specific creativity presumes in-depth knowledge of approaches in a particular discipline, domain-general creativity seeks applications that transcend fields. In their study of domain-specific creativity, Silva, Kaufman, and Pretz (2009) noted, “Traits like divergent thinking,

creative potential, creativity-relevant skills, and ideational abilities presumably foster creativity across many disciplines. Most of these theories would agree that domain-general traits translate into domain-specific accomplishments” (p. 146).

Beyond identified domain-general approaches, there may be domain-specific creativity approaches that are broadly applicable and relevant to multiple disciplines. They can be applied in ways that may be useful beyond the scope of the conventions common in that field. When investigating creativity scholarship and the connections between creative thinking and twenty-first century compositional practices, we were inspired by Palmeri’s (2012) inquiry into whether “there are similarities in the creative composing process of writers, visual artists, designers, and performing artists” (p. 25). Although Palmeri recognized the “limitations of generalizable theories of creativity,” he suggested that it “could be useful for compositionists to conduct comparative studies of students’ creativity processes when composing alphabetic and visual texts” (2012, p. 31). The assumption here is that a comparison of domain-specific strategies in the composition process of writers, visual artists, and performance artists may lead to “generalizable theories” of creativity. Our approach expands the question even further to ask if a writer, communicator, artist, and performer may gain insight on transferable creativity strategies from an even broader comparative study of postsecondary creativity pedagogies that includes engineering, sciences, and education. Scholars in these fields outside communication and the arts have long investigated the role of creative thinking; understanding common or even different approaches may inform how we can enhance teaching and student learning across educational environments.

While Palmeri raised questions about modal affordances and their impact on creativity in multimodal composition, our investigation of pedagogies of creativity reviews literature from the arts, engineering, sciences, social sciences, and humanities; identifies creativity theories and practices with the highest potential for impact in its writing and performance applications; and finally offers some generalizable creativity approaches. While we situate creativity pedagogies within specific disciplines, we highlight how a selection of possible transferable applications may enrich our ways of teaching creativity to students in other fields. In our survey of literature on creativity across disciplines, we kept the following key questions in mind:

- How is creativity and creativity pedagogy defined and discussed across disciplines?
- How can the study of creativity pedagogies across various fields of study help us consider transferable creative processes and techniques that support writing or communicating through a variety of modes including performance and visual arts?
- How might transferable creativity strategies apply in pedagogical situations within the writing process?

This chapter first summarizes our assessment of creativity theories and strategies drawn from a survey of over seventy articles and chapters in composition, engineering, sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Building on our findings from creativity research across the disciplines, we identify four distinct approaches that may be of value as transferable strategies for writing and performance. In presenting these generalized approaches of applied creativity drawn from across disciplines, we offer interdisciplinary perspectives based on available pedagogies that may help faculty assess the relevance and transferability of creativity beyond what students do in a specific discipline. In doing so, students may be given tools to apply relevant and even innovative strategies of creative thinking essential for integrating writing and performance within Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs.

## Creativity in Composition: Creativity as Thinking

Although creativity may be framed in a variety of ways in academic disciplines, scholars who study applications of creativity often discussed it as a “teachable” skill (Brent & Felder, 1992) that results in generating ideas, insights, or new perspectives that are not conventional or routine. For many interested in student learning, the pedagogical outcomes of creativity were also valuable because some scholars believed creativity engaged students through “deeper levels of understanding” in a subject (Korgel, 2002; Sweeney, 2003). Creativity can be discussed, as Howard, Culley, and Dekoninck (2008) noted, in terms of “the creative process, the creative product (output), the creative person, and the creative environment” (p. 161). We would add to this list creative pedagogy involving techniques or strategies applied to improving or achieving the creative process, product, or environment.

In this study, we focus on how creativity scholars in composition and across the disciplines frame and discuss pedagogical techniques to improve creativity in students and their academic work, whether this work is represented as expository essays or engineering problems. We then categorize relevant articles by author and discipline, creativity trend/concepts, and purpose/definitions (Appendix). Cataloguing the discipline allowed us to locate similar creativity strategies across fields and boundaries. The trends and concepts include ways scholars in the disciplines discussed creativity within their field. Furthermore, identifying the purpose/trend allows us to elaborate on and contextualize the creativity concepts from the literature. The following review of creativity scholarship covers six areas: composition, visual arts, engineering, sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Additionally, we provide a separate study of creativity in the visual arts because creativity is necessary in creating art, promoting art, advocating for art, and translating arts-based knowledge.

In composition studies, instructors may think of creativity and creative thinking as a process such as brainstorming by which students generate new ideas or topics. For composition instructors who adhere to process-writing approaches, the writing process is generally understood to involve four stages (brainstorming, planning, composing, and revising) that may or may not unfold in a neat sequence. A range of critical thinking activities are involved during each of the four stages.

Early composition scholars who supported the “process movement” in composition studies strongly emphasized creativity as a thinking act. Lauer (1970) drew from psychology when she asserted that instructors can improve how they teach the creative process in composition by reflecting on creativity as a heuristic tool, which can stimulate problem solving, questioning (rethinking), and flexibility in writing approaches. Flower and Hayes (1977) also framed writing as a “highly goal-oriented, intellectual performance” (p. 449) that benefits from problem solving: “[Writing] is both a strategic action and a thinking problem” (p. 449). They argued that the creative process helps students solve language or intellectual problems and increases “self-awareness” of such heuristics (1977, p. 450). Elbow (1983) believed creativity was a “bona fide kind of thinking because it is a process of making sense, and putting things together” (p. 38). Elbow, however, distinguished creativity as “first order thinking” (p. 39), associated specifically with intuitive, free-form idea generation. This first order thinking was contrasted against “second order thinking,” which he described as “directed, controlled thinking” in planning, organizing, or revising (1983, p. 38). Elbow saw creativity as distinct from directed thinking, while Flower and Hayes, especially in their later study, argued that creativity involved both kinds of free form and directed thinking in the “discovery process” of writing (1983, p. 22).

In more recent composition scholarship involving creativity, authors generally focused on creative techniques rather than debate the creative thinking process. Technology, media, and the visual arts have become more integrated into the composition classroom, and the affordances of composing in multiple modes were perceived to open new paths for communicating messages to audiences. However, these moves may have also complicated the ways we teach creativity in both technique and process. Recent articles explored ways in which new creative pedagogies were critical for teaching composition. Exploring academic creativity in the form of “play,” Rouzie (2000) insisted that play should be structured in the curriculum because it facilitates a critical process that invites open exploration of possible approaches, scenarios, or topics. Play allowed students to freely experiment with visual and mediated elements, to make mistakes, and to try new combinations while learning about how these decisions affect the design of a text (Rouzie, 2000, p. 635). Play may be particularly important as a creativity tool for learning when students are working with media and modes with which they have never composed before.



Composition scholars investigating writing and multimodality have continued to draw from theories across disciplines to inform new approaches. For example, Newcomb (2012) and Purdy (2014) explored creativity through the lens of engineering design and design theory. Newcomb and Purdy identified how design strategies are useful tools for improving creativity in composition studies. Evoking arguments in design studies (and echoing Flower and Hayes), Newcomb contended that design work depends on an understanding of relationships “full of constraints” (2012, p. 594) and requires students to develop and write about solutions to complex writing problems through “situational creativity” (p. 607). Noting the emergent trend in composition, Purdy also identified the value of design thinking in “multimodal/multimedia composing tasks” (2012, p. 614) by helping students complicate single solutions and creatively work with problems that are “ambiguous, contingent, and recursive” (p. 613). In exploring the connections between writing and performance, authors in the *ATD* special issue *Create, Perform, Write* (Gerben, 2015; Henry & Baker, 2015; Marquez, 2015) reconceptualized creativity in communicative performance by foregrounding the process of performing in terms of metacognition: Gerben (2015), for instance, championed “the integrity of the rhetorical creation (the ‘how’)” and the process of making or performing; Henry and Baker (2015) identified rehearsal performance as playing a crucial metacognitive role in “performance consciousness.” Extending the work of Newcomb and Purdy, this study gathered and processed disciplinary findings to further explore how design thinking and other creativity approaches might be transferred and applied to written and multimodal composing practices.

## Creativity Across Disciplines

Across disciplines, creativity has been defined, studied, and explored in ways that compositionists may quickly recognize; because, as we noted, theories and practices in composition studies have integrated cognitive psychology and engineering design theory. Our study of creativity in visual arts, engineering, sciences, education, and humanities correlates to the interdisciplinary Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric presented by the AAC&U in 2010. Consolidating criteria of creative thinking learning outcomes, the Creative Thinking VALUE rubric highlighted common attributes across disciplines, including innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking. Unlike the VALUE rubric, which was designed to help instructors assess the quality of students’ creative thinking, we present a detailed exploration of theories and strategies that may be more valuable for composition pedagogy and administrative work associated with WAC and WID. A closer examination of creativity studies provides insights for composition practice by revealing transferable creativity approaches compositionists have yet to consider. In this section, we summarize



the ways various disciplines discuss creativity and then draw observations relevant to WAC and WID scholars.

## Visual Arts: Creativity as a Skill

The most common aesthetic understanding of creativity—the idea of artistic originality—is one that has been applied in visual arts, where creativity may be seen by some to be at the very heart of arts education. Nonetheless, Tutor (2008) noted that arts education, like other disciplines, often fails to treat creativity as a pedagogical product of deliberate learning rather than a by-product of theoretical or conceptual content delivery or technical performance. Creativity in the visual arts is unique because it is both a process and product of visual artists. Although often included as a discipline within the field of postsecondary education, we discuss it here separately because we see the visual arts as an entry point to discussing creativity across the disciplines. Examining the production of art in our modern “information society,” Drucker (2005) noted how fine artists believe that creativity innovates the arts and may “lead the way for envisioning the future in all areas of contemporary life” (p. 37). In visual arts education, creativity was theorized as an aesthetic skill that was identified and measured to evaluate student performance. According to Eisner (1962), who outlined a typology of creativity in the visual arts, human creativity is comprised of “different kinds of creative competencies” (p. 12). Eisner identified four key behavioral characteristics of creativity that could be identified and measured by the facility of an individual to combine elements of a subject (such as genre) or forms (art material):

- boundary pushing creativity
- boundary breaking creativity
- inventive creativity, and
- aesthetic organizing creativity

Boundary-pushing creativity extends the subject or form in novel ways. One illustration of boundary pushing creativity might be seen in student-designed trade blankets assigned to Maine eighth and ninth graders (Hrenko & Stairs, 2012). Students were asked to design motifs that reflected “accurate regional patterns” made by a Maine native tribe, while adding an original motif that “identified” the students themselves (Hrenko & Stairs, 2012). By contrast, boundary breaking creativity provides an “utterly new” approach to subject or form. An example of boundary breaking creativity in performance might be seen in Gerben’s (2015) performance piece “Grace” (Gerben, 2015, pp. 9-11): Gerben’s piece, taught in a postsecondary educational setting, merged performance with multimedia art, requiring the audience (students) to experience a “park”-like space created through visual, auditory, tactile elements and actors. “Grace” may be seen as boundary breaking creativity because it reconceived the narrative of traditional performances in a radically different way,

replacing story with the audience's immersive experience of a concept instead. A third type of creativity, inventive creativity, is the ability to take existing forms and subjects to create something new. Examples of inventive creativity could be seen online with IKEA hacks, where DIYers use IKEA products for purposes completely different from its original intention: \$2 vases become "bricks" for a curving wall in a bathroom and stools are installed as wall bookshelves. Finally, Eisner introduced aesthetic organizing creativity, which orders "specific forms so as to constitute a coherent, harmonious, and balanced whole" (1962, p. 13). Aesthetic organizing creativity, also understood as the practice of design approaches by graphic designers and others, represents one of the most flexible creativity skills: Aesthetic organizing creativity embodies transferable sets of skills across different modes of art forms, from haptic to visual (Eisner, 1962, p. 19). Figure 3 is a good example of aesthetic organizing creativity, being part of a student design project described by Fowler (2015) in his article, "Writing-Intensive Approaches in a Typographic Design Studio Class" (p. 6). The objective of the assignment designed for college students was to explore how typographic and graphic design choices can "transpos[e] concepts from an earlier era to the present" (Fowler, 2015, p. 5); in this case, a student takes a nineteenth-century French poster advertisement (see Figure 2 in Fowler, 2015, p. 6) and graphically updates it with a scene from a Peanuts cartoon (see Figure 3 in Fowler, 2015, p. 6). While Eisner described creativity as a measurable skill of creative talent, more recent arguments for creativity in visual arts education have situated artistic creativity as a transferable skill that helps students work with content (Livingston, 2010).

### Four Types of Creativity

For instructors and scholars interested in writing and performance, a relevant observation from creativity scholarship in arts education at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels emerges: The four types of creativity may be used to help students identify and explore media forms and modes across disciplines. One of the major challenges to creativity is recognizing different kinds of creativity when it is seen while continuing to nurture students' creative confidence (Tutor, 2008). Understanding types of creativity (boundary-breaking creativity, boundary-pushing creativity, and inventive creativity) might provide new possibilities for ways in which students might be intentional about integrating creative approaches to reflect on and transfer strategies.

### Engineering: Creativity as Heuristic Tool and "Event"

In fields outside of the visual arts, creativity is not usually categorized by degrees of aesthetic originality but by the quality of cognitive problem solving. Essential qualities of creativity are described in fields as diverse as composition, psychology, mathematics, and engineering as generating a unique combination of elements,

developing novel perspectives for a performance, or solving a problem (Brent & Felder, 1992; Bump, 1985; Dorst, 2001; Elbow, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1977, 1980; Kokotovich, 2007; Korgel, 2002; Lauer, 1970; Lumsdaine & Lumsdaine, 1994; Mednick, 1962; Siswono, 2010). One of the earliest to propose processes for creative thinking, psychologist Mednick (1962) drew evidence from poets as well as mathematicians and scientists to theorize that creative “performance” of these artists and thinkers is due to the unique “combinations of associative elements” and that creative solutions of this nature were teachable through specific processes of thinking (p. 220). Whereas creativity theory from cognitive psychology emphasized the creative process involving cognitive thinking alone (Mednick, 1962), engineering discussed creativity in terms of solving a design problem, process, and activity (Howard, Culley, & Dekoninck, 2008).

Engineering researchers interested in creativity commonly referred to creativity as a heuristic tool or process. Because engineers commonly rethink systems, procedures, and performance tasks, these creative processes necessitated the development of systematized thinking practices that encourage engineers to break from standard approaches. In our review of engineering creativity research, we identify the following key concepts of creativity process that may be valuable for composition and performance studies.

### Divergent Thinking and Convergent Thinking

While Elbow (1983) made the case for two separate modes of thinking, one that is “creative” thinking and another that is “rational” thinking, engineering scholars have consistently argued that both approaches were parts of a greater creative thinking process: divergent thinking and convergent thinking necessarily work together to generate creativity. For Lumsdaine and Lumsdaine (1994) and others in engineering, “divergent thinking” is an ability to think imaginatively and innovatively about the problem by seeking to understand its broader context and generate ideas without evaluation. While divergent thinking helped with generating innovative ideas that challenge conventional or status-quo thinking, engineers considered “convergent thinking” to be a complementary ability to logically select, evaluate, synthesize, and refine “many potential ideas into one or more workable solutions” (Sweeney, 2003, p. 139).

### Involving Constant Questioning and Reshaping of the Problem and Solution

The hallmark of design thinking in engineering is the notion of constantly and creatively rethinking both the problem and the solution to produce a better solution that diverges from the “routine product” (Howard, Culley, & Dekoninck, 2008, p. 160). Design thinking, thus, involves a dynamic, creative cognitive process that

never settles on one given solution. In “Creativity in the Design Process,” Dorst (2001) called creativity an “event”; that is, “a period of exploration in which problem and solution spaces are evolving and are unstable until (temporarily) fixed by an emergent bridge which identifies problem-solution pairing” (p. 435). Creativity scholars in engineering generally argued that the best creative solutions occur when the problem or solution is consciously and methodically redefined and re-visited numerous times through an iterative practice.

## Sciences: Creativity as Situated Process

“Creativity,” Langley and Jones (1988) explained, “lies at the heart of the scientific process” (p. 177). As in engineering, creativity literature in the sciences generally addresses two concerns: the measuring of creative ability and the improvement of creative ability. The literature reviewed for our study focuses primarily on discussions about how students’ creativity may be improved to increase the quality of student research (Baily, White, & Pain, 1999; DeHaan, 2009; Siswono, 2010), although some have also studied how creativity motivates students in the sciences (Lee & Erdogan, 2007). Scholars in the sciences have made a particular case for asserting the importance of creativity in the research process and offered ways to explicitly teach creativity that take into consideration the rhetorical context or applications of creativity techniques.

### Situated Creativity

The following domain-specific creativity approaches may be applied more generally in other disciplines: Scientific research processes like design thinking involve creativity and rhetorical thinking situated in historical, cultural, and subjective contexts. Bailey, White, and Pain (1999), scientists in geography and environmental management, argued that science is always about interpretation of data, and creativity comes in contextual interpretation in the research process. In the life sciences, DeHann (2009) also situated creativity in scientific research as a multi-component process occurring in particular social contexts, often involving “a remarkable degree of influence and collaboration” (p. 174). Like scholars in engineering, DeHann asserted that creativity includes divergent thinking or “cognitive flexibility” and convergent thinking, or the ability to have analytic focus and select the best solution (2009, p. 174).

### Creativity as a Teachable Skill

Creativity scholars in the sciences generally agreed that “creativity does not happen by chance” and have argued for creative learning environments (Lee & Erdogan, 2007, p. 1317), discussions of creativity theory and techniques (DeHann, 2009),

and the teaching of creativity stages (Siswono, 2010). Students can be stimulated to be more creative if teachers actively encourage them to use creativity when identifying and solving problems; and if teachers explicitly guide students in how to be creative by “inform[ing] students about the nature of creativity and offer[ing] clear strategies for creative thinking” (DeHann, 2009, p. 176).

## Education and Social Sciences: Creativity as Constructed Environments

Creativity pedagogies in education focused on teaching creatively with an emphasis on instructing teachers to apply creative pedagogies in the classroom while constructing creative learning environments. The research in education also drew heavily from cognitive psychology and design, focusing on how to encourage students to be active creative thinkers. Areas within Education and Social Sciences often adopted a domain-general approach, as Sawyer (2011) notes: “[T]he implicit assumption made by arguments to justify arts education—[is] that such education results in domain-general creativity skills that will transfer to other subject areas” (p. 3). As Sawyer explained, teachers might look for approaches that transcend disciplines that can adapt to fit a variety of composing contexts. Furthermore, teachers might repurpose domain-general strategies for multimodal composition instruction.

Education focused on the process of creative teaching itself through studying strategies and approaches. In the education disciplines, emphasis was placed on how the class environment and curriculum shapes student creativity (Lin, 2011). Other education scholars have further investigated creative teaching, teaching for creativity, and creative learning (Baker & Burns, 2010; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004). Especially in the last decade, education scholars emphasized the important relationship between creativity and technology, particularly how technology in the classroom enables creativity with the digital generation (Livingston, 2010; Mishra & the Deep Play Research Group, 2012).

## Improvisation and Risk-taking

In our review of the research on creativity in education and the social sciences, improvisation and risk-taking in high and low-tech forms enhance creativity in education. For instance, Sawyer (2011) argued that the most effective way to foster creative thinking in learners is to “guide them in a process of disciplined improvisation” (p. 14). Education creativity research suggests that risk-taking activities help students learn from making mistakes and, when reflected upon and discussed explicitly, lead students to engaging in deeper and more productive creative experiences (Gibson, 2010).

## Problem Solving and “Possibility Thinking”

Like creativity scholars in engineering and the sciences, education and social science creativity scholars present creativity as a critical tool for problem solving. Scholars in education suggest that looking at the available approaches to solving problems or even constructing problems to be solved can facilitate creative thinking in students and can help shape a creative pedagogy. Problem solving allows students a way into a discussion, debate, or experiment. A characteristic of creativity itself, as Jeffrey and Craft (2004) explained, is “possibility thinking,” which “includes problem solving as in a puzzle, finding alternative routes to a barrier, the posing of questions and the identification of problems and issues” (pp. 81-82).

## Humanities: Imaginative Thinking and Doing

The humanities presented a challenge when tracking creativity approaches because its fields recognize creativity as product and/or process. In some cases, such as creative writing, creativity was the “focus of artistic energy” and the goal itself (Sewell, 2018, p. 64). As in the arts, creative writing was defined by creativity and evaluated by its successful implementation. In literary studies, creativity was essential for investigating “literary imagination,” because the choice and syntax of words become “the chief participants in imaginative sequences” (Gardner, 1982, p. 173). While academic disciplines such as English evaluated creativity in the final product and was a salient part of disciplinary work, other fields such as history viewed creativity as informing the processes of disciplinary thinking, much like the broad-based creativity strategies discussed earlier in other disciplines.

Historians discussed creativity in a variety of ways, including “counterfactual thinking” that parallels how engineering and sciences describe creative thinking for problem solving (Jackson, 2005). According to Jackson (2005), historians used creativity to imagine what cultures and belief systems were like in the past (p. 2) as well as to “engage with historical problems” (p. 2). “Counterfactual thinking” was, in fact, crucial for historians to think in alternative ways or to challenge assumptions and expand on commonly accepted views.

One approach to promote literary imagination or counterfactual thinking has been to explore visual thinking, which has resurged as a result of new methodologies and practices introduced by digital humanities. Coleman and Colbert (2001), for instance, highlighted the inherent connection between creative thinking skills and visual communication (p. 10). Similarly, Welch (2010) examined how students can improve technical writing by exploring creativity through visual design (p. 41). Digital humanities, moreover, have reinvigorated how scholars interpret text through data mining and have explored creative methods of critical theorizing through digital storytelling (Benmayor, 2015).

## Learning by Doing, Making, and Visual Modeling

Creativity in the humanities emphasized an interdisciplinary approach to design and communication, specifically in the visual, cultural, performative, and media arts. Researchers highlighted experiences that lead to creative thinking. Creative thinking was experiential in that creativity involved learning by doing or, as in the visual or performative arts, learning by making. One type of experiential learning in creativity was visual modeling, which included recreating scenes, events, or concepts or visualizing patterns, options, problems, and solutions. Through a visual modeling approach, students were asked to employ creativity to construct or reconstruct samples and consider multiple options, variations, and new interpretations.

## Four Approaches of Transferable Applied Creativity

When reviewing creativity scholarship together, we find that there is consensus on the value of academic creativity both as a practice in the academy and a process legitimized in academic frameworks for higher education. The primary goal of academic creativity is one of purposeful problem-finding or problem-solving, but the nuanced disciplinary approaches we've explored also reveal the multidisciplinary nature of creativity (Bremmer & Rodgers, 2013, p. 11): understanding different disciplinary approaches to creativity may introduce perspectives and concepts about creativity that may generate productive discussions on how creativity theory and techniques can be freshly applied or even rethought for written and multimodal composition at the K-12 and postsecondary level. Creative thinking is a skill, a heuristic process, situated event, and a product of constructed environments. Our study has led us to identify four general approaches of transferable applied creativity.

### Creative Thinking as a Critical Skill

Scholars argue that creativity is a skill that can be strengthened and improved through an awareness of creativity as risk taking and applying techniques that help students challenge existing approaches, thinking, or imagining. To cultivate creativity as a skill, instructors of writing and performance might focus on quantity not quality through divergent thinking applications. For instance, instructors can help students generate ideas during the task defining and invention stages by giving them tools to generate a large quantity of ideas, topics, questions, or concepts.

### Creative Thinking as a Heuristic Process

In addition to a skill, creative thinking is part of an ongoing and dynamic process



of discovery. To increase students' awareness, instructors might talk about creative thinking alongside the process of composing writing, performance, and visual arts. The most rhetorically effective, convincing, and original projects are produced when students are asked to be creative in various stages of task defining, inventing, researching, producing, and revising. A discussion of the creativity process makes explicit the method and application of creativity, and allows for students to actively challenge and rethink their assumptions along the process of generating their product.

## Creativity as a Situated Event

In addition to being a heuristic, problem-solving process, creativity is a situated event, and creative choices are shaped by historical, social, cultural, rhetorical, and modal contexts. Increased awareness of the situational context of creativity helps students understand how they can be original with their written or performance projects as limited by these contexts. Students might be encouraged to provide a self-assessment of the various contexts of their projects, including an evaluation of whether certain contexts are underdeveloped or overlooked and whether some contexts have the potential to be helpful or detrimental to the project.

## Creativity as a Product of Constructed Environments

Creativity can be learned and improved through explicit ongoing instruction. Teachability of creativity has been a focus in social sciences, especially education, but scholars in engineering and sciences have also examined how students' creative thinking is reinforced by curriculum that teaches creativity. Instructors can help cultivate creative thinking in their courses by inviting students to define the task/problems of assignments creatively and providing safe learning environments to do so.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we explored the roles of creativity pedagogy by investigating the scholarly literature drawn from across the disciplines and by examining how this research provides ways for considering creativity processes and techniques for composition studies. A review of creativity theories and strategies drawn from composition, engineering, sciences, social sciences, and humanities led us to conclude that creative processes offered value in creative thinking across the disciplines, especially in:

- idea generation
- quality of product
- innovative pedagogical approaches



The study resulting from the collection of creativity pedagogies across disciplines suggests the importance of problem-solving approaches not only as a visible performance of knowledge but also a means of raising the quality of the final product, whether that “product” involves scientific research, a slideshow presentation, or a dance performance. Creative thinking strategies reinforce the awareness of the situational and iterative nature of composition and performance, encouraging students to actively consider multiple paths toward a solution as well as questioning and revisiting results for quality, innovation, and/or rhetorical effectiveness.

Although discussions of applied creative thinking come at a particularly important time in composition studies, creativity research in written and multimodal composition is, in some ways, just beginning. In our attempt to examine transferable creativity approaches across disciplines, we hope to encourage further explorations of WAC/WID programs that teach creative thinking skills. Following Purdy (2014), future studies might examine creativity approaches within a specific discipline such as engineering or the sciences to deepen the connections with other disciplinary approaches. As K-12 classrooms and WAC/WID courses offer more assignments in genres different from traditional academic writing forms, and as writing instructors are asked to relate how students’ learning outcomes in composing connect with other disciplinary ways of thinking and doing (Carter, 2007), writing studies will benefit from joining the rich interdisciplinary conversations on creativity.

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## Appendix: Major Creativity Scholarship and Concepts across Disciplines

Author and Discipline	Creativity Terms/ Concepts	Purpose/Definition of Creativity
Mednick (1962) <i>Psychology</i>	“associative” process of creativity	Creative people (regardless of discipline) form “associative elements” into new combinations that are useful Creativity is originality plus “usefulness”
Lauer (1970) <i>Composition</i>	“heuristics” and invention	Prewriting, generation of goals, and problem solving
Flower & Hayes (1977); Flower & Hayes (1980) <i>Composition</i>	“problem-solving strategies” “discovery”	Brainstorming; role playing; analogies to see problems through a different lens
Gardner (1982) <i>History</i>	“counterfactual thinking”	Teaches students to re-evaluate thinking throughout the process
Elbow (1983) <i>Composition</i>	“first order thinking”	Intuitive, creative thinking through brainstorming
Bump (1985) <i>Technical Writing</i>	metaphorical thinking	Creative scientific writing uses metaphors to enable new conditions, models, and world-pictures; generate insights; clarify complex theories and objects
Carey & Flower (1989) <i>Composition</i>	creativity is situational	Openings for creativity in writing are in: 1. constructing and modifying task representation; 2. managing topic/content knowledge; 3. keeping track of evolving sets of goals and applying problem-solving strategies
Brent & Felder (1992) <i>Composition</i>	“creative thinking”	Creativity is a teachable skill; creativity requires students to move beyond the “surface approach to learning” Scaffolding of creativity through techniques of brainstorming; Assignments should encourage problem solving
Lumsdaine & Lumsdaine (1994) <i>Engineering</i>	visual thinking is placed with “imaginative, conceptual, and innovative thinking”	Creative thinking process involves the process of “defining problem,” “idea generation,” “synthesizing ideas,” and “implementing ideas” Creative value of collaborative work (especially with a group make up of different cognitive styles)
John-Steiner (2000) <i>Education</i>	“integrative collaboration” facilitates creativity	Creative/collaborative process of artists, musicians, and authors

Author and Discipline	Creativity Terms/ Concepts	Purpose/Definition of Creativity
Dunn (2001) <i>Composition</i>	using visual to promote creativity in writing	Creativity as a tool to help students retain metacognitive distance from writing and process; to generate different perspectives
Dorst (2001) <i>Design Studies</i>	“creative event”	Creativity is critical for defining the design problem A creative event is the period of “exploration” in which problem and solution spaces are evolving
Korgel (2002) <i>Engineering (Chemical Engineering)</i>	creativity and dialogue	Creativity in design problem-solving; writing to learn activities to nurture independent thought.
Riedl & Young (2006) <i>Engineering</i>	“exploratory creativity” in storytelling versus “transformational creativity”	Creativity storytelling is important as a skill that helps humans build cognitive structures for understanding the world
Sawyer (2011) <i>Education</i>	“creative spark”	Power/value of groups in creative thinking
Kokotovich (2007) <i>Design</i>	“creative problem solving”	Design comes out of solving design issues; use cognitive maps to allow for discovery loops; associative mind mapping is a type of cognitive map
Howard, Culley, & Dekoninck (2008) <i>Engineering Design</i>	“creativity” in the design process, creative product (output), creative person, creative environment	Survey of design and creative processes from literature on creativity in psychology and engineering The creative process has moved from one that is seen as a cognitive process to one that is more “activity-based” (what the producer/composer is doing)
DeHann (2009) <i>Life Science</i>	creativity pedagogy: multicomponent, social, and teachable	Creativity is “multicomponent” process (divergent and convergent thinking, and analogical thinking) Creativity occurs in a social context
Siswono (2010) <i>Mathematics</i>	creative thinking as a skill	Stages of creative thinking: 1. awareness of creative thinking 2. observation of creative thinking 3. creative thinking strategies 4. reflection on creative thinking Divergent and convergent thinking are part of creative thinking

Author and Discipline	Creativity Terms/ Concepts	Purpose/Definition of Creativity
Newcomb (2012) <i>Composition</i>	“situational creativity”	Creativity focuses on how students think about the problem in writing, not about how the student applies creative strategies in writing
Alexander, Powell, & Green (2011/2012) <i>Composition</i>	creativity and multimodal composition	Creativity as an affordance of multimodal text (among first year writers, for example).  Students respond to multimodal composition in light of their own experience in writing formal written academic genres





# (Re)Mapping Disciplinary Values and Rhetorical Concerns through Language: Interviews about Writing with Seven Instructors across the Performing and Visual Arts

Anicca Cox

This small study, based on interviews with seven university-level instructors of visual and performing arts from ceramics and sculpture to painting and drawing to music and field arts, investigates the uses of writing in art-making practice and instruction. The chapter explores personal narrative, interview analysis and extant literature on the subject, ultimately arguing that visual and performing arts disciplines have much to offer to writing studies in terms of a reconsideration of reflective, embodied, exploratory and assistive approaches to writing.

I'll never forget the moment I developed my first photograph when, as if by magic, a blank sheet of paper, in a dance with a chemical bath, brought forth an image out of the dark. Profoundly delighted with the language of light and form I saw before me, I began my undergraduate art career. Moving forward, I quickly learned from my instructors that while dexterity with the principles of visual language would be central, I would also need to use writing to better understand art-making codes and to successfully enter into a community of visual art practitioners. And though I ultimately decided on a career in writing studies, I never let go of the connections I made as an undergraduate between visual and written language, between multiple modes of seeing, thinking and making—principles that have in fact, all these years later, helped me better understand my own writing and teaching.

## Study Design

In the fall of 2014, inspired by some of the conversations I'd been having with colleagues in the visual and performing arts for years, I decided to investigate more closely how those instructors use writing in their disciplinary practice. The impetus to do so, however, was both personal and scholarly. Because I use visual imagery

in my classrooms to prompt writing assignments and prompt students to work in alternative modalities, I have often wondered if I am coopting my own experience in art making merely because I find it interesting, or if the work I have students do with visual analysis lends itself concretely to their better writing work? And because theory in visual rhetoric has so wholeheartedly advocated for use of multiple modalities in writing studies, I also couldn't help but wonder what was going on on the other end? How *do* art-makers use writing? And what kind of instruction do students receive in it? And more importantly, why?

In order to more closely examine the landscape of writing in the visual and performing arts and its potential connection back to writing studies—I conducted a series of phone interviews with seven instructors of visual and performing arts (hereafter “VPA instructors”) at the university level, focusing on two elements of inquiry: First, in what ways do these instructors make use of writing in their classroom to effectively teach disciplinary values?; specifically, how does writing support disciplinary participation and practice in ways that are particular to that domain? Secondly, I wondered, what might qualitative data highlighting language around writing instruction in the visual and performing arts have to “say back” to writing studies itself? Interview questions ranged from how these instructors view and value writing abstractly, to how they employ writing practice concretely—how they give evaluative feedback on writing, to what texts they offer as readings in their courses and how they perceive their students’ abilities.

Using grounded theory analysis borrowed from sociological research methods (now familiar broadly to compositionists) I identified recurring language and conceptual descriptors in an initial series of interview questions. From that analysis, I developed further lines of inquiry to examine research data. Some emergent concerns which are reflected in the following sections were: what language is used to describe disciplinary or rhetorical concerns within the visual and performing arts? What practices and values do instructors employ when teaching writing? Working with a hypothesis that visual and performing arts use writing as an essential component of disciplinary praxis, I hoped that some analysis of interview data could provide a site for intervention to the emerging assessment-based controls in writing studies. This trend too frequently can position process externally and as primarily in service of a summative, final written product. The results suggest that visual and performing arts instructors do, in fact, use writing in ways that uniquely support relationships between multiple modalities of expression (writing, visual, tactile among others). Further, the results of this study look at the importance of meta-cognitive reflective work, individuated instructional techniques, and multimodal or cross-disciplinary approaches to writing.

While the original study (Cox, 2014) was purely academic in nature and more

extensive than this chapter, in the text here I additionally employ my own reflective and interpretive analysis of art-making and its connection to my current identity as a writing instructor with the inclusion of images I made as an undergraduate photography student. By examining my current understanding of the role process and inquiry play for me as a writing instructor and what role they previously played for me as a practitioner in the visual arts, my hope is to provide an additional layer of meaning here—exploring potential articulations of the data from the study in my own experiences.

## Discourse Communities, Visual Rhetoric, Visual Analysis

In hindsight, my memories of making visual images as an undergraduate now seem more complicated than the photographic objects themselves. I remember the initial delight, the power that came from being able to explore and discover the way I see, or want to see. I was fascinated that a photograph could uniquely represent, like DNA, how its creator existed in the world. My first instinct, and perhaps one that carried on, was to make/find things of beauty and use my camera to interact with them. Early images, like the one you see here, paid some attention to composition and form but were made in the course of my daily life, simply by turning my eye toward things that struck me as interesting—a trip to the beach with a girlfriend in cold and empty Northern California for example. I learned to print images with contrast or focus depending on what I *felt* about them—the low light, the mist, the silence, long stretches of waterside with a single figure upon the landscape seemed evocative, at the time, of the loneliness I felt in that physical setting.

But slowly, over time, I also learned to become a part of a community of student-practitioners and my visual work became a product of the conversations that took place with others. I was beginning to make the uncomfortable and complex, sometimes invisible moves of enculturation into a fine arts community. I learned to make work in new ways, through trial and often failure, through the reading my instructors asked me to do from artists like Edward Weston or various art critics, and also from classroom settings where I learned to engage in “critique” sessions and apply interpretive analysis to the work of others and my own. This “peer-review” model later became intimately familiar to me as a writing teacher. And these sessions were also where things became complicated, as any enculturation process is bound to be. I suddenly had an audience and had to make a relationship with them. It wasn’t enough to merely find beauty and delight in it—or so I thought, but rather, I had to find a way to make meaning. The process was, I remember now, both intensely personal and vulnerable and intensely public.



Figure 2.1. “Blackbirds at Dusk,” Humboldt County, CA (photo by Anicca Cox).

While writing studies is also interested in how to make meaning in multiple modalities and currently engages scholarship about visual rhetoric, digital humanities and multimodal writing instruction in dynamic ways, much of my fascination with a described relationship between image and meaning via language came before I had entered the discipline, when, in an art history class, I read Barthes’ *Camera Lucida* (1980). In this theoretical work, he maps his own fascination and emotional response to photographs as a wielder of language. He explains that because the composition itself remains a “referent,” the nature, form, or truth of a photograph is often elusive and symbolic; because of this, photography is, for him, uniquely compelling and uniquely personal. By tracing the ways in which, for him, writing falls short of the task of appropriately addressing photographs so often, he asserts his own exigence for writing a book on the subject; Barthes writes, “the photographs which interest me . . . give me pleasure or emotion” (1980, p. 7) and in a sense, in this moment, assures the reader that subjectivity, pleasure and emotion are integral parts to understanding the world of experience, even in critical writing practice.

In my own visual practice at that time, I began to further understand, as one mentor photography professor always reminded me, “a photograph is finished by the audience.” Unlike argumentative prose, visual art production, arguably, is

meant to be interpreted directly by the viewer, through all their lenses of experience and understanding. For this reason, I found fascination in the way Barthes gave a book's worth of attention to that very experience, making connections to his own scholarly *and* personal identity.

Many years later, as I entered into a new community of practice, I discovered that of the concomitant realms of image and text within the disciplinary discourse of writing studies, much has been said. Examples include our investigations of the materiality of text, language as complement to artistic practices, multimodal composing, and expansion of notions of "textuality" itself (Childers, Hobson & Mullen, 1998; Fleckenstein, 2004; George, 2002; Wysocki, 2001, 2005; Yancey, 2004, 2014). How these considerations of language/meaning relationships are shaped and articulated by the practices and values of each of these disciplines, or "discourse communities," is salient to our understanding of how writing appears, and gets used for process and production (Gee, 1989; Johns, 1997; Harris, 1989; Hyland, 2004; Porter, 1986; Swales, 1990; Wardle, 2010). Scholars like Kostelnick (1989) and Purdy (2014) as well as others have employed the term "design" and investigated intersections and articulations of "design" pedagogy with composition pedagogy and have in particular explored writing process modalities in design disciplines.

Additionally, visual and performing artists themselves have explored linguistic/textual spaces, from the work of Ed Ruscha, to Andy Warhol and Barbara Kruger, and many more. These artists have frequently used texts in visual (and other) ways that speak to intervening, re-directing or subverting language—principles visual rhetoric suggests as being useful within new communicative technologies.

In an image I made toward the end of my undergraduate years (see Figure 2.2), I too became very interested in how I might draw some sort of relationship between image and text. I made several series of images that incorporated text, usually in illustrative ways. Here, I employed an excerpted line from a poem I wrote and an image of a friend peeling an apple. Admittedly, I wasn't very successful (as my peers and instructors frequently let me know). I struggled to create a concept and execute it, though I was certain I knew what I wanted my viewer to see. For example, when I worked to be directly illustrative, the work felt didactic and oversimplified, and when I worked to be more abstract, the audience (my peers and instructors) became confused. Yes, for me, there was something compelling about this mundane/poetic act of apple peeling and the gravity of human hands. Add to that the self-referential (I was trying to be metacognitive I think) choice to include the film strip markings at the bottom and I was pretty sure in the darkroom that I was moving beyond just something beautiful into something with a message. I found that I liked the color: the sepia toning process and gold pen felt like it matched. But in the end, I made visual choices subconsciously and was frequently unable to articulate those choices or make them of value to my viewer. Perhaps it was why I felt eventually that I would be more successful sticking to text.



Perhaps, initially it was also the sense of immediacy of photographic image that lulled me into thinking it was a simple process of meaning making? Years later, as a writer and teacher of writing, I understand that a dedication to process is not merely symbolic. I often share with my students that in my own practice, one piece of short writing can require weeks of writing, and perhaps hundreds of hours of my time by the time it make its way to publication. And it is writing that continues to teach me that I may need to look at a text a hundred more times than I think necessary before its internal rhythms emerge, before connections, meaning, organization and style become focused and clear.



*Figure 2.2. "Peeling the Apple," Arcata, CA (photo by Anicca Cox).*

Luckily for me, as a somewhat failed art student, writing studies became a place I could articulate ideas and execute them a bit more clearly. As discourse community theory suggests, communities of practice are rarely identical in their ways of knowing or communicating. That does not mean they are cleanly distinct from one another either. As I embarked on this study, I was curious to see what bridges might materialize, giving insight into how both domains (visual and performing arts and

writing studies) use writing as a way of “knowing,” whether that knowing be epistemological, phenomenological or otherwise. By examining an adjacent discipline, I wondered, where might writing studies explore and most appropriately engage the sometimes-competing concerns of subjective versus critical/analytical practice via composition?

## Methods

The methodology for this study included, as mentioned, a small sample of participants from a variety of demographics and examined both what they viewed as the value of writing for their particular teaching practice or discipline and also the practicalities of how each of them employed writing in their work. For ease of information, Tables 2.1 and 2.2 list the interview objectives and resulting descriptive markers identified as well as the participant demographics themselves.

**Table 2.1. Interview categories**

<b>Interview Objectives/Descriptive Markers:</b>
Value sets—pedagogical/instructional philosophies
Practices—particular pedagogical techniques that articulated instructional values
Disciplinary exigencies—support or articulation of values and practices in service of professional or disciplinary identity

**Table 2.2. Participants**

<b>Participant Demographics:</b>
Sculpture, ceramics, drawing, installation art, performance art, painting, jazz—history and practice, art history/visual studies, “ecology and art” (field studies).
Institutional affiliations: community college, private institution and four-year research institution.
Age and gender varied. *Most participants were Anglo (reflecting national faculty demographics).

## Findings

The study illuminated several points for further investigation and categorization. Figure 2.3 is a sample of sub-category themes that emerged from the coding process. While points of divergence were investigated to a certain degree, the aim of the interview process was to discover what, if anything, might be shared across instructor and institutional experience in regards to the use and value of writing in

visual and performing arts pedagogy. Table 2.3 represents a close-up examination of what instructors pointed to as relevant for their practice and values.

**Table 2.3. Coding themes**

<b>Sample of Sub-category Themes from Third Cycle Data Coding</b>
“professional identity/professional practices”
“best practices for instruction”
“clarity”
“reflective writing”
“analytical writing”
“novice verse expert concerns”
“differentiated/individuated instructional techniques”
“inquiry guided practices”
“physicality/materiality”
“imitation/lineage/tradition”
“disciplinary changes/disciplinary identity,” et al.

Using the interview objectives for the study (see Table 2.1) and the information from the initial categories above, the data yielded the following broader areas of interest:

- Aspects of “good” writing in visual and performing arts with identifiable values;
- Disciplinary exigencies clearly expressed through various relationships to writing; and
- Everyday instructional praxis as vehicle for both articulations.

Although this project aimed to evaluate the benefits and character of writing instruction in the domain of the visual and performing arts and, secondarily, to evaluate how that might in turn inform writing studies, it became nearly impossible to extract some of the values instructors prioritized regarding writing instruction (clarity, sincerity, reflexivity) from those they held about the practice of art-making, a concept familiar to WAC/WID pedagogy. For example, a self-reflective awareness of the “experience” of viewing or making art translated directly into values associated with writing practice. Ultimately, writing in the visual and performing arts frequently appeared in the data as working in tandem with art-making. However, it is important to note that, unlike my own failed attempts at coupling image and text, this process is not necessarily an illustrative one—writing translating art or vice versa, but rather writing and practice working in relationship to one another in specific ways. What follows are the results of a sampling of an extended data set. Table 2.4 presents that larger, umbrella-style



categorization of interview feedback related to instructor values and aggregated to represent an approximation of shared values.

**Table 2.4. Categories schema from coding**

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<b>Value Sets: categories and sub-categories of interview response from coding:</b>
“What Makes Good Writing?”
Criticality
Clarity
Connection
Writing Relationships: Enculturation and Identity Formation
Process
Professionalizing
Community lineage(s)
Category 3 “Instructional Praxis” (above) was suffused throughout so does not merit a separate category of discussion below.
*Each instructor is referred to by an alias. See below.

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### Clarity, Criticality, Connection

As a first grouping of value sets pulled from coding data, the following elements emerged consistently: “clarity” in writing, or the ability to articulate intent, “criticality,” or the ability to think beyond initial impressions and to look more deeply at a thing over time and respond with language, and “connection,” or an ability to connect personal experiences in art making to a larger disciplinary context. Further, instructors in the sample identified these values with specific language, evincing the key terms themselves. Though they thought the values were a bit nebulous at first, the interview participants came to see them as a central thread around which they are able to measure not only their students’ writing and their grasp of classroom content but also to connect to larger, professional exigencies within the visual and performing arts.

Naturally, some divergences did appear in the articulation of those concerns based on variations in individual pedagogical demands. For example, T. Miller, a professor of jazz studies, acknowledged that writing was valuable for his students to successfully navigate the contemporary world of jazz studies, but he did not necessarily believe writing makes “better players,” as he views the act of playing itself as an intuitive, reflexive, physical set of skills or a “doing” practice instead of a “thinking” one (Cox, 2015). Miller’s comment underscores an important aspect of writing here—writing in a writing class as something other than second-nature, or intuitive. In his mind, writing is a deliberate performance, a composition, as we call it, distinct from one of the intrinsic components of jazz performance as

art—namely that it is a result of intensive training in order to purposefully enter into unrehearsed, free-form, and ad-libbed production.

Yet, another art instructor, F. Stella, a seminal 1970s feminist artist who teaches performance art, drawing and painting, asserted that, “the reading and the writing and the research and thinking, changes their (visual/performance) work more than anything” (Cox, 2015). Regardless of divergences in data, all participants in some way clearly marked a connection between a student’s potential to be successful within an art discipline and their ability to write successfully in service of that art-making practice.

## Process, Professionalizing, Community/Lineage

**Table 2.5. Shared practices**

<b>Identifiable Shared Instructional Practices/Core Principles:</b>
Inquiry guided, “process” approaches via individuated instructional techniques
Document production aimed at “professionalizing” participants in the domain of study
Writing of documents that foster awareness of individual “artist” identities within a “community” or “lineage” of practice

While participants clearly saw writing work for their students as particularly integral to the disciplinary enculturation process (F. Stella, C. Hesse, Y. Wilson, T. Moore, S. Martin; Cox, 2015), interviews also consistently revealed that these instructors privilege and value the ways in which art-making goes beyond the analytical or reflective elements of writing practice into subjective, physical and emotionally based expression modalities. As F. Miller and other instructors suggested, reflexivity through and engagement in an art-making process may support practitioners well beyond the analytical components accessed via writing work. For example, as one instructor related, students need to “understand it in their bodies not just intellectually” (S. Martin; Cox, 2015). Therefore, writing becomes a complement, informant, or tool for an art making process and vice versa. Interviews showed that instructors navigate the distinctiveness of these potentially dichotomous ways of knowing (Wysocki, 2001) and work to foster integrated, balanced relationships between “doing” practices, like art-making, and critical thinking practices, like writing.

General consensus in interview data notwithstanding, some instructors saw more connections and overlap than others: one related, “I’m trying to help them hone their technical skills and their compositional skills at the same time because critical thinking and creativity go hand in hand, and to make them aware that one feeds off the other” (C. Hesse; Cox, 2015). Another instructor remarked, “Our *intention* is that the two [writing and art-making] would seamlessly come together

and be two expressions of the same, but in fact I see that there’s often a major disjunction between the two [for students]” (B. Smiley; Cox, 2015).

Despite such differences in opinion regarding how an interrelationship of artistic modality and criticality is best navigated in the classroom, all participants acknowledged their own efforts to put students through some of those challenges for the purpose of helping them grow, expand and deepen within the disciplinary and classroom community. T. Moore, a professor of art and art history explained, “there’s a different level of engagement that happens through the medium of writing.” He continued by explaining that he sees this level of engagement as critical to understanding “art objects” (Cox, 2015). Further, several participants expressed a valuing of engaging ideas, art objects and art-making from multiple viewpoints and pointed to writing work as instrumental in that process.

As an example of the articulation of these ways of knowing, particular textual documents were discussed at length by each instructor (see full article). Table 2.6 is a brief sampling:

**Table 2.6. Document listing**

Sample Documents/Practices in Visual and Performing Arts Instruction
Artist statements
Research and Reflection Documents
Process Papers
Artist’s Proposals
Visual Culture Papers

## Textual Loci: The Artist Statement

In the course of the interviews, each instructor pointed to specific textual documents that they employ to help students enculturate to some of the values discussed in the previous sections. While instructors ask students to compose various documents unique to their own pedagogy (see Table 2.6), one document in particular appeared in every discussion I had and crossed the boundaries of all artistic disciplines: the artist statement. This document was further deemed unique in that it provides a vehicle across the membrane of public and private spheres in the minds of these instructors and, therefore, for their students. Specifically, it is a document that is both deeply reflective for the practitioner and is a way to articulate artistic practice but also, as a document, it becomes beholden to an audience beyond just student, instructor or peer. They are used in gallery shows and often accompany proposals for funding. Below I offer two brief discussions of the artist statement both as locus of articulation for art-making values and as a document which enculturates and professionalizes the art-maker to their discipline.

## Clarity

Y. Wilson, an instructor of sculpture and ceramics at a mid-sized community college, referred to writing as a “process that allows someone to really *clarify* what they’re seeing and to think about it, to ponder it” (Cox, 2015). For him, this ability is central when it comes to the practice of writing an artist statement, which acts for students as “a reflection of how their own work and writing about their own work” come together to assist an audience, be that a curator or a viewer, to better understand with what they are engaging. Within the artist statement, he explained, he values “simplicity,” “sincerity” and a connection to “emotional experience,” stating that writing about the self is an “inherently narcissistic” process and he must work with his students to clarify their ideas and arrive at a more sincere, readable expression of their own practice. Guiding students to such sincerity/clarity, for him, is a key component of the work he does with students, resulting from what he sees as a need for them to avoid large generalizations about “the world,” “life,” “the universe,” and instead focus on expressing sincere experiences via visual modes and via their writing. This, he argues, enables an audience to feel a more substantial connection to the visual and written work and enables the students to better understand their own motives (Cox, 2015).

## Professionalizing

Again, as the most frequently mentioned written document in the interview sample, the artist statement elicited varying responses from the instructors. Opinions on the value of this written statement, which is included in exhibitions, gallery catalogues, press releases, is used to garner funding for art projects, and is included in CVs and any number of other professional situations for artists, naturally varied from instructor to instructor. One joked “someone should just pass a law that there’s no more artist statements” believing they are difficult for students to accomplish successfully without sounding overly self-important (B. Smiley; Cox, 2015). Conversely, another explained that this document for her has, over time, become a primary tool for both her reflective and professional practice as well as that of her students. She explained, “my artist statement is as much a practice as my visual art, one really feeds off the other” (C. Hesse; Cox, 2015). Regardless of the perceived challenges in writing a successful artist statement—“narcissism,” “ego,” or “stilted” prose, to name a few (Y. Wilson, B. Smiley; Cox, 2015)—the majority of interview participants upheld that they remain a central written document within the world of visual and performing arts, corroborating earlier findings within this study suggesting that writing is imperative to visual and performing arts production and that students who practice writing in their classes will find themselves more deeply connected to their art and more equipped to navigate the professional art world. Students must learn to write this discipline-specific document—one that outlines

for a reader their materials, purpose and philosophy—successfully in order to support their professional identities.

## Teaching the Artist Statement

Approaches to teaching students how to write a successful artist statement naturally varied. Borrowing from his previous work in clinical psychology and psychotherapy, Y. Wilson works through a “sociogram” with students, essentially mapping, through writing, their values, influences and relationship to the work and audience as scaffolding for a successful artist statement (Cox, 2015). Alternatively, S. Martin, an instructor of installation art at a small arts college, asks students to write about their experiences entering into the process of making work to bring to light, via writing, their “instinct and inspiration” in a manner that “integrates the brain and the body” (Cox, 2015). Still another instructor has students sit with their own work, engaging in contemplative visual experience of that work as a means to begin writing about what they are “seeing” and what it means for them and their audience (C. Hesse; Cox, 2015). Engaging in the ongoing, recursive process of viewing, reflecting on and engaging their own art objects as well as those of others supports the earlier conclusion that visual and performing arts is unique in the way it successfully uses writing to integrate concerns of subjectivity and experience into the process of developing analytical abilities.

## Writing an Artist Statement

I don’t have my old artist statement, but I well remember writing it. These instructors are correct: it’s difficult to be self-reflective and analytical about your own creative process and convey that to a reader in a way that makes sense and is sincere. As a writing instructor, I frequently try to remember this process as I ask students to write reflective documents about their own work, process and learning throughout a semester in my courses and to remember how challenging it can be to simultaneously be analytical, reflective and precise. All those years ago, fellow students in my class took varying approaches as well—a young man from Laguna Pueblo wrote a hilarious manifesto-poem about what he loved about life on “the Rez,” though I think he mentioned his art not at all. Digging through an old box recently I found I had a saved copy of his, because I remember it being impressive in its divergence from the form and its honesty about how his identity and experience form his art making, though again, I think he didn’t mention his work once. An older student in my class, a middle-aged housewife, wrote passionately about her work dealing with breast cancer and focused specifically on the body of work at hand—an homage to a friend who died, evincing the importance of personal relationships and the politics of the disease itself in our culture. As for me, I remember that I tried to be serious and poetic at the same time and in some ways like this early self-reflective

image (made long before the term “selfie” entered our lexicon), I tried to see multiple facets of self, exploring the importance of beauty and trying to convince my reader of the meaning underneath it.



*Figure 2.3. “Triple-Exposure, Moonstone Beach,”  
Mckinleyville, CA (photo by Anicca Cox).*

In retrospect, I realize I was trying to convince myself of something and answer the question, “Am I really an artist?” “Is this a community I belong to?” Being an artist seemed then, more like an identity than a practice and that identity was one that intimidated me a bit. It took me a while but what I am, I found out, is a teacher. Where the real magic appeared for me wasn’t just in those first moments when an image comes out of the chemical bath under the darkroom lights, it was in seeing the looks on my students’ faces as their own images emerged, years later in a



community darkroom I started and where I taught classes to high school students. Those first classes were where I felt connected to my purpose for the first time. That first classroom which, ironically, wasn't a writing classroom, led me to my career in writing studies. However, my early attempts at art making, particularly in a darkroom where you make print after print of the same image, refining it, playing with it, becoming intimate with image and light, later supported me in my work as a writer, and as a teacher, reminding me to be compassionate with my students as they struggle with revision work and with the intensive process it takes to write successfully. To value interpretive ways of knowing and doing, to move beyond my notions of objective truth into subjective experience and see the real, rigorous potential in that mode of meaning making came from my training in the creative space of a darkroom.

## Discussion

Several of the original assumptions held about writing instruction in the visual and performing arts were confirmed through the course of this study—the need for effective analysis and an emphasis on reflection in particular were shared values. Also, several illuminating differences with respect to the purpose and articulation of writing practice within visual and performing arts emerged, evidencing what discourse community theory, as well as WAC/WID studies, argues about writing—that it is a situated, community-based or disciplinary-specific practice. The study reestablished that within a given discipline, instructors adopt individuated modes tailored to serve the needs of their community. Ultimately, both points of connection and divergence could offer entryways for collaboration and mutual understanding between the disciplines of writing studies and visual and performing arts.

Two possible sites for closer examination appeared in the data. First, as hypothesized, writing in the domain of visual and performing arts carries the unique function of serving what Barthes refers to as its “referent”—the art object or the process of making meaning which often primarily exists in a non-linguistic format. This evidence appeared again and again as instructors discussed the particular relationship of art making to textual documents employed in their classrooms in tandem to the art-making process. Though art objects/written documents are not necessarily *directly illustrative* of the other (a key concept I reiterate here) they are instead inextricably linked in a relationship that exposes the potential for a complex layering of meaning. In terms of the subject of this study, the artist statement, for example, would add an additional tier to the dense layering of meaning-making since their (the artist's) explanation of how and why they captured the object through art (their process) would inevitably vary from the way(s) in which the viewer anticipates and perceives the relationship between object and image.

The ways that writing and art-making mirror one another enables the disciplines of the visual and performing arts to use writing effectively to *serve* art-making practices, both in terms of using writing analytically and reflectively to refine the process of making art and to communicate to broader, outside audiences. Simultaneously, it pushes artists to access, develop or value the subjective, and physical experience necessary to create that art itself. In fact, interview subjects in this study sometimes pushed back against polarized dichotomies between meaning-making in their medium and the way in which writing work could serve both the analytical and subjective needs of that process by viewing them as integrated components.

Though some may disagree (proponents of therapeutic writing, in some cases Expressivists), this dynamic practice of process and reflection provides some contrast to constraints in writing studies pedagogy which has arguably most broadly worked in a tradition relying on text itself as the primary product of writing. In order to be successful (at least in our current rhetoric), those texts typically must make clear arguments, provide concrete evidence and provide some measure of analytical distance from the object of their investigation. And yet, there continues to be room in writing pedagogy to reconsider how and what we ask students to write that would reflect, in much the way Barthes' shows us, that writing about process can inform writing as product (art). Through asking students to read their own work, make observations and understand the how and why moves that yield the x number of words on a page before them, they start to recognize a pattern or series of behaviors that *produce . . . yes, they begin to see themselves as producers or composers*, much like the artist sees herself. In fact, recent trends in the writing about writing approach suggest a renewed commitment within our discipline to fostering these very same meta-analysis abilities.

Second, the results of this study, though extracted from a disciplinary domain ostensibly disparate from writing studies, might provide space for a re-investigation into the work we do with students in writing studies and connect back to some of our own studies in literacy and critical pedagogy, which value identity formation and subjectivity as features of academic prose styles. This reinforces the potentiality for writing to access emotional or embodied spaces alongside aspects of criticality and analysis. Further, as suggested by the work of visual rhetoric and the work of The New London Group (1996) on "multiliteracies," multimodality may continue to be a site that encourages or investigates these broader notions of textuality and meaning within writing studies. Much as visual and performing arts instructors in the study consider the art object in relationship to an integrated writing process, placing value on subjective, material, or emotionally-based modes of meaning-making alongside critical thinking-writing processes may continue to be an area of re-engagement and development in writing classrooms.

As current scholarship in writing studies suggests, with the rise of electronic



writing mediums where text, image, and both objective and subjective experience converge, we may do well to observe further what studies like these indicate. Specifically, that there is value in learning how other disciplines navigate their communicative aims via discipline-specific relationships to process, individuated instructional techniques, and reflexive practices aimed at producing meaning in multiple formats. These practices allow participants to directly respond to their own perceived disciplinary exigencies, communicate with audiences and among practitioners and craft disciplinary identities for themselves.

Finally, powerfully, these instructors continually noted a perceived secondary position within the academy, pushed back against stereotypes of their practitioners only being capable of being “creative” as opposed to analytical, and rejected the notion of merely being in “service of” other disciplines in larger academic conversations. These instructors consistently argued that they deserve a “place at the table” with STEM disciplines and others.

Given the similarities between the disciplines of writing studies and the visual and performing arts, both in the way we use and value process and in the way that writing instruction is frequently seen as secondary to “content” based courses, the data from this study suggests a place for a seemingly natural, mutually beneficial alliance between the two. Perhaps as Michael Carter (2007) suggests, we could be connected within the academy in a “metagenre,” one that would allow for dynamic partnerships and mutual support.

Questions guiding such an alliance might include the following: how could the two domains of practice work more closely with one another, support each other’s disciplinary exigencies or engage in even more cross-disciplinary connections? How would such an alliance articulate itself in both our professional communities and classrooms via borrowing, sharing or mutual inquiry? Certainly, there have already been collaborations in classrooms between writing studies and visual and performing arts and the conclusion of this study supports the value of continued investigation and collaboration between the two as a means of empowering both the work our students do and the work we do as professionals.

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# Performance Art and Performing Text

J. Michael Rifenburg and Lindsey Allgood

This chapter draws on Lindsey Allgood's May 2014 participatory performance titled *Presence: A Performative Exploration of a Place That Will Soon Not Exist*. By considering the body as the medium, performance artists question where the creative process ends and everyday action begin. Through offering a detailed study of Lindsey's inventive process—including her sketches, notes, images, and first-person narrative—and her culminating delivered performance, we argue for a more expansive understanding of invention and delivery of text that hinges on the body as a central mode of meaning making.

Text: “participial stem of Latin *texĕre* to weave.”

—Etymology of Text, Oxford English Dictionary, n.1

## The Opening Scene: Performance Art and a Lumberyard

*In a hundred-year-old abandoned lumberyard, discarded wood beams and metal strips and poles rest in piles, semi-damp from a recent rain. Earthy smells of dirt and dust waft from scattered patches of overgrown grass. One can imagine these rotting materials' previous lives: a bench that heard secrets and recipes; the local drugstore countertop that felt coins still warm from a jean pocket roll across its surface; a family's well-worn kitchen table, proud of the child's etchings on one of its legs.*

*Off to the corner, in what could once have been a workshop or storage shed, wooden beams barely hang on to the framework, picked at by birds and mice. A few cats pounce about beneath the floorboards.*

*The words “Keep Door Closed” have been painted on the rusty, padlocked metal door. It hasn't been opened for years. Earlier in the day, children knocked on the flimsy door, and giggled as the door vibrated, letting out a playful wobbly echo. Some people held their ears to the door, as if something or someone would speak to them from the other side. Some people peeked through the tiny cracks between the wall's wooden slats. Some just stood, taking in the sights, sounds, and smells, turning circles to soak in the whole space and imagining its story.*

*Dozens of bright pink, blue, and green pieces of paper flutter in the light breeze, stuck to the corrugated door with magnets. A pen dangles from a nail, passed around from person to person. On each paper, these people—community members—have written what they imagine exists or existed behind the door in the past, present, and future.*



Our introductory narrative captures the embodied experience of a May 2014 participatory performance titled *Presence: A Performative Exploration of Active Existence in a Place That Will Soon Not Exist* by Lindsey Allgood, co-author of this chapter and an artist, writer, and current Writing Specialist at the University of California, Irvine, Writing Center. Lindsey's performance was part of *stART Norman* supported by the Norman (Oklahoma) Arts Council. Artists held performances in a hundred-year-old lumberyard slated for demolition. The city granted artists permission to reclaim the space temporarily to cultivate communal, cultural, and creative placemaking before demolition. Installations explored the idea of thresholds, which recall new beginnings and places of exchange. During *stART*, Lindsey offered a participatory performance exploring thresholds. Lindsey gave participants a map leading to locations in the yard. At each location, participants physically engaged with the space through writing and other activities. By engaging with artifacts and immersing themselves in the lumberyards' physical experience, Lindsey and her participants composed a text of their embodied performance. And this text, as our epigraph reminds us, was woven through the sensorial, embodied experience of performance.

Performance art, often called live art, is a time-based art form focusing on the body as medium, specifically the body as a destination and vessel through which, on which, and where art can occur. Performance art is rooted in the early twentieth-century Futurist and Dada movements, and it experienced a radically political reemergence in the 1960s (Goldberg, 2011). Performance artists often explore the liminal spaces between art and life and question the definitions: where does the creative process end and everyday action begin? Artists explore these queries through focusing on ephemerality, technology, and site-specificity via scripted or spontaneous, collaborative, and improvised performances. Performance artists often explore the body's ephemerality and sensorial perception through time-based practice (Banes & Lepecki, 2007; Manco, 2010). For example, in *The Artist is Present* (2010), Abramovic, one of the more highly-regarded contemporary performance artists, sat immobile at a table in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City for thirty-minute intervals, six days a week for a total of 736 hours. She stared into the eyes of whomever sat opposite her. This performance reflects the time-based practice of contemporary performance art and the unscripted, yet loosely guided interaction with participants. This practice's roots stretch back to performance art of the 1960s, particularly when Yoko Ono invited participants to cut away pieces of her clothing in her 1965 performance *Cut Piece*.

Not only does performance art trouble traditional understandings of author and authoring as Gerben (2015) recently argued, but we hold Lindsey's performance reshapes traditional notions of the invention and delivery of text by suggesting the

body as a central mode of meaning during these two processes. By detailing Lindsey's participatory performance, we argue for viewing performance art as a form of embodied text. Using Witte's (1993) definition of a text as an "organized set of symbols or signs" (p. 237) and tracing the etymology of the noun *text* back to the Latin participial stem for "to weave," we argue Lindsey's performance illustrates the centrality of her and her participants' bodies during the invention and delivery of the performance as text. Bodies that move, write, and think for an anticipated or present audience weave themselves into a greater cultural narrative (see also Gerben, 2015; Henry & Baker, 2015; Kurtyka, 2015). The space of and the tools for the performance also facilitate this weaving process. We build on Rowsell's (2013) argument that movement within such context as performance art "requires the body to enact text" (p. 110) by suggesting that during Lindsey's performance her and her participants' bodies were text while they were weaving text.

To create this argument, we offer a collage: current scholarship on the body and writing; Lindsey's invention process—including script-writing drafts, visual images, journal entries, and first-person narrative—and culminating performance; a reflection on how Lindsey's art offers compositionists new conceptions of invention and delivery.

## The Performing Body as Embodied Text

We situate our thinking about Lindsey's performance within composition research devoted to the body's centrality during composing (Arola & Wysocki, 2012; Fleckenstein, 1999; Knoblauch, 2012; Perry, 2012; Rifenburg, 2014; Syverson, 1999). Such work focuses on the fusion of the body and mind during composing, how our breathing and heartbeat impact how and what we write. As Fleckenstein (1999) argues "we write as bodies . . . We *are* our bodies; we are writing bodies" (p. 297). In the wake of Fleckenstein's claim, Perry (2012) asks, "How do we distinguish between the physical and conceptual work of composing?" Perry leaves her audience to ponder this question, strengthens ties between the physical and conceptual.

Activities where the body is a conduit for meaning making, such as performance artworks, strengthens these lines between the conceptual and the physical. Stressing the interconnectedness of the mind and the body, scholars have positioned writing as a method for facilitating and reflecting on bodily activity. For example, when teaching postsecondary ballet, Cooper (2011, 2013) assigns writing prompts as a way for her dancers to reflect on their bodies' movement within the dance studio. Not only does such reflective writing allow for metacognition and self-directed learning as Cooper suggests, but such writing highlights for dancers the interconnectedness of the mind and the body.

Extending Syverson's (1999) argument that "embodiment grounds our conceptual structures" (p. 13), we consider the conceptual structures of performance art, how Lindsey's attention to her body and her participants' bodies facilitate the invention and delivery of text, and what a close-analysis of the embodied actions taking place in a century-old desolate lumberyard in Oklahoma means for refiguring invention and delivery.

## Lindsey's Embodied Performance Art

Lindsey has performed throughout the United States and in the Netherlands. In her work, she explores the liminal spaces between physical, psychological, and emotional experience, particularly in terms of the feminine, and how these experiences help us navigate and shape our lived experiences. She is intrigued by moments of transition: when clean becomes dirty, and when gentle turns aggressive. In considering her audience, she imagines the psychological and emotional landscapes through which her performances will induce the viewer to travel. In her 2014 audience-oriented participatory performance *TouchTasteSmellFeel*, she invited gallery visitors to touch, taste, smell, and feel various objects: charcoal, chocolate, marbles, cinnamon, garlic, and flower petals. She audio-recorded the participants' responses of memories and emotions invoked by the objects, and she invited participants to interpret their experiences through sound with a variety of musical instruments.

Her *stART* performance necessitated a form of invention that required a real-time visceral experience as she visited the location, physically inhabited the space and sketched how her body and others' bodies could move and physically transform a soon-to-be demolished location. Below is Lindsey's narrative on preparing for this performance.

### Embodying Invention

*The initial idea for this interactive performance came from my curiosity about how humans, as sentient and cognizant beings, fuse sensation and cerebral activity to make sense of their worlds, in both immediacy and asynchronous reflection.*

*During the brainstorming process, I spent many hours in the lumberyard. I lay on a rickety bench and sat in the grass; I pulled out old wooden and metal planks from giant piles and stacked them, improvisationally building abstract sculptures. I listened to the gravel and the creaks in the wood beneath my feet as I walked across the barn floor. I got my hands dirty, all while taking notes in a journal and drawing images that came to my mind about how I imagined people interacting with things and spaces in the yard. A few things became important to me during the experience: the variance between being inside a manmade structure and in the open, natural elements; the process of leaving*



*one destination and arriving at another; and the importance of being still and silent for intermittent periods between note-taking sessions. All of these phenomena required an awareness of my muscles, skin, breathing and blinking, as well as the ability to develop a rhythm between listening, looking, writing and drawing. I realized this is what I wanted to invite participants to explore.*

*I chose various locations in the yard that would serve as destinations on the map for people to follow. The destinations consisted of a small nook where a wooden wall met a metal fence at a corner; a set of wooden stairs that led to a rotting, nearly nonexistent second floor; a permanently closed storage shed door; a chair in the grassy yard; a hay bale; and inside the large barn in which stacks of old wood and metal were stored years ago. I chose these destinations based on the personal saliency of my notes on how the spaces felt, smelled, sounded and looked most vivid, enticing, intense and emotionally or psychologically charged. I hoped to give participants the opportunity to engage the body in tandem with thought, memory, and imagination. I wanted participants to simultaneously charge and be charged by the spaces and materials.*

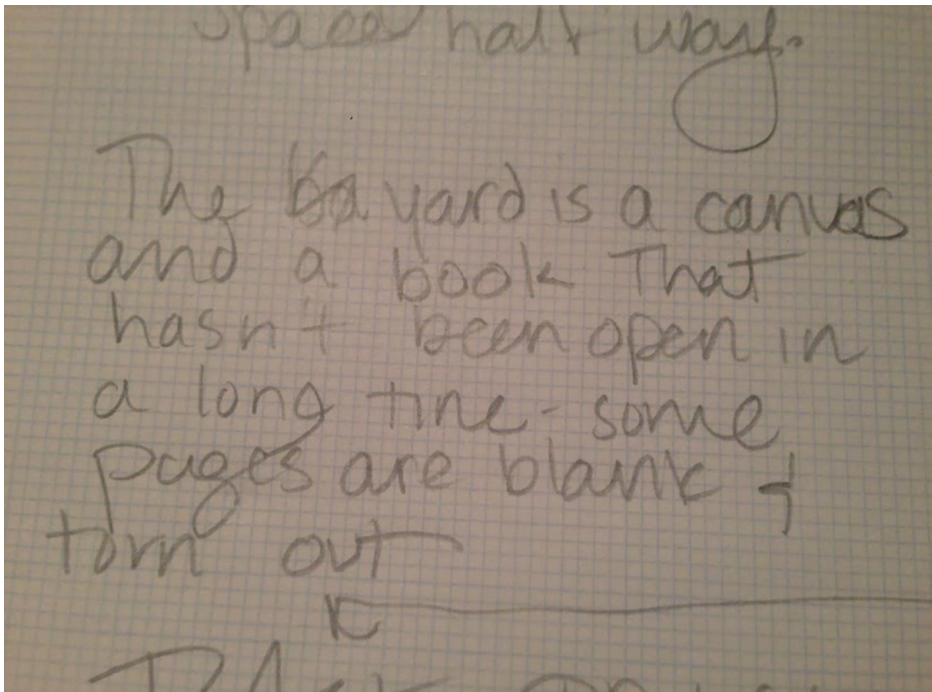


Figure 3.1. Lindsey's notes from her sketchbook (photo by Lindsey Allgood).

*During my creative process, sensations and bodily expressions (and impressions) directly ground my brainstorming. In my studio, I generally talk to myself a lot when I'm inventing performances, along with scribbling stuff down on notepads or posters tacked to the wall, and rearranging materials in the room. Some might say it is a mess, but the*

*various objects haphazardly scattered about are sensibly organized to me. As with most artists (and writers) I know, only through a little chaos can I play well and therefore create well. Only good play leads to authentic discovery. As Nachmanovitch (1990) contends in *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*, uninhibited improvisational play and “spontaneous creation” is liberating and nutritional to any sort of creation, be it for a sculptor, writer, musician, or auto mechanic (p. 5). This type of creating grounds the body in the mind’s primitivity—where I believe the raw, unalloyed roots of idea lie dormant.*

*As in the lumberyard, I often moved around, sat crisscross, lay down with limbs spread, hands on chin, flicking my pen, muttering to myself, drawing lines between objects with my fingers, closing my eyes, taking a break every five minutes to roam around or stare at the sky. For me, these actions induce “spontaneous and intuitive promptings” (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 9), much like a child playing in the back yard is prompted to do a cartwheel or dive into a swing by something an adult can’t quite put a finger on. An innocence and vulnerability exists in this mind-body interplay. It is important for me to be willing to let the spontaneity and intuition choreograph my movement as my thoughts materialize and intersect. I believe whether I place my hands on my belly, forehead, or the ground directly guides how my ideas birth themselves.*

*My invention process demands a sensitivity to the interconnectedness of my body, my thoughts, and the space around me. These elements are not only fused, they rely on each other—embody and are embodied by each other—to compose further sense of the world.*

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Like any writer, Lindsey works from an invention process. This process will eventually give rise to her participatory performance and calls on Lindsey to immerse herself in the physical location where she and others will enact a text. With her sketchbook, pencil, and red marker, Lindsey jotted down ideas. These ideas manifested themselves as complete, even stylistic, sentences (e.g., “I can imagine us standing here with a hundred arms—reaching out to touch and caress every nook and cranny and particle of dirt here) or composed in such a rush that Lindsey didn’t even take the time to erase her pencil marking, instead electing to scribble through them (e.g., “The ~~ba~~ yard is a canvas and a book that hasn’t been open in a long time” [see Figure 3.1]). Her invention process also called on her to map out her performance. Though she is still engaging with inchoate ideas, Lindsey signals the importance of location to her art through spatially orienting her unfolding future performance on a piece of sketch paper. Lindsey needs to do more than pen quick sentences; she also finds herself needing to map out (in this case literally) the activity of her art.

Thinking about Lindsey’s performance as a text invented through the body speaks to conceptions of invention within composition studies in three important ways. For one, Lindsey immersing herself in the physical space in which she and others will deliver a text draws attention to the importance of location during invention. Central to Lindsey’s invention process was her direct interaction with the physical



location in which her art was to be delivered, what Reynolds (2004) calls the “*where of writing*” (p. 176). For Lindsey, this location was spatially and temporally bounded. She could not invent this performance while sitting in, say, a Starbucks in Texas or a library in Kansas. She needed to sit, reflect, and write in the lumberyard in Norman, Oklahoma. And the participatory performance as an embodied text was set to be delivered in a specific location on a specific date. Again, she and her participants could not replicate this performance as text at a different time and place and yield similar results. The location, month, time of year, weather, time of day, participant composition, and many other factors weighed in on the ultimate delivery of this performance. Lindsey’s invention process illustrates the centrality of not only the scene of writing for text construction, but the necessity of inhabiting the scene where the text will be delivered. The location of invention depended on the location of delivery.

Second, a focus on the location of Lindsey’s invention pays credence to theories of invention seeking to understand the larger contextual forces giving rise to text. LeFevre (1987) holds that the “thinking and inventing of any [writer] happens in large part because of the ways each has interacted with others and with society and culture” (p. 139). This argument expands the focus of invention from the individual to the larger ecology in which she invents. While LeFevre directs criticism toward Platonic conceptions of inventions, the emphasis on the individual writer during invention was shared by current-traditional rhetoric (Crowley, 1990; Lauer, 2004) and even the 1960s process movement (Bawarshi, 2003; Lauer, 2004). Though dated, LeFevre’s argument still resonates with current understandings of invention. For example, the *College Composition and Communication* poster page on invention in the June 2012 issue relies on LeFevre when arguing invention is “an activity of a single writer composing in a social context” (p. 715). Bawarshi builds on LeFevre’s push toward an ecological understanding of invention by arguing invention resides in “a larger sphere of agency that includes not only the writer as agent but also the social and rhetorical conditions . . . which participate in this agency and in which the writer and the writing take place” (2003, p. 51). Focusing on Lindsey’s invention process illustrates these “social and rhetorical conditions” suggested by Bawarshi. Such a focus also adds material conditions to Lindsey’s invention ecology to the two conditions offered by Bawarshi. Material objects such as pen, paper and her limbs and eyes, play a large role in Lindsey’s invention.

Yet an analysis of Lindsey’s invention does more than support Bawarshi’s and LeFevre’s projections of invention. Lindsey’s inventive practices illustrate the centrality of her and her audience’s body to the activity of invention and anticipated activity of delivery. During invention, Lindsey called upon her own physical abilities. In the lumberyard, she sat “crisscross,” talked to herself, touched her hands to her chin, and closed her eyes. She also “believe[s] whether my hands are placed on my belly, forehead, or the ground directly guides how my ideas birth themselves.” All these activities call upon a certain bodily action of which some may

be incapable. A bodily disability precluding Lindsey from engaging with any of these physical activities would change her invention process and change the trajectory and ultimate delivery of the performance. Additionally, the activities Lindsey planned for the audience to engage in also necessitated specific physical capabilities. She constructed activities that invited her audience to write, touch, hear, speak, and walk. One activity invited participants to tie or nail something they were willing to part with to an object in the yard. If we read her performance as an unfolding text, then we need to acknowledge how specific understandings of her audience's physical abilities construct her text.

Taken together, Lindsey's invention highlights the centrality of her body and her audience's bodies, how knowledge and future delivery of the performance as text are inextricably linked to the physical capability of the body and to the body in a physical location. Of course, the performance exists in the realization of her sketches, notes, images, and sitting crisscross. Tracing the trajectory of Lindsey's participatory performance art with attention to the body's role within this trajectory focuses attention to the text's delivery. We return, again, to Lindsey's words and images.

## Embodying Delivery

*For the performance, I provided participants a map (Figure 3.2) showing different colored dots that corresponded with signs marking the various destinations in the lumberyard. I also provided a few supplies like writing utensils, paper, string, and scissors they would need to accomplish the physical and writing exercises.*

*As their first task, I asked people to choose something that they were willing to part with, and nail or tie it to something outside. This act invited people to directly embed their personal narratives into the space, initiating a psychological and physical connection between the location and the participant. One woman cut off a hand-woven bracelet she had been wearing for years and buried it in the dirt. Before doing so she told me the story of where it came from: a dear friend made it on a mission trip to South America years ago. She said she was inspired to sacrifice something particularly special to her, not just a napkin from her purse, because of the way the activities pushed her to think about why she was where she was. In other words, being prompted to think meta-cognitively and act on those thoughts was a very emotionally charged experience for her.*

*Participants were free to flow through the yard at their own pace and choose their own pathway, not following any specific order. At the dark blue sign (Figure 3.3) nestled in a corner where a metal fence met a wooden wall, instructions invited people to spend time sitting on a bench paying close attention to what activated their senses. Then they were to write down what they imagined happened and existed there in the past and what could happen there in the future.*

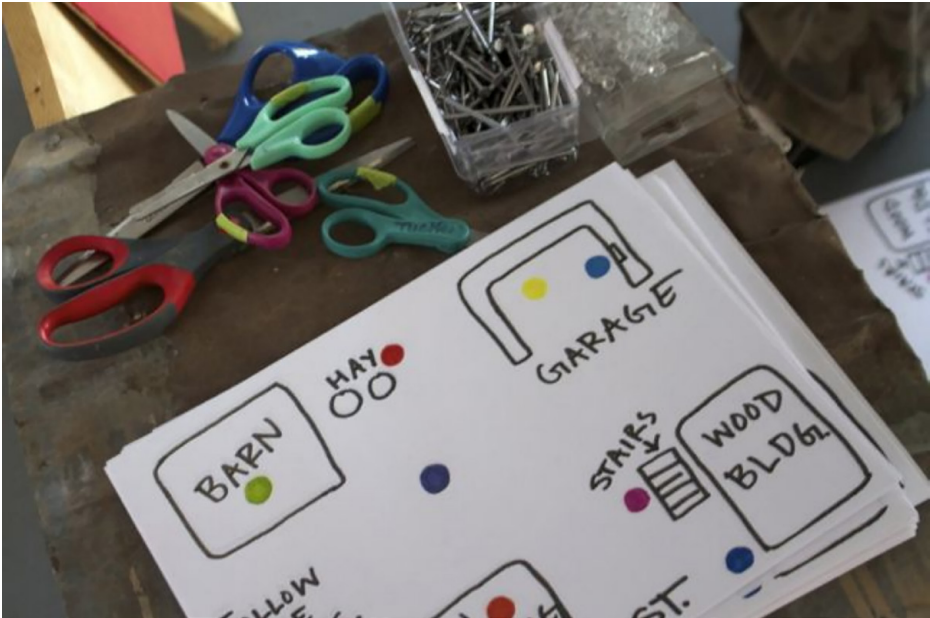


Figure 3.2. Participants used scissors, nails, and a map for Lindsey's participatory performance (photo by Lindsey Allgood).

A pink sign (Figure 3.4) hung from a set of wooden stairs that led to a non-existent second story of the rotting wooden building.

Instructions asked participants to imagine what was and could be upstairs. One woman had to physically restrain her child from running up the rickety stairs. I found this endearing because the child's excitement compelled his body to move into the space he was (re)composing. He wanted to literally be in the story he was articulating to his mother.

Across the yard participants encountered a yellow sign nailed above an old rusty toolbox that I found in the garage. Instructions asked participants to imagine who once owned the box and what was once inside. Several people responded with stories of hard-working grandfathers, denoting how the object and this particular space are inextricably linked to the community's historical heritage: diligent, tired farmers building their lives from scratch after the Land Run of 1889. This is a story with which most Oklahomans feel some connection.

A light blue sign (Figure 3.5) marked the rusty metal door that read "Keep Door Closed," and instructions prompted participants to imagine and write what was on the other side of the door on colored Post-Its, and then hang their thoughts on the door with magnets.



*Figure 3.3. A participant engages with Lindsey's performance (photo by Lindsey Allgood).*





*Figure 3.4. Participants engage with Lindsey's performance (photo by Lindsey Allgood).*



*Figure 3.5. Lindsey invited participants to imagine what was on the other side of the rusted door (photo by Lindsey Allgood).*

*Adults and teenagers responded to this prompt energetically with poetic and wildly imaginative stories involving ghosts and skeletons. I noticed that people spent a significantly longer time standing here than anywhere else. I think the door seemed a frustrating barrier at first, but when someone was willing enough, the act of standing still at a closed door piqued a deeper level of genuine curiosity. I believe they stayed so long at this destination because the possibility of discovery (excitement) overshadowed the prompts' demands (challenge). A door can symbolize—or be—so many things for us.*

*I encountered hay bales in the yard and stuffed a red sign (Figure 3.6) into one that asked participants to pluck a piece of hay and put it somewhere else. This invited the person to interact with and reorganize the natural elements of the space in a reflexively playful way.*

*While I imagined people would tie pieces of hay in the fence or scatter the hay in the grass, most people interacted with the hay in more personally physical ways: a child stuck a piece in her hair; a woman simply blew on it and watched the single blade quiver with the pressure of her breath. She probably smelled the hay. At this location, people felt free to merge their bodies with the physical environment. Many lay on the hay bale. The writing activities seemed to prime participants to play and explore with the hay in more genuine, undistracted ways, not worrying if people walking down Main Street in downtown Norman would think them odd.*

*Finally, a green sign outside of the large barn invited people inside where wood scraps, tools, nails, paint and brushes waited inside for participants to use to build whatever they chose, adding to the barn's existing structure, or making their own sculptures (Figure 3.7).*

*A man built a horse out of wood planks. A wire butterfly perched on a workbench; a triptych made of old doors and paint became a makeshift wall that honored the "everyman" employee of the lumber supply company.*

*As participants responded, their written words, sculptures and gestures reimagined and (re)composed the forgotten narratives of a rusty, neglected place. Simultaneously, participants' willingness to engage with the locations and objects in playful, peculiar ways incited an evolved form of knowing and composing that aligns the rhythms of mind, body and material. The spaces, objects and participants essentially activated—and embodied—each other.*

*As the event unfolded, I wandered through the yard, sorting out small confusions and encouraging hesitant participants to approach the prompts from new perspectives. I acted as a guide and tutor. "What if we tried . . .? What if we wrote . . ." To this, most seemed intrigued, curious, and sometimes a little perturbed at being asked to contribute to "the art." I asked a lot from participants; they came to an art exhibition probably expecting a traditional gallery setting with art on the walls, and to play the role of casual observer. I challenged people to experience the space in a new way, to contribute to its essence and purpose, and to construct hypothetical and imagined meaning for the space's existence. The participants' active embodiment of the space demanded them to intermittently become embodied by the very fact that the yard is susceptible to human touch and thought. While we can mentally "step" into a still life painting, we can physically become elements of the art work when the canvas is a playground, or in this case, a lumberyard.*





*Figure 3.6. Participants engage with Lindsey's performance  
(photo courtesy of Samba Sanchez).*



*Figure 3.7. While Lindsey squats and helps a young participant, other participants engage with Lindsey's performance (photo courtesy of Samba Sanchez).*

As Lindsey notes, “participants came to an art exhibition probably expecting a traditional gallery . . . and to play the role of the casual observer.” Such a role suggests common, ancient western understandings of delivery (*pronuntiatio*), which, as the Latin word suggests, emphasizes “modulations of the voice” and “proper stance and posture of the body” during oral delivery (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 22). The emphasis on delivery in ancient western schools of rhetoric was on the rhetor, not the audience. The rhetor trained in Aristotelian artistic proofs to generate an audience’s response. The focus on oral delivery and positioning the voice and body during delivery continued into the elocution movement, specifically through the work of Thomas Sheridan and Gilbert Austin in the eighteenth century and Hallie Quinn Brown at the turn of the nineteenth century. Again, the emphasis was on how the rhetor could facilitate a particular desired response in the audience through vocal cadence, hand gestures, and other bodily actions. Lindsey’s performance inverted traditional western understandings of delivery as being rhetor-focused by inviting the audience to collaboratively construct the maturing and unscripted text of her performance. Analyzing how Lindsey engaged the audience in the delivery of this unscripted performance and how the audience’s participation opened avenues Lindsey failed to consider during invention, sketches a richer picture of delivery within composition studies.

With the introduction of various digital platforms and the move from strictly print document design, scholars within composition studies re-theorized delivery



through case studies of how writing operates within specific communities of practice (Ridolfo, 2004; Rude, 2004; Trimbur, 2000). Building on this work, I suggest Lindsey's performance offers a case of how rhetor and audience jointly share the task of delivery. Instead of considering how to deploy the artistic proofs to persuade an audience or espousing a linear view of delivery as "getting [writing] delivered to where it needs to go" (Trimbur, 2000, p. 189), Lindsey's performance illustrates how audience and rhetor share the rhetorical task of delivery by collapsing the delineation between rhetor and audience: participants are invited to help give rise to the performance as text through nailing or tying a personal item to something outside; to imagine in writing where a set of stairs once led and where the stairs could lead; to rearrange an old hay bale. While Lindsey spent considerable time inventing the performance as a set of loose guidelines and preparing the space for the audience, once the performance began, it was hard to identify the receiver and deliverer of the performance as text. In the case of Lindsey's performance, rhetor and audience depended on each other to manifest delivery.

Through its participatory and unscripted roots, collaborative performance art flattens audience and rhetor into a singular performer. Such flattening can be maddening for a rhetor valuing authorial intent. Yet Lindsey's goal as a performer is not to dictate how action will unfold; instead, she seeks to create a space in which action can unfold. Lindsey provides the opportunity for performance as text to be delivered. She wants the performance as text to be delivered, an independent clause I wrote with an intentionally passive voice because a clear subject is unneeded. Lindsey is not dedicated to who delivers the performance and how—just that it is. Returning to Trimbur's (2000) understanding of delivery as "getting [writing] delivered to where it needs to go" (p. 189), Lindsey creates space for this "need to go" and does not lead the going. A focus on delivery with an emphasis on the audience's role in delivering text should be of particular importance to composition scholars in the wake of a proliferation of digital composing platforms and the push toward studying a text's circulation, a step many scholars project as the one after delivery.

In her *Computers and Composition* article "Iconographic Tracking: A Digital Research Method for Visual Rhetorics and Circulation Studies" (2013) and follow-up and award-winning book *Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetoric* (2015), Gries reports data from her five-year case study on the digital circulation of the iconic image Obama Hope, designed by Shepard Fairey and used in Barack Obama's successful 2008 presidential campaign. For Gries (2013), circulation studies examine how discourse is "produced and distributed" (p. 333) and how "once delivered, [discourse] circulates, transforms, and affects change through its material encounters" (p. 333). Often theorists conceptualize delivery as the final canon. However, Gries and others like Ridolfo (2015) are invested in following the text after delivery and are thus "pushing . . . to trace and follow things' dynamic movement" (Gries, 2015, p. 19). Circulation, for Gries

and others, is at the heart of understanding how a text operates within the public sphere. Yet just as performance art flattens rhetor and audience into a single authorial agent, I suggest an analysis of how Lindsey's performance unfolding through participatory interaction shows how delivery and circulation are flattened into a single rhetorical phenomenon.

According to Gries (2013), the text's distribution is central to circulation. For performance art as represented in Lindsey's performance, text is delivered through distribution. The delivery *is* the circulation. Often delivery is seen as the explicit handing-over of text from the rhetor to the audience, and circulation is the "spatio-temporal flows" (Gries, 2013, p. 335) through which a text moves, the action of the audience passing the text along. However, during the *stART* performance, through blurring the distinction between rhetor and audience, Lindsey allowed for an expansive understanding of delivery to include evolving circulation.

Finally, the audience and Lindsey collaboratively authored text through engaging and improvising with material objects. In *stART*, through emphasizing what Micciche (2014) calls "writing's 'withness'" (p. 495) (i.e., stressing the need to compose text with material objects), Lindsey did not deliver a text to an audience who then turned around and circulated it linearly. Lindsey and her audience collaboratively gave rise to a text through engaging with everyday material objects. When new participants entered the "textual site" (Micciche, 2014, p. 498) of the lumberyard and followed Lindsey's written and oral directions, another text arose, then another. The text of this performance—the myriad moments of giving rise to language through embodying an organized set of symbols—was delivered through the body and with the body's interaction with material objects. Through watching and hearing participants struggle and make sense of the participatory performance, other participants found a foothold for engaging with the objects Lindsey provided and the objects that were already a part of the lumberyard.

Taken together, our analysis of Lindsey's May 2014 participatory performance reveals five points regarding invention and delivery:

- Invention is tied to physical location where the text will be delivered;
- Invention is constrained by the rhetor's and audience's physical capabilities;
- Delivery flattens the distinction between the rhetor and the audience;
- Delivery encompasses circulation; and
- Delivery is facilitated through a pairing of the body with material objects.

## Bowing Out

Performance artists, like all artists, offer their work as a bit of talk in a longer and ongoing conversation. We take up this admirable gesture at the close and instead

of offering a confined and completed conclusion, we offer an open-ending, one asking for, maybe imploring, further conversation so that this work, our field's collective work, can continue. We concluded our final section with five bullet points as summations of our argument. We offered all five in the spirit of inviting future conversation, thought, and writing on theories of invention and delivery. As we end our performance, we find ourselves especially wrestling with the fifth one: Delivery is facilitated through a pairing of the body with material objects.

In "Around 1986: The Externalization of Cognition and the Emergence of Postprocess Invention," Lotier (2016) asserts inventional researchers began sketching an externalist philosophy of the mind at odds with the long-dominate Cartesian ontological and epistemological foundation of I think therefore I am, which privileged an internal philosophy of the mind. Lotier moves his argument in an insightful and surprising direction when he suggests such an externalist viewpoint paved the way for the postprocess era. Yet for our purposes, we are drawn to how Lotier links externalism, seen in ecological and posthuman theories, with invention. After walking through the work of ecological and posthuman theories and describing their indirect but salient contributions to invention, Lotier writes "cognition [is] a necessary plural act . . . accomplished by an indefinite number of human and non-human actors that have become localized and functional in collaborative effort" (p. 373). Lotier's persuasive perspective on externalist invention calls out to us at the close. We wonder how invention for Lindsey is a messy assemblage of what Lotier calls "human and nonhuman actors." While Lotier keeps the focus on invention, we also see space for extending this discussion into externalist delivery. We wonder: if a messy assemblage of people and things give rise to the performance, don't these people and things *do* the performance? On posters and websites, Lindsey Allgood is credited with the entirety of the May 2014 performance *Presence*. But that isn't the whole story. As the images and journal entries and Lindsey's own narrative attest, many objects—some animate, some not—facilitated the invention and ultimate delivery of this performance. Our focus in these pages was on the body and not external material objects. But we can't ignore the work of the hay bale, the rusty nail, the creaky stairs leading to . . . who knows where? Our time is up, the actors have bowed, the houselights are on, the ushers are escorting you out. But it is good. It is time for another performance, another conversation about how the people *and* things co-construct thoughts and action.

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# Collaboration as Conversation: Performing Writing and Speaking Across Disciplines

Chris Gerben

Collaboration provides an ideal framework through which to interrogate the ways that writing and performing intersect and overlap. By highlighting the roles that shared authority and prefaced products play in defining collaboration, writing scholars are better able to articulate the ways in which performance-based curricula may offer outcomes relevant to pre-professional interests. Using a case study of a performance-based course from 2001, this chapter explores the definitions of collaboration and authoring in light of increasing demands for measurable academic outcomes.

Writing is based in oral communication. Plato favored speaking over writing. Ong saw writing as transforming speaking. Writing is dialogic. Writing is social. Truisms related to the connections between writing and orality abound. And yet, despite the long histories alluded to in these oft-repeated ideas, those of us who primarily study writing seldom dig beneath the surface of the most basic truism: that writing and speaking are related, if not intertwined. This topsoil of understanding has been often turned over, but seldom do we dig deep into the sediments underneath. Doing so raises more questions than answers: Where is the line drawn between writing and speaking—for instance—in acts of brainstorming, invention, workshopping, or presentation? Does any such line exist? And if it does, where does it fall in demarcating the territories of speech and performance? Is writing “performed” in the same way that speech is? Although related, are writing and speaking (or performing) equally valued in our institutions?

What these questions lack in novelty they more than make up for in probing the depths of what we are hoping to teach (and learn) in writing courses that increasingly comingle with high stakes testing, explicitly assessable outcomes, and writing across the curriculum/disciplines (WAC/WID) scenarios. Beyond oral communication courses (which often feature assignments taking the form of persuasive speeches, debates, or TED-style talks), writing and speaking most visibly connect in our performance-based courses (typically taught in theater, and to a lesser degree, creative writing and literature courses.) There, orality approaches performance

through myriad more unstable terms and approaches: performance writing; writing for performance; performing writing; but seldom just writing, performed.

Scholarly works addressing these nuances seem to fight the temptation to conflate or completely contrast the related activities of writing, speaking, and performing. For instance, in one example, *Writing for Performance*, the authors argue, “Writing and performance are too often contrasted as different and at times contradictory practices: performance is ‘embodied,’ while writing is ‘a record’ of the ‘event,’ especially within academic contexts.” They go on to say, “If performance-making is a practice of inscription, writing is equally a physical practice. It is a making practice, a creative practice, a critical practice” (Harris & Holman-Jones, 2016, p. 1). Such an argument is hardly new. In 1999, Ric Allsopp referenced burgeoning digital media in proclaiming: “the conventionalized (and therefore often unquestioned) relations between writing and performance are proving increasingly inadequate as interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary arts practices emerge in response to rapidly shifting [digital] cultures” (p. 76). To say that these relations have since grown more complicated is the definition of understatement.

However, such parsing seems merely academic until viewed through two very pragmatic lenses that many instructors face in contemporary times: the need to address transfer in K-20 education, and increased scrutiny of assessment and outcomes in pedagogy. The former is increasingly viewed in light of high stakes testing that takes form as early as middle school (if not sooner). In such cases, authors like Cathy Smilan (2016) note the possible overlap of desired transferable skills and strategies taught in art-based courses; “At this time in intellectual and critical development [i.e., middle school], students are honing the creative dispositions of keen observation, purposeful investigation, data collection, analysis skills, collaborative interaction techniques and unique interpretations. [These] very skills and techniques . . . are foundational to studio inquiry” (p. 167). Smilan elaborates by supporting and arguing for the inclusion of arts-related inquiry as a way to build transferable twenty-first century skills (e.g., visual literacy, communication) that are taught and sought in other more traditional coursework.

Likewise, the connected concern of assessment is reflected on in experimental theater courses, such as in Henry & Baker’s observation: “Tempering the current over-emphasis on ‘outcomes’ with a more capacious understanding of teaching and learning that uses students’ written performances not as an index of competence but rather as a means to glean latent potential and to configure re-behaving to boost iterative performances aimed at learning” (2015), and in more traditional introductory courses based in theater. One such example from Baruch College is described as “offer[ing] an ideal forum in which to explore the means and methods of effective oral and written communication” (Hughes et al., 2006, p. 85). The introduction to theater course described here not only fulfills a performance and communication outcome, but also does duty as a WAC fulfillment, allowing



instructors and administrators to assess multiple skills sought across disciplinary lines: writing skills, speaking skills, and collaboration, among others.

These brief examples demonstrate not just our field's interest in the relationship between writing and performance (literacy and orality), but the interests of many fields, including those of our colleagues in theater, communication, general education, and WAC/WID. The common thread through all of these interests is a recognition not just that writing and speaking are related, but that through their relationship they open up new possibilities of addressing and achieving desirable outcomes. Throughout the vast literature on writing and performance we continually see mention of one such desired outcome: the importance of collaboration, not just because writing/speaking is dialogic, but because performance is collaborative at every turn—performer and audience, writer and editor, writer and interpreter, actors and actors.

In an age of high stakes testing and concrete outcome-obsessed culture, these collaborations present an opening for a very real payoff of skills desired across disciplines. That so many institutions are awakening to this fact is both refreshing and overdue. The tricky part, however, is communicating to these institutions (and to our policy makers, students, and each other) that this payoff often comes only via muddy and convoluted paths where issues of expectation, assessment, and role-playing are anything but clear. This is one reason why the case study—although highly contextualized—remains one of our best tools for analyzing the nuances of connections between writing and speaking, and desired outcomes like collaboration that are valued across many disciplines. One such case presented itself to me in 2001, and some 17+ years later I'm still unraveling the intertwined lessons.

## Collaboration as Conversation

Jim Cogswell, painter and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Art and Design at the University of Michigan, feeds on collaboration. "When I reach outside of [visual art] I feel as though I'm bringing something back inside of that world, and it's very nurturing even if I don't understand it completely. It's a different kind of sustenance" (personal interview, March 1, 2015). For Cogswell, this sustenance gained a public face in 1997 when he designed the sets for a performance of a dancer/choreographer friend, Peter Sparling, with the help of a biostatistician and a space physics researcher. "The collaboration itself became a conversation," he recalls of his work with biostatistician Fred Brookstein. "And it may not be an entirely verbal conversation. He responds to something I do. I respond to something he does. And, of course we use language to mediate this exchange, but it is an exchange offered through what I am best at and what he is best at" (J. Cogswell, personal interview, March 1, 2015).

The result of this particular exchange (in truth a collaboration with over twelve scholars, designers, dancers, and technicians) was “The Seven Enigmas,” a multimedia dance production (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ou4vIsucbX-swatches?v=ou4vIsucbXs>). A review of the finished product noted how the combination of “modern dance, a sculpture installation, footage from the Hubble Space Telescope and a computerized video projection” helped produce a successful “result [that] is a synergistic art experience that transcends the assumption that modern dance is hard, heavy and too complicated to understand” (“Finding the edge”). Judging by this review, instead of complicating the essence of the performance, the interdisciplinarity of the production helped make the piece more accessible and, perhaps, successful.

The problem and beauty with such collaborations is that they are both brief and intensely intimate. The aforementioned production took two years to prepare, a month to mount, and days to run, but when it was over it was gone, and only the four main collaborators were left with the intimate knowledge of the exchange. By extending this case to pedagogical contexts, it raises important questions for instructors interested in similar interdisciplinary work: Can such partnerships and collaborative processes be codified into coursework? If so, how can one bundle the successes and failures, and organic and forced interactions, into fifteen weeks of classes? In short, can we facilitate an ethereal creative process that both honors the real work that composers (including writers, artists, musicians, among others) do while also standing up to the rigors demanded in academia?

For Cogswell, the answers to these questions came in an interdisciplinary course he co-created in 1998, and ran only once more in 2001. The course, *Turning Points: Collaborations in the Arts*, taught thirty students—self-designated as ten writers, ten artists, and ten musicians—and asked them to form ten teams of three to perform three different collaborative projects in changing personnel configurations over the 15-week semester. The simple, direct prompt for each grouping was the same each time: *Create*. What Cogswell found in teaching the course both reified beliefs he’d always had about collaboration as well as confirmed the habits that he’d nurtured across his professional career.

## Text, Music, and the Visual Arts

*Turning Points* wasn’t just the result of Jim Cogswell’s “habit” of seeking out collaborations and interdisciplinary partnerships. The major catalyst for the course came from the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA), which in the winter of 1998 was set to host an exhibit featuring Claude Monet, titled *Monet at Vétheuil: The Turning Point*. Cogswell’s course was eventually named after this particular showing. The exhibit looked at the impressionist’s work at a time in his career when

he was in conversation with other artists, including Claude Debussy and Stephane Mallarme. And, because it was Monet, the UMMA expected, and got, big crowds. Cogswell recalls: “they knew it was going to be a blockbuster and they wanted to do something special. They said, ‘there ought to be an interdisciplinary arts course on the occasion to celebrate this artist who is also in conversation.’ All they did was start the conversation” (personal interview, March 1, 2015).

The subsequent conversation involved Cogswell (a painter), Richard Tillinghast (a poet), and Bright Sheng (a composer). Together, they brainstormed the interdisciplinary, collaborative course that would later become 2001’s *Turning Points*, team-taught with musician Eric Santos and technical advisor Tom Bray (who Cogswell emphasized was the key to success in getting the course off the ground in 1998.) The course itself was run much like Smilan’s idea of a studio course in art studies, or a workshop in writing studies. Students and instructors shared group discussions before breaking off into smaller brainstorming and revising circles. Once there, each team of three was given between \$50–\$100 for supplies, a scheduled meeting with Bray to go over technical requirements for the performance, and three to four weeks to design, script, and produce a performance that may never be produced (or seen) again after the trial run. This process, repeated three times with three different teams throughout the semester, constituted the main intellectual engagement for the makers of the course.

However, the course wasn’t just performance and critique. In addition to instructor and student regular show-and-tells (thus giving everyone in the course an opportunity to display their personally-authored pieces), the semester was filled with field trips to different departments and studio spaces on campus, observations of live rehearsals from local productions, lectures by visiting artists and composers, viewings of digital work by performers, and visits from local poets and artists who work in collaboration with one another. The semester was populated with makers who would come and go each week. Students were encouraged to take what they could from each visit. There were no papers, reports, or even journals required or collected; the influence, it was hoped, would be reflected in the performance pieces.

Cogswell and his co-instructors ultimately assessed students based on what he calls “engagement,” both throughout the course in things like attendance and discussion, and in personal growth exhibited in how far students pushed themselves out of their pre-determined identities, or roles (e.g., writer, musician, artist.) But this engagement was also concrete in that students ultimately self-assessed what they considered the “best” work that represented the collective intellectual journeys in the class. Alongside instructors, students voted on a handful of performances from the semester that would be showcased for a final, public performance at the end of the course. Cogswell says, “The final showcase became a moment when the teams had to self-evaluate what was most valuable about what they’d done. Without that self-evaluation, process can just lead to more process. There has to be some

kind of moment of truth” (personal interview, March 1, 2015). So even though Cogswell and his team explicitly encouraged the abstract valuing of creative and collaborative processes, the course did reward students with a final “product” that was publicly celebrated. The product (or final showcase), however, was completely divorced from grades in the course, and was meant to be ephemeral, surviving only for the one performance and then never (re)produced again.

These products were displayed during a 2001 public performance across multiple sites on campus. Of the more than 30 pieces originally performed in the course, twelve were decided upon to be produced again for an audience beyond the class. Many of the performances have since been archived as *YouTube* videos (e.g., Figures 4.1 and 4.2).



*Figure 4.1. Screenshot of Turning Points video performances (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGjkU-S4hJU>; courtesy of James Cogswell).*

But to call these videos “products” in the same way that a published piece from a writing course is a product is not quite accurate. Not only do contemporary viewings of these videos decontextualize the pieces from the overall experience of the final performance and course, they also artificially foreground the product over the process of making the pieces. As a result, although the digital longevity of the videos is one piece to understanding the creation of performances in the course, taking part in the public performance was the immediate reward, or recognition, that students in the course sought more than any long-lasting legacy.



Figure 4.2. Screenshot of Turning Points video performances (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGjkU-S4hJU>; courtesy of James Cogswell).

## Author in the Arts

For many students and novice scholars, *authoring* is synonymous with individual writing, composing, and in some cases, publishing. It can be a vaguely helpful concept when used in these ways, perhaps connoting *writing-plus*, as in writing with reward, or in receiving recognition; supporting phrases like “she’s not just a writer, she’s an author” and “I’ve just authored a new piece.” Because such use implies reward for individual work, such usage very quickly becomes catalyst for conjuring up long-held romantic views about the lone genius, solitary writer, or even Michel Foucault’s “author-function” (1969) which states that our belief in the social situation surrounding an author is just as important as the words she puts on the page. Authoring as *writing-plus* positions the writing/composing process as the less glamorous means to the product as the rewarding/public end. Or, “what the historian of authorship Martha Woodmansee refers to as the ‘contemporary usage’ of the word ‘author,’ a usage which denotes ‘an individual who is solely responsible—and thus exclusively deserving of credit—for the production of a unique, original work’” (as quoted in Bennett, 2005, p. 7).

In other words, even though writing, composing, and publishing are processes, traditional conceptualizations of authoring prioritizes an end-goal of recognition and status. This baked-in *ethos* in authoring is historically congruent with the term itself, as Andrew Bennett reminds us:

The Oxford English Dictionary records that the word “author” comes from the Latin verb *augere*, “to make to grow, originate, promote, increase,” which developed into the words *auctor* and *auctoritas* in the medieval period, with their sense of authority, their sense of the *auctor* as one of the ancient writers who could be called upon to guarantee an argument’s validity . . . at the end of the fourteenth century, as *auctor*, *auctour*, and later *aucthour* and *author*. Furthermore, it identifies the author with “authori-ty,” as a person “on whose authority a statement is made; an authority, an informant” (sb.4), and as someone who has “authority over others; a director, ruler, commander” (sb.5). (2005, p. 6)

Here, a sense of authority can be seen as a kind of reward or recognition in the same way that money, fame, or grades can be, too.

Those of us in writing studies know, however, that one cannot necessarily teach authority. It’s not a skill, *per se*. Writing courses teach ways to build and/or leverage authority, but they cannot necessarily instill it in their students much less list it as a probable curricular (or assessable) outcome. Authority must be earned through experience, evidence, or building of good will through the writing and composing processes. So, if we take this historical view of becoming an author as coming to possess authority, it raises some important questions for instructors. First, is this the same as saying that becoming an author is something that can be gained only *after* the writing process? More to the point, if the term *author* is historically aligned with authority, and contemporarily equated to attribution or reward, what do we gain by using it as a lens through which to view collaborative studies and/or WAC/WID work?

As a way of answering, Cogswell repeatedly used the word “makers” during our interview to refer to the writers, artists, and musicians who share the same verb to do what they do when they make: *compose*. Though tedious, this subtle parsing of similar words—creating, making, composing, writing, and authoring—is at the heart of collaborative studies, especially those that reach out across disciplinary and multimodal lines.

Our modern understanding of authoring, for better or worse, cuts to the bone of the messy business involved in finding and facilitating ideas, especially when those ideas are debated and shared by multiple parties. Making something involves finding and choosing source materials, contributing to them in some way



(including arranging and delivering them), and being rewarded for their (re)distribution as a created product. Applying the term authoring to this process foregrounds the “who” and “what” of the process, but may leave intact the integrity of the rhetorical creation (the “how”), allowing us to more readily focus on the making (or, in our common parlance, the process) so important in interdisciplinary work. However, the verb “making” may not carry the same intellectual gravitas that the term authoring does for many of our academic colleagues, especially when authoring as *writing-plus* is so engrained in institutional practices like tenure and promotion, awarding of grants, or grading.

As a concept, authoring is a standard (or status) shared across disciplines (e.g., *auteur* studies in filmmaking) that can be recognized but not exclusively owned. Unlike *writing*, which is often seen today as a skill or a service discipline housed in the humanities; and unlike *composing* which is technical, or *creating* which is magical; *authoring* is a respected (if not loosely defined) interdisciplinary concept. Authoring as concept, though, largely remains mired in traditional connotations of individuality both in terms of agency and recognition. As a result, revisiting *authoring* as a concept of collaborative “making” across disciplines provides us with an ideal frame through which we can better understand how writing studies can inform and be informed by other disciplines that compose in their own unique ways. Cogswell’s course encouraged students and instructors alike to create/make/compose without the expected end-goal of becoming an author (i.e., in gaining reward, recognition, or authority.) Instead, every aspect of the course privileged the making process by encouraging makers to embrace their inexperience and to simply not worry about the end product. As a result, the course asked students to eschew most hope for gaining recognition or authority, and instead embrace a collaboration process that could only be successful by denying the traditional conceptualizations of authoring.

## Composing and Collaborating

Writing encompasses all of the process, product, interpersonal, meta-affective, meta-cognitive, meta-reflective (and however many other) actions that an agent (or student) takes when she puts pen to paper or finger to keyboard. Chris Anson (2013), among many others, has chronicled how the “process movement” in our field rolls invention, writing, and revision into one cohesive package. And though the field of composition/rhetoric is only recently reawakening to its historical roots in orality (e.g., Elbow, 2012; Selfe, 2009), we should be mindful of the role that speaking, too, plays in what we refer to as both writing and/or composing writ large.

The study of speech, it has been argued, gets us close to understanding the concept of an author not just as a writer communicating through language, but as a construct denoting the *writing-plus* privilege discussed earlier. The difference, historically, has been that writing becomes a physical artifact that persists long after the communicative act, whereas speech is ephemeral. Channeling Roland Barthes, Andrew Bennett reminds us:

One of the fundamental differences between speech and writing is that, unlike speech, writing remains, that it lasts after the person that writes has departed . . . In other words, unlike acts of speech, acts of writing can be read after the absence, including the radical absence that constitutes death, of its author. (2005, p. 10)

This staying power of writing could be argued to provide it with more historical authority than speech. Speech is interlinked to our understanding of writing, of course, but speech (with the exception of modern recording techniques in digital video, podcasts, among others) is meant to be transient and unmoored. We can look at it as a catalyst for more speech (and more writing), but at its core as something that is contextualized only in the moment.

A large exception to this blanket characterization is performance, where speech is scripted and delivered in relatively fixed ways. Literature and drama studies frame such performance through the media of monologues, debates, and plays. Of course, such performances are widely used for entertainment and cultural commentary. In pedagogical contexts, however, Michael Carter describes performance as:

a learning situation in which teachers provide opportunities for their students to develop the enduring knowledge necessary for creating the artifacts that are the central focus of students' intended careers . . . these learning situations are opportunities for students to engage in ways of doing that may not lend themselves to explicit description and thus are marked indirectly by qualities of the doer to be represented in the artifact. (2007, p. 402)

Here, Carter advances our understanding of performance beyond scripting, acting, and media production, and instead into the creation of "artifacts" that may not be recognized as finished products in the traditional academic sense of outcomes. On the contrary, he positions performance as the expression of the learning process, an embodiment of the intellectual ephemeral.

This embodiment may take on the building of an intellectual *ethos*, or identity. Authorship scholars Janis Haswell and Richard Haswell point to this building in what they call discursive performance, defined as "construct[ing] an identity that will survive within a group or a community" (2010, pp. 5-6). They align such performances



closely with composition/rhetoric's current views of genre theory, noting "a person shapes or manipulates stock language into an identity, a performance that displays or impersonates characteristics already scripted by a particular group" (2010, p. 6). For Haswell and Haswell, such performance emerges in the form of outcomes (or products) in composition studies, where composing is how a student accomplishes such an act as "a writer." The authors disown this conceptualization of writing as product over process. Instead, they argue that an ideal composing outcome should instead focus on process, and take the name of something else to represent this shift to the building of an identity or a collective group of ideas. Eschewing centuries of etymology, they appropriate this act of building by calling it authoring, where:

teaching vests authority in authoring, [and] students will be recognized more by their promise than their performance, will be encouraged to develop personal distinction rather than group affiliations, and will be affirmed in their inner dignity rather than an "identity" assigned by the culture at large. (2010, p. 8)

In other words, Haswell and Haswell use their appropriated concept of authoring as a way to short circuit what they see as superficial performing in academic (and writing) life, where the staying power of the artifact (or scripted, staged, and enshrined performance) is more important than the act of making; the performance more important than the rehearsal.

For them, applying the terms discursive performance and "authoring" to writing studies allows instructors to focus on authentic processes of creating that aren't always readily apparent when we position students as writers in a world where "authoring" inherently invokes individual recognition in fixed forms. In their appropriation of the word authoring via a language of performance and identity, Haswell and Haswell note that the authority an author inhabits comes implicitly from within, and the process of bringing that authority forth is the action with which we should be most concerned. In other words, authoring does not precede authority; it is the very act of unearthing it and sharing it with others.

This concept of collaborative making-as-authoring allows us to interrogate the implications of the course *Turning Points* through a variety of ways. First, writing and speaking are intertwined, where the "writing" component of any piece may be a script that results in an actual theatrical performance. The course, in admitting students who self-designated as writers, musicians, or artists (and pre-assigned students into identifiable roles) also provided identities that students were free to perform their way out of. For example, as a student in the course, I knew going in that I was a writer who would be teamed with musicians and artists. The twist—what I believe comes closest to Haswell and Haswell's treatment of authoring—is that in each performance writers were asked to not only work with musicians and

artists, but to also do the composing work that they did, too. I established authority not just by writing and delivering a written artifact, but also by performing that identity with others and allowing my own definitions of what it means to create to emerge. In one performance, my role as writer stretched me to act my lines in front of a live audience and to work with the musician and artist to whom I was assigned to create an overall experience where my “writing” may or may not be recognized as such. In this frame, authoring is not simply about privileging process over product, it is about leveraging interdisciplinary performance to create an *ethos* that legitimizes the importance of making authority, but not necessarily presenting a finished artifact that reflects that authority (especially given that no one would respect my “acting” as any kind of authoritative performance.)

This making-of-authority process is of not just performance; it is the heart of what we know as collaboration, or co-authorship. Like authorship, collaboration is widely discussed but infrequently interrogated beyond traditional understanding. A common definition is attributed to Deborah Bosley in Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford’s canonical (1990) work on co-authoring: “two or more people working together to produce one written document in a situation in which a group takes responsibility for having produced the document” (as quoted in Ede & Lunsford, 1990, p. 15). This definition is important to consider in light of the type of interdisciplinary work produced in Cogswell’s course.

First, the reliance on “two or more people” was a foundational consideration for the course. The class did not simply partner writers with musicians, for example. Instead, by asking students to work in groups of three, the course became cross-disciplinary, or in Cogswell’s terminology, transdisciplinary. Such partnerships pushed students to negotiate the ways of thought, types of media, and forms of expression that their collaborations would ultimately take. There was no easy genre to fall into, such as an opera or a visual poem. Because of this, the latter part of the definition is likewise problematized: in such collaborations there was no inherent recognition of responsibility nor product/document to display. Yes, each collaboration resulted in a performance, but in many cases the work of the writer was spoken instead of read, the musician may have contributed only background sounds, and the visual artist was free to create objects (e.g., sculptures, videos, etc.) but in many cases worked with the technical director on lighting and ambience to create an experience more than a product. So, the resulting performance was not necessarily a product *per se*, and the recognition of the creative process was in the work itself, but seldom enumerated as the fruits of individual contribution. As a result, the individuals making up groups took “responsibility,” in Bosley’s terms, but not necessarily according to the predesignated roles they came in with: the writer may not have done the writing, the musician not the music, the artist not the art.

Such messy collaborations are not unique to this course. Group-writing assignments ask for similar negotiations. But even when students write individually

in different media we see the evidence of similar invisible choices of responsibility and shared authoring. Like orality, writing studies is currently experiencing a contemporary love affair with the concept of multimodality. And while this relationship is rightfully growing in unscripted ways, we should appreciate the thought that Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes give it in worrying aloud how they “fear that composition just ‘includes’ the multimodal, [thereby] co-opting it as an ‘extension of traditional composition,’ as opposed to exploring how multimodality challenges our rhetorical predispositions in privileging print textualities” (2014, p. 4).

An interdisciplinary project like *Turning Points* averted this concern by using different media to challenge not just print textualities but also the rhetorical idea of the author. In this way, it may be vogue to refer to the course as multimodal more than interdisciplinary or collaborative. To do so, though, privileges the artifacts, outcomes, or products more than the messy (and hidden) processes. In line with this, Jason Palmeri reminds us:

Challenging the notion that the teaching of writing and the teaching of performance are two entirely separate realms, [Edward P.J.] Corbett reminds compositionists that both actors and writers must make conscious choices about how to perform an identity (construct ethos) for a particular audience and a particular purpose. (2012, p. 63)

Palmeri (and by extension Corbett) sees performance as a kind of multimodal process that functions first and foremost as a way to interrogate the rhetorical understanding of authoring. In line with Haswell and Haswell, Palmeri notes how we ask students to perform an identity, and in doing so they “construct ethos,” or build authority. This is an important and necessary process, sometimes taught best through actual performance or self-conscious decisions present in collaboration and multimodal work. This building of authority is likewise in line with traditional notions of authoring.

But unlike many academic outcomes, this process need not rely on a finished product that embodies or implies a mastery of concepts (or outcomes). Instead, because the making is foregrounded in the authoring process (as opposed to the traditionally favored delivery, or publishing) the onus falls more on the instructors, or the curriculum itself, to allow students to assess their work and deem what deserves reward. In Cogswell’s course, this assessment took place after each performance where the instructors and students engaged in a studio critique: the entire class sat in a circle to discuss the strengths and weakness of the performance. The final judgment, and outcome, of the critique came when the class members self-selected which of the thirty original pieces would make it to the final public performance, where only a dozen pieces would be showcased. Being chosen was a reward that

didn't diminish the value of what wasn't chosen, but maintained familiarity with a system of recognition consistent with traditional creative endeavors.

This reward system also served as a dialogic and meta-reflective assessment that fulfills the long-awaited pedagogical articulation of post-process theory as espoused by Raul Sanchez, Thomas Kent, and Lee-Ann M. Kastman Breuch. Breuch most notably acknowledged that "post-process theory [makes] an important pedagogical contribution through its rejection of mastery" (2002, p. 127). Pieces chosen for the final performance were selected based on the display of breadth of creativity (e.g., spoken pieces, video pieces, etc.), practical staging decisions, and subjective favoritism. Yes, class favorites were rewarded with another performance, but this popularity was not based in a traditional network of mastery (e.g., what was done particularly well) so much as what excited and surprised the class participants. It displayed the slippery "we know it when we see it" *ethos* common in art critiques, but less so in college writing courses. As a result, this maintains if not a rejection of mastery then a constantly moving target of what is considered a communal display of collaborative creativity.

It could be argued that this rejection of mastery is analogous to the rejection of an author as *writing-plus*, where authorship connotes a lone genius, writing with recognition and the social construction of authority. And while post-process remains a concept specific to writing studies, Cogswell would feel comfortable describing his course similarly as postmodern. He said of the course, "I realized that there might have been [final] results that you might have cringed at, but that that wasn't the point. I realized that we were asking people to do something that they had no experience doing and they would have to learn their way into doing, and that that struggle to do it would be what was most valuable" (J. Cogswell, personal interview, March 1, 2015). Like conceptions of collaboration studies, this postmodern approach acknowledges multiple voices, and puts the natural authority of the classroom (the teacher) into direct dialogue with the student. But in this articulation, there is no apprenticing or easy conveyance of knowledge. Instead, the knowledge is self-taught and self-realized, and never mastered in the traditional sense. In this way, authoring in this course privileges making and *ethos* (or identity) building over any perception of expertise, mastery, or recognition as reward. Despite the presence of performances, in its collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, the course complicates the traditional notion of authoring by stopping short of fixing its conclusion in a static artifact.

## Turning Points

In hindsight, Jim Cogswell is clear and confident about two things related to the transdisciplinary course *Turning Points*. First, the course would have never suc-

ceeded, let alone happened, without the technical expertise and generosity of a third party, in this case Tom Bray (Converging Technologies Consultant, University of Michigan). Bray was ostensibly support staff for the course and in charge of assistance and advising in the digital video studio where the class was held. But his expertise transcended mere support, and instead he took his place alongside historically invisible co-authors like editors and mentors who have stood behind “lone genius” authors. Bray’s presence and influence positioned him as an active participant in the course, both co-instructor and co-creator. Cogswell fully acknowledges this in explaining why the course was able to take place twice in a relatively short amount of time.

But Cogswell also acknowledges a second fact related to the course, which reveals why it has not been offered again since 2001. In a word: space. The video production studio that served as the creative hub and performance space for the initial classes has been increasingly popular (primarily for drama courses) since Cogswell’s initial courses. As a result, although he admits that he could work to find alternative space, the challenges that such an undertaking bring with it aren’t worth the effort for him at this time.

Admittedly neither of these reflections about the course is about writing or authoring. Instead, the institutional and material constraints of working with limited resources serves as a kind of gatekeeper to creating, or creative composing, in this vein. Even if participants are willing (and Cogswell assures me that he is very much still willing to do this again), the forces currently in place on campus aren’t amicable. The same could be said of co-authored pieces being denied proper acknowledgment in promotion portfolios, interdisciplinary partnerships being rejected based on a department’s needs for direct benefits, and myriad other instances where incalculable pay-offs are eschewed for more quantitative outcomes.

All of this is why this profile is not offered as a how-to or best practice. Cogswell’s *Turning Points* can be seen as a success story or a cautionary tale depending on how we view the relationship of writing and speaking to (co-)authorship in the academy. The course was offered in the traditional liberal arts education mold, stressing critical thinking, discursive and interpersonal interaction, and self-reflection. And yet it was, and still is, hard to describe in terms of transferrable pedagogy, assessment, and contributions to any of the fields involved. In many ways the three disciplines represented co-composing on a larger scale, in essence making a joint discipline connected by one imperative: creating.

The kinds of collaborative, interdisciplinary, and performative creating produced in this course fit many of the ideals embodied in our understandings of authorship, but with important alterations. First, authorship should never connote an individual contribution. Even when a sole author takes credit, there are individuals and institutions backing her decisions at every move. Second, authorship may help to build, or create, authority, but it does not precede it; authority is not a

product in itself. Instead, the ongoing negotiations of identity in specific contexts is a kind of discursive authority that should be valued. Third, reward and/or recognition are not implicit in a successful understanding of authorship. Outcomes are fluid and contextual, and although by-lines and wages are worthy rewards, they are only certain types among many options. Finally, products are no more important than processes. This, in its indirect way, leads us back to further understanding the relations between writing and speaking, literacy and orality, and performance of all kinds. As social creatures, we engage in conversation every day; we evolve to be the sum results of those conversations. In effect, we are the products of collaboration, as we are the ongoing process as we write and speak to further perform ourselves.

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# OPERAcraft: Intersections of Creative Narrative, Music, and Video Games

Katie Dredger, Ariana Wyatt, Tracy Cowden,  
Ivica Ico Bukvic, and Kelly Parkes

Community-sourced narrative writing performed through popular emerging technology in the form of the building video game *Minecraft* can demonstrate interdisciplinary art. OPERAcraft asks collaborators to balance the technical expertise of gaming while creatively imagining a story that appeals to children, adolescents, and young adults. Opera, gaming, theater, and composition collided in this collaborative effort that culminated with a public performance in a university theater featuring college voice majors singing an opera libretto written by high school students while *Minecraft* avatars were manipulated by the teens on a stage.

This chapter discusses the challenges and triumphs of interdisciplinary and community-sourced narrative writing using popular emerging technology in the form of the building video game *Minecraft* (Mojang, 2011). This project asked that the collaborators balance the technical expertise of an open-source game contributor while also seeing themselves as creative writers of a fantastical story that would appeal to children and young adults. Drawing from scholarship on creating opera, intersections of gaming and composition, multi-modality, mentor texts in the narrative composition process, dystopian young adult literature, and authentic audience, this project demonstrates an example of the ways that interdisciplinary work can be implemented in wide and varied ways.

English, Education, Computer Science, and Music faculty at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia collaborated to create an opera sung by undergraduate voice majors and performed by video game avatars as puppets controlled by high school students. Adolescents in an extracurricular club created an original opera performed within *Minecraft*. Starting with Mozart's music and five characters, OPERAcraft inspired students to create a plot, the libretto, the virtual set and the avatars. Students controlled the avatars while soloists sang the libretto (the dialogue to be sung by live musicians that told the narrative) for a live and virtual audience for a twenty-minute operatic performance.

Interdisciplinary work can be especially innovative when adolescents, college students, and faculty members collaborate to create an artistic performance for an authentic audience. In this project, high-school-aged adolescents collaborated to compose an opera libretto by writing the dialogue that would be sung

by college voice majors. They then created the set and avatars in *Minecraft*, an interactive building game. The preparation for the live performance offered the authentic purpose for this interdisciplinary project. This chapter describes the creation of the libretto, the text for the story that was sung for the OPERAcraft performance. Two separate iterations of this project were performed, in 2013 and in 2015 (Crecente, 2014). The discussion of plot originates in the original OPERAcraft performance in 2013, *The Surface: A World Above* (OPERAcraft, 2014). Shared examples and images use the 2015 performance, *The Beacon of Mazon Mines*.

A reoccurring theme for the creation of the libretto was the recursive use of mentor texts. Mentor texts have been described as:

pieces of literature that you—both teacher and student—can return to and reread for many different purposes. They are texts to be studied and imitated. Mentor texts help students to take risks and be different writers tomorrow than they are today. It helps them to try out new strategies and formats. They should be basically books that students can relate to and can even read independently *or* with some support. And of course, a mentor text doesn't have to be in the form of a book—a mentor text might be a poem, a newspaper article, song lyrics, comic strips, manuals, essays, almost anything. (Dorfmann, 2013)

The first mentor text that the student writers utilized came in the form of performed opera. After student writers viewed videotaped productions of operas, the faculty project team for OPERAcraft discussed with students the concept of a narrative as a story that has a beginning, middle and end, and that an opera specifically often tells a story that has a developed character who experiences a deeply emotional conflict that the audience can empathize with. Because the film *Les Misérables* (Bevan, Fellner, Hayward, Mackintosh, & Hooper, 2012) had recently been released, students differentiated between the musical and an opera. While this distinction is not neat, faculty simplified the concept of opera as different from musical theater to the students involved with the project. Operas were described as featuring singers with multi-octave ranges. Furthermore, operas are driven by the music. The music is complex, and emotive selections, called arias, evoke emotional response (Tommasini, 2011). Traditionally, operas tend to be lengthier than musicals when performed. The emotions of the characters are reflected in the sound and the sense of the words and music performed by the characters. Like written or performed poetry, the opera libretto affects the audience in their knowing the connotations of the words sung while responding viscerally to the visual and oral performance. Opera audience members do not have to even know the language of the opera to be affected by the emotions depicted

on the stage and in the music. Thus, the movement of the characters, the setting of the stage, the sense of the words and the sound of the music work together to make meaning and evoke emotional response to the universal plights of human existence that are portrayed by the characters in an opera (Gorlée, 1997; Harris, 1985; Kinsley, 1964; Marx, 1973).

The faculty of the project group shared the qualities of several operas with excerpts from *The Magic Flute* (Mozart & Schikaneder, 1791; Opera Nerd, 2014); *Tosca* (Puccini et al., 1905); and *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart & Da Ponte, 1786) that included emotive elements and conflict that is resolved. The music reflected the emotions of the characters as they struggled to resolve a conflict. Students then understood the constraints of our particular performance, that it would have to be relatively short to fit time constraints. Within those restraints, however, students wanted to explore a range of emotions within their collaborative Minecraft Opera.

## Theoretical Framework

This project draws from scholarship on creating opera, intersections of gaming and composition, multi-modality, mentor texts, authentic audience, and New Literacies Theory. When working in such interdisciplinary and intersecting spaces, it is more effective to be inclusive in theoretical perspectives because in the siloed nature of academia inclusivity can be a key to broadening our views of our fields in concert with varied disciplines. In the creation of opera, story and music combine like sound and substance of poetry in order to evoke emotion from an audience while simultaneously telling a story (Carter & Greenwald, 2014; Hensher, 1995; Leung & Leung, 2010; Orero & Matamala, 2007). Within the scholarship of gaming and composition, art and story are inextricably linked (Alexander, 2009; Lane, 2013; Sabatino, 2014). Sandbox games spearheaded by the unprecedented success of *Minecraft* (Duncan, 2011) offer unique opportunities in arts, education, and engineering. Users are often self-motivated to create their roleplaying environments, and even produce entire movies, an activity also known as machinima (Morris, Kelland, & Lloyd, 2005.). By engaging in OPERAcraft, students were given an opportunity to seamlessly traverse a transdisciplinary landscape while being driven and motivated by a single focal aspirational goal: the production of a virtual opera (Lane, 2013; Paper Bull Arts, 2012; Sherman, 2006). Multimodality, defined as words, pictures, movement, and/or sound makes for composition that meets the comfort levels of readers of today, especially adolescents versed in internet and screen compositions (Wright, 2004; Yancy, 2004). In order to support the move from consumer of these texts to producer, we wished to aid students in viewing these screen-based texts as

models for emulation instead of just entertainment. As such, this project provided scaffolds to adolescent writers in varied ways using traditional opera, musical theater, and young adult literature as mentor texts to aid in the creation of an original story (Ehmann & Gayer, 2009; McWorter, 2006). This illustrates the ways that conflicts and tribulations of the human experience are universal, while allowing for young writers to shape a personal and timely narrative (Dorfmann, 2013; Gallagher, 2011; Kittle, 2008; Park, 2005). When students have choice and authenticity, writing matters, and in our case, the writing illustrated creative authenticity (Elbow, 1998, 2000; Gallagher, 2006; Harvey & Daniels, 2009). Finally, this project finds that intersections of music, computers, and composition embrace the dispositions of New Literacies Theory (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Szymanski, 2009). Students jumped into a participatory space where they can experiment and innovate, tinkering in collaboration with others as they value sharing of ideas over ownership and distributed over centralized expertise. These frameworks intersect in OPERAcraft.

## Theme

In the composition process, the faculty project team began with the concept of theme. The discussion of theme surfaced in the viewing of the mentor texts. Members of the research team asked the student participants what the artists may have been wanting to share through their creation, and this discussion naturally evolved into a discussion of theme. The students initiated this discussion and suggested that opera was doing more than just telling a story. In order to elicit an emotional response to the universal plight of human existence, students agreed on some universal themes that could be explored. The theme of a literary work is often simplified to students as a lesson that the text teaches readers. Because we focused on mentor texts, established writings that are used as exemplars for student writers to model, we cited classic literature that students have read in school and current films that students may have seen, including Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (2012). Students cited the theme of *Star Wars* (Kurtz & Lucas, 1977) as an example that good triumphs over evil. In order to move beyond simplistic themes, we prompted students to think of platitudes often quoted to youth that they questioned now that they were well into adolescence. These platitudes that students rejected are found in Table 5.1.

When teaching students to write a thoughtful libretto with an affecting theme, students wanted to challenge these platitudes. The students did not verbalize a connection to the school curricular writing activities, but they used skills that a writing teacher could hone, like finding nuance in a sophisticated essay writing activity. Instead of asking students to move into choosing a theme for their text, we simply

used this discussion of challenging simplified platitudes as a brainstorming start. We then talked about conflicts found in narrative.

The writing process in this project was fluid and recursive, especially when writing with a group of eight adolescents. While we wanted the libretto to be original, we wanted all students to have a stake in its creation. We often explained that this is just one way to write a narrative as a group. We also had to contend with time and scheduling constraints, so a decision to move from universal platitudes to conflicts and then to characters was an individual one made by the English Educator on the OPERAcraft team.

**Table 5.1. Simplistic platitudes rejected by students**

Platitudes offered to youth that student participants wanted to challenge.
People are inherently good.
Only the good die young.
One person can change the world.
If nothing is worth dying for, nothing is worth living for.

## Coming to Consensus on Conflict

After a mini-lecture on various themes found in literary works, students were most intrigued by the idea of Person vs. Society, Person vs. Person, or Person vs. Supernatural. For the Person vs. Society plot, we referred to Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) as a mentor text, because the participants had read this novel in school. Person vs. Person conflict was explained by referencing Katniss vs. other tributes in Collins’ *The Hunger Games* (2008). A great example of a Person vs. Supernatural mentor text that students referenced was *Terminator* (Cameron & Hurd, 1984). While they were motivated to create with *Minecraft*, they rejected any conflict having to do with machines, which was interesting given the dystopian setting and the tool of *Minecraft* that was used. Person vs. Nature and Self was also of little interest to the students involved. Consensus, as observed by the team members on the project, was surprisingly congenial. Students shared equally and showed genuine respect for other ideas and were particularly eager to take risks with ideas. When one idea was preferred over another, no one expressed any angst. Ultimately it seemed that animated passion won out; when one student shared that he had been thinking about his ideas during the week, in time outside of the scheduled after-school activities, the student members acquiesced to his idea of a main character fighting against an autocratic ruler while attempting to reach a better world. A key connection to fostering a creative space, in or outside of the classroom, may be in offering time for students to share with each other.

Plot

In order to develop the plot, the English Educator (faculty) presented first a tried and true plot that was quickly rejected by the group. This plot fits many movies and books preferred by mainstream society and was simplified in the following short statement, “Boy meets, loses, reunites with girl.” Those of us on the research team were relieved that this plot was so quickly rejected and were refreshed to know that the students on this project, knowing it was a short narrative, still wanted to challenge the expectations of the viewers. We continued to be encouraged and enlightened by the fresh thinking and insights that students brought to the discussion.

We then looked to Kylene Beers (2003), past president of National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and prolific author of great teaching ideas, and used her teaching strategy called “Somebody Wanted but So.” We challenged students to create a narrative with this template. Who will the audience care about? What will the main character(s) want? What will get in the way, creating the conflict? How will the conflict be resolved? Because the students had already explored and brainstormed ideas for a conflict, we recognized that an authority figure would be an antagonist in opposition to the protagonist, not yet determined.

Table 5.2. Original Proposed Plots by Student Participants

Proposed Skeleton Plots				
Author	Somebody	Wanted	But	So
#1	Good guy (25 yrs old)	To fight evil	Bad guy is evil	He fights and wins (or not)
#2	Girl (17)	experience	Walled by constraints of society	She escapes (or not)
#3	Adult male	To join family after a split society	Father is assassinated	Wondering is worse than knowing
#4	Young male	to join family	Is prevented	carries out quest (no resolution to quest suggested)
#5	Young adult	to be good	Does bad to achieve good	Is left with a choice (unresolved)
#6	Young male	a better society	Government is not good	He struggles for power (unresolved)

During this composition process, where students sat in desks arranged in a large u-shape facing the English educator, the student libretto authors tossed out ideas that were cataloged on large poster paper. Any idea verbalized was written

down, and the students were reminded that the revision process is recursive, messy, and long, and that ideas can and would change until we moved into the publication stage of the revision process.

In this part of the writing process, we challenged each student libretto author to take a spiral notebook and quickly brainstorm a proposed plot. This gave opportunities to each member of the writing team to have quiet time to pursue their own thinking on paper, and allowed the faculty facilitators to assess involvement of all of the students in the creative process of libretto composition. Table 5.2 reflects each student participant’s thoughts early in the process of the narrative development. Of the eight participants, six were present for the work time that day. The parenthetical commentary found in the “so” column reflects the brainstormed idea but shows that the student author was not locked into any particular outcome of the narrative at that point in the composition process.

Characters

When it was time to choose characters a few weeks after we had discussed plot, project participants were reminded that time was a factor in their final opera, and that too many characters could complicate the way that the audience would comprehend the final performance. They agreed on five characters, the main characters and protagonist, who would be a late adolescent female, her brother, an early adolescent, The Evil Emperor and antagonist, and two evil cronies, a male and female. These are shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Characters in the libretto

Characters’ Proposed Names (was final choice on name)				
Protagonist	Brother	Evil Emperor	Crony Male	Crony Female
Evangeline	Marcus	Xavier	Buzz	Nyssa
Maude	Phillip	Alias	Steve	Lilith
Tatiana	Finnick		Gregor	
Piper			Mortimer	
Regina				

The “somebody” of our plot template was clearly inspired by the female heroine of dystopian books and film today, including Katniss of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) and Tris of *Divergent* (Roth, 2011). The character of Regina, the main character, was played by the student authors sitting in a semi-circle below the screen, shown in Figure 5.1.





*Figure 5.1. Secondary students control the characters in the live OPERAcraft performance (photo courtesy of Susan Bland).*

## Setting

Setting seemed to organically come up in our discussion of plot. The idea of an underworld and an “overworld” was planted by one of the students in the discussion of proposed plot and grew. These conversations went on from week to week, and the students came to the OPERAcraft project with background knowledge in *Minecraft* that they referenced when planning the setting for the opera within the *Minecraft* platform. As a favorite part of the composition process, students built the set in *Minecraft* (Figure 5.2).

## Music

Music entered the conversation during this phase of the libretto composition. For practical reasons, the music educators needed to find appropriate operas to model for style based on the voices of the characters in the libretto. The students suggested that Regina be soprano; that Marcus and Xavier be tenors; and that Mortimer and Lilith be bass and alto, respectively. The voices of the performers, college voice majors, would depict the characterization work of the student authors. This was important for the movement of a short story told to children and tweens (Figure 5.3). In the next step of the composition process, the students decided that Regina, Mortimer, and Lilith would be in their twenties, Emperor Xavier would be in his mid fifties, and Marcus would be sixteen.



*Figure 5.2. This depicts a scene from the live performance. Opera singers are at top right. The secondary students, authors of the libretto in the foreground, control characters on screen in real time. The screen displayed the set created from Minecraft (photo courtesy of Susan Bland).*



*Figure 5.3. College voice majors, pictures on the right, perform the libretto written by the high school students in the 2015 performance, *The Beacon of Mazen Mines* (photo courtesy of Susan Bland).*

## Group Composition

After a week where students were asked to reflect on the plot of the *Minecraft* Opera, students convened and openly shared ideas. Two students in particular had concrete ideas about how the plot could progress. After a mini-lecture on the pitfalls and realities of over-simplified plot diagrams often shared in secondary classrooms, one student participant shared his vision for the OPERAcraft libretto plot. Because of time constraints, the story needed to neatly end as a short story or television sitcom might.

Christopher (a pseudonym) narrated a loose story of a female protagonist and her younger brother who find themselves in a post-apocalyptic world without parents. They sense that their parents were taken from the world somehow but are still alive in another alternate place. They plead with the leader of their world, but are thwarted when they realize that the emperor is not benevolent but is actually a former enemy of their parents. They recognize that they have to reach a tower in a fabulous fight in order to escape their world and reunite with their parents.

The other student participants agree that this is a great first draft for their opera libretto. The agreed-upon conflicts would be Regina vs. her society and Regina vs. herself, as she would have to make a hard decision that could involve personal sacrifice as she struggles to fight the society, this underworld in which she finds herself orphaned. When the English Educator asked students about the setting, they agreed that it would be dark, run-down, and futuristic, indicative of a dismal place that needs to be escaped.

## Plot Development

Because composition is a somewhat cyclical, sometimes messy process of brainstorming, revision, and negotiations, we returned at this time to moving the initial broad outline of the plot into more developed movement of sequences of events. Students broke into pairs in order to develop the plot after agreeing upon eight distinctive scenes. These scenes were summarized by the group as shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4. Group Early Consensus**

Scene	Early Draft Synopsis	Consensus
#1	Siblings enter and sing about longing be with parents in upperworld.	
#2	Emperor makes speech to public but then in private reveals malevolent motives to cronies.	
#3	Siblings approach emperor for help.	
#4	Siblings express fear and doubt to each other.	
#5	Regina shares internal conflict. Cronies overhear.	
#6	Cronies reveal Regina's motives to Emperor.	
#7	Climax at Tower. Emperor dies? Sibling(s) fall?	
#8	Regina sacrifices herself? Marcus dies? Marcus is saved and goes to light/hope of upper world?	

The students agreed that scene five would include a classic operatic aria, and seemed to be confident with the plot until the final resolution. At this point, the music educators chose excerpts from existing Mozart operas, including solos, duets, and ensembles, that could potentially be manipulated to fit the atmosphere and emotive elements that the students wanted to create in each scene. The excerpts were presented to the students, often with multiple options for each scene, and a lively discussion ensued in which the students made the final decisions about which music suited each scene best. Students then broke into pairs to draft the dialogue of the libretto and then met with music and English Education faculty to revise diction and to match dialogue to syllabic and melodic pieces. The dialogue had to do more than offer characterization; it had to quickly move the plot in such a short performance. In order to support the audience, closed captioning was provided during the opera (Figure 5.4). Students were clearly not as interested in this part of the project, wanting to move back to the creation of the set in *Minecraft*, but they respectfully paired with faculty to match rests in the melody and different voices to the existing Mozart opera excerpts. In order to mediate these competing desires and needs, we started and ended each work session with a short review of the vision of the final product; that seemed to keep the students working on their least favorite parts of the project, even if only in short increments of about thirty minutes.



Figure 5.4. Closed captioning of the libretto text depicted within the *Minecraft* game at the live performance (photo courtesy of Susan Bland).



After a summer away from the project, OPERAcraft members reconvened to do final edits of the libretto before publication and performance. Within the performance, the authors of the libretto narrative were the characters in the sense that they sat behind the computers and moved their characters' avatars. Student singers sang the libretto while a music faculty member played piano in accompaniment in real time, as the authors manipulated their characters within the *Minecraft* set. Audience members watched the screen but could also see the authors as they sat at their computers, as well as the singers and accompanist. The small performance venue was full and the twenty-minute performance was warmly received. After the performance, the creators of this art form answered audience questions in the live blackbox. In these performances, OPERAcraft became a way for multiple generations in one community to show the intersections of composition, music, computing, educating, entertaining, and connecting.

## Implications

This project drew on out-of-school literacies and a contemporary passion of adolescents (*Minecraft*) and became a bridge to a traditional art form: opera. This combining of communities culminated in a well-received performance to the public. The faculty and student collaborators balanced technical, musical and educational expertise to create a fantastical story that appealed to children and young adults. In the implementation of a project such as this, the foundation was built upon the passion of the adolescents in a contemporary interest of theirs, one that they knew better than the adults on the project. The adolescents drove the product in their commitment and engagement in each stage of the process. The multi-age audience was also a motivating factor, as project participants could see their past and future selves finding value in the work, but also in the ability to invite their peers and family members to enjoy the culminating performance.

Like other interdisciplinary arts projects, the product allowed for remixing and reinvention modeling mentor texts of artistic merit for a modern audience. The youth were empowered to be the authors, and the areas of expertise of the supportive adults were tapped in the inventive creation. Expertise was truly distributed, as no one on the project was expert in every area of the project, so the work became a true exercise in collaborative creation with varied models being accessed by the creators. The collaboration became a synthesis of varied disciplines, mentor text models, and platforms, and something new was presented to an eager audience. In weaving scholarship on creating opera, connecting intersections of gaming and composition, exploring multi-modality and providing mentor texts in the narrative composition process, we engaged an authentic audience—demonstrating successful interdisciplinary work in the twenty-first century.

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# Words, Pictures, and the “Nonlistening Space”: Visual Design and Popular Music as Forms of Performance in First-Year Writing

Maria Soriano

The chapter focuses on the importance of teaching visual rhetoric by examining a multimodal first-year writing course unit that asks students to create concert posters for their favorite bands or musical artists. In addition, students produce explanatory essays that translate their creation process into words, representing their imaginations on paper. Soriano discusses the ways that this unit has improved and enriched the writing of many of her students, including poster examples and supplemental materials for instructors who might want to adopt this assignment and challenge their students to invade their own “nonlistening spaces.”

## Introduction: Forms of Rhetoric at War

In the 2013 film *Words and Pictures*, English teacher Jack Marcus challenges art instructor Dina Delsanto with the following powerful question: “Words versus pictures: which is worth more?” (Schepisi, 2014). Exploration, creation, and arguments ensue between the students of Marcus and Delsanto as they compose written and visual pieces that simultaneously unite and separate the persuasive components of written and visual rhetoric. These performances highlight the necessity of studying rhetoric, for as Joan Mullin (2011) argued, “in its study of how communication takes place and is received, rhetoric is relevant as a useful tool for research in all arts practices since, in addition to the medium of language, the original components of ancient rhetorical practice include the purposeful use of voice, tone, performance, and visual effect” (p. 152). Students first learn of these principles in their English classes between grades 9–12 because of the curricular emphasis on proficiency in explanatory writing, and continue to develop them in college-level first-year writing (FYW) courses. They examine and articulate detailed arguments supported by research, and learn to direct those messages to a chosen audience—primarily through writing. But as more FYW curricula incorporate multimodal assignments, lessons on written and visual rhetoric (or, words and pictures) are juxtaposed in order to examine the performative power of each genre.

What is gained by studying visual rhetoric in FYW? Cultural awareness, for one, because we are immersed in visual rhetoric: television commercials, magazine ads, political postcards, and electronic banners on the side of computer, tablet, and phone screens, just to name a few. Because of this constant exposure, teaching visual rhetoric alongside writing in FYW is crucial for the development of students' capacities to negotiate the world because, as Carolyn Handa (2004) wrote, "Visual rhetoric in the composition course then serves two ends: to help students better understand how images persuade on their own terms and in the context of multimodal texts, and to help students make more rhetorically informed decisions as they compose visual genres" (p. 3). To accomplish these objectives, I focus in this chapter on using popular music and visual design to teach visual rhetoric in my FYW course by adding aural learning and perception into my pedagogy. By provoking students to actively tune in to the music and lyrics that play in the backgrounds of their workouts, study sessions, and walks between classes, I aim to engage their imaginations and teach them to transpose sounds into pictures, creating concert posters that advertise their chosen bands and artists. Next, they translate the visual element into words, writing detailed explanatory essays that function as evidence-based rationales for their design choices and represent intentionality, a key component of metacognitive development. By separating and then uniting visual and written rhetoric through the lessons and assignments of this unit, students learn to understand academic projects as performative acts—an objective that is enhanced through the use of popular music.

## Process: Classroom Instruction and Unit Overview

Craig Stroupe (2004) asserted the necessity of including visual arts in the pedagogy of FYW when he wrote that "words don't simply talk to words, but to images, links, horizontal lines—to every feature of the iconographic page" (p. 25). In her chapter, Faith Kurtyka (2015) cited Barbara Duffelmeyer and Anthony Ellertson, who also believed that students need to learn "critical visual literacy," or the ability to understand visuals not as a direct representation of reality, but as constructed from a certain viewpoint. To teach this essential principle in the classroom, I begin the visual rhetoric unit by addressing the following question, posed best by Charles A. Hill (2004): "How, exactly, do images persuade? In other words, how do representational images work to influence the beliefs, attitudes, opinions—and sometimes actions—of those who view them?" (p. 25).

Advertisements are an ideal genre to examine as my students begin to answer Hill's question. From magazines and newspapers to Twitter feeds and Facebook pages, advertisements reach out to us so frequently that we often ignore, overlook, and scroll past them. Therefore, my first step is to get students to actually *look* at

some advertisements, record reactions, and analyze design strategies: photos and graphics; font size, type, and placement; colors; audience; and intended messages. Next, I prompt students to consider the reasons *why* each ad’s creators made specific choices with each element of the design. The final introductory lesson focuses on the genre of concert posters, drawing conclusions about how the elements represent the band or artist, the style of music, the location, and the concert atmosphere. These initial lessons introduce students to the study of visual rhetoric and teach them to narrowly focus on each element of a poster, deepening their critical thinking and analysis skills as they determine the impact of that designer’s choices.<sup>1</sup> Such scrutiny and synthesis demonstrate that in visual design, intentionality is key—every element is carefully chosen and contributes to the piece as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The unconscious acceptance of and distanced subscription to some elements of the world that surround us every day (like advertisements) represent a frame of mind that Cynthia and Richard Selfe labelled a “nonthinking space” (Stroupe, 2004, p. 17). Similarly, we often listen to but simultaneously tune out our favorite music, shifting it *behind* primary thoughts and tasks without interference, so applying the Selfes’ term to music produces what I call a “nonlistening space.” Judging by the number of college students I see with earbuds practically glued into their ears as they study, work out, or walk, I knew that tapping into that passive, “nonlistening space” to teach visual rhetoric would be meaningful and relatable. In his essay about music in the FYW classroom, Scott Strovas (2011) discussed the effectiveness of the topic: “I have found music to be a useful course topic in advancing more important writing objectives such as learning to think critically and to engage primary source materials effectively. Writing about music reinforces the importance of writing descriptively, which in turn empowers students to trust in their own perceptions and develop an individual writing voice,” (p. 25) an observation that supports my own ideas. To echo Strovas, I believe that a carefully constructed visual rhetoric unit encourages students to actively engage with an element in their lives that is familiar, and consequently enhances the development of both critical thinking and explanatory writing.

After we complete the introductory lessons, students begin to design their posters. To aid invention and record research, sources, and ideas, I provide students with a worksheet (found in Appendix A) that divides the process into stages—similar to the writing process that FYW teachers (and others across the disciplines) implement for written papers and projects. During the research and active listening stages of the project, I encourage my students to listen *exclusively* to the music of

1 See Kurtyka (2015), who also posited in her study of sorority social media sites, “students may need guidance in exploring the possibilities of arrangement in digital media to make a variety of associations, beyond just what is cool at any given moment.”

2 The chapter on elements of visual rhetoric in any edition of *Everything’s an Argument* (by Andrea A. Lunsford and John J. Ruszkiewicz) is particularly helpful in providing students with detailed background material for this unit.

their chosen bands or musical artists while they work in class for an immersive, connected experience. They first conduct research on the bands or artists, gathering information on the histories, musical influences, discographies, evolution, and even charitable causes and organizations that the musicians created or support. That research forms a foundation for both aspects of the project and gives them credibility as creators and writers.

Because the students in FYW courses at the private, liberal arts university where I teach bring diverse experiences with and knowledge about music into my classroom, I incorporate some basic music theory into the unit (in addition to the basic principles of design that I mentioned earlier) to help them listen more actively to the band or musical artist they choose to focus on.<sup>3</sup> Similar to the multiple layers and elements contained within an advertisement or concert poster, music weaves together multiple instrumental and vocal tracks that the “nonlistening” mind does not always notice. Active listening requires students to listen to songs and albums multiple times, which challenges them to consciously tune *in* to the songs and tune *out* their surroundings to deconstruct the music.

Once they determine that their initial research is complete and have made notes from listening to the music (sometimes narrowing the focus to one particular album), the students move to the third step of the process: making connections and engaging their imaginations. I provoke them to think of colors, words, scenes, locations, moods, or “vibes”—a term I borrow from Kurtyka (2015)—that they picture as they listen to the music, especially since “images enhance our ability to understand and feel music” (Walters, 2010, p. 17). One section of their worksheets makes space for them to record their thoughts; the material generated in the listening moment will help them intentionally choose words and pictures when they begin to create their posters. As they connect aural sounds with visual images, they implicitly learn the concept of *intertextuality*, where “images, sounds, and spatial delineations are read on to and through one another” (Rogoff, 2004, p. 381). This concept manifests itself in the individualized associations each student makes when listening to his or her music.

When they are ready to transform their ideas and notes into a concrete design, the students turn to their “easels.” Though I offer students the chance to draw, paint, or make prints for their posters, most use Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe Photoshop on their computers to edit images and add or manipulate text. In more recent years, some students have used apps on their tablets to select and edit photos, text, and graphics. As an instructor, observing my students during in-class workshop days is as fascinating as seeing the final products; not only do I learn more about them from their tastes in music and their posters-in-progress, but

3 I provide my students with brief definitions of the following musical concepts: instrumentation, effects, mood, lyrics, tone, dynamics, rhythm, riff, key change, and tempo. We also discuss how these concepts connect, aided by the method sheet in Appendix A.

I also see their projects evolve. They select and change fine details over and over, rarely asking for my input; only *they* can determine what looks “right,” from the precise shade of blue to the exact style of font.<sup>4</sup> I have watched a student try every font style in the Microsoft Office Suite, examining a preview of each to determine which suited his poster best. Similarly, I also watched a student spend 30 minutes rotating and resizing a photo in order to get the placement and proportions to her liking. Such a critical eye and attention to exact detail, as well as a sense of “play” with digital media, is crucial for their posters—and, I tell them, for their writing.<sup>5</sup>

## Product: Project Results

### Concert Posters

Because we identify genres of music or specific bands or artists as our “favorites” for various reasons—connections to friends or family, memories of concerts, relatable lyrics, or appealing voices or instrumentation—the opportunity for students to work in-depth with music enhances their levels of investment. The dual-performance environment of visual rhetoric and traditional academic writing turns the FYW classroom into a design studio, where students work quietly and individually, each with their own blank canvas (the computer screen). Their posters outwardly reflect their imaginations and their identities—which are not shaped or influenced by others during the creation process.<sup>6</sup> At the conclusion of the unit, I project each student’s poster on the overhead; here, the students “perform” for their peers by displaying and discussing their creations. Their enthusiasm reflects their pride in and ownership of their projects, and they applaud and admire the work of their peers as well.

To illustrate the components and results of this assignment, I include a few student examples on the following pages. These posters reflect each student’s musical taste and connection with the band or artist, as well as their knowledge of technology and design tools. To begin, Mike’s poster for Jeff the Brotherhood is below:

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4 Mullin (2011) explained this critical, artistic precision: “A designer might intuit or think rhetorically to more quickly understand that while yellow is the colour she wants, lemon yellow does not create the effect desired” (p. 154).

5 Sohui Lee and Russell Carpenter (2015) incorporated the idea of academic creativity in the form of play into their chapter: “Play allowed students to freely experiment with visual and mediated elements, to make mistakes, and to try new combinations while learning about how these decisions affect the design of a text.”

6 Students do receive feedback on their posters during the unit’s peer review session; their peers evaluate the effectiveness of the poster based on readability, arrangement, colors, fonts, and relative sizes in accordance with our early lessons.





*Figure 6.1. Mike's poster for Jeff the Brotherhood<sup>7</sup> (courtesy of Mike Campbell).*

Mike's advanced experience with PowerPoint and Photoshop contributes to his deceptively complex poster design. The background image is a screen-captured frame from a Jeff the Brotherhood music video. Then, from a separate image of the two band members, Mike used his laptop touchpad to trace the outline of their bodies, layering the edited image onto the background. Finally, he created his own font by drawing individual lines to form the angles and shapes of the text. Mike's design choices, articulated in his explanatory essay, visually correspond with Jeff the Brotherhood's laidback, mellow sound (the musicians only play guitar and drums, but produce songs with big, complex melodies and rhythms) and emit a relaxed and carefree vibe. Mike's selection of an outdoor scene also reflects the duo's preference for playing at outdoor venues, which incorporates "expert" information that he learned during the research stage. Similar to the music of Jeff the Brotherhood, Mike's poster appears simple—but actually incorporates many intentional and informed design choices and techniques that demonstrate his critical visual literacy.

Equally successful for different reasons, the next example represents a creative use of digital resources, combining images and graphics found online with fonts available in Microsoft PowerPoint.

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<sup>7</sup> All student posters and survey answers are reproduced in this chapter with the students' written permission.



*Figure 6.2. Mylane's poster for Tori Kelly (courtesy of Mylane Bella-Smuts).*

Mylane's poster for Tori Kelly features carefully and thoughtfully chosen fonts and graphics, as well as a soft, faded color scheme that corresponds with Tori Kelly's indie, light pop music and airy vocals. Similar to Mike, Mylane intentionally layered images and text on her poster, demonstrating her understanding of one of my lessons on visual design. Mylane first selected a background image of Tori Kelly, and then placed complementary graphics (the feather and the watercolor splash) onto that background so she could clearly position the important text on top of those images as her last step. The font sizes strategically draw the viewer's eyes all the way from the top left of the poster to the bottom right—a technique that reflects an in-class lesson on strategic placement as a marketing technique to ensure that readers see and read every aspect of the poster. Though Mylane has never attended a Tori Kelly concert, she extracted ideas from the music and lyrics and used her imagination to construct the experience. To me, Mylane's poster effectively balances words and pictures, demonstrating how the two types of rhetoric can be equally persuasive and complementary.

Similar to Mylane's poster, the last student example also incorporates elements of visual and written rhetoric; however, the difference with Kasey's poster is that she used images and formatting (as well as descriptions in her essay) gathered from first-hand experiences.

For the background, Kasey chose a photo that she took at a Periphery show and manipulated the shadow effects, adding a red filter over the black and white tint. She incorporated the band's font and logo in the top left and lower right corners, and then added the (imaginary) concert details. The most impressive

aspect of Kasey's project is her credibility as the designer, which is revealed in her essay. Kasey frequently attends concerts at The Agora (a small venue in Cleveland, Ohio) and collects show posters and advertisements; during her design process, she took note of certain standards across her collection that the venue uses in all of its advertisements, and replicated those standards in her own design (I do wish that she had included some examples in her essay for my benefit). Since Kasey was a marketing major, I was pleased that she treated this assignment like a professional experience—and combined that with ideas and memories from the concerts she previously attended. Her writing, as a result, was both vivid and confident.



*Figure 6.3. Kasey's poster for Periphery (courtesy of Kasey Gilson).*

Whether students create their posters solely from their imaginations or use the assignment as an opportunity to relive concerts they attended, the results bring them closer to the music they listen to on a daily basis. Students who focus on bands or artists that they have seen live draw upon both their imaginations *and* their memories—and these vivid memories contribute to beautiful posters and well-written essays, like Kasey's project. On this topic, Catherine L. Hobbs (2004) wrote, "The faculty of imagination, intertwined with memory, becomes central to the very definition of rhetoric, which carries with it a cognitive model. It forms the background of discoveries in vision and optics and is linked with the notion that we gain knowledge through observation" (p. 61). Whether or not they are creating and writing from their own memories, the explanatory essay aspect of the project "provides students a chance to develop and gain trust in their writing abilities while exploring what their favorite music means to

them” (Strovas, 2011, p. 33). Visually representing that meaning enhances their connection and personal investment, and the use of visual design and music encourages students to invest the time that is necessary to produce a successful project.

## Explanatory Essays

In addition to the posters that engage their imaginations and concert memories, many students produce their strongest writing of the semester in this unit. They initially balk at the “lengthy” page requirements (included on the assignment sheet in Appendix B), but easily reach (and exceed) those requirements when they begin to explain every detail of their posters *after* completing the visual element of the unit. In her article, Anicca Cox (2015) questioned, “What does it mean to use writing to create or inform the process of ‘doing’ or ‘making’ in visual or performing arts practices?” To add to her inquiry, I ask, “What does it mean to use writing to transpose the process of ‘making’ visual art?” To me, it means a key to metacognition and a window to the imagination. Learning to perform a “close writing” that maintains a narrow focus on one small detail at a time teaches students to enhance their persuasiveness and choose their words precisely. As a result, their writing is more thoroughly developed and convincing to the audience—one rhetorical canon emphasized by Lee and Carpenter (2015).

To show an example of the vivid, descriptive writing that emerges in students’ explanatory essays, I include the introduction of Alex’s explanatory essay about The National, reproduced with his permission. Alex began the semester as a disinterested writer, struggling with focus and development in his argument analysis and research-based written assignments during the first half of the semester (for which he earned average grades). The visual rhetoric unit, in contrast, gave Alex the opportunity to recreate his experience attending The National’s concert—an assignment that opened the door for him to access and connect with writing and language on a deeper, more meaningful level. Without my guidance or influence in early drafts, Alex’s final essay included the following introduction:

As the crowd walks into the concert hall, there is an atmosphere to resemble space not based on appearance but something deeper than that. Amidst the black background of the stage, blue, purple, and white lights flash to give the image of something more than just a stage during the concert, but going to a whole new place entirely, a different world. When the five members of the band walk out into this different world, this is when the audience is truly brought into what is happening. Matt Berninger, the singer, steps out among the two sets of



brothers, Scott Devendorf who plays the bass and his brother Bryan who plays the drums. Behind them Aaron Dessener and his brother Bryce, both guitar players, step out to the stage to perform for the always eager audience. The lights dim and the crowd cheers as the blue lights cover the crowd for the display of light that will captivate them and instill a memory for years to come. The performance begins and now the audience has entered the complex, dark, and smooth rhythm of the rock band before them.

From Alex's incorporation of sensory details (the flashing blue, purple, and white lights) to his narration of the order the band members walk onto the stage, readers are fully immersed in this concert environment—and therefore, in *his* embodied experience. We feel the same excitement and anticipation as the audience members because of the mental image Alex's words communicate to our minds.

In addition to these vivid images, Alex's precise rhetorical choices in his essay correspond with the photos and color scheme on his poster, which demonstrates his close attention to his poster during his writing process to ensure that both elements complemented each other.



Figure 6.4. Alex's poster for *The National* (courtesy of Alex Zamblauskas).

Most importantly—for me as an instructor and for Alex as a first-year writer—this markedly improved writing revealed that Alex successfully synthesized and applied important lessons about academic writing, earning an A for the project. Because he had the chance to write about music (and, further, music that

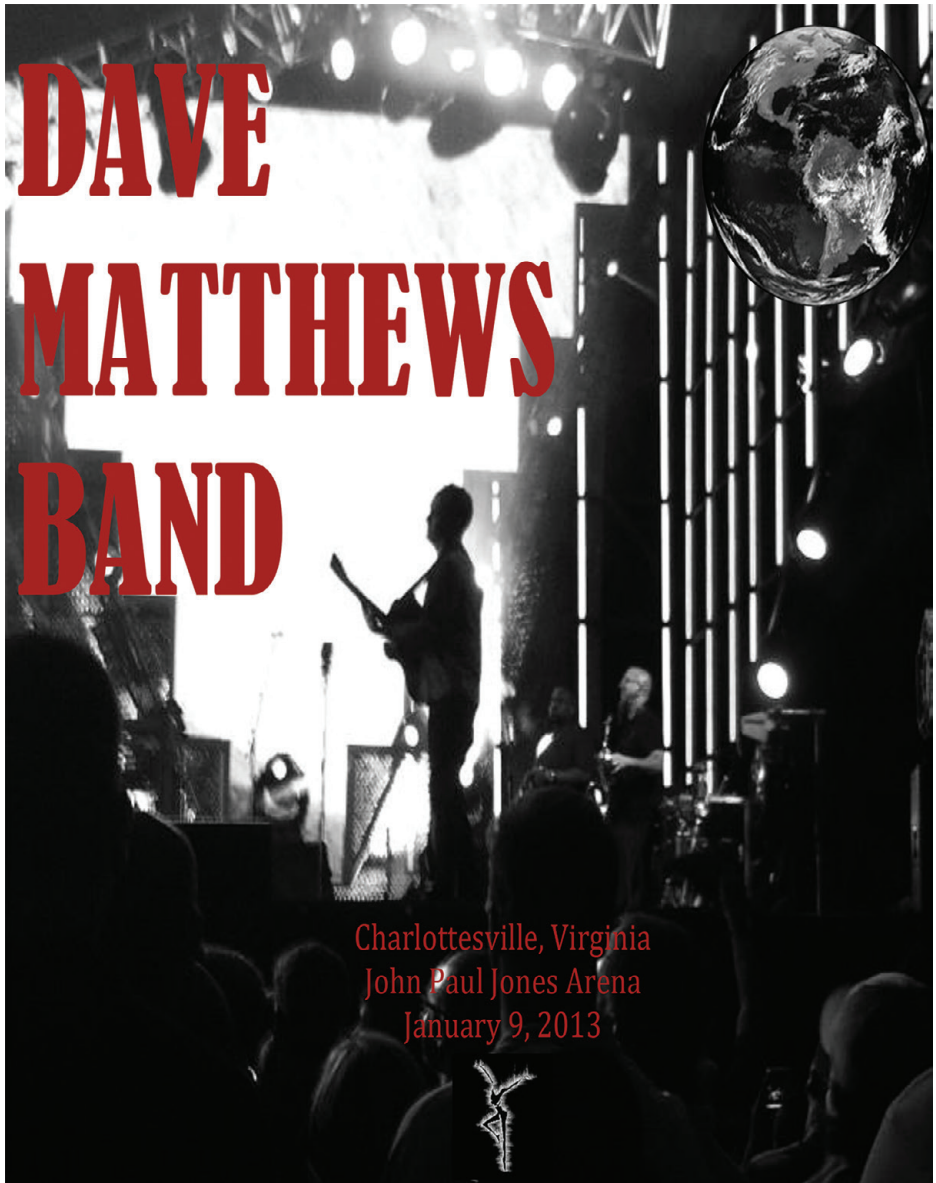
he loved and knew well), he easily incorporated the principles of clear, descriptive writing and logical representation of both his research and the scenes he imagined when he created his poster. Like Alex, many of my students have produced stronger, more cohesive writing as a result of this unit, which is accompanied by in-class lessons on research, paragraph development, and source incorporation between weeks 6 and 10. By the time they are working on their portfolios five weeks later, they are able to revise assignments from earlier in the semester with a deepened sense of critical thinking and strengthened ability to connect with the audience.

Though the concert poster is created first for this unit, the explanatory essay carries equal weight. The students must explain *every* design choice, specifically articulating the reasons they chose each image, font, color, and object placement. This writing challenge forces them to focus on every detail and use language that precisely represents what they imagined, connecting those details to an overall argumentative statement that their posters effectively represent their bands or artists. Through metacognitive reflection on their posters and articulation of their rationale for each decision, students absorb larger lessons on academic writing that can then be replicated in writing across the disciplines—a feature of what Lee and Carpenter (2015), as well as James Purdy (2014), cited as “design thinking pedagogy.”<sup>8</sup> The incorporation of this particular pedagogy into the unit serves to provoke knowledge and skill transfer across courses; a student learns to articulate the reasons she selected a particular photo of Beyoncé, for example, and therefore transfers that lesson to Philosophy papers, where her opinions and ideas need just as much detail and clear support.

Similar to the traditional written research paper, this unit also requires students to locate relevant evidence and incorporate that into both their posters and essays. Some students research color theory and corresponding feelings or emotions when creating their posters, and then cite the evidence they locate in their essays as support. Others use information about the bands or artists in their designs and essays. For example, Alexa included the logo for Bama Works, a fund established and maintained by Dave Matthews Band, in the top right corner of her poster. She then incorporated information about the Fund in her essay, explaining its purpose and importance to the musicians.

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8 For further explanation, see James P. Purdy’s (2014) “What Can Design Thinking Offer Writing Studies?” I found his use of the verbs *design* and *compose* intriguing in the context of my assignment, as both verbs have longitudinal connotations. Specific to the context of writing, *compose* seems more linear, while *design* seems more freeform and movement-oriented (as with the digital creation process of “pictures”).



*Figure 6.5. Alexa's poster for Dave Matthews Band (courtesy of Alexa Britton).*

As another example, Natalie's detailed research on Demi Lovato's life directly influenced her design choices for her concert poster. Since Demi Lovato was her favorite singer, Natalie already knew the background of Lovato's struggles with emotional disorders, drugs, and alcohol abuse. By combining that knowledge



with biographical information and interviews she read on the Internet, Natalie began to formulate a graphic representation of the singer in her mind. She connected her research with what she heard in Demi Lovato’s music, associating the themes, lyrics, and music with images of fire, ashes, and shadows. Natalie chose flames as the background of the poster and applied black and white, ashen effects to a photo of Demi Lovato singing; she then positioned the ashen photo amidst the flames.



*Figure 6.6. Natalie’s poster for Demi Lovato (courtesy of Natalie Hanna).*

Natalie’s written explanation of her design choices shows that she intended for her poster to represent Demi Lovato rising from the ashes of a troubled past and rebuilding her life. Just as Demi Lovato used her music and lyrics as inspiration to recover and return to her career stronger than ever, Natalie also used the music to find inspiration for her poster—and connected with the singer’s emotions in the process. In an end-of-semester reflection, Natalie wrote that in her essay, she was “able to take the message and the emotions of the artist and her music and use that as a support for my reasoning and decision making.” In other words, she learned to interpret and apply research material to inform and shape her own graphic choices; and, most importantly, she closely connected her thinking, creating, and writing choices in her explanatory essay.

## Connections between the Arts and Writing

Together, the two components of this unit pave the way for students to produce writing that is more analytic and cohesive—a threshold often articulated in university assessment goals and rubrics. By engaging with the arts, students implicitly learn how active thinking, creativity, and investment in the subject matter enhance writing. This lesson often reveals itself in metacognitive reflections at the end of the semester, where many students credit this unit as the “turning point” in their understanding of what makes good academic writing and how to produce it. Shelby, for example, reflected on the concert poster unit and its process, formulating the connections between thinking, creating, and writing into an “order of activities”—one which mirrors the steps in a successful writing process. She writes, “Thinking, creating, and writing are all connected; if you can do all three in that order, then writing a 6-page paper becomes a breeze.” Of course, we as instructors know that students naturally progress through these three stages for every assignment across the disciplines—some just do not take time to *separate* them and *consciously* devote time to each (especially when thinking, creating, *and* writing are all done the night before a paper is due). However, the lesson is much more meaningful when students discover and apply it themselves. But these critical actions reinforce the idea that thinking, creating, and writing exist on a recursive continuum, and as creators and writers, students metacognitively move back and forth between stages as they complete a project. Reinforcing the importance of a process-based approach aligns with the implicit objectives of a visual rhetoric unit because students see (and hear) each stage through a medium other than words: first music, then pictures.

Above all, even I have learned (from teaching this unit and composing this chapter) that a visual rhetoric assignment implicitly invokes and synthesizes many principles of writing that are introduced in high school English courses and further developed in FYW courses. After examining the elements of the rhetorical triangle in the writing of professionals, students use and demonstrate ethos, pathos, and logos in both their posters and their essays. The Aristotelian principles of invention and style become relevant in both the visual and written stages, where students must begin by imagining, creating, and organizing graphics and end by transposing their imaginations onto paper in a language of reader-based prose. Similar to elements of presentation in writing (from paragraphing to MLA citation to logical arrangement of ideas), students adhere to principles of graphic design to ensure that fonts, colors, images, and element organization both represent the artist or band and effectively communicate to the audience.<sup>9</sup>

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9 To learn more about these principles of composition and rhetoric, I suggest referencing a First-Year Writing textbook like *Everything's an Argument*, mentioned earlier, or *Writing Today*, by Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine.

To conclude, I'd like to draw upon Nancy Allen's (2008) essay, “Seeing Rhetoric.” She discussed the difficulties of teaching visual rhetoric, since writing and artistic creativity become separate entities as students get older. In elementary school, music, art, library, and physical education are part of every school day. As students reach middle and high school grades, though, the fine arts become more specialized *choices*—or simply become hobbies or extracurricular activities for some. These varied levels of interest and experience do not matter when they reach my class, though. Whether my students define themselves as “creative,” “artistic,” or neither, listening to music and creating concert posters represent a return to artistic exploration, innate creativity, and a youthful sense of play with colors, fonts, and graphics—activities that, as Allen believed, are by no means foreign. She wrote, “Teaching visual rhetoric, then, isn't so much teaching a new set of skills as *reawakening our visual skills* and developing our ways of seeing” (Allen, 2008, p. 34). Provoking my students to reawaken their engagement with popular music, create a concert poster for their favorite bands or musical artists, and then reflect on and write about their creation process and specific choices both invokes creativity and amplifies the importance of FYW's objectives and skills. Beyond having fun and learning more about visual design and music, students invade their own “nonthinking” and “nonlistening” spaces through this unit and construct a meaningful, recursive continuum between thinking, creating, and writing. And as for the winner of the debate between words and pictures, well, in first-year writing, we conclude that they are equally powerful forms of rhetoric.

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## Appendix A. Visual Design Method Sheet for Creating Your Concert Poster

**Step 1:** Initial research on the artist, album, songs, and lyrics. (*Hint:* keep track of your sources—you'll need that information to incorporate into your explanatory essay.)

**Step 2:** Notes about the music itself: what genre does it fall into? What instruments? Moods? Emotions? Tempo (fast, slow, varying)? Dynamics (loud or soft)? Are there any common undercurrents in the lyrics?

**Step 3:** Connections—brainstorm what comes to mind as you're putting everything together. Start with reaction words as you're listening to the music. Then, think about what colors could be associated with those words, as well as the images. Make connections between each element to push your analysis to its fullest capacity *and* connect written and visual rhetoric.

<i>word</i>	<i>color</i>	<i>image</i>
(ex. Calm/mellow/meditative)-----	(blue/green)-----	(pond/lake in evening)

## Appendix B. Sequence #3: The Culture of Concert Posters as Visual Rhetoric

<b>Components:</b>	One 8 ½” x 11” concert poster 6-page explanatory essay
<b>Percentage of Grade:</b>	15% (50 points for poster, 100 points for essay)
<b>Draft Due for Peer Review:</b>	Tuesday, November 4 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Due Date:</b>	Thursday, November 6 <sup>th</sup>

**Purpose:** The third unit of this course moves into a genre of rhetoric that is an important, ever-present aspect of our culture: visual rhetoric. Cultural texts like web and print advertisements, commercials, cars, food, drinks, and even shopping bags overpopulate our lives, and our choices with these products contribute to our identities and make arguments about who we are as members of society. In this unit, we will focus on “reading” visual texts—in particular, concert posters. Since visual texts go through a very careful composition process, we will examine the significance of each color, font, and graphic choice and what it contributes to the poster’s overall argument. You will then use that knowledge to create your own concert poster for an artist or album of your choice, and you will write a 6-page explanatory essay to accompany your poster.

**Audience:** Your primary audience will be the executives of the company representing the band or artist that are hiring you to design the concert poster. Obviously, they are looking for your design to appeal to fans of the artist or album you choose to advertise. How old are they? What areas of the country, economic classes, social ranks, and ways of life are they coming from? What would they know about the artist or album already?

At the same time, artists want to try and draw in new fans with their advertisements, so the executives want you to appeal to audiences that do not know the artist or album. Therefore, you’ll want to pick graphics or photos that pinpoint and portray the artist or album accurately in a way that orients those who are unfamiliar with the artist to his or her music.

**Assignment:** The situation is this: you have been hired to design the promotional poster for your favorite artist or album, combining visual elements and words. Since you are being paid by the company to do this, they also want a 6-page typed, double-spaced explanatory essay that discusses the details of your graphic, font, and information choices and how those choices accurately represent the artist or album and impact the audience.

You’ll begin by choosing a musical artist or album that is particularly meaningful to you. Identify what about that artist or album affects you so much, and figure

out why (“because I like it” as an answer is not good enough, and will not get you anywhere with this assignment). Use those reasons (mood, emotions, messages in the lyrics, instrumentation, innovation, etc.) to locate elements of visual design that illustrate your reactions. Carefully construct your concert poster in accordance with the color schemes, graphics, fonts, and information that correspond with your reactions. **Please note: your concert poster must be appropriate for an academic audience, including the graphics and the text that you choose.**

After you have composed your poster, you will then write a 6-page explanatory essay that discusses the rationale behind your choices. Remember that *every* choice is significant, and therefore, must be explained thoroughly. What does your poster suggest to the audience about that artist or album? What elements of the artist’s life, history, or music impacted you and led you to make those design choices?

### Evaluation Criteria

#### Poster:

- \*images are clear, relevant, and appropriate
- \*colors are complementary and well-chosen
- \*font is appropriate
- \*information is organized on layout
- \*message is discernible

#### Essay:

- \*appropriate response to the prompt
- \*essay length reaches 6 *full pages*
- \*detailed explanation of visual elements
- \*evidence of critical thinking
- \*awareness of audience
- \*proper use of MLA format
- \*carefully developed paragraphs

## Part 2. Teaching Writing in and about the Performing and Visual Arts: Curriculum and Course Designs, Applications, and Support





# Introduction to Part Two

Part Two includes shorter pieces that provide practical illustrations of performing and visual arts pedagogies in action. From course-design considerations, to the application of art-inspired pedagogical visions in the classroom, to the assessment of student performances, the authors in Part Two collectively dance (and sing, act, design, and visualize) attitudes and actions well-worth the price of admission.

## Design and Visualize

Ontario College of Art and Design University's Writing and Learning Centre was assigned the task of assisting students in building the skills required to meet the challenges of academic life. For **Chapter 7**, "Insights from Art and Design Writing Workshops," Rebecca Diederichs and Carianne Leung selected the first-year research essay, a required assignment that is part a mandatory first-year art and design history course, as a site for offering support. The authors offer a vivid enactment of a studio workshop, wherein they introduced students to learning and writing strategies to address the learning objectives of that essay. In the last two years of program delivery, the design and pedagogy of the workshop have developed beyond meeting the criteria of the assignment to facilitating students' thinking and critique of authorial intention, context, perception, and reception in ways that are intended to help them reflect upon their processes of writing and studio practice and extending towards the broader art and design community beyond the university. The authors describe the genealogy of this process through discussing the insights gathered from the Writing and Learning staff, faculty and student participants through the delivery of the workshops.

In **Chapter 8**, "Writing as Making: Positioning a WAC Initiative to Bridge Academic Discourse and Studio Learning," Cary DiPietro, Susan Ferguson, and Roderick Grant describe how the shift from college to university curriculum at The Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD U) has produced tensions between cultures of making in the studio and the perceived incompatibility with academic discourse. While these tensions resonate differently within each disciplinary context, writing has occupied a central position within pedagogical debates at OCAD U, ranging from concern about the quality of student writing to fears about the encroachment of academic subjects upon studio-based education. This dissonance, however, affords opportunities to reevaluate what and how we learn in different pedagogical and disciplinary contexts and to recognize diverse forms of knowledge production within the academy. Studio education—which emphasizes creativity, process, and peer critique—productively destabilizes conceptions of writing as isolated academic discourse. Likewise, a writing pedagogy mobilized for

art and design education enables interdisciplinarity between academic and design practice, while, at the same time, fostering the codification of disciplinary knowledge in emergent academic discourses in art and design. This chapter takes up these questions within the context of a university-wide undergraduate Writing Across the Curriculum initiative that began in the fall of 2013 to address concerns about student writing and showcase its implementation in the Graphic Design program.

Tumblr is a microblogging website and social network where users can either create their own unique content—artwork, animated gifs, text posts, video, and audio—or “reblog” other users’ content. In 2014, Tumblr was the fastest growing social media platform among teen and twenty-something users. In large part, Tumblr appeals to this demographic because of its flexibility and customizability, features lacking in Facebook, Instagram, and other visually-based social media sites. Following in the footsteps of her Special Issue masterpiece, in **Chapter 9**, “Tumblr as a Visual Invention Heuristic,” Faith Kurtyka describes a curriculum, adaptable for both high school and college students, for harnessing Tumblr’s creative power for visual composition to help students articulate their ideas in writing. The author describes a college-level writing project whereby students created a Tumblr page of images, songs, videos, and quotes about leadership to develop a leadership theory in writing. This chapter should be beneficial to high school and college instructors looking for innovative approaches to multimodal assignments that build on students’ existing capacities for composing visually.

English instruction at the K-12 and college levels includes practice in multimodal communication and multiliteracies. However, college composition is distinct because it is grounded in rhetoric as a theoretical and pedagogical framework. In **Chapter 10**, “Visual Thinking Strategies in the Composition Classroom,” Summer Hess, Justin Young, and Heidi Arbogast demonstrate how Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) methodology improves student success in the transition to college by providing a bridge from K-12 English Language Arts instruction, based on the Common Core State Standards, to instruction on visual and digital rhetoric commonly provided in college writing classrooms. VTS is a unique, research-based teaching method used by museums worldwide to facilitate conversations about carefully chosen visual images. Research suggests that regular exposure to VTS augments academic performance through the promotion of aesthetic and critical thinking skills, which can be transferred to non-art objects and other subjects, including writing (Housen, 2001). The idea of transfer in the K-12 classroom has been explored by Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education Project Zero and in secondary education through the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Visual Literacy Competency Standards. The authors discuss two pilot English 101 courses where VTS discussions were incorporated into the curriculum and used to prepare students to encounter and write about fine art and cultural artifacts from the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture. They also connect

VTs to a framework of creativity strategies used “to reinforce the situational and iterative nature of composition” and to encourage students to revise their work, thereby improving what Special Issue authors Lee and Carpenter deem “quality, innovation, and/or rhetorical effectiveness” (Lee & Carpenter, 2015).

Long before WAC, WID, or interdisciplinary initiatives, Friedrich Schlegel observed that “in the works of the greatest poets there often breathes the spirit of a different art.” In dialogue form, Lindsay Illich and Iris Kumar in **Chapter 11**, “A Different Art: An Interdisciplinary Conversation between Lindsay Illich and Iris Kumar,” explore conceptual affinities in the fields of writing studies and visual arts. They make connections that could serve as starting points for integrating writing in visual arts classes and, reciprocally, how concepts in the visual arts may open up new ways of thinking about process, technique, and feedback for writing studies. The authors discuss the challenges of documenting process as technology changes, highlighting the material nature of composing, and the possibilities that documenting process could offer students in reflective assignments such as literacy narratives, writing assignment reflections, artist statements, and artist talks.

Medieval works exemplify arts integration. Later works, influenced by them, adapt this compositional feature. Both combine multiple arts—words, pictures, music, performance—into texts. Providing a perfectly fitting transition between this subsection and the next of our collection, in **Chapter 12**, “Crafting Medievalism in an Introductory Integrative Arts Course,” Sandy Feinstein demonstrates how hybrid characteristic of medievalism served the objectives of her honors Integrative Arts Course, namely, to increase student awareness of the following: the interplay among the arts over time; reinvention of the past through art; form and media of the visual and performative, audio and tactile, monumental and miniature; and the way materials and methods inform artistic creation. Students were to achieve these goals not only through assigned readings, but through their own hand-crafted and digital projects submitted with an “artist’s statement,” something Special Issue author Anicca Cox (2015; and this volume) argues acts as a central text in relationship to art-making practices. The course ultimately asked students to embody in their writing what they created with their hands and mini-pads. Everything produced was both performance and text, something enacted energetically by Special Issue authors Henry and Baker (2015). By making art—and writing about it—students explored relationships between the theoretical and applied, culture and forms of media, technology and handcrafting, written expression and artistic production, artistic vision and process, and how creativity informs craft and composition.

## Dance, Sing, and Act

Bodies write. Bodies dance. Bodies write about bodies that dance. In **Chapter 13**, “Dancing=Composing=Writing: Writing about Performing and Visual Arts

through Dance,” Molly E. Daniel makes her chapter do two things: (1) explore the ways the choreography process engages the body, thereby creating a foundation that can expand our approaches to writing (and teaching that writing) about the performing body because it is informed rhetorically, aesthetically, creatively, and materially, and (2) provide two potential assignments that apply this expansion. Daniel pursues the question: how can the choreography-process enhance approaches to writing-pedagogy about performing and visual arts? It is not, however, simply writing about dance but also what we can learn about writing through the composing process of dance (Cox, 2015, and this volume; Corbett, this volume; Foster, 2004; King, 2003; Lepecki 2004), and how that shapes the performance and the audience’s experiences. Although there has been scholarship on the composing body (Fleckenstein, 1999; George, 2012; Rifenburg & Allgood, 2015, and this volume), the complexity of the body has a tendency to become implicit in performance scholarship. A dancing body is central to both the process and performance. By better understanding the body within the context of a dance performance, we can develop a wider range of vocabulary through which to discuss it, write it, and teach it because embodied activity matters in dancing, composing, and writing.

In **Chapter 14**, “Let’s Dance! Warming-Up to All That Moves and Connects Our Writing-Centered Performances,” Steven J. Corbett writes from the point of view of a writing center director working in the performing arts (primarily dance) at the University of Washington, Seattle. The author surveys and critiques the metaphors writing center scholars have conceptualized in his quest toward an action-inspired, movement-oriented metaphor for WAC and WID, whether *cross-curricular* or, in the case of high-school and college writing center connections, *cross-institutional* (Hansen, Hartley, Jamsen, Levin, & Nichols-Besel, 2015, p. 140). Complimenting McCarroll’s (this volume) elaboration of choreographer Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process, Corbett proceeds to narrate how he came to practically and experientially appreciate this connection while collaborating with professors, professionals, and students—at all levels—in dance. The author concludes with some implications of embracing this perennially fresh metaphor for the teaching, learning, and performing of writing in and across disciplines and institutions.

The mercurial field of dance emplaces a need for dance education to produce critically connected, integrated thinkers and movers. Coursework in dance education should bolster the critical thinking necessary for graduates to manage shifting challenges in beginning and sustaining diverse careers. Introducing students to fully integrated dance learning is an essential start. In **Chapter 15**, “Integrated Dance Learning: Critical Thinking for Embodied Minds,” Barbara Angeline and Jeff Friedman deconstruct the conceptual framework, critical learning goals, integrated coursework, and assessment for “Introduction to Dance Studies.” Often, dance curricula are divided into “academic” and “studio” work. The course merges scholarly and studio practices, establishing connections between choreographic

intent and decision-making, embodied practice, oral discussion, and analytic and evaluative writing. Students in the dance department complete this course in their first semester—prior to their first dance composition course—as one step in the curricular scaffold that creates thinking artists who successfully navigate the field. Activities—including reading, discussing, viewing, analyzing, writing, creating, reflecting and synthesizing dances and ideas about dance—are deconstructed as they relate to integrated dance learning. The Special Issue addressed the ways in which writing interacts with visual and performing arts to foster new possibilities in learning. The authors of this chapter on integrated dance learning reference, forward and expand on the conversations begun in that issue. This chapter highlights the importance of integrating watching, analyzing and embodying dance, with writing and speaking about dance, using the frameworks of multiple intelligences and critical thinking to ground dance students as critically embodied, thinking learners.

In **Chapter 16**, “Writer as Choreographer: Critical Response Process in the Writing Center,” Meredith McCarroll demonstrates how Choreographer Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process offers a productive model for collaborative feedback in the writing center. In her innovative process, Lerman works to create offerings of feedback, always enabling the creator to decline feedback, but also encouraging the critic to categorize the feedback. Within the realm of choreography, after showing a piece of movement, critics follow a clearly outlined structure to provide feedback, including affirmation, questions from choreographer, and then suggestions for revision from the critics. A typical question follows the format, “I have a suggestion about music. Would you like to hear it?” The choreographer directs the conversation based around his or her needs and concerns rather than allowing the critic to state opinions in a threatening and unstructured format. Lerman’s methodology is especially effective, the author argues, in a peer tutoring relationship in the ways that it acknowledges the subjectivity of writing while encouraging a conversation around revision. Moving away from directive tutoring, which can silence a writer and place a tutor in a teacherly position (offering a compelling counterpoint to Corbett’s chapter in this volume), Lerman’s method depends upon and encourages strong guidance by the writer who determines the shape of the tutoring session.

Writing clearly and accurately about dance is a difficult skill for students enrolled in introductory dance appreciation courses, as they tend to write in generalities about what they see. In **Chapter 17**, “The Use of an Analytic Framework to Scaffold Student Writing in an Online Dance Course,” Matthew Henley, Rhonda Cinotto, and Jennifer Salk illustrate how the online course they offer, “Understanding Dance” has been successful in teaching novices how to navigate the complexity of dance in visual, textual, and embodied ways in order to develop thoughtful, articulate and specific writing. The course begins by using principles drawn from Laban Movement Analysis to compartmentalize students’ perceptions of choreography. Compartmentalization allows for more specific descriptions which can

be used as a foundation onto which more complex analyses, interpretations and evaluations can be scaffolded. Traditional viewing and writing assignments coincide with the conventional Bloom's taxonomy, moving students from knowing, through comprehending, to synthesizing. Embodied assignments subvert the taxonomy asking students first to synthesize course concepts by physicalizing them, then deconstructing their creative activity to comprehend the underlying skills and choices. The authors have found that approaching writing in dance from these multiple levels dramatically improves the clarity and accuracy of student writing. These methods have also become relevant in other face-to-face classes and have improved how they help students write about dance across the curriculum and in different educational formats.

As a performance educator, the author wants students to cultivate presence in the theatrical roles they pursue, whether that entails taking on the persona of self or other. Yet, as meaningful and enjoyable as it can be for students to don a performative mask on stage, they often struggle with writing about their experiences post-performance, translating embodiment through the written word with nuance. In **Chapter 18**, "Performative Writing as Training in the Performing Arts," Patrick Santoro describes an approach for getting students to meet their work on the page as fully and experientially as on the stage by implementing the process-oriented, body-centered pedagogy of performative writing. This chapter's goals are twofold: First, it discusses the practice of performative writing, calling upon performance studies practitioners and scholars to offer a definitional and conceptual understanding of its representational strategies. Second, it bridges the theoretical discussion of performative writing (echoing Loren Marquez's Special Issue article) by suggesting strategies students can employ to both think and write about their live performance work, whether or not an explicit discussion of performative writing takes place in the classroom. The author's intention is to engage educators (and students) at a pragmatic level, providing them with a pedagogy for garnering more critical, insightful, multidimensional, and inspired student responses from stage to page.

Rounding-out Part Two, Peter H. Khost and David Hyman in **Chapter 19**, "Where's that Confounded Bridge? Performance, Intratextuality, and Genre-Awareness Transfer," discuss how awareness of genre—which is now often regarded as an active phenomenon rather than inert entity—can be effectively improved through appropriate performative acts as well as more formalist-based conventional instruction. Performative approaches enact a proven strategy for promoting positive transfer called bridging, in which concepts and skills from practice with more familiar contexts are shown to be somehow analogous to those of relevant, less familiar contexts. Drawing on an analysis of the generic rhetorics of rock music as well as classical notions of mimesis and *kairos*, the authors provide explanations, examples, and materials from having introduced contemporary genre theory to varieties of postsecondary and secondary students and teachers through the analysis and the



vocal performance of popular musical texts. The dynamic value of furthering conversations between the performing arts and the interdisciplinary and cross-curricular concerns and approaches of WAC/WID has been attested to by several scholars, including Loren Marquez, whose Special Issue article “Dramatic Consequences: Integrating Rhetorical Performance across the Disciplines and Curriculum” explores how engagement with rhetorical dimensions of dramatic performance provides a transferable heuristic for reimagining cross-curricular pedagogies and objectives. This chapter proposes that the analysis and performance of popular musical texts proves equally relevant. In addition, the cross-generational appeal of popular music makes it an excellent vehicle for exploring ways to bridge the gap between secondary and postsecondary writing within and across majors and disciplines.



# Insights from Art and Design Writing Workshops

Rebecca Diederichs and Carrienne Leung

Kathleen Blake Yancey asserts that the first-year essay be more gateway than gatekeeping. Through facilitated workshops, the Writing and Learning Centre at OCAD University introduced first-year students to research and writing strategies to address specific learning objectives of their art and design history research essay. Students were encouraged to think critically about their own authorial intention, context, perception, and to reflect upon their processes of writing and studio practice beyond the university and towards art and design professional communities. We trace the genealogy of these workshops via insights gathered from WLC staff, faculty and student participants.

The first-year essay, as Kathleen Blake Yancey (2004) states, has been one of the stalwarts of academic gatekeeping. The assignment immediately sets and signifies for students that there are conventions and standards to the institution that they have been admitted. Not only does the first-year essay count as an academic exercise, many students interpret this emotionally charged experience and their grade as a sieve through which they are sifted to determine if they can “truly” cut it here. In her essay, Yancey (2004) calls for a shift for this assignment to function as less gatekeeping and more as gateway for students to build skills to participate in the writing and reading public they are joining. For students in a visual art and design institution like OCAD University, this gateway signifies an introduction to particular discourse communities as well as ways of seeing, thinking and making knowledge using writing as a medium.

This chapter details the process of developing and revising a writing workshop to support the first-year research paper. At the Writing and Learning Centre (WLC), our unique position as co-curricular support places our services at the so-called “gate”, and we are invested in supporting students in acquiring the skills needed to complete and thrive within their programs. By planning and delivering workshops intended to assist students with their first-year research paper, we recognized that the WLC needed to encourage a wider-ranging and particular thinking about these kinds of assignments that would contribute to their work across practices or disciplines.

Our insights, gathered across several years, are based on feedback and observations from students, facilitators and staff as well as our own assessment of strategies for facilitating the workshops. We came to realize the importance of engaging with

writing as a process of *making* and how we might encourage and support students to approach writing assignments as they might their studio-based projects. How could we present writing approaches as students might explore materials and methods for creative production?

Two strategies emerged: the role of intuition and the use of metaphor in the process of writing, research and critical thinking. These were not deliberately considered as such but with the evolution of the workshop, they became significant ways to demonstrate how writing about art and design correlates to the process(es) of art and design creation and production. In developing a workshop for the first-year research essay attached to the mandatory foundations course on art and design history, the WLC has had to continually evolve our thinking about the process of writing as making as well and integrate this kind of process back into our workshop design. The workshops, therefore, required “tactile” material-based approaches to writing and model a writing process that has the intuitive exploratory elements of the studio (Figure 1).

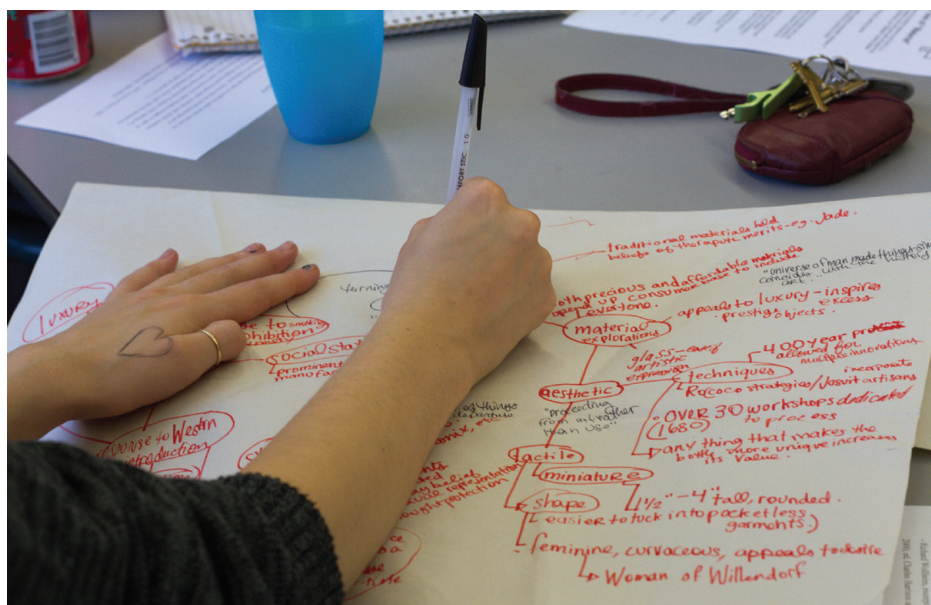


Figure 7.1. Student idea-mapping during WLC Workshop supporting VISC 1001/1002 (photo courtesy of Angie Roberts).

## The Assignment

The WLC offered the first iteration of the writing workshop during the fall term of 2011, to provide first-year students with strategies to succeed with a “critical anal-

ysis and research” essay assignment. This assignment was attached to a mandatory survey course on art and design history for all first-year students.

The assignment objectives required students to choose an art or design object on physical display at either the Art Gallery of Ontario or the Royal Ontario Museum (both Toronto); use one of four or five assigned art critique text excerpts to analyze the object; conduct and provide research that supports their thesis statement (which should link object and text). The paper was to be 1,000 words, and students were required to cite three research sources. With only recent exposure to analytical observation of an object and little or no experience critically evaluating a piece of art writing or art criticism, they either ignored or only superficially made use of the text excerpt. Most significantly they found it difficult to see this essay assignment as anything other than a grading device, as gatekeeper. Our biggest challenge then was in helping students see it as a way to gain insight into their own writing and making process(es) through the evaluation and research of objects from ancient to contemporary histories.

## The Role of Intuitive Exploration

In the first iteration of the workshop, we provided a two-hour session. The first hour focused on the writing process: free-writing, idea generation, focused writing, note-taking and integration of sources, acknowledgment and citations of sources guided by a slide presentation. The second half of the workshop entailed breakout groups working with a facilitator to work through parts of the assignment with sample texts and images of art/design.

The two challenges that students shared were first, the disconnect between the “instructional” portion of the workshop with the “doing” portion. The length of the slide presentation meant that when we finally invited students into groups, information needed to be repeated and the students had some difficulty comprehending the strategies we had described. Second, while these were all valuable tools and discussion points, students indicated that they hoped the workshop would more directly address the specific assignment and not focus on skills.

This first iteration of the workshop alerted us to the assumptions that students make in writing a research essay. Instead of trusting their first instincts as a way to inquiry, many felt they needed to take a formal, “academic” approach without an understanding of what this means or involves. By introducing the role of intuition as a way to assess the subject, students build the confidence to begin to develop pathways to research and knowledge. Intuitive response, often used in studio practice, allows students to bring in their personal reflection and context. When metaphor and intuition are seen and employed as part of research and analysis of visual culture, students begin to consider their agency as critical thinkers, as designers, makers and writers.

From the collective feedback and workshop “debrief,” we learned that the group work was the most effective part. Facilitators worked with objects (even if only in documentation-form) and encouraged students to relax around the rigid formulaic approach to writing a research essay. They now wrote down many notes, questions, observations about both the text and the object, then assembled these on the board to be arranged thematically. Because the total group size varied from five to 18 participants, this meant greater engagement, discussion and collaboration between student participants and peer facilitators (Figure 2). Students continued to focus on applying strategies to a physical object. They were also given enough time to work together to unpack a sample text excerpt followed by application of those strategies to analysis of the object. Peer facilitators and students alike were encouraged to acknowledge associations, revelations, and especially observations that seemed overly obvious or intuitive—and to use these to identify and propose deeper more complex and nuanced ideas/concepts in the text and in the art object, and sometimes identify possible thesis claims and/or hypotheses (Figure 7.3).

We realized more clearly that considering an object both methodically and intuitively could be correlated to the processes of brainstorming, sketching, and experimenting in the studio: it became both a visual exercise and one of rearranging and organizing ideas as one might organize and consider components in developing ideas for an art or design project. Inviting students to consider their own *making* processes in light of conceptual and material decisions they observed in these art and design works became paramount. We felt that if students could see this connection, the essay assignment could form a gateway to thinking and making.



*Figure 7.2. Students working together during WLC Workshop supporting VISCI 1001/1002 (photo courtesy of Angie Roberts).*



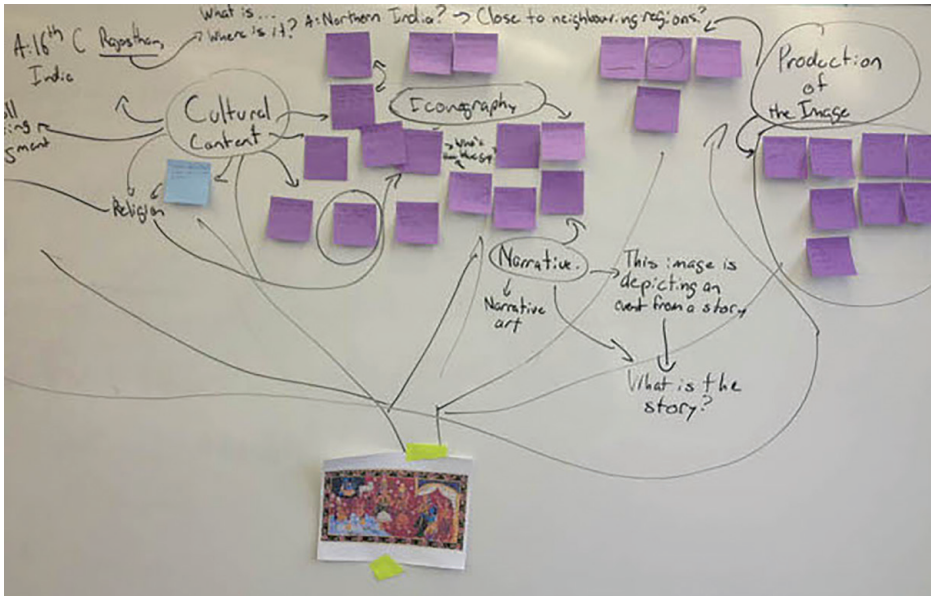


Figure 7.3. Idea map created by students during WLC Workshop supporting VISC 1001/1002 (photo courtesy of Angie Roberts).

In the last couple of years, the assignment changed and no longer requires a response to a text excerpt. A theme (ritual, awe, luxury, etc.) now frames the essay along with the choice of a question that directs research as well as thesis. Because of this change we now ask students to propose a theme that comes to mind when observing a physical object (on display for the workshop) (Figures 7.4 and 7.5).



Figures 7.4 and 7.5. Views of the object used in VISC workshops (photo by Rebecca Diederichs).





## Considering Visual Language and the Role of Metaphor

The use of metaphor gives us a range of ways to access understanding and meaning, especially in the context of an institution focused on visual culture. Often a “seat-of-the-pants,” spontaneous and possibly intuitive problem-solving method, it usually results in students’ grasping the idea more effectively. In her poem, “Essay on what I think about most,” Anne Carson (2001) quotes Aristotle on the value of metaphor: “. . . it is from metaphor that we can get hold of something new and fresh” [*Rhet.*, 1410b10-13]. Orr, Blythman, and Mullin (2008) propose that educators “mindfully shape visual metaphors for students so that the visuality and plasticity of language becomes apparent to them.” In the first iteration of the assignment, students were required to respond to a text excerpted from a longer theoretical text. Many students felt that they needed to read the entire text as part of the process to understand the excerpt. Their essays were bogged down by the summary of the text and left little essay space to apply it to their chosen object and integrate research sources into a discussion. We witnessed this in our role as tutors and in the workshop suggested that the excerpt, in itself, become *the lens through which they might view an object*. The thoughts articulated in the short excerpt could function then as a way to zoom in or adjust their perspective on and about the art or design piece.

When we discuss the integration of their research sources, we use the metaphor of a *potluck dinner* in which the student could invite a number of people to join them at their table: their reader, the artist/designer, the object itself and the authors of the resources they include. At such an event, they would receive and acknowledge the satisfying and/or unexpected ways that different contributions work together. Similarly, we describe the evolution of a thesis statement, especially at early stages of writing, as *a scientist’s preliminary hypothesis*. In this way students connect to processes of experimentation, to trial and error, assessment of findings and conclusions and refinement to a more directed (if necessary) thesis.

## Ongoing Evaluations and Revisions

The use and demonstration of metaphor and the spotlight on intuitive responses to visual art and design objects continue to be our focus as we facilitate these workshops. In the last two years of program delivery, we’ve witnessed much more engaged and active discussions about how art and design contribute, reveal, interact with both our immediate communities as well as extending to broader society and culture.

The following considerations have therefore become critical aspects of the workshops and continue to inform their evolution:

- Demonstrate that *writing is a process of making* akin to studio processes, i.e., through the language of metaphors employing artistic considerations (lens, frame, etc.).
- Encourage *writing at a university of art and design as an inventive possibility* rather than a prescribed form: a translation of and dialogue between a visual/physical/tangible language into textual language (text to text).
- Acknowledge *intuitive response to objects under scrutiny*: encourage students to listen to their emotional and intellectual reactions *before* they filter them through their understanding of academic expectations. A consideration of the space for these reactions and queries flows into critical thinking as *students tap into what they know, experience, and believe about their world*.
- Facilitate students' thinking and critique of authorial intention, context, perception and reception in ways that are intended to help them reflect upon their own processes of writing and studio and extend towards communication with and to the community beyond the university (Figure 7.8).

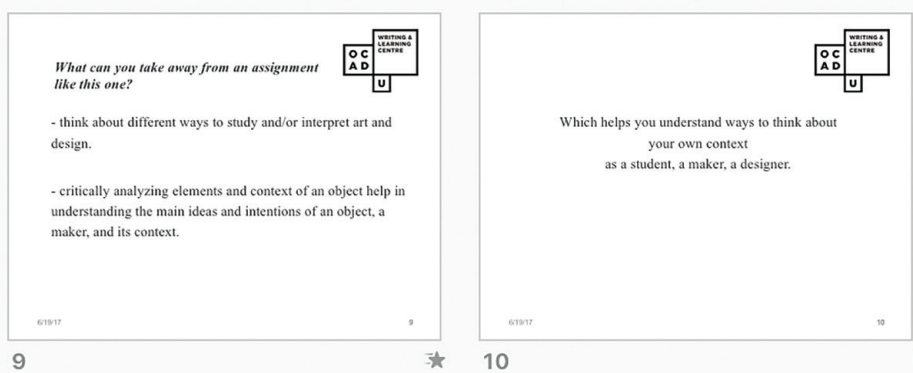


Figure 7.8. Slides from workshop presentation: *Writing, Research Workshop for VISC 1001/1002*.

Through five years of iterations, the priorities of these writing workshops continue to be to support students' intuitive engagement with visual culture, practice research as an organic as well as an organized activity, formulate questions about materials, formal elements, contexts, authorship, presentation, representation, etc. As participants in the world, students need to consider "how what they are composing relates to 'real world' genres" (Yancey, 2004). We intend that these writing workshops encourage them to access what they know, what they see, how they read. In this way, students see and think critically about their contributions to visual culture as they interact *in the real world*.

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# Writing as Making: Positioning a WAC Initiative to Bridge Academic Discourse and Studio Learning

Cary DiPietro, Susan Ferguson, and Roderick Grant

The shift from college to university curriculum at OCAD University in Toronto, an art and design school, has produced tensions between cultures of making and their perceived incompatibility with academic discourse. These tensions, however, afford opportunities to reflect upon the place of academic writing in relation to diverse forms of knowledge production within the university. Writing in the studio, which emphasizes creativity, process and peer critique, productively destabilizes conceptions of academic writing as a generalizable academic skill while fostering the codification of disciplinary knowledge in emergent academic discourses in art and design. These issues are discussed within the context of a university-wide Writing Across the Curriculum initiative.

OCAD University (OCAD U) in Toronto is the largest art and design university in Canada and the third largest in North America. The shift from college to university curriculum in 2002 has produced tensions between cultures of making in the studio and academic discourse. While these tensions resonate differently within each program and disciplinary context, writing has occupied a central position within pedagogical debates, ranging from concern about the quality of student writing to fears about the encroachment of academic writing upon studio-based education. This dissonance, however, affords opportunities to reflect upon what and how we learn in different pedagogical and disciplinary contexts and to recognize diverse forms of knowledge production within the academy. Studio education—which emphasizes embodied and emplaced knowledge, materiality, creativity, process, and peer critique—productively destabilizes conceptions of academic writing as a generalizable skill and isolated academic discourse. Likewise, a writing pedagogy mobilized for art and design education enables pragmatic interconnections between—and, in so doing, also reveals the false dichotomy of—academic and art and design practices, while, at the same time, fostering the codification of disciplinary knowledge in emergent academic discourses in art and design.

In this chapter, we will explore these issues within the context of a university-wide Task Force on Undergraduate Writing Across the Curriculum established in 2013 to address concerns about student writing. We will begin with a brief overview of the institutional context of art and design education at OCAD U that gave rise to the task force, highlighting some of the key pedagogical tensions that arose during

task force discussions. We will then describe the resulting Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiative, focusing on two key pieces that were developed to answer the need for a contextually appropriate and flexible approach: the development of degree-level learning outcomes for writing and the implementation process for a stream of WAC-designated courses. Finally, we will showcase its implementation in first-year in the Graphic Design program where writing is treated as a material practice through an emphasis on the acquisition and application of an intersubjective design vocabulary to support and enliven studio process, while also staking the grounds of Graphic Design as an evolving academic discourse and discipline.

## The Institutional Context of OCAD University

OCAD U offers 16 undergraduate programs in fine art, design, digital media, and liberal arts across three undergraduate Faculties: the Faculty of Art (FoA), Faculty of Design (FoD), and Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies (FoLASSIS). Although FoLASSIS now offers its own programs, it was initially established to support OCAD U's transition to a degree-granting university in 2002 by offering liberal studies courses to satisfy the breadth requirements of each undergraduate program. In this manner, FoLASSIS has been historically responsible for most formal, for-credit academic writing instruction at OCAD U through both the disciplinary writing assignments found within liberal arts courses and a required, first-year writing course (Essay and Argument), housed within FoLASSIS.

The limitations of the first-year composition course model are well-established within the WAC literature (Petraglia, 1995; Hall, 2006) and it is now commonly recognized that becoming a good writer takes time and that writing is best learned when grounded in the context of a particular discipline rather than treated as a generalizable skill (Carter, 2007). By writing within their disciplines, students engage in the legitimizing and regulatory activities of their professions (Haswell, 2006), “inventing the university” (Bartholomae, 1986) each time they attempt to write. Inventing the university requires negotiating between the attributes we associate with self-expression—creativity, point of view, voice—and the “peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse” of a scholarly or professional community that they must appropriate or to which they must adapt their own voices (Bartholomae, 1986, p. 4; see also Jones & Comprone, 1993; McLeod, 1989).

While the value to art and design education of first-year composition and the academic writing instruction characteristic of a liberal studies curriculum are not in dispute, the inherent shortcomings of the first-year composition model of writing instruction seem also to be applicable at OCAD U where faculty from across the university have become increasingly concerned about students' writing



competency and ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, especially within the context of studio-based programs. Although students struggle with writing requirements across their years of study, concerns about undergraduate writing competency have been especially pronounced in relation to capstone studio courses required in most programs, in which students combine studio making with sizeable writing components. Faculty expressed concerns that students were unprepared to write in ways specific to their professions and practices and that students seemed to have difficulty translating what they learned through writing instruction in liberal arts courses into the writing components of their final year.

## The Task Force on Undergraduate Writing Across the Curriculum

In the Spring of 2013, in response to these concerns, a university-wide task force with membership from all three Faculties, as well as academic support staff, was established to develop a comprehensive strategy to embed writing instruction across the undergraduate curriculum and improve student writing outcomes. The Task Force on Undergraduate Writing Across the Curriculum conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, investigated the types of writing assignments currently being used within programs at OCAD U, and researched models of writing instruction in higher education generally, and art and design education specifically. Importantly, it was recognized from the outset of the process that any model of writing instruction at OCAD U would need to be grounded in OCAD U's unique institutional context, the curricular needs of OCAD U programs and the pedagogical approaches of studio-based art and design education.

A key theme emerging from the task force discussions—and one that we will return to throughout this chapter—was a tension between studio making and academic writing. This was expressed as the sense that students tend not to perceive writing as directly relevant to their studies at OCAD U, believing instead that their sole focus ought to be on making in the studio. This (mis)perception is both a reflection of, and reinforced by, the positioning of the Essay and Argument course—and liberal arts courses in general—as the main locus of academic writing instruction at the university, allowing students and faculty alike to treat writing as a discrete skill that can be learned independently of making in the studio. Positioned in this way, writing is sequestered from student learning in their programs of study, existing “over there” in liberal arts courses. Writing viewed in this manner thus becomes an instrumentalist problem of grammar and mechanics that is the responsibility of a small group of academic writing instructors. Furthermore, many studio faculty members describe an ambivalent relationship to the inclusion of writing in their courses, on the one hand recognizing strongly the value of written

communication to their fields of art and design practice and, on the other hand, expressing reluctance about both their ability to support and assess student writing and the pragmatics of including writing in studio courses with already very full curriculum. Some faculty have gone further, questioning the very presence of writing in studio courses, some suggesting that writing ought properly to remain the responsibility of a liberal arts curriculum and others questioning whether the presence of writing is counterproductive to studio pedagogies that exemplify often unarticulated but demonstrably embodied ways of knowing and doing.

Writing has thus come to occupy an uneasy space at OCAD U, particularly against the backdrop of the transition to a university and the perceived encroachment of liberal arts content on studio curricula—within this context of educational change, the problem of student writing became, at times, a flashpoint for larger pedagogical debates about the very nature of teaching and learning at OCAD U. And yet, the needs assessment also clearly revealed that writing is already very present throughout the OCAD U curriculum, in many different courses, across all programs and all faculties (DiPietro, 2014). Similarly, it was also found that writing is already used to support student learning in a wide variety of ways—visual analysis, idea generation, critical reflection, researching materials, and concept development, among others—and across all course types (DiPietro, 2014). And so, while writing and its purpose and place within the curriculum are highly contested, it is also widely accepted that OCAD U students must be able to write well in the context of their programs and future professions.

## Writing in the Disciplines of Art and Design

It is in this last statement—“in the context of their programs and future professions”—that we might find a sense of the problem. Many programs at OCAD U do not identify as an academic discipline—indeed, they may actively resist identifying as an academic discipline—or are emerging disciplines where the academic discourse has not yet been well-established or well-documented in scholarly literature. And yet a key assumption of writing pedagogy, and indeed our approach from the outset of the task force discussions, is that writing instruction needs to support student learning in the context of academic programs which are themselves grounded in their respective disciplines. At the same time, “academic writing” is typically conceived of narrowly, as the conventional essay writing commonly found in the liberal arts, and there was understandable apprehension about the place of this type of academic writing in diverse disciplinary contexts, particularly art and design studio-based ones. And so it was that a kind of dissonance emerged around writing at OCAD U, with very different stakes involved for differently positioned faculty, students and staff.

It was by taking seriously WAC's emphasis on using writing to support student learning (Writing to Learn) and the rhetorical approach to writing as a social practice that takes place within particular discourse communities (Writing in the Disciplines) that we were able to mobilize these tensions within pedagogical debates about writing and develop a comprehensive model of writing instruction at OCAD U. As McLeod (2000) argues, WAC programs are most effective when they are transformative rather than additive; that is, when they engage faculty in deep collaborative work to enrich the curriculum through the renewal of disciplinary writing activities rather than simply adding writing to existing curriculum. In an art and design educational environment, this means beginning with an understanding of the specific curricular needs of different programs, and the writing genres and conventions of those same programs. In the context of studio education, it also means proceeding from an appreciation for the distinct value, aims and culture of studio pedagogy.

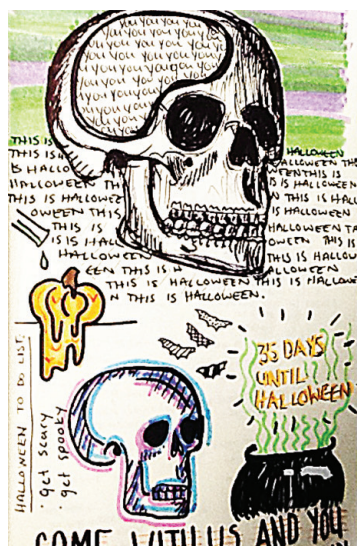
It follows, then, that typical understandings of academic writing must also be reconceived to include the rich, diverse forms of written knowledge production found throughout the studio curriculum. By drawing upon foundational pedagogical principles of studio education—including embodied and emplaced knowledge, materiality, creativity, process, and peer critique—and treating writing as a creative and material practice in its own right, the key assumptions of writing pedagogy can be extended, and perhaps even reimaged, to allow for an inclusive and relevant writing pedagogy for art and design education. In this sense, WAC in an art and design educational context is highly reciprocal, as writing pedagogy and studio pedagogy inform one another across different and shared pedagogical commitments.

## The Framework for Undergraduate Writing Competency

The mandate of the Task Force included the development of degree-level learning outcomes for writing and benchmarks for achieving them. The resulting document, OCAD U's Framework for Undergraduate Writing Competency, set an institutional standard by making explicit what students need to achieve to produce university-level writing. The Framework was developed with reference to standards for writing and communication, including the Canadian Language Benchmarks, the Writing Program Administrators' Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing, and the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards

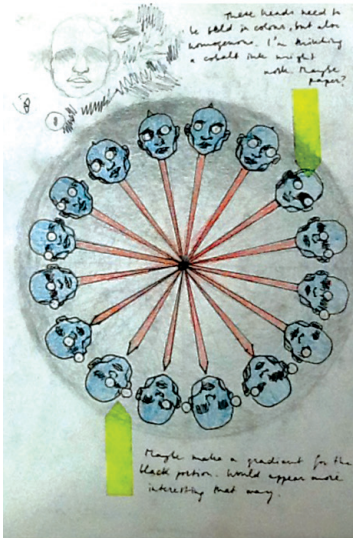
A learning-outcomes-based approach was chosen in part to shift the perception by some faculty that writing refers to the eloquent and grammatically proficient finished product, with the attendant concerns noted above about faculty not seeing themselves as competent language and writing teachers, to emphasize instead the variety of skills, knowledge and attitudes that students require in the *process* of writing—skills that are also essential to their processes of making. The learning outcomes include

the development of rhetorical or contextual awareness of their practice through the use of disciplinary vocabulary or the mastery of professional genres of writing, the ability to engage critically and analytically with textual, visual and material sources, and the use of tools in the process of developing concepts and arguments (brainstorming, mind-mapping, drafting, and revision) in ways that integrate written and oral discourse with visual and material production and encourage students to reflect upon the interconnections of the writing process with studio making. By focusing on the learning outcomes, faculty are able to develop unique and creative approaches to writing that are contextually specific to their disciplines—for example (in Figures 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4), having students combine the use of disciplinary vocabulary and written reflection with their practice of drawing in sketchbooks and process work in first-year courses—while, at the same time, drawing connections via common learning outcomes to their learning in liberal studies courses. Note that the figures shown below were collected as part of a multi-year research study approved by OCAD University's Research Ethics Board (REB 100805). To participate in the study, students consent to the collection, analysis and dissemination of their visual course work for research purposes, indicating whether they prefer to remain anonymous or be credited for their work when reproduced in scholarly presentations and publications.



"I'm not sure why I love using highlighter so much but it's probably my favourite medium to use, however, I'm starting to explore using white out in unconventional ways. I like to use it as paint, making things white, obviously; to use it to create texture, layering it as it slowly dries; I use it to stop sharpie from leaking through the next page as a primer. I use it to not only fix mistakes but to create them instead."

*Figure 8.1. Excerpt from a sketchbook by Siobhan Waldock, produced for a required first-year drawing course in the Drawing and Painting program taught by David Griffin, Faculty of Art, and excerpt from the same student's written reflection on the use of the sketchbook to develop a habitual drawing and writing practice where they reflect on their materials, how they experiment with materials, and where such experimentation leads to creativity.*



"When it comes to highly conceptual projects, writing is my first touchpoint, often transcribing an inner voice as it tracks my train of thought (my ideas are generated almost completely internally, save for occasional visual prompts from Tumblr or random stumbled-upons). I find this approach helps when the time comes to verbalise the 'message' behind the final product, since there is this initial rough draft of ideas already in place."

Figure 8.2. Excerpt from a sketchbook (anonymous) for *Drawing and Painting* (as in Figure 8.1) with excerpt from a written reflection statement in which the student articulates why writing is valuable to their critical and creative practice.



"The original on the left looks less frightening and more protective, based on how its standing. Since I wanted the lion to initially appear aggressive, I thought changing his body position, as I did on the right, would look more frightening as if the lion could leap out at you ready to attack."



"I tested the colours I wanted to use, as well as the medium. I tried colouring the thumbnails with marker and pencil crayon (on the left) and then with water colour (on the right). I decided to go with the water colour because I liked the more organic look and the wash I could create of the sky with the watercolour."

Figure 8.3. Excerpts from a mind-mapping exercise by Brigitte Bernardo in a required first-year course in the Illustration program taught by Shea Chang, Faculty of Design. The assignment requires students to creatively reinterpret their zodiac sign to convey a unique visual message.



"This artwork conveys a message about homesickness of those students who are living abroad without their family. As an international student, I have been in Canada for more than two years. I always experience homesickness no matter how long I have been here. I believe that most of the international students usually experience the same emotion as mine because we left the place where we were familiar with and then moved to a part of the world that we knew nothing about, which was an adventure. To be honest, the emotion of missing home and family is uncontrollable."



*Figure 8.4. Final illustration and artist statement for the zodiac assignment from Figure 8.3 by Cindy Zhao. The student reflects on their personal experience as an international student, demonstrating how students make meaning in language that emerges from their personal experience, the embodiedness of their creative practice, and their place in the world.*

## Negotiating the Tensions between “Academic” Discourse and Art and Design

As noted above, the Framework also enables a flexible and contextually-nuanced approach to the implementation of the WAC initiative in course and program development. Rather than prescribing a curriculum or a fixed approach to writing pedagogy, the Framework instead permits interpretation and translation of the learning outcomes into different disciplinary contexts. Through a course development process, faculty actively engage with the language of writing pedagogy in order to translate it into their unique curricular and disciplinary contexts. Given the tensions described above between academic discourse and studio pedagogy, such engagement requires a negotiation of sometimes fraught and often contested language and concepts.

To give but one example of such a flashpoint, the development of research skills and information literacy are described in the Framework in the more neutral language of “information gathering.” In art and design education, “research” has the rhetorical force of conventional academic practice and, for many studio faculty, therefore potentially problematic connotations. An institutional emphasis

on research, an emphasis driven by funding and tenure processes, is sometimes interpreted as administrative pressure to force art and design education to conform to an academic norm. Where “academic” research is understood primarily to mean using library databases to find authoritative scholarly sources and documenting and citing textual sources using established disciplinary conventions, “studio-based research”—a coinage many faculty members are disinclined to use—involves a variety of embodied, haptic, and empirical explorations of processes and materials requiring, for example, sketching, feeling, observing, copying, experimenting, and prototyping. Although a common observation by faculty is that such studio-based research is embodied and does not require written language, in fact, the challenge—and often the point of meaningful connection as well as, occasionally, a difficult impasse—is to demonstrate how writing is also an embodied practice, and that no visual or material practice exists, as it were, outside of language and, therefore, that visual and material research can be enriched by a variety of written and oral interactions between faculty and students.

By unpacking the implications of information-gathering skills in studio situations, we can draw out parallels between textual, visual, and material practices, to show, for example, how students can use writing as a means of documenting visual sources in a sketchbook or journal (e.g., recording the act of walking down the street and observing graphic design) or by annotating photographs and images, or how they can describe their studio research orally in critique and cite their sources of information (see Figure 8.5). The need to teach students more intentionally how to document and cite visual and material sources has, in fact, taken on new urgency given the rising tide of instances of academic misconduct involving visual and material plagiarism. What we discover, then, by drawing out the parallel between “academic” or textual practices and studio-based visual and material practices is a pragmatic but increasingly false dichotomy, especially in light of OCAD U’s transition to university curriculum and the still emergent disciplinarity of art and design education. Working through the language of research thus becomes an institutional and educational imperative.

## WAC Course Development

In addition to the Framework, another key piece of the WAC initiative is a stream of designated WAC courses, one stream in each undergraduate program at each year level such that all students take one required WAC course in each year of their program. These designated courses were identified from existing courses within the curriculum that already had a writing component or for which the inclusion of a writing component was well-aligned with the course. The implementation of the initiative involves working with faculty to align their course learning outcomes,



teaching and learning activities and assessments with the benchmarks identified in the Framework. As noted above, the course development process requires faculty to interpret the learning outcomes of the Framework according to the contextually specific needs of their students and practices of their programs, adapting or developing new writing strategies and assignments. As such, the process is dialogic, driven by faculty and requiring their expertise, and supported and facilitated by a WAC team comprised of faculty mentors, educational developers and language/writing specialists. The initiative is also tied to a complementary strategy to support the learning needs of second-language writers.



*Figure 8.5. Excerpt from an assignment showing primary material research by Ruitong Zhu, a student in a first-year Materials and Methods course in the Material Art and Design program taught by Joni Moriyama, Faculty of Design.*

There is no prescribed WAC curriculum and, to date, the emphasis has been on low-stakes in-class writing activities integrated into studio-based making activities. The course development process involves a variety of strategies, including an online survey or "reflection" tool to help faculty develop their courses, pre- and mid-term faculty

workshops, faculty and student-focused events such as lunchtime roundtables and exhibitions of student work, and the development of teaching resources in the form of a faculty toolkit. The Writing & Learning Centre also provides optional short workshops for students tied to learning outcomes in the Framework that can be embedded in classes.

The most effective implementation strategy has been the use of a model of collaborative course-based research. Using an iterative methodology informed by collaborative inquiry and participatory action research, disciplinary faculty team up with writing specialists and educational developers to develop and test writing activities and assignments designed to help students achieve the Framework's learning outcomes. The approach grounds theory in practice in the classroom, enabling the refinement of best practices in ways that are meaningful and authentic, as well as responsive to the needs of a particular discipline or context.

The research is premised on the recognition that a contextually nuanced approach requires deep and meaningful investigation into the rich and diverse forms of written knowledge production in art and design, as well as the skills students need to progress in their disciplines. It also reflects our awareness of the need to test the assumptions of and generate validity evidence for the Framework. Faculty who participate in the research become, in turn, advocates for the initiative who are able to share the results of their research demonstrated through student samples of written and visual work. Collaborating staff from the writing and teaching centers translate their enhanced expertise to other WAC collaborations and use the results of the research to guide and inform the initiative while also contributing to educational research. One especially fruitful collaboration has been with Graphic Design faculty teaching the first-year WAC-designated course.

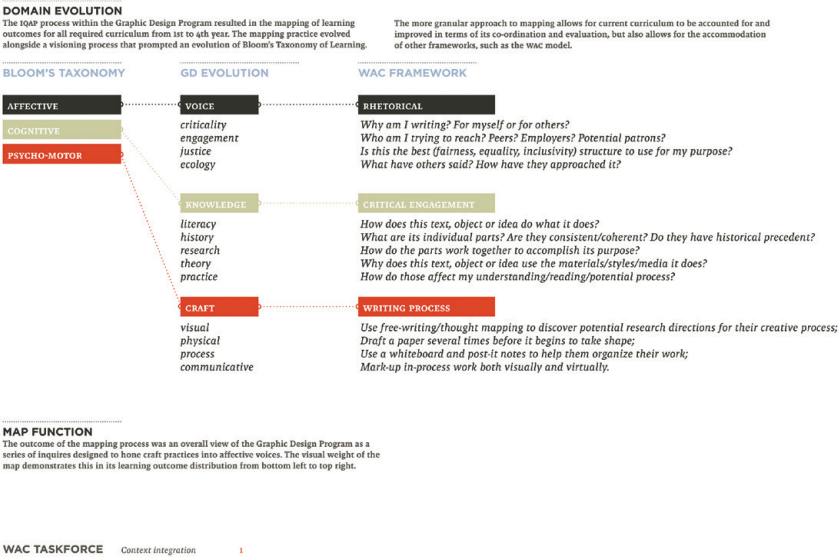
## Learning Language, Learning Practice

An active student press as well as faculty output in research and scholarship indicate that an interest in and productive energy around writing and design as a discourse exists in and outside of existing Graphic Design curriculum. In place of introducing writing as a tangential and mechanical exercise exterior to design-as-a-practice, recent efforts in the first year of the program embed an approach to WAC that *a) builds facility with disciplinary language, b) initiates a contextual awareness of writing as a conceptual/rhetorical tactic of making, and c) commences a reflective relationship between visual and verbal form.* These three facets of learning serve as a foundation for the development of Graphic Design as critical visual rhetoric in the second, third and fourth years of the program. As the first year concentrates on the acquisition of formal skill and technique, writing is introduced as a low-stakes means to extend the activity of design as a process. The studio introduction of WAC begins with an intersubjective sense of design vocabulary in the first year of the program.

## a) builds facility with disciplinary language

The acquisition of disciplinary language is a complex and long-term activity, but common ground can be found from the perspective that design will be a second language for all students regardless of linguistic proficiency in English. The mapping of a core design vocabulary in the Graphic Design program at OCAD U (Figure 8.6) allowed students across multiple sections of a core design studio to see the language of their discipline in a relational context—not all language functions in the same way—where some terms are descriptive, some are active, and some are shared by other disciplines. The map was given as a paper handout at the beginning of each project throughout the first year as a means for students to identify, track, and define where the given project existed in terms of language. As all projects were composed of multiple phases over four weeks, the maps served as a means for students to demonstrate their sense of where a project started, and where it went as the project evolved towards its conclusion.

### BDes Graphic Design



*Figure 8.6. Excerpt from a curriculum map by Roderick Grant for the Graphic Design program at OCAD University showing the relationship of a modified Bloom's taxonomy, program learning outcomes and WAC learning outcomes identified in the Framework for Undergraduate Writing Competency.*

The intent of the map is to help students establish the linguistic territory of their discipline, and to identify inter-disciplinary potential when the vocabulary seems inadequate. The map is thus never thought of, nor presented as, a totality,



Students who can begin to see design language as a means to initiate visual making processes are well on their way to more advanced conceptual and theoretical investigation. We don't just see contrast between black and white, between blue and yellow, we make that contrast happen, we initiate that principle if we have a working definition of that principle. That principle then, can guide *how*, and therefore *what*, we make as designers—this is an active participation in the definition of language, and brings design and writing together as generative practices (see Figure 8.8). Though being able to write down what one is about to do doesn't necessarily mean one will be able to do it, we will be able to respond to whatever is made, and iterate the work both verbally and visually.

PRINCIPLES	ACTIONS	PRACTICES
Means of organizing elements and their relationships.	The manipulation, disruption, or qualification of principles.	To further build upon our core language we look to other practices and disciplines for their specialized lexicons.
ASYMMETRY/SYMMETRY ATTRACTION/REPULSION BACKGROUND/FOREGROUND BALANCE/ANSTABILITY CLARITY/AMBIGUITY COMPOSITION/STRUCTURE CONTRAST/HARMONY DENSITY/SPARSITY DIRECTION DOMINANCE/RESERVATION GRADATION HIERARCHY MOVEMENT OPACITY/TRANSPARENCY POSITIVE/NEGATIVE SPACE PROPORTION RADIATION REPETITION RHYTHM SCALE STATIC/ACTIVE TENSION UNITY/FRAGMENT VARIATION	ACCELERATE ADD ALIGN CROP DISPLACE DISRUPT DISTRIBUTE DIVIDE ENLARGE EXAGGERATE EXTRACT EXTRUDE FRACTURE FRAME INTERLOCK INTERSECT ISOLATE JUXTAPOSE LAYER MIRROR MODIFY MOVE MULTIPLY NEST OVERLAP PENETRATE REDUCE REFLECT SHEAR SHIFT SPLIT SUBTRACT TORQUE WAVE	ARCHITECTURE CINEMATOGRAPHY DEVELOPMENT COLOUR DRAWING INTERACTIVITY JOURNALISM MATERIALITY PHOTOGRAPHY TYPOGRAPHY
<b>GESTALT PRINCIPLES</b> CLOSURE CONTAINMENT CONTINUITY GROUPING PÄGNANZ PROXIMITY REPETITION SIMILARITY		

*Handwritten notes:*

- static/look* (next to ASYMMETRY/SYMMETRY)
- can be shown through colour & placement* (next to HIERARCHY)
- what even is my thing? get clarification* (next to RHYTHM)
- craft is the quality of how smth is made* (next to FRAME)
- framing the cube might make it apparent it's the most dominant part* (next to FRAME)
- too obvious!* (next to a bracketed section of the table)
- repeating certain values that might create emphasis* (next to PÄGNANZ)
- contrast helps define the space* (next to SIMILARITY)
- warm advances, cool recedes* (next to SIMILARITY)
- modernism ought to distinguish itself from nature* (next to SIMILARITY)
- Space proportion* (next to WAVE)
- Composition* (next to WAVE)
- axis: — | — + —* (next to WAVE)

When we talk about our work, and that of our peers, we need to share a common ground. The most direct route to a common understanding in any critique is to define, and share, a core vocabulary. This chart is the beginning to just such a lexicon (the

vocabulary and language of a discipline)—by no means comprehensive—but more than rudimentary. The terms here vary little across the design disciplines and form a strong base from which to branch out into other practices.

2017/2018

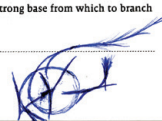
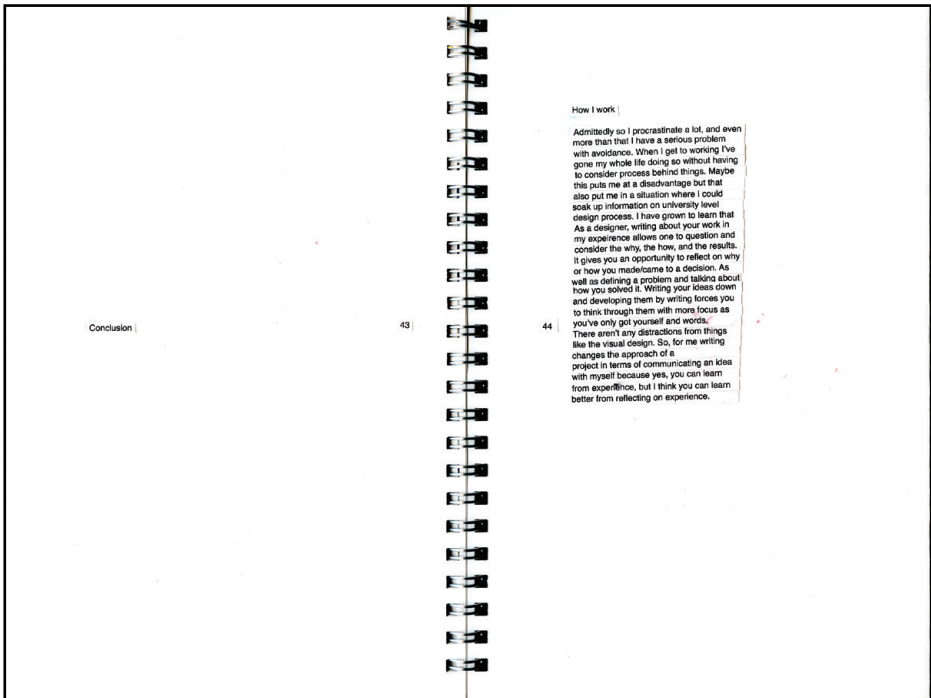


Figure 8.8. Excerpt from an assignment by Vuoni Unigabe, in a first-year Design Process studio, required by the Graphic Design program, taught by Roderick Grant, Faculty of Design. The assignment combines visual and material exploration of design vocabulary with short, written reflections.

### c) commences a reflective relationship between visual and verbal form

Graphic Design reserves a dedicated discourse for the study of language in the form of *typography*. Typography at OCAD U is a studio sequence of five courses. While students are exposed to a full range of digital approaches to given design projects, the final project of the year is a fully hand-assembled book of their reflective writing in relation to their studio work (Figure 8.9). The project gives students a chance to review their work, but most importantly, gives students the experience of building language from its constituent fragments and structures as an active visual practice.



*Figure 8.9. Excerpt from an assignment by Jason Aronsberg, in the first-year Design Process studio. The assignment asks students to assemble their own writing, typographically, by hand, word by word, line by line to gain experience with language as having physical/material properties.*

In taking writing from a generic word processing document, printing it onto plain white paper, then cutting that paper apart to be re-composed within a specific page format, syntactic issues meet visual and rhetorical issues of spacing, structure, composition, and visual movement within a defined format—the page. The requirement of performing this process with paper, scissors, tape, etc., gives the work consequence and real, physical weight. Importantly, students become active



participants in constructing academic discourse in the discipline of Graphic Design through their engagement in this work—language as a way of “doing” the discipline (Carter, 2007, p. 385). As students engage with this practice, they come to see that language can be defined, applied, but also visually re-contextualized as it has a conceptual as well as a phenomenal life. An exposure to the life of language in vocabulary acquisition, generative potential and as a means to reflect on individual decisions and praxis, grounds first-year students in an experience of language as having unique potential across different contexts, practices, and disciplines.

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# Tumblr as a Visual Invention Heuristic

Faith Kurtyka

This chapter explains how I used Tumblr as a visual invention heuristic for an assignment that asked students to create their own theory about leadership. I present the scaffolding of the assignment and examples of student work to show how the Tumblr assignment diversified students' thinking about leadership and created a space for their own experience in crafting the leadership theory.

Tumblr (<https://www.tumblr.com/>) is a microblogging website and social network where users can either create their own unique content—such as artwork, animated gifs, text posts, video, and audio—or share the content other users have posted by “reblogging” it. Tumblr users follow those who post content related to their interests and reblog this content for their own followers. Users view the posts of people they follow on their “dashboard”; from there, they can either like, reblog, or share to other platforms. In contrast to more user-friendly social media platforms like Facebook, Tumblr's complicated navigation and the lack of uniform structure offer insiders a sense of privacy, making Tumblr more welcoming of the weird, the offbeat, the creative, and the artistic (Dewey, 2015). Tumblr attracts teens and youth who see it as a refuge from the older adults on Facebook and Twitter (Monteiro, 2015).

The primary way that people use Tumblr is the bricolage of images and text, a visual literacy skill that is important beginning in primary grades. Particularly in middle school, students are “honing the creative dispositions of keen observation, purposeful investigation, data collection and analysis skills, collaborative interaction techniques and unique interpretations” (Smilan, 2016, p. 167). Tumblr requires searching, sorting, organizing, and combining images and text, challenging the user to find connections between ideas and across media. In a study of eighth- and ninth-grade students' multimodal projects, Kelly A. Hrenko and Andrea J. Stairs (2012) demonstrated that students' “ideas have become more specific and powerful when artmaking and writing are coupled” especially when “visual, auditory, oral, written” modalities are combined.

The appeal of Tumblr's customizability, focus on images, and popularity with youth demographics led me to consider ways it might be used in a variety of classrooms, including my college composition class. Previous approaches to social media in rhetoric and composition have examined how students compose on social media for different audiences (Swartz, 2010; Vie, 2008), but I want to look at Tumblr more as a personal, artistic composing tool for helping student writers

think through what they want to say. In this chapter, I explain how I used Tumblr as a visual invention heuristic for an assignment that asked students to create their own theory about leadership. I present the scaffolding of the assignment and examples of student work to show how the Tumblr assignment diversified students' thinking about leadership and created a space for their own experience in crafting the leadership theory.

## My Leadership Theory: The Curriculum Model

I developed this curriculum for a first-year composition course for students in a leadership living-learning community called the "Freshman Leadership Program" at my institution. As part of this highly selective program, the students live together in a residence hall, do service together, attend a weekly seminar on leadership, and take a composition class together. The first unit of the class focused on images of leadership, and the students conducted a visual analysis of videos and photos of famous leaders. In the second unit, students studied different theories of leadership such as heroic leadership, servant leadership, and transformational leadership. For the third and final unit, I wanted students to develop their own leadership theory, but I was not sure how to get them thinking creatively about their own views of leadership outside of the theories we had already read or give them confidence that they could come up with their own theory comparable to the leadership theories written by professional scholars in the field of leadership studies.

I thought that Tumblr might present a heuristic for helping students invent and articulate their own leadership theory. I first learned about uses of Tumblr while conducting research for my article, "Trends, Vibes, and Energies: Building on Students' Strengths in Visual Composing" (Kurtyka, 2015). I interviewed a member of a social sorority, "Margo," who was responsible for creating a Tumblr to recruit new members to the sorority. Margo drew from hundreds of photos of the sorority members to create a coherent image for the sorority. My previous assignments with visuals had asked students to analyze a single photo or image, but my conversation with Margo showed me that Tumblr requires analyzing sometimes hundreds of images and perceiving how they work together to create a singular message or elicit a specific emotional response. I wanted to create an assignment that reflected the more sophisticated rhetorical task of analyzing how multiple images and text work together.

I began with a homework assignment to familiarize students with Tumblr and to understand its place in the rhetorical landscape of social media. As Amber Buck (2012) argues, "The literate activity that individuals engage in on social network sites is, of course, produced under a number of rhetorical, social, and technological constraints" (p. 32). While all the students had heard of Tumblr, and about half of them had created Tumblrs, I wanted them to be familiar with Tumblr's

social impact, target demographics, and the different uses of Tumblr. The following homework assignment helped students think critically about the literate activity that Tumblr enables.

## Homework Assignment

Read:

“Tumblr and Social Media Demographics” (Smith, 2013)

“Tumblr is the New Front Page of the Internet” (Dewey, 2015)

Write:

- Why has Tumblr become so popular, according to these articles?
- What makes Tumblr different from other social media platforms, according to these articles?
- Why do most Tumblr users use Tumblr, according to these articles?
- Find one of your own favorite Tumblrs and post the link. Why do you think this Tumblr is effective? In what ways does it effectively use the Tumblr format?

Once the students were familiar with the genre of Tumblr and its impact as a mode of social media, I wanted them to be able to compare and contrast it with other forms of social media. So the next day in class, we had a “Social Media Town Hall.” I told them that to support each other during finals, their community had decided that they would all give up all but one form of social media until the end of the semester. In class, we were going to hold a “town hall” to decide which form of social media to keep. The students were divided into six groups: Team Facebook, Team Twitter, Team Instagram, Team Snapchat, Team Tumblr, and one team to serve as judges. Each team gave a three-minute presentation to the class on why their form of social media should be the only one the class would use until the end of the semester. The team of judges then had to facilitate discussion and debate for the whole class and decide on a winner. This activity allowed the students to consider the different rhetorical purposes and audiences of each form of social media and to think about the affordances of Tumblr in the context of other social media.

After students had a better grasp of the functions and purposes of Tumblr, I introduced the assignment.

## My Leadership Theory

Our first unit focused on visuals of leadership, while our second unit focused on leadership theories. In this third unit, you’ll put both together, creating a Tumblr

page of images of leadership and using these images to create your own leadership theory.

1. Sign up for a Tumblr account and create a Tumblr page specifically for this class. Set up a profile and design the look and feel of your site.
2. Upload to your Tumblr page of at least 10 posts (images, quotes, audio, video, etc.) that you feel relate to your own beliefs on leadership.
  1. For each of these posts, you should write a one-sentence caption explaining how this post connects to your idea of leadership. You can “re-blog” other people’s material, but you must write your own caption for each post.
  2. Your Tumblr should have at least one of each:
    1. Image—at least one should be a photo you took
    2. Song (can be your own or another person’s)
    3. Video (can be your own or another person’s)
    4. Quote (can be your own or another person’s)
3. Once you’ve put together your Tumblr page, write a 1,000-word essay where you create a single, coherent theory of leadership drawing on your Tumblr posts as evidence. Your theory does not need to be ground-breaking but it should:
  1. Provide a guideline or useful way of thinking about leadership.
  2. Be unique to you and your views about leadership.
  3. Use the Tumblr posts as evidence to support your theory. You do not need to analyze every post, but you should analyze at least 3-5 closely.

To get the students thinking about the connections between the images and their writing, I created my own Tumblr page and my own leadership theory: “un-famous leadership,” meaning that the best leaders try not to be famous or widely known. I again divided the class into five teams and one team of judges, and I showed them different images. For each image, they had to argue why it should or should not be used to support the leadership theory. The team of judges then determined if their arguments were persuasive.

## Conclusion: Successes and Challenges

Students reported that they enjoyed creating their Tumblr pages and writing their essays in conjunction with their Tumblrs. They found creating the Tumblr a refreshing change from typical brainstorming activities, and they enjoyed sharing their Tumblrs with me and with the class. Two particular successes stood out to me and are worthy of mention here. First, I found that Tumblr helped students think outside the box in coming up with and developing the theory. One student, David, developed a theory he called “Ant Leadership Theory.” David’s Tumblr combined a YouTube video of an ant colony working together, comics about ants, a Henry

David Thoreau quote about ants, and a clip from the Disney movie *Antz*. In his essay, he drew on his images, texts, and videos to define Ant Leadership as “working hard in a caring fashion so goals can be achieved with subtlety.” David argues that humans are typically annoyed by ants, yet he found that his Tumblr posts demonstrate that ants are “unselfish, good communicator[s], humble, and hard working.” I found that the *diversity* of ways of thinking about ants—the movie, videos, popular conceptions of ants—showed how creating the Tumblr expanded his thinking about ants and thus led to a more interesting, encompassing, and unexpected leadership theory.

David’s work also points to an issue I had with getting students to work in a recursive process. Ideally, the students would have moved back and forth between the development of the theory and the creation of the Tumblr; however, many (like David) came up with their theory first and then found the visuals to go along with them. In retrospect, I would have asked the students begin creating the Tumblr earlier in the semester, perhaps adding images of leadership once or twice a week earlier in the semester, before I had even given them the assignment.

I also counted as a success students’ use of their own experience in creating the leadership theory. I wanted the theories to be personally meaningful for the students, especially because they were in a program designed to form them into effective leaders. In previous classes, students have struggled to see their personal experience as relevant in academic writing and with how to incorporate personal experience and maintain the formality of the essay. In this case, the assignment requirement to select one of their own photos for the Tumblr created a more natural space for their own experience. One student, Rachael, uses a photo of herself and a classmate to illustrate “selfless leadership,” which she describes as “putting others’ needs before your own.” Her Tumblr includes a photo of herself and her friend lying on the floor of their residence hall study area. She writes:

We were studying and [my friend] decided that she was done with anatomy and laid down on the floor. I shared her sentiments exactly and decided to lie down next to her [to show] her that I too was in a time of desperation and that we were on the same level.

Overall, I felt that the students’ leadership theories were more inspired because of their uses of Tumblr. I would have liked their writing process to be more recursive, working back and forth between the Tumblr and the essay, but I still felt that creating the Tumblr expanded and diversified their thinking.

This assignment is more about the bricolage of texts rather than the specific use of Tumblr, so it could easily be adapted to K-12 settings with or without the use of technology. Younger children could make collages accompanied by handwritten or

typed text that support a central theme, argument, or idea. Cory Callahan (2015) argues that visual analysis skills, like those required to complete this assignment, have larger significance for students living in a visual world: “Pictorial-based social media (e.g., Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Tumblr) continue to encourage and sustain contemporary culture; thus, it is reasonable to conclude that citizens will increasingly need the ability to critique visual information and take informed action” (p. 62). Ultimately, Tumblr inspired a creative bricolage that challenged students to think and compare ideas across different forms of media, a skill that will help them to engage as consumers of media.

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# Visual Thinking Strategies in the Composition Classroom

Summer Hess, Justin Young, and Heidi Arbogast

English instruction at the K-12 and college levels includes practice in multi-modal communication and multiliteracies; however, college composition is distinct because it is grounded in rhetoric as a theoretical and pedagogical framework. This chapter demonstrates how Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) methodology can improve student success in the transition to college by providing a bridge from K-12 English Language Arts instruction, based on the Common Core State Standards, to instruction on visual and digital rhetoric commonly provided in college writing classrooms.

Professors and secondary school teachers across the country are collaborating on ways to bridge the high school and college experience and to give students the tools they need to be successful in this transition. Within the realm of language arts and college composition, this transition is an important aspect for college success across disciplines. But while there is some alignment between K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and discipline-approved college-level learning outcomes, the expectations for what constitute a college-ready writer can vary greatly, and more strategies for helping students of diverse abilities bridge this gap are needed. Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is an arts-based teaching method designed to augment visual literacy and critical thinking in school-age children; interestingly, it is also being used in university settings to continue the development of twenty-first century habits of mind for working and learning. Although VTS has been used across age groups, populations, and educational institutions, it has not yet been fully explored as an agent for the successful transition from high school to college—a transition requiring students to read and analyze traditional and multimodal texts from multiple perspectives, including the use of a range of rhetorical concepts. This chapter reports on how VTS was used in two English 101 courses to enhance learning outcomes and help sighted students practice twenty-first century habits of mind.

## Course Description and VTS Application

VTS was used in two English 101 courses in Fall 2014 and again in Fall 2015. The course was supported by the Office of Community Engagement that awarded Summer Hess, a quarterly faculty instructor, a small grant, which paid for the stu-

dents' museum entries and compensated the instructor for some of the extra hours invested in course redesign. Hess had worked at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (MAC) on a six-month grant-funded project called the Teen Interpreter Program, which trained high school students to engage the public in conversation about exhibitions in the galleries. The program used VTS to train these students in the art of inquiry and critical discussion, and the instructor observed how high school students practiced and excelled in many twenty-first century skills that some of her English 101 students would struggle to apply in the university environment. She was inspired to complete introductory and advanced VTS trainings with the hopes of using the teaching method to help her students transition from a language arts approach to writing to a more rhetorically-driven strategy of analysis and composition. She integrated the discussion method into the English 101 curriculum in three ways: as a classroom warm up, in preparation for the museum visit, and as a vehicle for peer-to-peer and community engagement.

VTS is a research-based teaching method used by museums and educators worldwide to facilitate conversations about works of art. It was co-created through the work of veteran museum educator Philip Yenawine and cognitive psychologist Abigail Housen. Originally developed as a museum teaching strategy to nurture aesthetic development in the early 1990s, VTS quickly grew into a school program to support observation, creative and critical thinking, listening, and communication skills in students. VTS asks students to pause and ponder three related questions: Firstly, "What's going on in this picture?" Secondly, students are asked to reason and search for evidence with the repeated use of the question, "What do you see that makes you say that?" Finally, students are asked to look longer and to probe deeper with, "What more can you/we find?" Housen's research found that regular exposure to VTS augments academic performance in students through the promotion of aesthetic and critical thinking skills, which can be transferred to non-art objects and other subjects, including writing (Housen, 2001). It creates a student-centered environment through engaging and open-ended questions, and validates and encourages growth through the facilitator's paraphrasing of student responses. VTS is a constructivist model and asks students to apply what they know, thereby gaining new insight from the careful scaffolding of a teacher's facilitation and from peer interaction as the conversation builds from their collective reasoning. The strategy grew out of Abigail Housen's research on aesthetic thinking, leading to the creation of an aesthetic development stage theory to understand how we make meaning while looking at a work of art. The VTS framework helps students express their ideas while teaching them how to ground their thinking in evidence.

During VTS discussions, students practice reasoning in a social context and learn to use the ideas of others to expand their perspectives. They experiment with other composition related skills such as observation, interpretation, the provision of evidence, listening, elaboration, argumentation, the practice of new vocabulary, and the

revision of their initial impression or interpretations—all key predicates for effective writing. In this way, VTS was used to support the following course goals: First, to identify and analyze the elements of the rhetorical situation, including context, purpose, audience, subject, and author; Second, to read, comprehend, and analyze a variety of popular and/or scholarly texts; Third, to collaborate in small and large peer groups for the purpose of sharing relevant ideas, respectful opinions, and constructive feedback; and Finally, to develop a recursive and collaborative writing process that includes planning, drafting, revising, organizing, editing, and proofreading.

First, twice weekly VTS discussions were used as a warm up activity to help students shift their attention from other preoccupations to the demands of the classroom and to give them opportunities to practice composition-related skills on a regular basis. In the warm-up, an image was projected onto a large screen at the beginning of every class while students observed the slide and wrote about it for two minutes in response to the opening VTS question: “What’s going on in this image?” Then, the instructor facilitated a 15-minute conversation about the image, during which she mirrored students’ thinking through paraphrasing and emphasized similarities and differences among key ideas. Finally, students returned to the original piece of writing and were asked to record “What more did I find?” in order to help them practice a collaborative writing process. This writing was entered into the students’ Writers’ Logs and submitted as part of their final portfolio. Although encountered as unusual at first, within two weeks students anticipated and looked forward to the exercise at the beginning of each class. The instructor selected images from many mediums and time periods according to the image selection guidelines put forward by VTS co-founder, Philip Yenawine (2003), so as to engage different kinds of viewers and expose them to diverse media and historical contexts.

Next, these discussions were used to prepare students for the museum environment, where they chose a cultural artifact to research and analyze for their final paper. The final paper was a persuasive essay divided into two parts: a visual analysis and a researched argument. Although often reticent to let their guard down in a new and formal environment, VTS provided students with the confidence to interact with works of art in the museum setting. VTS also helped students practice the four habits of mind that bolstered their writing abilities and provided them with the confidence to interact with original works of art in a new context. It gave them an approach for creating meaning that could be applied across a diverse range of situations and reinforced the idea that composition skills can be employed outside classroom. Finally, it gave them practice viewing and analyzing a variety of visual and digital works, which made students more comfortable with the rhetorical skills necessary to complete the final paper. Before the end of the visit, students selected objects from the 100 Stories exhibit, a centennial celebration of the history of the Northwest, which incorporates fine art, video footage, photography, and cultural objects.

## VTS at Work in the Writing Classroom

A few samples of student work will help demonstrate the impacts of VTS in student thinking and writing. First, here is the first draft of the final paper of the least college-ready student in the Fall 2014 class:

What I first noticed about the object is how worn out they were. Where my eyes travel next is the writing on the square they were sitting on. My first impression was why there is an old pair of boots here what is so significant about them. The dominant colors on this pair of boots were like a brown and black with a like a leather strap welded over the shoe laces. The brown part of the shoes were on the sides and the rest of it was black including the thick leather strap that was over the laces. Light is used in this object by having the light shine right on the laces. The owner of these shoes was Michael Cain. The size of the shoes is men's large.



*Figure 10.1. Kaiser Aluminum Work Boots (gift of Michael Cain, 2011; photo courtesy of MAC Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture).*

Here is an excerpt from the same student's final draft:

When visiting the Museum of Arts and culture. I took an interest in the aluminum factory workers boots. The reason they were in such interest because of the history it has behind Spokane. The aluminum factory was big a part of Spokane. The factory was named Kaisers mead aluminum reduction mill. . . . Kaiser

Mead Aluminum Factory was very important in the Spokane's history. . . . When I first saw the pair of boots I really didn't know why they were designed like the way they were. They had very thick padding surrounding a cover over the laces. I am assuming to keep out all the heat, that plan didn't work to well if Michael only quit after two years of working at the mill . . . I believe that when observing Cain's boots, it showed how hard people worked to keep Spokane running. I do believe that showing this object in a Spokane museum was very interesting because it is showing how one simple object shows so much history for one city. The boots remind me of my own shoes. The reason they do is because I have worked in hard labor and every day I would look at them and realized I had a hard day's work that was best part of my day.

While the student did not progress to composing college-level prose, he did engage in critical thinking and analysis and found a rudimentary way to capture his thinking process in writing. In this way, VTS gave the student practice with making his thinking visible, both in speech and writing. For the reluctant writer, this is critical. Learning how to decode an image first through discussion creates a language-rich environment for the writer. That, coupled with the open-ended probing of a visual image nurtures the acquisition of language. Through repeated measurements, VTS has shown to have an impact on student writing. For example, with as few as ten lessons per year in a third to fifth grade classroom, students consistently demonstrate growth in detailed observations, speculative thinking, and evidential reasoning. The skills practiced in discussions transfer to independently writing about a work of art (Yenawine, 2013).

Fortunately, the VTS methodology challenges high-achieving students just as it provides an entry point for those with a less ample foundation. Here is an excerpt from the final paper of one of the students with the highest grade at the end of the quarter.

Miss Tokushima is a pleasant, perpetually smiling doll that was assigned an important task upon her conception: to help reconcile the relationship between America and Japan at a time in which they were at odds. The artist who designed her, Koryusai Takizawa, created her in such a way as to instill a positive frame of reference in the minds of Americans whenever they considered the Japanese. She is small, constructed of porcelain, and lived in Japan before reaching her destination in the United States to fulfill her lofty goal. She is currently housed at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture and continues to play a diplomatic role from her perch inside her glass case . . . After performing

extensive research, I believe that Miss. Tokushima is a good representation of the relationship between America and Japan because of the manner in which she was received at the time of her conception and the manner in which many Americans regarded her and other friendship dolls during World War II.



*Figure 10.2. Japanese Friendship Doll "Miss Tokushima" (made by Takizawa Korysai, 1927; photo courtesy of MAC Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture).*



While this student entered the classroom with a high level of competency, VTS engaged her. VTS is used in the university setting for many of the same reasons K-12 education values the skills and strategies it nurtures—the twenty-first century habits of mind for work and learning. For example, the Rose Museum at Brandeis University has used VTS as a tool for student engagement at a university museum. Harvard Medical School offers an elective course title “Training the Eye,” which also uses VTS as a way to hone observation skills, including clinical reasoning. Learning to read a patient or the plethora of visual information in the clinical setting requires medical professionals to be well versed in the act of looking and feeling comfortable dwelling in ambiguity. Practicing the skill of pulling back and hearing what others have to say about the same image cultivates the social reasoning and intelligence of group thinking. It is justified by the idea that a practice of listening to others prior to a final diagnosis could result in fewer mistakes.

## VTS in the Transition from High School to College English Rhetorical Reading

Both the K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS)/ English Language Arts (ELA) Anchor Standards for Reading and the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) Outcomes Statement for FYC require that students critically read and interpret a wide range of texts, with a particular focus on the relationship between claims and evidence. This indicates that, to be successful in the transition from high school to college, students need to receive instruction on how to read complex academic texts using the framework of rhetoric, along with practice doing so, at both the high school *and* college level.

**Table 10.1. Rhetorical Reading**

CCSS ELA Anchor Standards for Reading	WPA Outcomes Statement for FYC
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations

While the CCSS clearly establish that students need instruction and practice in critical reading skills, research on college reading underscores the need for instruction and practice in *rhetorical* reading at the college level. Rhetorical reading is necessary to the process of academic inquiry and writing required at the college

level, as students learn to engage with and write about unfamiliar scholarly texts from a range of diverse disciplines (Jamieson, 2013; Moore Howard, 1993).

VTs supports close reading, rhetorical reading, and text analysis by inviting students to see a text and view it again and again. When students are asked, collectively, to puzzle through what is happening in an image, their responses are often idiosyncratic and grounded in their own personal schema. However, the facilitation process by the instructor allows for naming this type of thinking, which makes students more aware of the framework or rhetorical strategies they engage to “read” a visual text. For example, a paraphrase might include framing their remarks with the vocabulary of rhetorical analysis: “From your perspective this is . . . from your experience . . . to you this looks like . . . from your point of view this might be . . .” A VTs conversation allows for multiple points of view to exist in reference to one source—the image. Thomas, Place, and Hillyard (2008) also found that “our pedagogy and practice is grounded in research that highlights the use of visual images in promoting polysemic understanding, or the ability to make sense of texts with multiple channels of information.” The practice of holding various perspectives afloat, equally, during a conversation gives students practice in analyzing multiple perspectives, which is essential for engagement and participation in the classroom and beyond.

## Locating, Evaluating, and Using Evidence

Broadly, the CCSS Anchor Standards for Writing require a few major shifts from most previous K-12 standards: a move toward the reading and writing of informational texts in addition to literary texts, a focus on reading and writing using evidence from texts, an improvement in research skills, and a heavy focus on academic vocabulary. A key shift of the CCSS and central to FYC is the importance of finding and citing textual evidence in support of argumentative communication, and students need to be able to do this with both alphabetic and multimodal texts. Both the K-12 and college standards related to the use of sources include a focus on the location, evaluation, and use of appropriate textual evidence to inform and support the production of informational and argumentative texts.

Clearly, according to these standards, that students learn to use appropriate evidence to support claims is important at both the high school and college level. However, as students transition from high school to college, they face numerous challenges in learning to effectively evaluate and use academic sources as evidence. Jamieson (2013) and Rebecca Moore Howard (1993) observe that, rather than effectively and appropriately “integrating the writers’ ideas with those from . . . sources” (WPA Outcomes, 2014) beginning college writers often engage in “patchwriting,” which leaves them in danger of being charged with academic misconduct. This issue has recently received so much attention in the field that one of

the most successful and widely used composition textbooks on the market, *They say, I say: Moves that matter in academic writing*, is devoted almost entirely to teaching students to interact with, and effectively deploy, academic sources as evidence in researched-based argumentative writing assignments (Graff & Birkenstein, 2014).

**Table 10.2. Use of Sources**

CCSS ELA Anchor Standards for Writing	WPA Outcomes Statement for FYC
<p>Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p>Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.</p> <p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p>	<p>Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias, and so on) primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources</p> <p>Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer’s ideas with those from appropriate sources.</p>

VTS can address this issue in a way that many students will find more engaging than completing a textbook reading assignment. Throughout a VTS conversation, when a claim or unsupported inference is made, students are asked to ground their observations in evidence with the question: “What do you see that makes you say that?” The wording of this question directs the student back to the image to cite visual evidence to support their interpretation. In addition, it gives the student an opportunity to elaborate and justify their thinking. This question is used often to give students practice in reasoning in evidence. VTS also gives students multiple entry points into decoding a work of art, which is a complex task, in part, because reading an image is a non-linear process. Unlike written text, there are multiple ways to enter a work of art. A viewer is tasked with organizing their thoughts, seeing connections in a mass of visual information. The VTS question “What more can we find?” draws the eyes and thinking back to the image to continually mine the work for meaning. Skilled facilitation assists the group in this process by verbally mapping the conversation—linking similar and divergent connections where they exist as well as noting themes as they emerge.

## Critical Thinking and Habits of Mind

The CCSS and WPA FYC Standards both require that students engage in deep

critical thinking, applying new frameworks (especially rhetoric at the college level), and practice new thinking strategies. The documents that make up the official text of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are prefaced with what is termed a “portrait of students who meet the standards set out in this document” (National Governors Association, 2010, p. 7). This portrait describes a set of students that are “engaged and open-minded” and who “demonstrate independence,” qualities that we argue can be enhanced through instruction in VTS. This kind of epistemological and pedagogical perspective is also reflected in the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, a report jointly produced by the Council of Writing Program Administrators and the National Council of Teachers of English (2001), which notes that habits of mind such as curiosity, openness, engagement, and metacognition are essential to success at the college level.

One way to make the kind pedagogical shift that is necessary to foster these habits of mind in students making the transition to college is to engage them in the kind of learning found in the VTS approach. The way that VTS inspires student engagement, twenty-first century skills, and the learning of cognitive strategies can be further understood through the framework of creativity studies. As a vehicle for creative thinking, VTS can be used “to reinforce the situational and iterative nature of composition” and to encourage students to revise their work, thereby improving the “quality, innovation, and/or rhetorical effectiveness” (Lee & Carpenter, 2000). These two scholars also agree that a key take away from the field of creativity scholarship is that “aesthetic creativity is relevant for academic and non-academic work” and is “transferable across media modes” (2000, p. 4). More broadly speaking, Rouzie (2000) suggests that the permission to explore possibilities, make mistakes, and try new possibilities is essential for some students who “may need to feel some permission to experiment with the aesthetic and rhetorical possibilities of playful discourse . . . (651). In other words, when VTS is employed as a strategy to teach creative thinking in the composition classroom, students regularly have the opportunity to analyze rhetorical situations, engage with academic discourse, employ evidence and develop a recursive and collaborative writing process.

## Conclusion

More analysis is needed to better understand the potential of VTS to be used in the composition classroom. Additionally, the heavy emphasis on visual literacy could isolate students with visual impairments, unless reasonable accommodations were enacted. But as an initial exploration into the potential for a museum-inspired pedagogy to help students transition from a language arts approach to writing to a more rhetorically-driven strategy of analysis and composition, the course provided strong initial outcomes.

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# A Different Art: An Interdisciplinary Conversion between Lindsay Illich and Iris Kumar

Lindsay Illich and Iris Kumar

In the context of implementing a new general education program in which general education courses can apply to meet the reading and writing enhancement criteria, the authors, a fine arts professor teaching visual arts courses and the director of the college writing program, discuss assignments in the visual arts that would support learning outcomes for reading and writing across the disciplines. Written in the form of a conversation between practitioners, the discussion highlights how rhetorical knowledge (especially genre knowledge) can be part of a cohesive visual-arts curriculum; how issues of multimodal composition are treated in writing studies that may support learning outcomes in the visual arts (the ekphrastic and photographic essay); affinities between the literacy narrative and artist statement that may bridge discussions of process in both fields; and finally, some artists and writers who could be included as case studies in such a curriculum. The tradition of the dialogue as a device will serve the authors' desires to model curriculum development as a process that depends on listening and mutual understandings of the goals and perspectives of faculty from seemingly disparate disciplinary backgrounds and the new ideas that emerge from the collaborative process.

LI: Friedrich Schlegel observed that “in the works of the greatest poets there often breathes the spirit of a different art.” Writing and making art *are* different arts, but when I think about the Greek word for making, *poesis*, I realize that conceptually we may share more affinities than we’re aware of. In that spirit, I want to start with some ideas about process in response to your gallery talk yesterday. Being a curator of words and things, I was excited to learn several new, fantastic ones during your discussion: lauan wood, medieval relic boxes, Chine-collé, ferric acid, burr, and intaglio. You demonstrated how central to your field discussions of process are, especially in mediating works of art for a wider audience. It reminded me of Kathleen Yancey, the former National Council of Teachers of English President, who challenged writing researchers to be careful documentarians of writing processes, especially processes that may have changed given the material changes in the way we write (how we use databases, composing in electronic environments, multimodal situations). And in our historical moment, the writing process and the way people talk about it in writing studies has shifted from considering the solitary figure of



the writer, critiqued early on by Linda Brodkey (1987), to ideas about process that are grounded in the material and social: the writer is part of an ecology of resources (to borrow Marilyn Cooper's term) from which she curates, reimagines, and tinkers to make something that works for her rhetorical situation—that is, her specific audience and purpose. Yancey et al. (2015) research, for example, how *assemblage* and *remix* might be useful metaphors in students' understanding of this process. Recently, Kristopher Lotier (2016) describes this shift as part of the “externalization of cognition.” In the visual arts, it seems like there's a sharper awareness (or perhaps a tacit awareness) of how works of art are not only shaped by the materials you're working with.

IK: In just the language you use, I see some obvious crossovers in terms of process: especially with the word *assemblage* but also with the words related to curatorial judgment. There is a sense that in art we sometimes start with materials rather than an idea. For a group project in mixed media, for example, I give students Color-aid paper. Color-aid is a wonderful material to work with because of it has varying levels of saturation of color and a velvety texture. And I encourage inventive use of materials, including charcoal, Sharpies, paint, magazine-collage elements, digital-collage elements, pencil, and found objects. The work emerges from the happy accidents that occur when these things collide.

LI: I'm thinking about your gallery talk as an example of a thing an artist does with language that mediates their artwork. Besides the gallery talk or artist talks, are there other kinds of things visual artists typically use words for?

IK: Artist statements, to start. Artist statements accompany an artist's work, articulating its meaning and documenting the artist's process of creating it. To help students with this kind of writing, I start with a visual art assignment that's broken down into discrete steps to make process more transparent to students. The first step is for students to identify their source of inspiration, align design elements conceptually in association with their source of inspiration, and determine what they want their artwork to communicate. Students are encouraged to consider ideas presented in class as sources of inspiration such as working from a poem or literary source, a response to a social or political issue or historical event, or a response to music. The next step is for students to create a series of prints in response to their source of inspiration using symbolic content and metaphor to create a powerful visual message and using design elements identified in the first step to strengthen the communicative properties of their prints. They are encouraged to allow “happy accidents” to happen, to allow their series to evolve and develop through the process of creating it. Even though art doesn't always happen this way, the scaffolding of the assignment helps to make clear the structure of the artist statement.

LI: The way you talk about artist statements leads me to think about them as a “wild genre” in your field (Soliday, 2011). In other words, artist statements take on a special duty of performing disciplinarity and are used for real-world

audiences. In other words, there's an expectation that artists must be able to talk about these issues as part of a suite of skills that make up what it means to be a professional artist.

IK: The artist talk you heard me give is another genre of professional artists. I see the two as related genres, and when my students prepare to write them, my colleagues and I give artist talks and hand out sample artist statements. One colleague discusses the social/political nature of some of her prints and artist books, as well as how she has incorporated music into her work. I discuss my own sources of inspiration in my prints at different points in my career as an artist. In my current body of creative work, I strive towards communicating how natural cycles of the world around us correspond to life experiences. I take what I know, what I have learned from living with a chronic illness, and translate it into a more universal language that steps outside of my experiences. The work focuses on capturing different stages of growth and renewal within an environment that exhibits elements of decomposition and decay.

LI: For a person who studies composition, the word "decomposition" invites all kinds of considerations for the work we do with students. As writers, I see this process as a making and unmaking. When you talk about your work, tracing your influences and experiences, I can see that your analysis is performed in retrospect, the work of recovering how it is you are standing in front of a piece of art you've created and working backwards to trace its nativity. When I ask students to think about the kind of readers and writers they are, or to describe their writing process for something they've written, students are sometimes hard-pressed to come up with anything. The work of reflection is coming to terms with the way a writer—a person—approaches a task, which has everything to do with the way they were taught, the attitude in their families toward reading and writing, and how they see themselves as learners. In a sense, they are using themselves as case studies, but the point extends beyond accounting for how and why they do things the way they do at the present moment. Reflection pulls us into the future and asks us to consider who we want to be, what practices may be worth shifting. In artist statements and artists talk, I see similar work going on. Yes, the artist is developing a vocabulary for process in writing these genres, and reflecting on procedural knowledge that they have gained, but also there's identity formation going on. When my students write literacy narratives about their own experiences with literacy and language learning, often very powerful work is accomplished simply by composing a sentence that starts with, "As a writer . . ." Students usually don't come to college identifying as writers, which make writing literacy narratives even more powerful.

I also want to point out the special learning opportunity afforded by the genres you mention. I was reading about an artist, Nick Fortunato, who created an artist statement generator program (<http://10gallon.com/statement2000>) that parodies the genre. When I filled in the blanks like a Mad-Lib, the program generated this:

Through my work I attempt to examine the phenomenon of She-Ra as a metaphorical interpretation of both Amy Sillman and rutting.

What began as a personal journey of bootyism has translated into images of cheese and clavicles that resonate with people to question their own semi-automatic-ness.

My mixed media glaze embodies an idiosyncratic view of Walt Whitman, yet the familiar imagery allows for a connection between Stephen J. Gould, cords and muffins.

My work is in the private collection of Dick Clark who said "O!, that's some real perspicacious Art."

I am a recipient of a grant from Folsom Prison where I served time for stealing mugs and tie clips from the gift shop of The Prado. I have exhibited in group shows at Taco Bell and The Menil Collection in Houston, though not at the same time. I currently spend my time between my kitchen sink and Berlin.

What this program is poking fun at is the superficially generic ways that artist statements sometimes fall short of being meaningful, but more important for this discussion, the program highlights a misconception about genre, which is that genres are stable and arhetorical. Jennifer Liese's (2014) description of the artist statement is helpful here to think about how the genre should take into account audience and purpose: "the artist statement, as we know it today, is produced to meet an explicitly professional occasional need, such as accompanying the artist's work in a magazine, exhibition catalogue, grant application, or on the artist's website."

IK: It's true that writing is necessary for mediating an artist's work for a wider audience, but I think it's tough because my students fear writing. Many of these students have a visual acuity, so they gravitate towards the arts, but the predisposition toward visual expression sometimes means that students come to us lagging in other kinds of expression, like written and oral communication. At the College Art Association conference this year, I spoke at length with a professor from a different institution about how beneficial it would be to have a panel discussion on writing in the arts because of this challenge. I'll give you an example from my own classes. In Digital Art, I had a student who excelled in the visual projects at such a high level that he did not submit a written component for his final project, but he was able to receive an A in the class because he met the other outcomes.

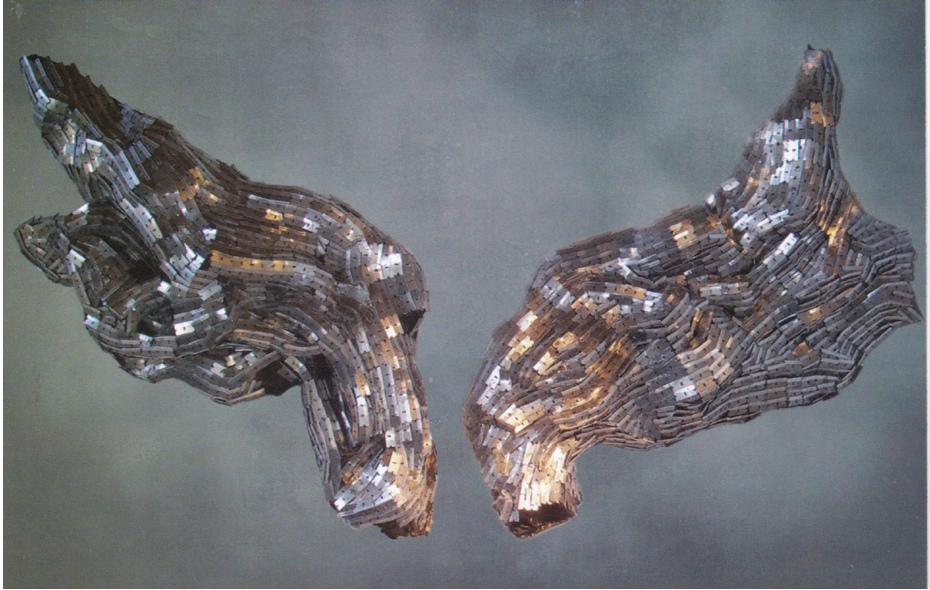
LI: I hear similar concerns from faculty in other disciplines as they struggle to make writing meaningful in their general education courses and in upper level courses in the majors. For your students, and their particular acuity for the visual,

I think you should think more expansively about what is considered *writing*. Your field uses the term mixed-media to refer to what writing studies would call *multimodal composition*—the kind of writing that results when writers draw on different modes of communication, including page layout, font, images. I think designing writing assignments that allow students to incorporate these elements in their writing will help them draw on prior knowledge and expertise they have of visual design. An example of this working in a secondary school setting is described in Hrenko and Stair’s article “Creative Literacy: A New Space of Pedagogical Understanding,” in which the authors found that the mixing of text and image promoted critical thinking and risk-taking. Also, and you may already be doing this, think about incorporating lots of low stakes mini-assignments—one-off activities in class or as homework that ask students to write very small amounts (one or two sentences) with a focused purpose, such as demonstrating knowledge of a concept.

You mentioned that the concept of texture is important in your courses. Is writing a way to demonstrate that a student understands the concept?

IK: Texture is a formal element of art and design that I have students explore in a variety of assignments in many different courses. In a course called Three-Dimensional Design, the first assignment I give focuses on surface and how that can relate to form and cause the viewer to interpret it in different ways. They experiment with textured surfaces and inventive materials to create a sculpture that uses texture to create emphasis and enhance meaning. The learning objectives for the assignment are: to explore the relationship between form and surface, to use texture and rhythm/repetition to enhance meaning, and to create emphasis. In the Design Fundamentals course, the learning objectives are similar; however, students are working two-dimensionally and with different materials, which cultivates a different experience of creating work.

I introduce the assignment by talking about texture as an element that is experienced in a very visceral way. One has an immediate reaction. They want to touch, to stroke. It can be soft and inviting. Or it can be repulsive and make you want to pull away. It is only after this immediate reaction that the more cerebral interpretation begins to take place. One of the artists that I show my students when I introduce this assignment is Isabel Barbuza. The two sculptures that I discuss the most are *Alas* and *Embrace Me*. I talk about the feelings I had when I first saw *Alas* (Figure 11.1) installed on a large museum wall in the University of Iowa Museum, how from a distance it glistened in the light, ephemeral, and such large scale, representing what looked to me like a giant pair of angel’s wings. Then, when I got close, I realized that the entire work was made of razor blades. My emotional response was immediate and intense. When I tell my students this story, I can see on their faces that some of them start to understand just how powerful texture can be.



*Figure 11.1. Alas III, 2009. In Private Collection Mendoza, Argentina (courtesy of Isabel Barbuzza).*

This is also why the concept of texture is so important to me. It can powerfully communicate mood and emotion. It is provocative and enticing. It can entice a viewer, but also repel.

Whether a student's understanding of texture conceptually is evident to the student and to the class during the critique process. During critique, I will guide the discussion by addressing the learning objectives of the assignment. We discuss both what is successful in meeting learning objectives and what can be improved. For texture assignments, I have the class simply react to the works on the wall rather than give an explanation before a critique begins. If the work visually communicates mood or emotion, it is successful for enhancing meaning or creating emphasis.

I am interested in exploring ways I could integrate writing into texture assignments. Some of my immediate thoughts are to have students begin their projects by researching the work of other sculptors and examining the use of materials and its connection to enhancing meaning. Or to come up with a process writing assignment that could help them connect specific textures and surfaces to emotions before they even start making. I am also interested in using writing reflectively in an assignment to capture the kind of discussion that takes place in a critique and to help better prepare students for writing artist statements in the future.

LI: It's tempting to talk about style as a textual texture, here. Another day! But I do want to wrap this up by sharing some research from Dan Melzer (2014), the

Reading and Writing Coordinator at California State University, Sacramento. In his book, *Assignments Across the Curriculum: A National Study of College Writing*, he reports that of over 2,100 writing-across-the-curriculum assignments he collected from 400 different courses at 100 different institutions, only 3% of assignments were for expressive purposes. He saw a dearth of opportunities for students to engage with language in imaginative ways and made recommendations for more of this kind of writing in composition courses and WAC/WID courses. Thinking about the particularities of art program and art students' proclivities, ekphrastic writing may be an opportunity for you to incorporate writing that isn't threatening and that students may find highly engaging. Ekphrasis is writing about a work of art, and the tradition has a rich history that extends to the present day. One example is Mina Loy's poem about Brancusi's sculpture *Bird in Space*.

A mistake would be to read the poem as an homage to Brancusi's sculpture. Yes, the poem responds to the visual elements of the sculpture, but more importantly, the speaker of the poem is giving an alternative account of artist genius, an alternative to the masculine, hypersexualized version of genius that Ezra Pound was using to describe Brancusi's work in the literary magazine *The Little Review*. Loy's attitude toward the work is one of a philosopher concerned with the sculpture's social and historical significance, but that's only one way of approaching a work of art among many. Gregory Pardlo, the Pulitzer Prize winning poet, has mapped these approaches graphically on a grid that describes the speaker in a poem's relationship to the work of art. The speaker can be a translator of the artwork, for example, or "confidential informant," in which the speaker of the poem gives away a secret about the work of art (Pardlo, 2012). These possible subject positions for writing about a work of art could be used as a writing toolbox for assignments that asked students to respond expressively and poetically to work in your classes.

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# Crafting Medievalism in an Introductory Integrative Arts Course

Sandy Feinstein

This chapter provides an overview of a multidisciplinary honors course on medievalism, one bringing together the creative arts and close reading with writing on aesthetic concepts and productions. While reading and listening assignments provided a foundation for integrative artistic creation, students achieved the course goals by creating hand-crafted and digital projects accompanied by artist statements. Combined, these assignments, requiring different modes of crafting, provided a means for thinking about and working through—for students and teacher—the relationship between artistic production and written expression, and how engaging them together develops and enriches both.

This chapter provides an overview of a multidisciplinary honors course on medievalism, one bringing together the creative arts and close reading with writing on aesthetic concepts and productions. More specifically, the course concerned how the arts are integrated in medieval works and how later medievalist works appropriate tropes of the period. Medieval works exemplify arts integration; later works influenced by them adapt this compositional feature by combining multiple arts, including words, visual images, music, and performance. This characteristic of medievalism served the objectives of my honors integrative arts course: namely, to increase student awareness of the interplay among the arts over time; to examine how art and media reinvent the past; and to experience through creative production how materials and methods inform artistic ideas and constructions. While reading and listening assignments provided a foundation for integrative artistic creation, students achieved the course goals by creating hand-crafted and digital projects accompanied by artist statements. For Anicca Cox (2015), the artist statement itself acts as a central text in relation to art-making practices.

The course design emphasized creative production and written expression partly for students to learn how writing can serve art relationally to develop a compelling mutual dependency, as Cox argues it does. I developed this course as a response to having had success with assignments requiring creative projects and writing in humanities courses such as *The Quest* and the Arthurian Legend, the motifs and characters of which students know from medievalist fantasy novels, films, and games. Students would even brave humanities courses beginning with medieval texts and the earliest Arthurian literature because they were fans of the *Game of*

*Thrones* novels and HBO's adaptation of them or the BBC's *Merlin* or Tolkien's novels and the films based on them, or they fondly recalled childhood works such as the *How to Train Your Dragon* series of books and films. Many, too, were avid game players, would-be game constructors, and aspiring fantasy fiction writers.

The course was also to meet the goals of the Integrative Arts Program at Penn State University: to prepare "undergraduate students to work successfully as innovative and dynamic artists, designers, and performers in an increasingly interdisciplinary world" (Penn State University Integrative Arts Program). The program's stated educational objectives endeavor for students to be able to "synthesize and evaluate creative output, contribute to critical discourse, and learn how to incorporate feedback and critique as part of the creative process"; and to "understand, apply, and analyze art historical and aesthetic concepts related to the creation and/or design of creative works that combine multiple forms of art, design, or performance" (Penn State University Integrative Arts Program). The medievalism course assignments in reading, seeing, listening, performing, and writing were intended to facilitate these goals and expand the directions for students' creativity.

Integrating student performance in English courses is longstanding when it comes to dramatic literature. Scholarship focusing on performance in the teaching of Shakespeare in English courses (as opposed to theater courses), for example, has elaborated on the pedagogy of performance and its benefits over the course of 35 years (Cohen, 1990; Gilbert, 1983; Riggio, 1999). Students have staged small scenes in and out of the classroom, mounted full theatrical productions for on campus productions, attended field trips to school, community, and professional productions, and watched cinematic interpretations of works. In addition, scholars in English have described and argued the case for performing *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a narrative poem (Vitz, 1999; Vitz & Zaerr, 2007). The integrative arts course on medievalism described here extended learning through performances of these genres to enactments of lyric poetry and visual art. It also ventured into the field to discover integrative medievalist sites, not only in an art museum but in the aspirational architecture of an energy efficient building whose walls were adorned with medieval symbols of alchemy. The course final reinforced this kind of engagement with off-site medievalism in Washington, DC, where students identified and discussed what they would categorize as medievalist in the city; their responses included the Smithsonian Castle, the National Cathedral, and a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*, among others. Such field trips expand the concept of what constitutes art, both what it is and what it can do. Students see for themselves how communities shape the arts and how the arts shape communities, and what they learn begins to inform their own creative ideas.

Students were enthusiastic about the creative assignments and the class time devoted to them. Even those who professed no artistic ability seemed to look

forward to trying to make something. One period was set aside for a workshop led by the Berks College resident artist who introduced the class to contemporary hand tools that could be used to recreate medieval crafts. Our guest teacher provided resources for hand crafting—gold leaf, paints, brushes, inks, stencil books of lettering, among other materials. Students experimented with drawing marginalia on a manuscript page, designing and inking historiated letters, and recopying text as medieval scribes did with less readily available resources. Though a few claimed to be self-conscious about what they produced, they also expressed how much they enjoyed the opportunity to be creative. While self-conscious about their writing as well, none enthused about the act of doing it.

Preparing students for doing creative projects and writing about them began with reading assignments and journal exercises. The first assigned readings focused on early literature and, like all the works on the syllabus, integrated at least two different arts: for example, poetry and music, drama and performance, and/or poetry and visual image. Marcabru's medieval lyric "L'Autrier Jost'una Sebissa" ("The Other Day Beside a Hedge"), for example, is accompanied by music that can be "heard" online; "The Agincourt Carol" is a later English song; and the Robin Hood plays have stage directions identifying where to add fight scenes and dance. These and numerous other pre-modern works are freely and legally available online, as are visual images of manuscript illuminations and marginalia related to these texts, if not originally part of them. The first journal assignment accompanying the readings asked students to:

Create or find music to accompany the play. Discuss how the music complements the action, words, characters, etc. OR  
create, draw, or find costumes to outfit the knight. Then discuss how the costumes complement the characters, dialogue, action.

Knights appear in all three assignments. Additionally, in *Robin Hood*, stage directions identify breaks for music to be performed, though there are no extant copies of the play that include musical settings.

This first assignment, a journal entry requiring students to write music or create costumes, offered them a choice between exercising their talents in the visual or musical arts. Costuming, while typically associated with drama, is also important in paintings, as students later see for themselves, for example, in "The Blessed Damsel," a painting and poem by the Victorian Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Since not all students want to write music or feel comfortable sewing or drawing, the alternative was for them to "find" music or costumes to represent their ideas about character or theme, a responsibility of music supervisors for film and television and dramaturges in theater. Therefore, justified by these professional models, I included "selection" as creative production, for anything chosen to represent these medieval works would be original and, thus, provide new interpretations and approaches to them.

Score

# Two Knights Laid Waste

An Electronic Project

Christian Brendel  
Sean Geguera

Piano

Tenor

Low Irish Whistle

Bass Drum

Pno.

T

B. Dr.

Two knights laid waste one qui - et spring morn

Their eyes a - blaze and all vows foe - sworn

© Honors Program

Figure 12.1. Brendel and Geguera's song<sup>1</sup> (courtesy of Christian Brendel and Sean Geguera).

1 This is the computer project, not the journal response, of Christian Brendel and Sean Geguera. Sean submitted both written music and designed costumes for the journal assignment.

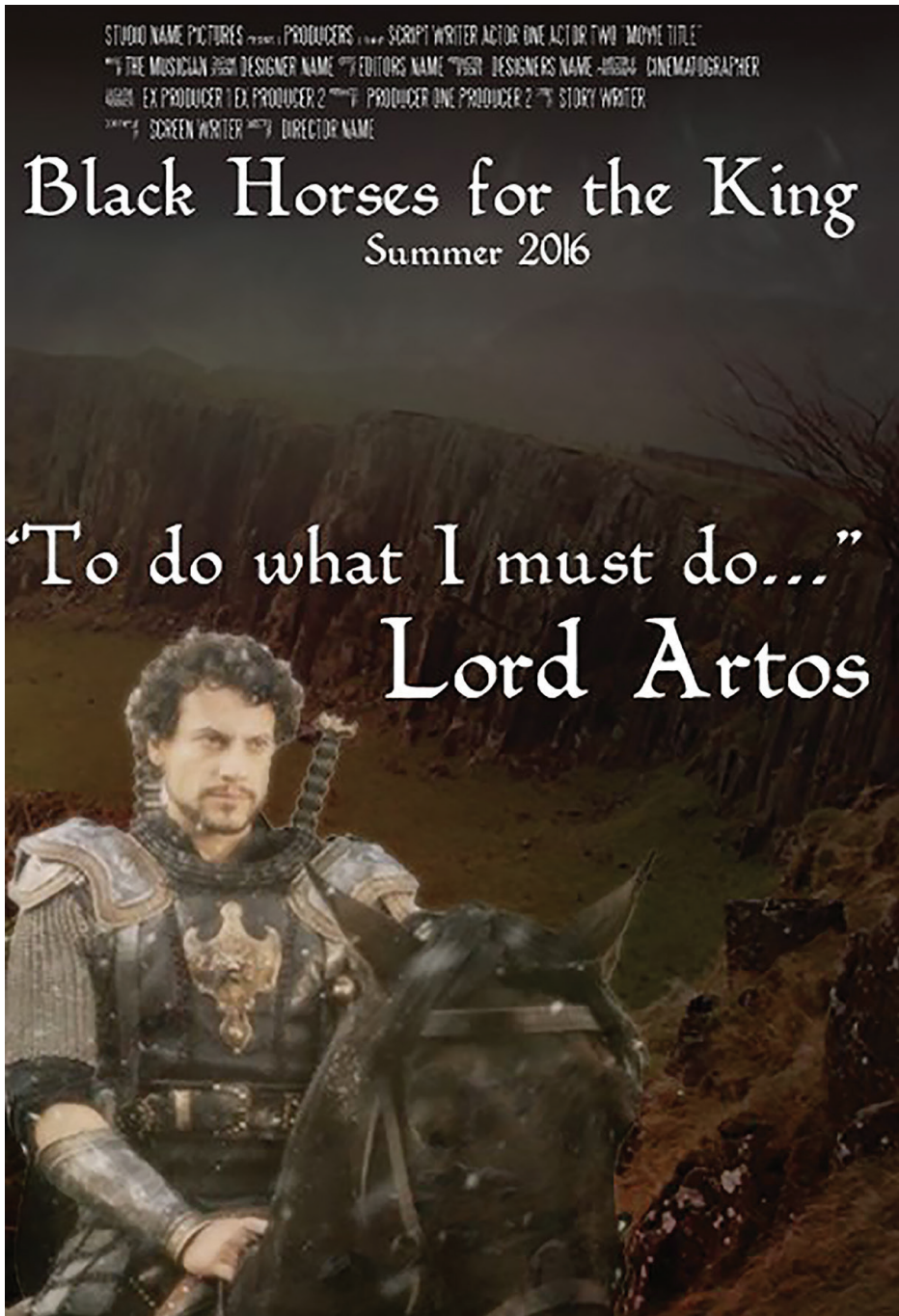


Figure 12.2. Rachel's poster, "Black Horses for the King" (courtesy of Rachel Jensen).

Writing was to complement whatever students chose to “make” or “do.” It was to emphasize an identifiable purpose and the specific ways their choice of music or costume design provided insights into a character or action of a work. The challenge of this first assignment, as it would be for the subsequent paper, was the written discussion rather than creative production. Typical of my comments were the following: “You could have been more specific in your references with regard to these particular Robin Hood texts”; “But you address the play relatively generally . . .”; “Explanation would help here”; and “More considered discussion of the play . . . .”<sup>2</sup> As for the creative works elicited by the prompt, they went in a variety of directions: crayon sketches, raps, collages, among others. One student costumed characters *and* wrote music for one of the Robin Hood plays, demonstrating multiple talents and, also, a compelling interest in how two very different forms could be used to tell an old story in a new way.

This initial assignment had asked students to create something and then write about how what they created reinterpreted or re-envisioned a medieval text. The next journal exercise was a variation on the first, but started with writing based on the reading and then proceeded to creating art. In this unit, students began by reading “The Nature of Gothic” by John Ruskin and a much shorter piece by William Morris, “Address on Pre-Raphaelite Paintings.” Then they were exposed to selections of Victorian medievalist poetry and paintings by nineteenth-century artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris, as well as paintings by medieval artists coupled with later poetry about them, for example, Robert Browning’s poem “Fra Lippo Lippi” paired with the eponymous subject’s medieval paintings. Following exposure to these primary sources, students were introduced to contemporary medievalist theory in one article by Elizabeth Emery and another by M. J. Toswell. With varied forms of medieval and Victorian constructions in mind, together with contemporary theorizing about them, students were asked to:

### Do #1 and then two of any of the following:

1. [Make] A key word list of “the Gothic” as defined by Ruskin;
2. Write an epigraph or epitaph informed in some way by medievalism;
3. Write a short description of a “medieval” (human) character;
4. Write a short description of a creature suitable for a medieval bestiary;
5. Write a short prayer using biblical verse or an encomium using biblical and/or classical allusions;
6. If you can write music, write one simple line of notes and represent one key word from #1 as part of the music or a lyrical line.

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2 I have omitted more specific comments to maintain student confidentiality; but, in this regard, the comments were much the same and, therefore, not likely to reveal the identity of any particular student.



The students found Ruskin difficult but useful. They enjoyed the two scholarly articles by Toswell and Emery, perhaps because the use of familiar contemporary examples made the theories of medievalist taxonomy comparatively accessible.

This journal assignment resulted in “aha” moments for most of the students. Indeed, their descriptions of medieval beasts or human types, whether of their own invention or traditional ones such as dragons, would become the basis for their first creative projects. The problems in the responses primarily concerned synthesizing Ruskin and understanding his terms in relation to their would-be creations as gothic or medievalist. Distinguishing his key characteristics, such as “savageness” from “grotesque” or “rudeness” from “rigidity” or “naturalism,” proved particularly challenging. Though students would not be required to use Ruskin’s terminology in their artist statements, they would anyway, having found it useful for thinking about design.

The students were ready to create their first project, hand crafting an object or “artifact” evoking the Middle Ages. As with each of the preparatory journal assignments, invention and construction would come more easily than writing about what they had created. The comments I appended to each project primarily focused on the accompanying artist statement, not the creation itself. Typically, I noted a lack of specificity, clarity, focus, definition, and use of terms. Students had clearly expended their time and energy on the creative productions that deserved the effusive praise lavished on them when presented to the class. The writing seemed almost an afterthought, the suddenly remembered homework. The students knew, too, that the written portion could be revised, that I was more interested in their learning how to write about their artistic products than with what grade their first drafts deserved.

Whether or not students chose to revise their artist statements for their first project—and not all did—they would have a second chance to practice the form when they wrote new ones to accompany the second project. This project would take them into the digital age by requiring a “computer crafted” object. The project parameters read as follows:

“Computer craft” an object (it can be the same subject as project one or entirely new) in the medievalist tradition. Then write a short paper identifying what you created, how you created it, and what you think was gained through use of this medium, followed by what you think was lost through use of this medium.

Though students were not required to cite Toswell or Emery, most did, replicating their use of Ruskin as a constructive critical authority in the first paper. They had learned something about creating a context for their work and invoking an authority to support their approach. Working with different tools also prompted reflection on the choices they had made as artists. Thus, their conclusions about what is gained and what lost through different modalities—here hand-crafts and digital-crafts—were shaped by their creative experience engaging both methods.





*Figure 12.3. Lewis' Wyvelope<sup>3</sup> (courtesy of Erik Lewis).*

The second artist statement required students to address the same principles as the first one. The results, therefore, were reassuring, as my response to one suggests: “Doing the same thing twice offers all sorts of insights into process and production—and you seem to have considered most of them . . . good specificity and details!” These papers avoided the vagueness that characterized the artist statements accompanying the first project. In this second essay, students were careful to explain precisely what they had tried to do, detailing and discussing their decisions in terms of an intended purpose or effect. They also demonstrated a greater facility in using the critical and scholarly sources, as noted in this appended comment: “the use of Emery and Toswell is impressive for being thoughtful and sophisticated.”

Students had learned something from writing their artist statements. But the final writing project, an Artist's Manifesto, was less successful. Few were ready to formulate a personal approach or ideology of art at this stage of their creative life. Assigning examples of the form (e.g., the Futurist Manifesto) may only have made the task seem more daunting; artist statements had not been provided as models for the first two papers, and the omission may have been enabling, freeing them to find their own voice and style to represent their creative ideas rather than leaving them intimidated by those of others. In future iterations of the course, I will replace

3 This is the computer project of Erik Lewis based on his craft project of a Wyvelope. The sculpture, carved, painted, and made of several pieces, unfortunately shared the vulnerability of medieval crafts and has since partly broken apart.

this assignment with a critical review or a small grant proposal, either of which would increase student awareness of how intended audience may impact creative production.

The course asked students to embody in their writing what they created with their hands and mini-pads. Everything produced was both performance and text, something recommended strenuously by Henry and Baker (2015). By making art and writing about it, students explored relationships between the theoretical and applied, culture and forms of media, technology and handcrafting, written expression and artistic production, artistic vision and process, and how creativity informs craft *and* composition in all its varied forms.

The writing produced in this integrative arts course was unique to my experience. I reminded myself—and sometimes the class—that I was not teaching a literature course, despite readings including poetry, fiction, drama, and historical criticism. Nor did art history papers substitute for English papers. I was interested in creative performances in multiple forms—crafts, composition, computers. The assigned writing was intended to help students generate ideas, describe their artistic vision and process, and critically assess the success of their creative projects in fulfilling their own goals and intentions. Combined, these assignments involving different modes of crafting provided a means for thinking about and working through—for students and teacher—the relationship between artistic production and written expression, and how engaging them together develops and enriches both.

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# Dancing=Composing=Writing: Writing about Performing and Visual Arts through Dance

Molly E. Daniel

This chapter focuses upon the way the choreographic process engages both the body and mind to create a foundation to expand writing and writing pedagogies. In this pursuit it not only explores approaches to writing about performance but also situates writing as an embodied act that must address balance between body and mind. In addition to this exploration, the chapter provides two potential assignments that can be modified for a variety of classrooms, ages, and disciplines that implement embodied writing using elements of the choreographic process.

Writing is an embodied act. Dance is an embodied act. It is at the intersection of dance and writing that we can identify the ways bodies actively compose—alphabetically and somatically—through parallel processes: writing and choreographic. By building a stronger foundation for our understanding of embodied writing because of the similarities between these processes, we can see how bodies are active participants in the recursive composing process—invention, revision and performance. These active bodies also reflect and project embodied experiences that inform the lenses that frame each act of composing, thus enacting embodied pedagogy. Tina Kazan (2005) suggests that “as we engage in an embodied pedagogy in our classrooms, we make students more aware of their own bodies in the classroom context” (p. 404). Therefore, the explicit integration of bodies into writing supports and extends embodied writing pedagogy, which challenges us to make the implicit body of the writer explicit in ways that mirror that of the dancing and performing body.

To write about a performance, often from the perspective of the audience, means that each activity that led the performance to its momentary life on stage has disappeared behind the scenes, much like a polished final draft. When we ask students to analyze a performance, we are also asking them to read the bodies on stage, so an embodied approach to writing provides a foundation that can “bestow significance to bodies that [are] interpreted” (Kazan, 2005, p. 394). Embodied writing pedagogy, then, can gain an understanding of approaches to writing in tandem with performance because the embodied element draws attention to bodies as both composers and contributing pieces of the composition; this speaks to Anicca Cox’s (2015) study results that “reinforce the potentiality for writing to access emotional or embodied spaces alongside aspects of criticality and analysis.” Therefore, accessing

an emotional or embodied space through embodied writing pedagogy creates a foundation for analysis to flourish and attend to embodied acts explicitly. As both a choreographer and a compositionist, the potential for embodied spaces in writing is of importance to me because they provide untapped possibilities (that I have seen surface in my own processes) for writing pedagogy as well as writing about performance. As such, I do not intend to simply make suggestions for writing about dance but also articulate what we can learn about the embodied act of writing through the composing process of dance to better engage, discuss, and include embodiment. It is in this spirit that I pursue the following question: how can the choreographic process enhance approaches to embodied writing pedagogy both in general and about performing and visual arts? Better understanding the positionality of bodies as dancers and writers underscores the reality that embodied activity matters not only in performance such as dance but also in writing. To that end, I set out to do two things:

- explore the ways in which the choreographic process engages the body and mind, thereby creating a foundation to expand our approaches to writing and writing pedagogy as well as
- provide two potential assignments—one major and one minor—that apply that expansion.

In so doing, I highlight the activities that are transferable across disciplines that can (re)embody writing and reinvigorate writing pedagogy in the interest of (embodied) writing about performance.

Therefore, embodied writing pedagogy can build upon the choreographic process to better accommodate embodied activity, particularly by considering improvisation, feedback, and delivery as elements of the writing process that engage the composing body. This, in turn, enhances approaches to writing about performance and visual arts because embodiment may not be an implicit element; therefore, it is possible to examine bodies as texts by analyzing the way bodies deliver a message with or without verbal cues for the audience. If a student writer is aware of their own embodied actions within the process of writing, then they are more readily able to identify embodied activity through a rhetorical lens when writing about performance. In other words, understanding the ways in which bodies function in the development of a performance allows us to facilitate analysis and study of performance because students can see how the process they engage in (writing) is like the performance they are writing about.

## Parallel Processes—Writing and Choreography

All acts of composing, and the processes<sup>1</sup> that support them, loosely follow three

1 I acknowledge that these processes are recursive in nature as opposed to linear proscription processes.

stages: invention, revision, and performance.<sup>2</sup> My paralleling of the writing and choreographic processes to extend current writing process conversations in both K-12 and post-secondary education echoes the work of Catherine Golden (1986) wherein she pairs painting and writing. She argues that “there are useful parallels between the genesis of a painting and that of a writing manuscript. The artist’s first simple sketch seems to function like a writer’s verbal map or outline, similarly capturing the central theme of the composition: the initial vision” (Golden, 1986, p. 60). In other words, it is not new to draw these parallels, but what we can learn from them is new. By identifying similarities between the choreographic and writing processes, then, bodies become an explicit element of both, which, in turn fosters attention to embodiment when writing about performance and visual arts because students sense their own embodied actions.

Like Golden’s discussion of painting and writing, choreography can contribute to writing pedagogy through embodied action because dance marries physical movement with aesthetic qualities (and rhetorical purpose); often, it communicates the choreographer’s intention through the movements dancers execute within space and time. Kenneth King’s (2003) claim that “moving the body—dancing—can be synonymous with seeing, thinking, doing—with action!” underscores how dance is a full body experience that engages the integrated mind-body pair (p. 3). In fact, James Birch (2000) claims that “dance is a subject that uses all three domains of knowledge: cognitive, affective, and motor,” which points to the way dance creates an experience and a message that is embodied, cognizant, and integrates multiple elements (p. 223). Additionally, Judith Hanna (2008) has “traced the path of dance into the university and, consequently, K-12” (p. 497). She suggests that “the key concepts of dance; dance’s power as nonverbal communication; and the mind-body connection in dance as cognitive and emotional communication; and critical thinking in dance-making and dance-viewing” transfer valuable skills to students both pursuing dance as a career path and those not studying dance directly (p. 497). Therefore, dance can be integrated across all levels of education through embodied pedagogy to foster the teaching of these elements through the exploration of how students’ bodies participate in the process of writing about a performance while also engaging all three domains of knowledge. These brief defining qualities of dance highlight potential connections between dance and writing: rhetorical effects, action, knowledge domains, critical thinking. Although the processes are similar, choreographers like those in “art-making domains,” “frequently see writing as a component part of a larger process connected to the making of art objects, conceptual concerns, or perceived identity” while “writing studies frequently utilize the writing process to arrive at a written or ‘textual’ ‘product,’ making writing itself

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2 Performance is the chosen word here because it allows for acknowledgement of embodiment across processes and speaks to notions of “writing as performance” (George, 2012).



the ‘object’” (Cox, 2015, pg. 2). As a choreographer, I have dancers, ages 10–18, write choreography as they learn it to reinforce their learning process, which reflects Cox’s point that writing is often a part of the process of creating art objects; we participate in activities that are not written when writing is the goal, but we do not often directly identify these acts as contributing to the larger process in the same way. Through the implementation of embodied writing pedagogy, we can actively engage non-writing acts and understand their embodied nature and influence throughout the process of writing akin to the ways in which writing supports the larger choreographic process. Writing is a mode of action that is communicated through the medium of a body, enacted through a recursive process.

To begin both the choreographic and writing process, invention is a lengthy part because each contributing element is impacted by the others. This results in a slow evolution toward completion through the activities of creation (development of composition) and design (mapping and planning). Invention, then, is the space wherein the ideas are developed, discovered, and potentially mapped, which is based on definitions in the field of Composition Studies. For instance, Irene Clark (2003) defines invention as “the process writers use to search for; discover; create; or ‘invent’ material for a piece of writing” (p. 71). Invention often occurs throughout the process, but there is a concentrated effort at the beginning that generates initial ideas and directly connects to the term *discover*. Discovery is a key component in improvisational dance—wherein dancers move through space to discover new ways they can move. Improvisational dance (Improv), although a genre that is performed on its own, is often used to generate choreography, or to invent it. What is particularly interesting about invention within choreography is that it necessarily attends to the location, bodies (performers and the audience), and potential message. This can be seen in the way J. Michael Rifenburg and Lindsey Allgood (2015) articulate invention within their analysis of Allgood’s embodied performance art. She constantly considered the constraints and affordances of the location and the participation of both the performer and the audience to create through her acts of invention. Because “embodied writing tries to ‘presence’ the experience in the writer” (Anderson, 2001), the invention work in choreography is particularly important to consider within the writing process. Christopher Worthman (2002) echoes presencing of experience during his study of TeenStreet<sup>3</sup> when he identified “the experiential nature of the somatic and mental imagery in the prosaic effort to help teenagers reclaim or re-create language that speaks to their lives as they live them and not as they are perceived by others” (p. 32). If students engage in embodied activities, such as improvisation, then they can become aware of how they write through embodiment and, in turn, can attend to embodied acts

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3 TeenStreet is an ensemble of teenagers in Chicago that is a kind of school-based creative arts program (Worthman, 2002, p. 6).



when writing about performance. Improvisation (or movement) can be integrated into embodied writing pedagogy because it functions as a prewriting activity; it does “what many composition scholars and researchers believe prewriting exercises should do—they help students tap into their experiences” (Worthman, 2002, p. 120). As we ask student writers to cultivate their own, student-centric, writing processes, it is important to keep in mind that “human beings first learn through movement, and movement facilitates learning” (Hanna, 2008, p. 493). Therefore, improvisation also creates the opportunity for discovery in writing at all levels—elementary, secondary, and higher education—since it engages kinetic learning while fostering creativity and discovery.



*Figure 13.1. Improvisation for my 2015 Feminisms and Rhetorics project (photo by Molly Daniel).*

Similar to writers during revision in the writing process, dancers and choreographers participate in feedback (suggestions, critique, collaboration) and refinement (fine-tuning and polishing the whole piece). Betty Bamberg’s (2003) description of revision suggests it includes rethinking and reconsidering “initial rhetorical choices about content, development, and organization,” and she adds “sentence structure, and word choice” (p. 107). Revision relies upon re-seeing and making changes that arise from a need within the work, which also occurs during the choreographic process. Revision, then, is enacted by dancers and choreographers reshaping a work before it takes the stage—major changes such as reorganizing steps or changing movement and pathways (like moving paragraphs in written revision or adding

and deleting content) as well as minor alterations such as facial expressions and timing within music (like sentence level editing of grammar, usage, mechanics, and punctuation).

Since bodies are constitutive elements of a choreographic work, they not only enact and provide feedback and refinement, but they also embody refinements because of the feedback provided. For instance, as a choreographer, I provide feedback to refine movements executed by my dancers' bodies as seen in Figure 13.2. Similarly, as a composition teacher, I give detailed feedback (example in Figure 13.3) to students' writing to help them refine.



*Figure 13.2. My feedback to dancers during rehearsal (courtesy ofHuntington Dance Theatre).*

ich originated	<b>Molly Daniel</b> Perhaps consider how you can make this introduction more effective. Perhaps describe the scene people think of when they hear the word soccer...
arth. It would be	
most famous player,	
If comes with risks;	
ay. Players have	
This paper will	<b>Molly Daniel</b> What is the is sentence's function? Is it necessary? What sentence do you see as your thesis?
juries, or if there	

*Figure 13.3. My feedback to a written draft.*

True, written refinement is not applied directly to bodies, but it is implemented through the integrated mind-body pair of the writing body; however, when the topic of the draft is a performance, writers are refining their articulation of embodied experiences. A writing body comprehends and implements refinements that produce a revised composition. Because bodies actively function as agents and components in these activities, the affordances and constraints of them impact the ways in which revision is achieved, and when engaging in embodied writing, the bodies of the writers are also agents within revision.

Finally, all the work and rehearsals culminate in performance wherein the dancers rely on bodies and the atmosphere created on stage to incarnate the performance. Performance in this context relies upon the preceding stages for an audience to fully experience the composed piece. It is situated as the final part of the process, akin to the final draft of an essay. This relies upon the premise that performance functions as two differing concepts, “one involving the display of skills, the other also involving display, but of less particular skills than of a recognized and culturally coded pattern of behavior” (Carlson, 2007, p. 72). While skill, or mastery, of dance technique allows the performance to take shape just as writing skills contribute to a composed final draft, both also articulate a message that is rooted in these culturally coded patterns of behavior that connect to the audience through cohesion (semiotic relationship between the assembled elements) and delivery (conveying the purpose to the audience). The body is the conduit for cohesion in delivery because it enacts the culminating performance and engages with the contributing elements that were created and refined. Although less obvious, the body is also the conduit for cohesion in written delivery because it engages in the embodied process and enacted revision to cultivate the final draft.

## Application in Assignments

Based upon the preceding discussion, I suggest two assignments: one minor (in class) activity and one major project that integrate embodied activity and the analysis of performance. The first interweaves movement into invention strategies, rooted in the act of improvisational dance, while the second is a rhetorical analysis of performance, focusing on embodied interaction. Both draw awareness to the embodied acts of writing and dancing while positioning bodies as textual, not supplemental. This integration in the classroom works to mirror the findings of Kelly A. Hrenko and Andrea J. Stairs’ (2012) study that examines the intersections of art, culture and writing with grade 8 and grade 9 students because students not only are analyzing and writing about a performance but also using embodied activity to better understand it. Engaging in embodied writing allows writers to discuss bodies and explore experiences from the bodies’ (their own and those on stage) perspective (Anderson, 2001, p. 2). Using

the assignments together fosters an embodied approach to writing by first incorporating the in-class embodied activity into invention and then using their embodied knowledge and experience to identify embodied elements in the performance topic of the major project. This scaffolding, while reinforcing the embodied approach to writing, also enhances and supports students' learning.

*Minor Activity—Move to Write, Write to Move.*<sup>4</sup> This in-class activity invites students to think alphabetically and linguistically as well as kinesthetically, highlighting the reciprocity of language and (embodied) experience as students move and write. Cathy Smilan (2016) suggests, “art integration best serves students when teachers employ art-based strategies for inquiry and authentically engage in the act of learning through discovery” (p. 172). So, within the context of performance, students engaging in improvisational dance, or movement, prior to writing about an embodied performance use a choreographic discovery method to support written invention. It fosters creative invention through embodied activity, and it uses approximately 45 minutes. An outline is provided for this activity:

- Create space in the classroom by moving furniture or moving to a spacious location when possible.
- Make a music selection that is instrumental and provides a beat without an overpowering melody (silence works too if preferred). Music can play for the duration of the activity or just during movement.
- Write for 5–7 minutes: collecting thoughts, drafting, freewriting, based upon the music and/or in preparation for a larger project that will expand upon this invention exercise.
- Move—or improvise—for 3–5 minutes within the space to articulate somatically the written work that students just composed individually. Be cognizant of the other moving bodies.
- Repeat steps three and four 2–3 more times.
- Group students into sets of 3–4 to share movement and writing.
- Discuss purpose within both the writing and movement.
- Identify points of connection and divergence of how purpose in each performance (written and danced) functioned based upon the responses from the audience (their peers).

This activity could be shifted from dance improvisation to acting/miming movement as well depending on the purpose of the project it is supporting. In this shift, students may recognize the practice as a game of charades, which could heighten their own comfort level with the activity because that could be more familiar. This familiarity is an important aspect to consider for learners.

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4 The minor assignment originated as an activity for middle schoolers attending summer creative writing workshops I offered with my local National Writing Project site.

*Major Assignment—Performance Beyond Critique.*<sup>5</sup> This major project engages the embodied writing process through rhetorical analysis of a performance. The duration of time for this assignment is approximately 4–6 weeks and yields a written essay of 1,000–1,500 words, depending on course and student population. First, students select a performance to attend locally or watch as a recording. Then students analyze the performance by attending to purpose/function, audience, integration of elements: ambience, bodies, lighting, costuming, music, and types of movement. Once the performance has been viewed, students assemble a list of the elements integrated, a purpose executed by the performance, and a description of the audience for which it was intended. The following questions are thinking questions to support the writing process:

- What is the title of the performance? How does that communicate purpose? How does it affect your perception of the performance? Does that align with the way the performance functioned for you as a member of the audience? Why?
- What did you notice about the bodies on stage? How did they interact with one another, the space and the other elements?
- What elements were used within the performance? How were they assembled? How did they inform design? How did they impact navigation on stage? Did the organization of them impact the effectiveness of the purpose?
- How would you define the audience of the performance? Did the performance affect your body as an audience member?
- How did the bodies on stage create cohesion and execute delivery? How did they articulate emotion and/or elicit emotion from the audience? What did you notice about the way the bodies functioned on stage?

## Conclusions

Enacting an (explicitly) embodied process has the potential to give writers a better understanding of performance and visual arts as they write about them. As J. Michael Rifenburg and Lindsey Allgood (2015) remind us, “pedagogically, this reshaping allows for the mindful intersections of the body and writing” (p. 3) Writing is composing through bodies, and Debra Hawhee (2004) establishes that ancient athletics and rhetoric were practiced in the same space; this resulted in a “crossover in pedagogical practices and learning styles, a crossover that contributed to the development of rhetoric as a *bodily art*: an art learned, practiced and performed

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5 The analysis, although specific to a college setting, is transferable into other educational settings with tweaks in word count and alignment with grade-specific writing outcomes.

by and with the body as well as the mind” (p. 144). This crossover between processes in writing and choreography reminds us that they are both bodily arts and the mind-body is an integrated pair. Actively incorporating improvisational dance inside a writing classroom, through an activity such as this chapter suggests, invites students to express ideas through movement and provides a different stimulus to aid in written invention—especially when the larger project focuses upon performance or visual arts, which aligns with arguments to include dance within education curricula (Bergmann, 1995). Purposefully integrating embodied action inside the writing classroom expands our understanding of writing pedagogy as well as what it means to compose, and, in turn, applying this method within visual arts is valuable because it deepens students’ connection to their embodied experience.

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# Let's Dance! Warming-Up to All That Moves and Connects Our Writing-Centered Performances

Steven J. Corbett

This chapter is written from the point of view of a writing center director working in the performing arts (primarily dance) at the University of Washington, Seattle. The author surveys and critiques the metaphors writing center scholars have conceptualized in his quest toward an action-inspired, movement-oriented metaphor for WAC and WID, whether *cross-curricular* or, in the case of high-school and college writing center connections, *cross-institutional* (Hansen, Hartley, Jamsen, Levin, & Nichols-Besel, 2015, p. 140). Complementing McCarroll's (this volume) elaboration of choreographer Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process, Corbett proceeds to narrate how he came to practically and experientially appreciate this connection while collaborating with professors, professionals, and students—at all levels—in dance. The author concludes with some implications of embracing this perennially fresh metaphor for the teaching, learning, and performing of writing in and across disciplines and institutions.



*Figure 14.1. UW-Seattle MFA Concert 2013 (courtesy of Tim Summers).*

A curious visitor, lithe and light on her feet, catches my attention as she enters the room. Before she can slip away, I introduce myself as Steven, director of the new dance (satellite) writing center. With a quiet smile she tells me her name is Carolyn and that she's really glad that I'm here. She confides in me a little about this teacher she had last quarter whom she had a tough time with while discussing her paper. She says her teacher gave a rather open-ended assignment, but then got on everyone's case for not having it in the proper genre. So, we talk a little about teacher expectations: how it can sometimes be hard for teachers to make their expectations clear enough to students when giving assignments. I explain that we could talk about her papers at any stage she wants. She tells me that she's not as good a writer as some of the other MFAs, that she is mostly just a performer . . .

Days later, I will watch Carolyn perform a solo dance routine in *Tenant of the Street* by Eve Gentry. In this performance, she portrays a homeless person draped in loose, tattered gray clothing. There is no music, only recorded sounds of the street: horns honking, cars passing, the din of shuffling and muffled crowds. She drags her feet slowly across the floor. She pulls herself around with her hands as if on an imaginary rope, scraping her feet—never leaving the ground behind her. The look on her face screams loneliness, lostness, exhaustion and trepidation as she tentatively moves into the light—exposing a pale grimace—or into the shadows—hiding her shame and (in)securing anonymity . . . Her movements tell me all, without uttering a single word.

I'd like to continue this story of my turn toward a new metaphor for writing center work, a metaphor also applicable to many other communicative, performance, collaborative, and pedagogical situations. Through dance I have experienced the world of a huge population of students and colleagues who do not always rely on words as their primary means of communication or learning, and it has influenced how I think about teaching, learning, and tutoring. One of the most important concepts writing centers are poised to share with all writers is just how useful realization of the mind-body connection can be in writing performances. But first, artful communication and choreography require an artful and imaginative rhetorical frame of mind . . . and body, whether in high school or post-secondary settings.

## Dancers Need Writing Tutors Too Sometimes? Dancing the Talk

As I also describe in our Special Issue introduction, from 2000 to 2008 I helped direct writing centers and writing programs at the University of Washington, Seattle. The former director of the Dance Program, and co-editor of the Special Issue and this volume, Elizabeth (Betsy) Cooper, is a professional dancer and also a dance

scholar who is very interested in writers' composing and learning processes (see Cooper, 2010; 2011; 2013).

In 2002 a colleague helped us to connect and while discussing my ideas about writing center theory and practice Betsy and I became visibly and verbally excited. We quickly decided to establish a satellite center for her program.

I soon realized that in order to establish a connection grounded in mutual respect, I would have to conceptualize a “conversation” rather than a “conversion” model of cross-curricular collaboration. I would have to follow the suggestions of Muriel Harris (1992, p. 171), Barbara Walvoord (1992, pp. 15-16), and the words of Joan Graham (1992): “Faculty and graduate students in English can provide valuable writing instruction for students in the disciplines—if they go to the disciplinary contexts where students are working and expect to learn themselves” (pp. 125-126). These sentiments ring as true today as they did when they were first published over twenty years ago—and they apply cross-curricularly and cross-institutionally to high school, as well as college, settings (see, for example, (Hansen et al., 2015, p. 140; Hrenko & Stairs, 2012). I talked at length with both Betsy and the director of the 100-level dance classes, Peter Kyle. I asked them for books and journal articles I should read. They were very happy to hear my interest in learning about dance. Peter even joked that I should take Dance 101, suggesting that I might learn more about dance that way (practicing) than by reading (theorizing) alone. A week later I registered. The next quarter I found myself in a studio, sporting ballet slippers, learning the fundamentals of ballet and modern dance. More importantly, as I danced and learned to talk about dance, I also began to theorize and practice a mind-body-motion-emotion metaphor for writing applicable across the disciplines.



*Figure 14.2 UW Dance class, June 2013 (courtesy of Tim Summers).*

## A Turn to Choreography: Metaphors to Teach, Write, and Collaborate By

The power of tropes like metaphor lies in their ability to turn our words into more usable ideas and forms for more people to identify with and understand. The word

“trope” itself etymologically stems from a movement-oriented Greek definition involving a figurative *turn* in the direction or meaning of a phrase. But the thing about metaphors is that, once created and instantiated, they can take on a life and momentum of their own, a momentum and energy that can be tough sometimes to redirect the flow of. My years spent working side-by-side with dancers, MFA students of dance, dance majors, choreographers, scholars, and students taking Dance 101, moved me toward identifying with a new metaphor for tutoring writing, a metaphor with some similarities to previous composition and writing center metaphors.



*Figure 14.3. UW-Seattle MFA Concert 2013 (courtesy of Tim Summers).*

Several writing center scholars have written on the metaphors we tutor by. Harris (2007) recognizes that we have done an ample job of categorizing “the destructive metaphors and myths that capture how others regard us—as jailers who correct linguistic crimes, medical doctors who cure the wounded, gas station attendants who tune up conked-out prose and so on” (p. 75). But she laments that we have not done an adequate job of creatively communicating why and how we can be so central to academic writing instruction. Melissa Nicolas (2007) likewise critiques writing center metaphors from Andrea Lunsford (the “storehouse,” “the garret,” and the coveted “Burkean parlor”); Wendy Bishop (writing center as “haven”); and Stephen North and Peter Carino (writing center personnel as “hostess,” someone to make sure the chairs and tables are set up, the coffee is hot, and the conversation

never veers too far off the topic of writing”) (p. 5). Nicolas argues that these types of metaphorical narratives, while attempting to paint a more positive portrait of one-to-one teaching, have continued to place writing centers in a dichotomous, contentious spatial relationship with the rest of the academy. (For a further review of spatial metaphors, including writing center as “home/comfort,” “thirdspace,” and “nonplace” cf. Singh-Corcoran & Emika, 2012.)

Those involved in WAC/writing center “decentralizing” outreach initiatives have likewise developed their own set of metaphors, metaphors that attempt to close the gap between the center and the rest of the writing academy. Carol Haviland, Sherry Green, Barbra Shields, and Todd Harper (1999) Teagan Decker (2005), Steven Corbett (2005), and Carol Severino and Megan Knight (2007), in their descriptions of course-based and writing fellows tutoring programs create metaphors of tutor-as-emissary or ambassador. For these authors, the tutor-as-emissary or ambassador works against the grain to help revise the above missionary “conversion” metaphor—described by Walvoord (1992), Harris (1992), and Graham (1992)—to move toward a more synergistic, negotiated model of collaboration. While I appreciate this tutor-as-emissary or ambassador much more than the tutor-as-missionary metaphor, I still feel as if it places the burden on the disciplinary partner as “hostess” to the tutor, much like the writing center described by North and Carino. My favorite metaphor for WAC interactions, and also one of the earliest, comes from the (1986) “Independence and Collaboration: Why We Should Decentralize Writing Centers.”



Figure 14.4. “Eleven,” UW Dance Majors Concert, 2013 (courtesy of Tim Summers).

In this influential essay Louise Smith provides one of the earliest critiques of Stephen North’s ubiquitous “The Idea of a Writing Center” (1984) by drawing on The Queens College model and, especially, the UMass Boston’s tutoring program to illustrate how “the idea of the ‘center’ has gotten in the way” of productive Writing Center and classroom collaborations (p. 22). Smith urged writing center directors



and faculty across the curriculum to look at the “choreography” between UMass Boston’s English Department and Writing Center. This dance paired one tutor to each section of freshman English. Tutors and instructors negotiated the role of the tutor according to the teachers’ pedagogical preferences. Tutors, in turn, helped teach in the class with the instructor with the goal of trying to present to students an approachable, knowledgeable person who functions more as a concerned peer (listener) than a judge and grader. And just as dance is as popular today as it ever has been (consider the huge international success of TV shows like *Glee*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *So You Think You Can Dance*, and edgy films like *Black Swan* and *Magic Mike*), seventeen years later Smith’s original message was just as relevant to writing center professionals, enjoying a reprint in a special (2003) edition of *The Writing Center Journal*.

This idea of tutoring as a dance immediately struck a melodious chord. Finally, I had stumbled upon an organizing metaphor that took into account place, space, and people on relatively equal footing. A metaphor that seemed to move beyond the spatial a bit more toward the interpersonal and relational—a bold metaphor and conceptual frame (of mind) that invites us to consider the place of living, breathing, moving, thinking, desiring human beings (human bodies) in action and re-action.



*Figure 14.5. University of Washington, Seattle, 2013 beginning modern technique class (courtesy of Tim Summers).*

## Dance, Teach, Write: Collaboration in Motion

While I sometimes worked with graduate student MFAs like Carolyn (who will reenter our story soon), I usually worked with undergraduates—taking either introductory gen-ed courses, like the one I experienced with Peter Kyle and fellow students, or dance students writing papers for courses in the major. Writing center folks are uniquely poised to co-choreograph and enjoy close relationships with students, teachers, program directors, and administrators at all levels. And thinking of these relationships in terms of motion and dance can result not only in better practice but, sometimes, in long-term connections, collaborations, and friendships.



Once I was sitting in the office when Betsy came in looking frazzled. I asked her how she's doing. She said dramatically that she's "drowning." She had a huge stack of papers from her class of sixty-five. She told me that she doesn't know how she's going to have time to assess all those papers. I told her that I could help her, that Friday I have three open hours. We talked a little about how she grades and what she looks for. I told her I should have no problem assessing papers if I could use a check system. We proceeded to talk about the value of low-stakes writing-to-learn assignments graded with a check, check-plus, or check-minus. I asked her to just do a few examples for me to gauge from and I'd work through as many as possible. She showed her appreciation through heartfelt thank yous, smiles, and a hug. Helping her to assess papers becomes a regular part of my practice only for a little while. I understand that readers may be grimacing as they read these words, that it might upset the typical tutorial dynamic to assign grades. And normally, I would agree. (In fact, after reconsidering, this was the only course I ended up grading papers for.)

But this aspect of my involvement with dance lead to conversations with Betsy and other dance instructors that gave me a much better idea of ("normed" me to) what is valued in writing about dance. It is akin in some ways for a tutor to be willing to do a "grammar check" of a student's paper in order to get, perhaps, to higher-order concerns like claim, evidence, or analysis. It could perhaps even be thought of in terms of Elizabeth Boquet's encouragement, in *Noise from the Writing Center*, of "higher risk/higher yield" tutoring on the edge of our expertise (2002, p. 81). My willingness to traverse beyond the typical writing center/ writing classroom, tutor/teacher dichotomies, I believe, enabled me to move on to co-choreograph other close collaborative interactions with my new colleagues. I think it helped "persuade" them to trust me more. This closer collaboration led to other, more orthodox, WAC activities like helping instructors design more effective assignments (e.g., Harris, 1992, 2010; Soliday, 2011). Mary Soliday (2011), in her description of the apprenticeship model for CUNY writing fellows, offers a complimentary view of the social and contextual dynamics of assignment design when she writes that "it is not enough to describe requirements on a prompt. Because a prompt embodies a social practice, we would not *give* assignments as much as we would try to *enact* them in our classes" (p. 3). My closer understanding of the instructional context of Betsy's course allowed me insight into the sorts of information they might consider in their assignment design, delivery, and assessment. It provided me a much clearer view into what sorts of writing styles and elements are valued by teachers of writing in dance.

For example, I tutored a student, Helen, trying to set up an historical analysis of a dance by an influential twentieth century female choreographer of her choice (Betsy's next assignment). Helen chose Martha Graham, the "Picasso of dance" and founder of the oldest dance company in America (to view the current Martha

Graham Dance Company repertory visit <http://marthagraham.org/>). Helen was not a dance major. Since I had just assessed her paper, we talked a little about it and how she could apply a bit more kinesthetic, or bodily movement, details to what I deemed her strongly expressionistic treatment of Graham's choreographic innovations. Betsy believes in a pedagogy that encourages students to revise for a better grade, so Helen could perhaps take her check and transform it into a check plus by detailing the connections between Graham's groundbreaking choreography and the historical context that influenced her innovations.



Figure 14.6. UW Advanced Modern Technique  
Class 2013 (courtesy of Tim Summers).

While we talked, I made liberal use of my own body to illustrate for Helen the precise sorts of detailing she would want to apply toward her revision. My arms subtly swooped in various *positions de bras*, my legs jutted out in circular *rond de jambe* or pointing *relevé*. Helen watched and listened raptly, becoming increasingly excited and engaged in our dance, both physically and verbally. Motion gave way to emotion, which in turn gave birth to mutual understanding of each other's writing—and communicative—expectations and concerns. What we talked about (and rhetorically acted out), the moves, gestures, we did our best to transcribe into words. We were enacting the potential of our *sundromos*, an ancient Greek term described by Debra Hawhee as “an intensive gathering of forces (of desire, of vigorous practices, of musical sounds, of corporeal codes), trafficked through and by neurons, muscles, and organs” (2002, p. 160), with each breath, each smile, and each exclamation. We were enacting what Perl (2004) describes as the felt sense of realizing mind-body communicative synergy: “When the words that are emerging *feel* right, we often feel excited or at least pleased; we experience a kind of flow. Physically and mentally, we are aligned” (p. 3). The potential of our bodily energy reciprocally informed and inspired our words, ultimately making the read and *feel* of her writing more vivid and alive.



*Figure 14.7. UW Intermediate/Advanced Ballet Class 2013 (courtesy of Tim Summers).*

The sorts of lessons I learned working between instructor assignment sheets and student attempts at enacting those assignments, paved a productive two-way street for enhanced collaboration. I was able to discuss with Betsy some suggestions for possible ways to emphasize her desire for more detailed kinesthetic descriptions in her assignment design and delivery. Additionally, while working with dance students I kept my eyes open for potential tutors: I recruited an exceptional tutor, then only a sophomore in one of Betsy's classes, after reading her evocative, sophisticated descriptions of dance performances. This former tutor is none other than co-editor Dr. Jennifer LeMesurier. She, like many artists, is making the most of her multiple ways of knowing, doing, thinking, and performing.

Exploring the meaning-making process of other disciplines demands a willingness to learn other disciplines' ways of thinking and knowing first, or at least while, we share our own. The performing arts have much to offer writing teachers of all stripes, and the cross-curricular-curious will be rewarded for their actions. Through dance, I've come to realize that no matter how beautiful or confident someone appears, when it comes to our art—be it writing, dancing or anything else—we are all still unsure apprentices trying to become confident masters in an eternal chorus. We all feel sometimes strong, other times weak, in body and in spirit.

## Our Visitor (Still Curious) Returns

Carolyn came back to visit me with her graduate seminar paper on site-specific dance. Site-specific dance, or art, involves taking the performance outside of the typical stage setting; usually, the artist considers the location while planning the work (similar to tutoring programs that choreograph classroom visits, course-based

tutoring, or satellite centers). She spoke in a low tone and often asked how I felt about what she had written. Betsy was the class instructor, and one of the emphases of the class was to compose a publishable essay. So, I talked with Carolyn about some of the different dance academic journals I had recently investigated and some of the different conventions associated with each. I explained how she will want to target a specific journal or two, and then research a little into that journal, how they cite, how they use footnotes, how the language sounds. I read her essay, impressed from the start. Carolyn not only provided the theoretical and practical precedence for site-specific dance, but she also illustrated the degree to which she had participated in this innovative art form. She had experiences performing with some ground-breaking choreographers in this genre, performances in busy streets or on makeshift outdoor stages. I gave her lots of honest praise because I felt this was an important, publishable work. I supplied a few suggestions, mostly involving word choice and a few other minor concerns. The best thing I could offer, though, was encouragement to send her fine essay to a journal or two.

I later learned that Carolyn would present her paper to an international dance conference in Portugal. Soon after, the same paper was published in a distinguished international dance journal. Granted, for some readers, it may sound like I did not do very much to help Carolyn realize her true potential as a writer. In fact, Betsy helped her along with drafts of the essay much, much more than I did. But I would say that each writer we work with requires something different, and oftentimes different readers have different gifts to offer. Sometimes, what some writers need more than anything is someone who will listen and encourage—a partner who may need to *directively* lead/talk less and *affectively* follow/listen more (c.f. McCarroll, this volume).

Whenever we would pass each other in the halls between offices and studios Carolyn would give me that same quiet smile I saw when we first met. Little more than “hi” was required to evoke memories of wordless motion and wordful emotion. Today I am left reflecting on my lovely partners in art, their movements, their thoughts, our felt sense, our *sundromos* . . . body and soul.

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# Integrated Dance Learning: Critical Thinking for Embodied Minds

Barbara Angeline and Jeff Friedman

The mercurial field of dance challenges dance educators to cultivate critically connected, integrated movement artists who can manage and sustain diverse careers. This chapter deconstructs the conceptual framework, critical learning goals, and integrated coursework for “Introduction to Dance Studies.” The course merges scholarly and studio dance practices, establishing connections between choreographic intent and decision-making, embodied practice, oral discussion, and analytic and evaluative writing. The pedagogical strategies and scaffolded course activities described can be adapted for middle, high school and post-secondary students to reinforce the value of body/mind integration and the benefits of using both physical and cognitive intelligences to maximize learning.

The mercurial field of dance emplaces a need for dance education to produce critically connected, integrated movement artists. Coursework should bolster the critical thinking necessary for graduates to manage and sustain diverse careers. Scaffolding students through integrated dance learning is an essential start.

This chapter deconstructs the conceptual framework, critical learning goals and integrated coursework for *Introduction to Dance Studies*. The course and its format were originally created by Dr. Jeff Friedman for first-year students majoring in dance at Rutgers University. Co-instructor Barbara Angeline, with her research in critical thinking for dance education, elucidated and expanded higher order thinking throughout the course. Dance curricula are often divided into “academic” and “studio” classes. This course merges scholarly and studio practices, establishing connections between choreographic intent and decision-making, embodied practice, oral discussion, and analytic and evaluative writing. Dance Department students complete this course in their first semester—prior to their first choreography course—as one step in the curricular scaffold that creates thinking artists who successfully navigate the field.

As a first-year, first-semester university course, *Introduction to Dance Studies* provides a bridge between K-12 and post-secondary learning, thinking, and doing. The ideas and activities described below could be easily transposed for middle and high school students to reinforce the value of body/mind integration and the benefits of using both physical and cognitive intelligences to maximize learning.



## Critical Thinking - Introduction and Review of Literature

Critical thinking (CT) provides the mechanism by which students can explore, deconstruct and examine ideas to arrive at their own reasonable, articulate, defensible conclusions. The Association of American Colleges states, “The key to educational excellence lies not in the memorization of vast amounts of information, but rather in fostering habits of mind that enable students to continue their learning [and] engage new questions” (Kuh, Chen, & Nelson Laird, 2007, p. 40). Knowledge and reasoning that are domain-specific provide a framework for the practice of CT skills (Facione, 1990). Studies show that post-secondary students who learn critical thinking skills demonstrate more achievement in their specific study areas than students who don’t (Lampert, 2006). In the few studies that assess post-secondary student CT achievement, findings show that students make their greatest gains during freshman year (McBride & Reed, as cited in Angeline, 2010). This means that educators teaching first-year students need to prioritize critical thinking goals, making their significance and value explicit to students. “[Providing] opportunities for student and teacher agency allows the classroom to become a laboratory for generating, researching, and discussing new ideas and perspectives in relations to the content area. . . . Students and teachers assume active roles in the development of knowledge and create personal voices within the content” (Ottey, 1996). A critical “journey” of learning can guide students through the shift from receivers of information to contributing collaborators.

In a research study of educators with five to twenty-five years of post-secondary teaching in dance, participants stated that the number one obstacle to critical thinking in dance coursework is student resistance.

Previous training, education and/or cognitive development pre-disposed students to either embrace or resist the teachers’ efforts to get them to think. Students who were not given opportunities to think in previous educational experiences developed habits of movement [and recitation] rather than habits of thought. (Angeline, 2010)

Another significant challenge was balancing course learning between critical thinking and content goals (Angeline, 2010).

Modeled or implicit CT may not be enough. Critical thinking is promoted when teachers establish criteria for students to use within a lesson, then let students form, examine and adjust their own conclusions (Chen, 2001; Dewey,

1916; Mosston, 1998). A critical learning environment is facilitated, not dictated, by the educator:

1. The teacher models critical thinking for students, and students are encouraged to rationally question, examine and assess processes in class—including teaching methods and choices.
2. Students are encouraged and expected to explore cognitive and metacognitive thinking efforts, actions and consequences.
3. Students are guided to expand on original thoughts by investigating and assessing all available information to develop alternative responses.
4. Students learn to consider the feelings and ideas of others, as well as their own personal biases, in order to form responses that are organized, reasonable, and justifiable (Chen, as cited in Angeline, 2010).

## Critical Thinking—Definition

What do we mean when we say “critical thinking”? Lack of a clear definition of CT may illuminate the greatest challenge to installing critical thinking as an educational priority, particularly in domain-specific arts education environments. Expert theorists, educators and philosophers have worked to analyze and interpret elements of critical thinking. Reflections on a common definition of critical thinking and pedagogy for its delivery in dance education expand possibilities for developing dancers who use critical thinking skills both in and out of the dance studio (Angeline, 2010). In 1990, the American Philosophical Association asked Dr. Peter A. Facione to investigate a definition of Critical Thinking. Using the Delphi research method, Facione facilitated 43 critical-thinking experts’ coming to consensus. Through several rounds of written, anonymous debate, post-secondary professors from around the country used their own CT abilities to hone a definition. Critical thinking was deemed to have two major components: cognitive skills and affective dispositions (see Table 15.1):

## Affective CT Dispositions

*Definition:* Delineated habits of using, or the aptitude to use and see the value of critical thinking.

*Dispositions:* Truthseeking, Open-Mindedness, Systematicity, Critical Thinking, Self-Confidence, Maturity of Judgment, Inquisitiveness

- Facione, as synthesized in Angeline (2010)

**Table 15.1: Consensus list of CT cognitive skills, sub-skills and affective disposition characteristics**

CT Skill	Sub-Skills
1. Interpretation	Categorization Decoding Significance Clarifying Meaning
2. Analysis	Examining Ideas Identifying Arguments Analyzing Arguments
3. Evaluation	Assessing Claims Assessing Arguments
4. Inference	Querying Evidence Conjecturing Alternatives Drawing Conclusions
5. Explanation	Stating Results Justifying Procedures Presenting Arguments
6. Self-Regulation	Self-Examination Self-Correction

## CT and Course Design

The development of critical thinking is contingent on the design of class activities and assignments and the pedagogical practices that support an integration of course content and critical thinking goals. Examining the ways in which we communicate to and with students is key. “The use of questions and how they form the basis of knowledge, decision making, and actions are integral to the promotion of critical thinking” (Myrick, as cited in Myrick & Yonge, 2002). Different types of questions elicit different types of thinking, and all are valuable to scaffolding CT. Below is a table of question categories, definitions and thinking elicited by each type of question. Correlating course activities for *Introduction to Dance Studies* are included to show how activities discussed in the chapter address these different types of thinking.

**Table 15.2: Question categories, definition, connected thinking and course activities**

<b>Question Type</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Thinking</b>	<b>Course Activity</b>
<b>Factual</b>	“Requires the students to state a fact . . . generally explicitly stated in the curriculum material. Fact questions usually have a single correct answer.”	Provides domain knowledge necessary to connect CT to course or discipline content.	–Online Reading Response –Critical Dance Analysis, Parts I & II –Paper #1 –Paper #2
<b>Criteria</b>	Generally has more than one answer, but the possible answers come from a finite pool of facts related to content.	Scaffolds domain knowledge and helps to establish a system of evaluation that is a necessary component of CT.	–Class Discussion –Critical Dance Analysis, Parts I & II –Paper #1 –Paper #2
<b>Higher cognitive</b>	Includes “analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions and cannot be answered using rote memory. . . . Several answers usually are plausible and defensible.”	“Requires the student to respond with an inference, evidence, generalization, explanation, solution, prediction, or opinion which cannot be obtained directly from the curriculum materials.”	–Online Reading Response –Class Discussion –Critical Dance Analysis, Part III –Paper #1 –Paper #2
<b>Analysis</b>		Elicits “motives or causes of observed events; inferences, interpretations, or generalizations; and/or evidence” to support all of these.	–Critical Dance Analysis, Part III –Paper #1 –Paper #2
<b>Synthesis</b>		“Elicits predictions, solutions to problems, original communications.”	–Critical Writing, Part III –Paper #1 –Paper #2
<b>Evaluation</b>		“Elicits opinions about issues, judgments about the validity of ideas, judgments about the merit of problem solving.”	–Class Discussion –Paper #2

*Note: Synthesized and adapted from Gall et al., cited in Angeline (2010)*

The reciprocal value of critical thinking and writing is well known.

[Critical] writing is about selecting ideas, analyzing and interpreting them, imagining objections and responding to them, identifying and questioning assumptions, clarifying the reasons behind a conclusion, and presenting those reasons in a structured form . . . .

The ability to generate a rational argument for your beliefs is a primary expression of intellectual maturity. We should be able to explain why we believe what we believe, or why we do what we do—not in terms of the causes or origins of the belief, but in terms of reasons. (Coe, 2011)

Integrated course activities help students to develop, expand and hone their critical writing.

## Introduction to Dance Studies— Foundational Course Information

Once a clear definition of CT is concretized, the connection between writing and critical thinking can be made clear to students via well-crafted writing prompts and rubrics. However, CT as a means to serve artistic practice may be harder to elucidate, though writing and CT have reciprocal benefits. “Hands-on activities” should not be included merely to serve critical thinking goals. Critical thinking may also be of value in forwarding artistic decision making, creativity, and depth in artistic thinking. In *Introduction to Dance Studies*, we forward activities that help students practice the connection between critical thinking, writing, discussion, dance viewing, dance embodiment and dance composition experiences.

Opportunities for our diverse students to explore how they fit into their chosen field is pragmatically age-appropriate. Self-identification is a temporal process that is lifelong, with a fluid quality that potentially enables a variety of identities over the life-course. For the purposes of expanding critical thinking about themselves, others, and their passionately chosen art-form, the course provides opportunities for cultivating a body-based sensibility that informs the technical development of dancers, their creative capacities as choreographers, and their procedural and philosophical competencies as critical thinkers and writers. The course introduces students to the categories of artistic choice-making made by dance choreographers that frame audience experience and interpretation of their dance works. Categories are scaffolded in the semester to move students from proximal areas of familiar territory toward more multifarious topic areas:

**Table 15.3: Scaffolding of Topic Areas for Introduction to Dance Studies (Friedman, 2003)**

<b>DIFFERENT TYPES OF FRAMES</b>
Social frames (demographics, audience engagement)
Architectural frames (theater types, site-specific practices)
<b>CONTENTS OF THE FRAME</b>
Technology (sound, lighting, video, editing, screendance)
Costumes/Props/Accessories (color coding/descriptive vocabulary, historical time period, class/status, cultural affiliation, abstract/literal use)
Set design (historical time period, class/status, cultural affiliation, abstract/literal use)
Lighting design (location, mood, color, lighting/darkening, time of day/season)
Sound score (types of sound, live/recorded, mood, movement/sound alignment, historical time period, cultural affiliation)
<b>BODIES IN THE FRAME</b>
Body Idealism/Disability/Physically Integrated Dance (debates and considerations, expanded virtuosity)
Gender and Sexuality (biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, constructs, conventions, debates and considerations)
Race, Ethnicity and Culture (debates and considerations, coloniality, hybridity, cultural contexts)

Theories, concepts and vocabulary on the topics of gender, sexuality, race and disability are challenging for first-semester undergraduates. For the benefit of new students coming into the program, there is a unique opportunity to examine the often-generalized, “default” dance body—Euro/upper class/abled/female/heterosexual—through the lens of dance studies. Our goal, as instructors, is to help students begin to parse that generalized body to become, instead, a series of more specific, individualized types having to do with the actively raced/ethnicized, classed, abled, gendered, and sexed bodies, often matching the diverse population of our incoming first-year class. Because of this relatively congruent match, we are aware that affective dispositions for critical thinking can and should be elicited. Based on an existing empathy towards equitable representations of their cohort as evolving dance artists, our students are primed for developing skills to fulfill that empathy in a schooled manner. Considering questions of sex, gender, race, ethnicity and disability in dance choreography and performance gives students a chance to address bias and explore from a critically-enhanced perspective of inquisitive open-mindedness. We want to nurture affective CT dispositions through stimulations of extant yet implicit demographic realities of the dance field. All the topic areas of the default “conventional body” are addressed in our curriculum.

## Integrated Course Activities (See Appendix for Additional Course Activities)

After two weeks of foundational dance literacy coursework, each subsequent week follows a structured format, with a distinct topic of study that is folded into the mix of knowledge and thinking from previous units. Course activities are integrated to provide diverse approaches to absorbing, deconstructing, critically considering and *experiencing* each topic. Critical thinking and writing are integrated with embodied dance experiences, so student learning is not solely cerebral. We make explicit the equal, integrated, and mutually dependent values of artistic practice and critical thought.

**Online Reading Response**—Prior to the first classroom meeting, students read an article or book chapter about the week’s topic. This reading is selected to expand, challenge and provoke thinking by identifying societal conventions and constructs as they relate to dance and the ways in which dancers, dance writers, and choreographers respond to these constructs. Students write online responses to two prompts: “Fact Check” makes sure students have absorbed significant information from the reading; “Think About” requires students to critically connect their learning from the reading to open-ended, original conclusions.

1. *Fact Check*: List three important aspects of the work that “Danceability Project” artists Alito Alessi and Emery Blackwell choreograph and perform together.
2. *Think About*: Should the word “disabled” be used to describe people? Why or why not? (This is not a trick question—people advocate for both sides of this debate, so it’s okay to express your own, supported ideas.)

The online response allows instructors to pre-assess student knowledge. Misunderstandings can be ascertained, as can the level of prior knowledge that individual students bring to the topic area. Students are asked to print out and bring their answers to class for discussion. This assignment has many benefits: The online environment provides both time and a safe space for every student to arrive at deeply considered, individual ideas. Students who need confidence in speaking in class, or do not have “rapid-fire” responses in face-to-face discussions, are emboldened by having their answers in hand. Discussions are also able to move more quickly into higher cognitive connections, since thinking about the topic has already been guided in this direction.

### Class Meeting 1

The first class of each week meets in a traditional classroom. The class begins and ends with student ideas, writing and development of critical connections.



*Critical Dance Analysis, Part I:* This writing activity supports the development of decoding skills. At the start of class, a dance video is played for students. During the video, students practice what we call “Impressionist Writing.” Students respond immediately to an embodied performance stimulus by translating what is seen in the video into impressionistic streams of evidence. We encourage students to use all resources at hand: single words, phrases, bullet lists, mind-map, and/or graphic drawing formats allow for multiple types of conceptual relationships; writing need not follow a grammatical prose format but can flow without punctuation. Students are asked to consider all topic areas covered by the course up to that point and to include course vocabulary in their note-taking whenever possible.

*Class Lecture/Dance Viewing/Discussion:* After the video, the lecture begins. Intertwined with domain-specific knowledge are dance video examples to illustrate the concepts and vocabulary of that week’s topic. Facione’s consensus divided critical thinking elements into six main categories. In order to acquire or expand these skills, our students need a solid foundation for the selected topic. To forward the CT skill of Interpretation, we provide vocabulary to support more complex thinking. Video excerpts are carefully organized to progress from extant (and comfortable) student comprehension toward areas of expanded complexity. The lecture continues, reinforcing the process of moving from comfort zones of preformed ideas into proximal zones of new thinking.

Vocabulary is provided as a medium with which students can discuss, debate and write about the topic. Class discussion, interspersed throughout the lecture, allows students to practice this new vocabulary and individually respond to traditional and challenged constructs in the course content, consider expanded ideas about choreographic intent in the videos and explore alternative ideas with their peers. The integration of domain knowledge, video examples and discussions shifts students towards querying evidence, a sub-skill of Inference. Discussions generally “camp” in one of two places: student clarification of domain content and critical connections expanded by the content. When student questions arise, we redirect them back to the questioner’s peers. If time is allowed, there is usually an aggregate understanding, and the students’ answering questions for each other allows the topic to be discussed in a collaborative, idea-generating environment. Critical connections are made when provocative questions are posed. For example, in a “Race and Ethnicity” lecture, students were asked, “Is it okay for a white choreographer to compose a dance about black suffering?” Discussion can reveal the ambiguities and seeming contradictions embedded in the course content and dance videos. Simple forms of categorization are challenged, creating room for alternative explorations. Diverse perspectives and debates are presented and valued in lecture material, videos and student discussions.

*Critical Dance Analysis, Part II:* At the end of the lecture, students re-watch the video that they decoded at the start of class. Again, they are asked to stream

their observations and impressions of the dance. Seen through eyes opened to new conceptual territory, students engage their new vocabularies, adding evidence grounded in newly learned concepts and diverse constructs. By challenging simple categorization and considering alternative categorizations, students reach towards new, more complex conceptual categories and develop meta-cognition skills.

*Critical Dance Analysis, Part III:* Reviewing and querying evidence gathered in the first impressionist writing, and considering the expanded knowledge represented in the second writing, students are asked to use the evidence before them to identify an artistic argument. Has the choreographer adequately persuaded the viewer toward a single interpretive “Big Idea”? Considering a conjecture about meaning can be clarified to answer the question, “What is the intended message of this dance work?” Students are required to cite evidence from their notes to substantiate their conclusions. Which observations and impressions connect to “show” the viewer the intent of the choreographer? Are there “outlier” pieces of evidence that challenge or shift a seemingly simple interpretation of the work? A consideration of concepts and ideas from lecture may lead the student toward another, more complex and less conventional conclusion. We ask students to use lecture concepts and vocabulary to engage the critical thinking elements of Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, Inference and Explanation.

This end-of-class, short prose-style paragraph requires students to cultivate their affective dispositions of inquisitiveness, open-mindedness, and truthseeking, toward self-confident critical thinking. The explicit progression of student ideas to conceptual illustrations, coupled with a progression of greater reliance on self-designed ideation supports the affective disposition of systematicity. In order to grow towards greater critical thinking, the systematic process of moving from the known to the unknown is crucial. The critical thinking skills of stating results, justifying procedures, presenting arguments, self-examination and self-correction are further developed in two, longer-form papers later in the course. Maturity of judgment will also be developed. For now, we have shown that students can be led, through a process of writing about embodied dance practices, toward acquisition of a variety of critical thinking competencies and affective dispositions that will guide them towards future expansion of their critical thinking skills.

## Class Meeting 2

The second meeting for our topic week convenes in the dance studio. A variety of events, including guest artist performances, class discussions and workshops (writing, interpreting and composing dance), take place that help students experience an embodied practice of the week’s topic. Active, “hands-on” learning can be a powerful tool for expanding critical thinking (Piergiiovanni, 2014). We incorporate

this idea but in a manner that reinforces both artistic action and thinking as equally significant to the learning of both.

*Verb/Adverb Analysis and Dance Composition:* One example of an embodied workshop is the “Verb/Adverb” project. The purpose of this workshop is to spiral student experiences of writing, interpreting and composing dance towards an understanding of their reciprocal benefits. We frame this workshop as an encouragement towards more vivid writing for movement description in students’ papers. Pedagogically, we are also scaffolding an experience that deliberately integrates thinking/writing with movement/composition. The activities spiral recursively over the course of a single eighty-minute period, leading towards students’ increased awareness of how writing and movement experiences can be mutually informative.

Resources for this workshop are two reviews for the same dance event, published by dance critics affiliated with *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*. Activities begin with students forming small groups. Each group analyzes the same dance critique, identifying and listing active verbs and accompanying adverbial descriptors. Then, the activity is repeated with the second critique. Since both critics reviewed the same event, we have the opportunity to support the value of vivid dance writing through a comparative analysis of their texts. A simple count shows one critic is clearly more engaged with using vivid active verbs and an extensive list of adverbs. A brief discussion acknowledges that some dance critics are or were active dance artists, invested in movement practice and choreography. Students develop a correlation between engaged movement practice and the ability to generate vividly descriptive writing about dance.

Each student then links four random pairs of verbs and adverbs/descriptors (e.g., “plummeting fleetingly,” “flailing quietly,” or “pushing, as if flying”) and generates a short movement composition that enacts these descriptive pairs in embodied format. Compositions completed, each student links with a partner and they perform for each other. Each student observes their partner and generates written movement descriptors that apply to each unusual movement combination, explicitly expanding their embodied imagination. Thus, the recursive structure of this embodied workshop spirals from text, to embodied practice, to combinatory text, to embodied dance composition and performance, and then returns to textual description, informed by embodied experience. This workshop frequently proves successful for students’ subsequent writing projects, where use of active verbs and adverbs becomes more vividly descriptive, as a consequence of the integration of thinking, writing, dance composition, dance performance, movement observation and analysis.

*Two Long Papers:* Students write two long papers in the course. Both are an extension of their Critical Dance Analysis writing practices and require attendance at live dance performances. Paper #1 asks students to interpret one dance from our BFA Senior Dance Concert. Works in this concert are solos and duets performed in

a black box theater, so elements of analysis are simple and fairly straightforward. In addition, the elements of analysis for this first paper pull from concrete categories, such as costume, lighting, and sound. Paper #2 requires critical analysis of two dance works from our faculty DancePlus concert, incorporating both the earlier, concrete categories and adding conceptual categories, such as race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality. For this paper, students are also required to compare, contrast, contextualize and evaluate the two dances, which are generally longer and more complex.



*Figure 15.1. Introduction to Dance Studies students deconstruct a dance critique for adjectives and descriptive phrases, then embody the adjectives and write about the peer dancing they observe (photo by the authors).*

# Conclusion

In conclusion, we propose the importance of integrating the observing, analyzing and embodying of dance with writing and speaking about dance, using the framework of critical thinking skills to ground dance students as critically embodied, thinking learners and artists.

CT is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one’s personal and civic life. The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider . . . reasonable in the selection of criteria . . . [and] focused in inquiry. Educating good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. (Facione, cited in Angeline, 2010)

We need to identify CT when we use it, so students recognize that we model it and understand that we expect it. CT goals need to be included in assessments, with points explicitly connected in rubrics, so students see its value and they know when they have achieved specific elements of CT. For arts educators committed to cultivating critical thinking, the surest approach may be to practice our own affective critical thinking dispositions and exercise our critical thinking skills when planning curriculum.

**Table 15.4: Critical Thinking Skills and Curriculum Considerations (Adapted from Angeline, 2010)**

CT SKILL	CURRICULUM CONSIDERATIONS
1. Interpretation	How is critical thinking defined? What are the CT goals for this course? What will the progression or scaffolding of CT skills look like?
2. Analysis	How can content and use of questions be employed in service of CT? How can CT serve the content goals?
3. Evaluation	What role should critical thinking play in dance coursework? How will CT goals be balanced with domain content goals?
4. Inference	How will I know if students are achieving CT goals? How can I articulate CT goals in course activities, assessments and rubrics?
5. Explanation	What are the pedagogical strategies that forward CT?
6. Self-Regulation	Based on review of course assessments, are students successfully developing CT skills? Which assignments work best? Which didn’t work as expected? What adjustments need to be made pedagogically to facilitate this curriculum? How will these adjustments be made?

We suggest that lesson plans may also need to incorporate adjustments that forward the development of affective CT dispositions (Ennis, 1987; Facione, 1990). If students enter post-secondary education either unprepared to think or predisposed to resist the use of critical thought, it is essential to give them more time and more opportunities to explore critical processes, practice the articulation of defensible conclusions and experience critical thinking as an integral and valued part of arts education.

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## Appendix

*Additional Course Activities: Introduction to Dance Studies* is a rigorous, integrated academic course. In addition to the course activities and assignments discussed in the chapter, the following writing assignments are also included in the course:

Course Activity	Description	Thinking Promoted
<b>Dance Intelligences Essay</b>	Using Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory, students apply appropriate intelligence categories to an analysis of dance roles such as choreographer, dancer, technician, musician, teacher, anthropologist, and critic.	Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, Inference, Explanation
<b>Dance Festival Proposal</b>	Students develop a proposal for a fantasy dance festival, with criteria including a selected theater style, appropriate commissioned artists, inferred audience demographic and engagement through publicity. Critical connections among all elements must be integrated to support the selected festival theme or mission (charitable, artistic, etc.)	Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, Inference, Explanation, and Self-Regulation
<b>Descriptive Writing and Dancing</b>	Studio event—Students participate in trios. One student improvises a dance, while the other two write descriptive prose about the movement. After each student has performed and written, students read the descriptions written about their dance to see if the intent of the improvisation was strongly interpreted. Performer considers adjustments that could be made to achieve stronger intent.	Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, and Self-Regulation
<b>Final Exam</b>	Exam includes factual, criteria, higher cognitive and analysis questions.	Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, Inference, Explanation





# Writer as Choreographer: Critical Response Process in the Writing Center

Meredith McCarroll

Drawing from experience as a choreographer and dancer, but also as a Writing Center Director and writing teacher, McCarroll asks what we might learn about power in the writer/tutor relationship from the Critical Response Method used in dance workshops. Inspired by choreographer Liz Lerman, McCarroll suggests that clear guidelines can empower the writer to speak her needs and questions *and* can offer structure for the writing tutor.

The dance studio grows quiet. The audience—core members of Circle Modern Dance participating in a feedback session for works in progress—waits for sound. They look to me as the choreographer, expecting me to cue the music so that the dance can start. Instead, I set a metronome and allow it to begin marking time. At once, all five dancers begin to speak. All five dancers begin to move. The audience fidgets.

The Writing Center opens. A new tutor takes her seat as a student writer joins her. Introductions are made. The tutor is nervous; the writer is nervous. The tutor makes small talk. The writer pulls out a draft of a paper. The tutor leans forward to read. The writer fidgets.

What happens next—the various ways that these players feel, react, and move through the session—has much to do with power, comfort, and authority. It also has much to do with the script of the feedback session. Both the creator and the respondent have much at stake. The writer and choreographer feel exposed. The tutor is braced for the moment that she is expected to reveal the secret to writing, which she worries she doesn't have. The fellow dancer feels responsible to offer something, but worries she lacks the language.

In both of these scenarios, anxieties about power, ability, and responsibility loom. The choreographer feels protective and unsure of her work, as the audience member doubts his right to react to the work. The writer simultaneously wants help but is weary of exposing herself in order to seek that help, while the tutor navigates boundaries and expectations, hoping to help. In these moments, things could go badly. The potential for dialogic feedback structure tends toward monologue in both choreography and writing feedback workshops. Without a clear structure, the helper can help too much—with suggestions and responses that feel like conclusions rather than introductions to a conversation about the work at hand. In a traditional choreography feedback session, audience members suggest, “you could . . .” which often feels like “you should . . .” to a choreographer who is asked to

remain silent in the conversation. In a writing center, it is easy for the tutor to fill the quiet space, correct all of the “errors” and get carried away offering suggestions. And in each scenario, the vulnerable one who just shared something—whether a dance piece or a paper—can be left feeling defensive or voiceless. Sometimes she feels shame, wishing that she had kept to herself. We are taught to accept feedback; to question makes us seem defensive, which is framed in the creative process as insecure and closed-minded rather than committed and clear. So, half of a conversation becomes muted and the creator can leave a feedback session or writing center consultation feeling disconnected from the thing that she created.

There are alternatives. Those of us who train and work with peer tutors have seen how collaborative learning can work, empowering rather than silencing both parties. Collaborative learning and feedback sessions do not necessarily leave the creator feeling silenced. There is work that the creator can do to maintain power while still being open to potential change. Here, though, I want to focus on the work that we can do as a pedagogical community to teach effective workshopping in a way that shares power, evokes productive responses, and empowers the creator to revise a piece of work. A model exists in the dance world. J. Michael Rifenberg and Lindsey Allgood (2015) remind us, “Through its participatory and unscripted roots, performance art flattens audience and rhetor into a singular performer, similar to the act of tutoring where the tutor and tutee collaboratively work toward stronger writing.” I’m interested in exploring the participatory but *highly scripted* nature of critical response in order to learn methods of engaging actively in communication around creation and revision.

A few years ago, after many years as a modern dancer, I choreographed my first piece. I was processing motherhood, a Ph.D. program, and an evolving marriage. In short, I was working to find ways that my experience could feel multi-faceted rather than fragmented. My piece was about my vulnerability, and I was especially vulnerable to share this part of myself with an audience.

I was dancing and choreographing with a community-based dance company in Knoxville, Tennessee that utilized the Critical Response Process, which was first created by dancer and choreographer Liz Lerman. My experience with this process not only helped me feel more authentic and comfortable as I continued to work with the piece, but it helped the piece evolve in important ways that would not have happened without this input. Most importantly, though, the Critical Response Process shifted my understanding of collaboration, which I have taken off the stage and into the classroom.

Dance offers a model for collaborative feedback, in part because of the impossibility for this creative act to happen in isolation. Simply put, the work doesn’t exist without bodies to give life to the imagined or the sketched out. That, combined with the lack of a consistent notation system, means that to share a dance piece, one needs people. Unlike music, which can be notated and shared, or writing, which

is most often produced and consumed without interaction, dance is necessarily collaborative and communicative in its creation. Lerman's method, intended for choreographers, offers an important model for classroom instructors and writing tutors. A collaborative form of feedback in the classroom can empower and encourage student writers while also shaping a role for a peer—shifting a classmate from an uncommitted proofread into a collaborator. Carroll Hauptle, in "Liberating Dialogue in Peer Review: Applying Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process to the Writing Classroom" (2006) offers a model for this work that will serve many writing instructors. It was in my recent role as a Writing Center Director, though, that I found a new application for the Critical Response Process.

Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process was developed for her own dance company in order to turn critique into a stage of creation that inspires a return to the work, rather than a turn away from it. As a choreographer and as a dancer called upon for feedback, Lerman understood the difficulty of being on either side of the process. Previously, Lerman felt that when she listened to criticism, she felt silenced. She writes that she recalls feeling that "to respond in [a] 'mature' way to criticism meant quietly taking it, rather than attempting to engage in a dialogue, since to respond at all was somehow deemed either defensive or a violation of an unspoken boundary" (Lerman & Borstell, 2003, p. 6). In an attempt to encourage a dialogue, Lerman developed a highly structured process that gives voice to both the creator and the audience, guiding a conversation that remains focused on the work at hand. The dialogue that develops, and the script that guides this dialogue, is applicable and transformative in a collaborative tutoring session as well. What can happen differently with questions come first from the creator. A question like, "Did the example that I used from the final scene of the novel support my thesis?" does at least two things. It directs the tutor into a specific moment of the text, empowering the writer to direct the session. It also creates a metacognitive level of reflection before the conversation takes off.

When a dancer steps up to share a bit of choreography or when a writer enters the Writing Center, he or she has already made difficult choices. The writer has already chosen to be vulnerable in an effort to produce a better piece of writing. Those of us working in Writing Centers know that these student writers take many forms. There is value in thinking about the various types of student writers we encounter, and in thinking carefully about the methods that tutors might bring to these encounters. The Critical Response Process offers one more tool, and has been effective with the most eager writer and the most bitter writer, offering a balanced way to discuss a piece of work with an emphasis on revision instead of assessment.

In her public lectures, her website, and her publications, Liz Lerman outlines clear steps that she first developed for choreography, but which can be applied to a number of generative processes, and can be modified for effective use in a tutoring session. My own experience with the metronome piece, which was later

titled “Rattle,” can serve to demonstrate the way that the original Critical Response Process plays out. After describing my own experience in the creator’s role, I will recommend ways that this method can be used in a tutoring session. My hope is that a concrete method of response can be taught to tutors in their training courses as another means of maintaining a balance of power in individual sessions.

At the showing of works in progress, my dancers took the stage and performed the complete piece, which was very much in draft form. Immediately following the performance, the show’s director acted as a facilitator for the Critical Response Process, asking first for responses from the audience. This first step, *Statements of Meaning*, is meant to answer the need of the artist to understand that what she has just shared has been received. While the general tone of this first step tends to be affirmative, the idea is to move beyond the general praise and to work toward more useful feedback. The facilitator might ask, “What was stimulating? Meaningful? Evocative? Surprising?” The audience then responds, guided—we hope—with the piece of art in mind more than the ego of the artist. With my metronome piece, some said that they were moved by the cacophony of the multiple texts. Another said that he appreciated the sharp angularity of the movement, and the precision with which the dancers performed. At that stage, I nodded, but did not respond. It felt good to hear that part of what I had intended had landed. I had intentions as I choreographed, and it was deeply affirming to know that some of those intentions had worked. The specificity of the response left me focused on the work itself rather than my own pride or insecurities as a creator of that work.

In the tutoring session, the *Statement of Meaning* stage often happens naturally, but can be overlooked. Encouraging tutors to parrot back the overall ideas of the paper that they have just read ensures that writers and tutors are in agreement about the general shape of the work. Statements like, “I hear you when you make this comparison between the two texts,” or “I hadn’t thought of the novel in this light before. This is a productive critical lens, I think” can affirm the writer that what she has written was clear enough to be understood, can reveal potential gaps in understanding, and can offer a starting point for questions that will guide the second step. When a tutor keeps in mind this first stage of response, it can quiet the critical voice that might rise in the throat of the well-intentioned tutor and derail the collaborative process.

In the second step, *Artist as Questioner*, the creator is empowered to ask questions of the audience. Sometimes, as in a company where this process is familiar, a choreographer will bring questions to the showing. At other times, these questions are more spontaneous. Lerman explains, “The more artists clarify their focus, the more intense and deep the dialogue becomes” (Lerman & Borstel, 2003, p.19). The facilitator asks the creator for questions, and can help the artist form effective questions as needed. According to Lerman, “General questions often elicit more varied responses, which can be helpful if the artist is seeking a broad survey of reactions

to a particular aspect of the work. But when an artist poses her inquiry broadly, she may find that the response is not addressing the issue that is really at the root of her question” (Lerman & Borstel, 2003, p.19). I asked, for example, “Does it work to have all the dancers speaking at the same time?” After receiving varied and contradictory responses, the facilitator asked me to reframe my question. “What would it mean for it to ‘work?’” he asked. When I clarified, “Does it create a sense of anxiety but also monotony to have the dancers speaking at the same time?” the answers were clearer.

This step for writing tutors can be central to empowering writers to direct the tutoring session. A typical question that a tutor asks of a writer is, “What would you like to work on today?” Student writers might be clear on that topic, but more frequently do not know how to respond to so broad a question. To slightly shift the question toward more specificity and toward an empowering of the writer, a tutor might instead state, “I’d like to hear what questions you have for me now that we’re starting to discuss your paper.” This subtle shift might move a student writer from thinking about how a reader and future grader of the paper would answer the question (what I NEED to fix) to how the writer might answer the question (what I want to understand). As in the situation described above, where the facilitator asked, “What would it mean for it to ‘work?’” there are ways that tutors can ask clarifying questions of the writer. If a writer says, for example, “I just want to make sure that it flows,” a tutor might ask, “What would the best structure be for this assignment? What would flow look like?” Always, whether in a dance showing or a tutoring question, it is important for the facilitator or the tutor to acknowledge that the creator might not have questions yet. There will be another opportunity for questions at the end of the session.

In the third step, *Neutral Questions from Responders*, “The dialogue is now reversed and responders can ask the artist informational or factual questions” (Lerman & Borstel, 2003, p. 20). The neutrality of the question is tricky, and the integration of the Critical Response Process into any feedback process requires a clear discussion of neutral questions. In my own example with the choreography showing, a non-neutral question might have been, “Why does the piece have no narrative arc?” while a neutral question might have been, “What sort of narrative structure were you hoping to develop?” This step is probably the trickiest *and* the most fruitful. Once a responder learns to frame a neutral question, the artist or writer is positioned to embody a subject position rather than a defensive object position. Lerman writes, “When defensiveness starts, learning stops” and offers clear steps to guide a conversation that is critical but also empowering to the creator (Lerman & Borstel, 2003, p. 21).

In a tutor training course, I spend significant time modeling neutral questions. Many questions that feel neutral to a tutor do not feel neutral to the writer. An effective assignment that I have used involves asking pairs of tutor trainees to create

lists of neutral questions in response to a sample paper that they read. We then spend time sharing these neutral questions to evaluate not only whether they are truly neutral, but to anticipate the topics that might be opened up. This is a part of most tutoring dialogues that truly aim for collaboration, but a clear intentional choice of neutrality can shift “Does your conclusion really fit the thesis?” to “What is the relationship between the conclusion and the introduction?” The prior really translates to “Your conclusion doesn’t fit your thesis” while the latter allows the writer to reflect on the relationship and offer connections that might be fruitful for discussion and revision.

The fourth step, *Permissioned Opinions*, is a space for an observer to make a suggestion while still empowering the creator. In my showing, a fellow company member said, “I have an opinion about costumes. Would you like to hear it?” I had a very general concept for costumes, but was open to suggestions, so I agreed that I’d like to hear her opinion. It turned out that her idea was similar to mine, which confirmed the general sentiment but offered a more concrete image than I had been able to pull up. This not only helped me decide what costumes to design, but affirmed that my sense had been echoed, and my intention had been felt. Later in the discussion, though, another member said, “I have a suggestion for a song. Would you like to hear it?” In that moment, because I felt very bound to the metronome idea, I explained why I was not interested in a song suggestion and we moved on. Because of the clear structure of the process, I could say no without apology or awkwardness.

In Writing Centers, there is a temptation to remain in this fourth step, but often without permission. An uncertain tutor, or an ill-prepared tutor, can overstep lines without even seeing the line, assuming that opinions and suggestions are what is sought when a writer walks through the door. The concept of the permissioned opinion forces a tutor to check her power and encourages a writer to claim his power. When a writer decides whether she wants to hear about a particular idea, she is more likely to feel empowered when she leaves the Writing Center. Lerman explains that although the process of asking for permission can feel stilted and formal, it is essential for a few reasons:

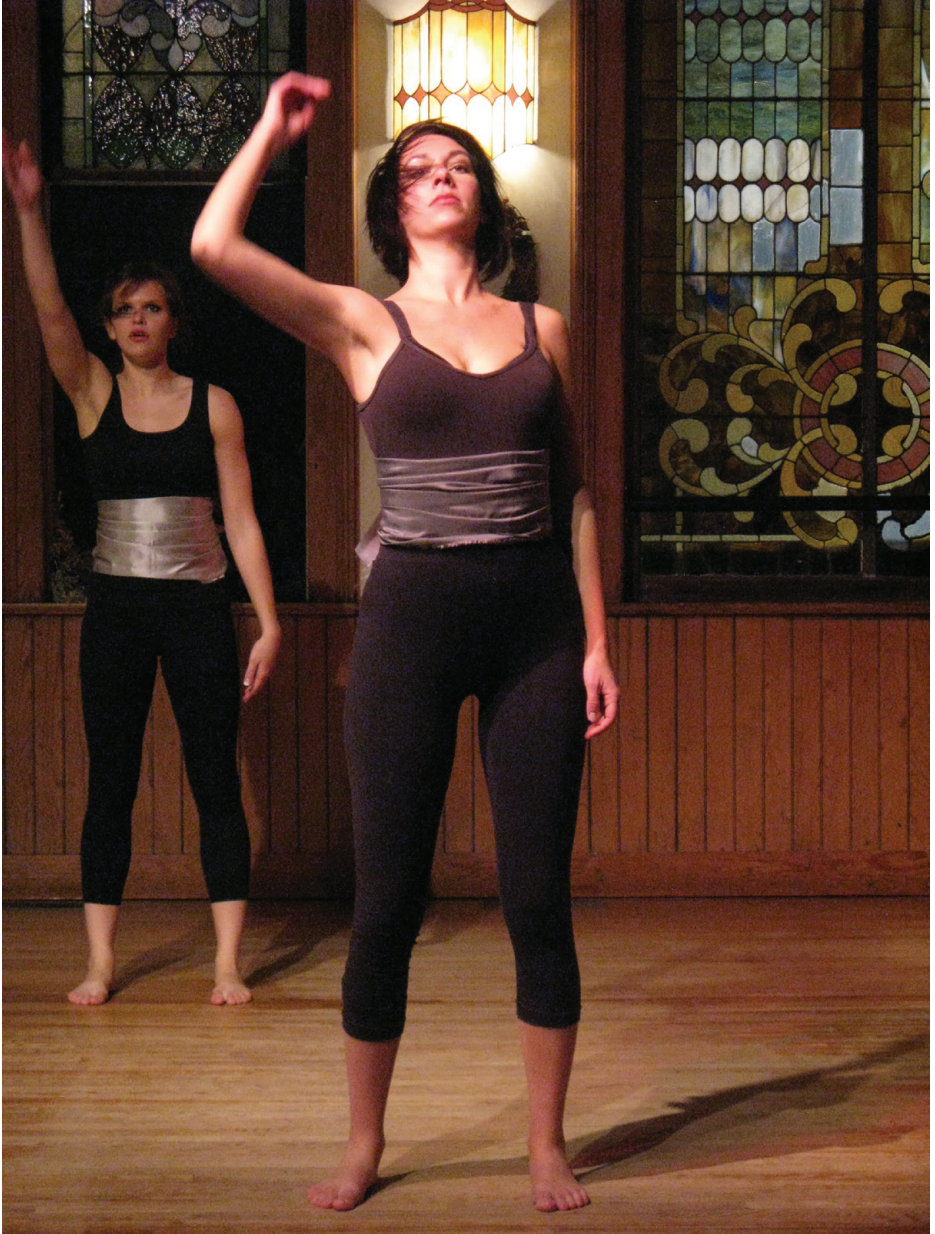
For the responder, forming the initial statements offers a kind of warm-up and mental preparation for identifying and stating the opinion itself. For artists, it affords a chance to readjust their focus to become receptive to a new partner and new idea. Finally, it serves to maintain the Process’ dynamic of dialogue through an exchange that keeps both speakers focused and listening. The step may seem formal, but often the formality, discipline and structure inherent in the Process make it safe for people to go into a more challenging dialogue. (Lerman & Borstel, 2003, p. 22)



With a tutor rather than a group of responders, it is even more important to ask whether an opinion is permissioned in order to maintain a balanced dialogue that feels safe and focused.

Finally, Lerman encourages a facilitator in the Critical Response Process to bring closure to the conversation. The facilitator can ask the artist about next steps, ensuring that as she leaves the showing, she has a concrete plan to move forward. Lerman explains, “This short exchange affords artists the final word in the discussion of their work as well as a moment to consolidate the information they’ve gathered through the Process, while responders get confirmation of the purpose their involvement has served” (Lerman & Borstel, 2003, p. 22). In my own experience as a choreographer, the facilitator asked me about next steps, which led me to synthesize the observations that I had heard and allowed me to ask one final question. Much of our conversation was around the intention to create a sense of chaos while still creating a structured piece that drew an audience in, rather than pushing them away. I restated the feedback that I had heard about the placement of dancers on stage, and asked a final question about the conclusion of the piece. I left the showing with a clear understanding of the revisions that I wanted to make to the choreography. My dancers were privy to this conversation, which helped them understand anew what I intended. Perhaps as much as anything, though, as I heard myself speak my intentions, ask my questions, and state my plans for revision, I felt not only that my work existed but that I had some control over it. Because dance is necessarily collaborative, it is possible for a choreographer—especially a new or uncertain choreographer—to doubt his or her instincts as other choreographers see a piece in process and as dancers ask questions to clarify directions. Many artists—visual, musical—use a workshop model to hear feedback from peers, and many artists find the workshop to be disempowering. Lerman’s process aims to help the artist both learn from others during the development stage *and* have her own intentions heard. Each step in the process aims to create a true dialogue that can be transformative for the piece of art and empowering to both the audience and the choreographer.

The final few minutes of any tutoring session can be a challenge. Time runs out and it can feel like the conversation stops mid-sentence. I continually encourage tutors to ensure that the tutoring session is punctuated in order to create a sense of closure, but also to hold student writers accountable for their next steps. What I often observe during these final conversations tends toward a tutor-driven summary. Tutors mean well here, but they are stepping into the realm of the instructor who wraps up a lecture for a class. The writer in this situation is thrust into the student role, passively observing or listening to the authoritative voice of the tutor. The final word, in too many tutoring sessions, is taken by the tutor. The Critical Response Process enables the writer to claim the last word, and to frame for herself the most important ideas of the session as well as the next steps in her revision process.



*Figure 16.1. The author and another dancer in the final performance of “Rattle” (photo courtesy of Larry Crowell).*

Incorporation of Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process into training for peer tutors of writing can provide a productive model for collaborative feedback in the

Writing Center, breaking down the tutor/writer power dynamic to more actively empower the writer. In her innovative process, Lerman works to create offerings of feedback, always enabling the creator to decline feedback, but also encouraging the critic to categorize the feedback. This shift to empower the writer, when applied in a Writing Center setting, serves to not only give voice to the writer, but also relieves the tutor of the pressures to always have an answer. It is not always the tutor who claims the power or who steps over a line. It is often an insecure writer who grants that power or who begs for too much feedback. Adherence to this structure can liberate both student writer and peer tutor to follow a script built on collaboration. Lerman's methodology is especially effective as it acknowledges the subjectivity of writing while encouraging a conversation around revision. Moving away from directive tutoring, which can silence a writer and place a tutor in an expert position, Lerman's method depends upon and encourages strong guidance by the writer who determines the shape of the tutoring session. As the student inhabits the writerly position, the session can enable a more productive session that empowers a student *and* allows for the vulnerability that is essential for change.

## Critical Response Process for Writing Tutors

### Step One: Statement of Meaning

After reading the paper with the student writer, take a moment to tell the writer what you heard. What resonated with you? What made you think? What works well? This is the most overtly affirmative portion of the tutoring session, but should be specific and grounded. Rather than, "This is a good start," aim for, "The connection you are making between the Dickinson and Plath made me see Dickinson in a new light," or "It really worked for me that you wrote so assertively and directly in your conclusion."

### Step Two: Artist as Questioner

This is a stage that the student writer will not necessarily expect. If you rush the first step, and are too vague in explaining this step, student writers are likely to rely on the classic, "I just want to make sure this flows" or "Does it make sense?" lines. Instead, take a moment to explain the process that you are using. Say, "I'll share my ideas in a minute, but first I want to hear what questions you have for me now that I have just read your paper." If the student writer is vague, guide them to be more specific. "Which sections might not flow? Can you ask about a particular part of the paper? That will help me give more concrete feedback." This step might be very

short (or even absent), but it could be extensive. Be sure to offer a chance for the writer to ask more than one question, especially if she seems comfortable with this part of the process.

### Step Three: Neutral Questions from Responders

Work to construct truly neutral questions for the writer. The more specific, the better. You might try to connect to the issues that were raised in Step Two. Consider the embedded opinion in questions that you might ask: “Do you really understand the poem you’re writing about?” reveals the embedded opinion: “I don’t think that you know what this poem is about.” Instead: “How did you prepare your interpretation of this poem?”

### Step Four: Permissioned Opinions

As a tutor, you might assume that any opinion is already permissioned. Instead, ask whether the writer would like to hear your idea about a specific section of the paper. You might say, “I have an idea about how to open the paper. Would you like to hear it?” This formality might feel awkward, but it turns a potential monologue into a dialogue and encourages the writer to stay engaged.

### Closure

Be sure to save a few minutes to wrap up the session. Instead of the traditional format, in which the tutor reframes the main points for the writer, your job is to invite that reframing from the writer. “Talk to me about your next steps. What do you plan to do for this revision?” This allows the writer to have the last word, to ask a final question, and to leave the session feeling in control of her writing.

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# The Use of an Analytic Framework to Scaffold Student Writing in an Online Dance Course

Rhonda Cinotto, Matthew Henley, and Jennifer Salk

In this chapter, we describe three strategies we adopted to help students in an online dance appreciation course develop the ability to write about dance with specificity and clarity. The course begins by having students develop a specific lexicon to describe dance. We scaffold the use of that lexicon into increasingly complex writing tasks and provide opportunities for students to embody course concepts as a way to enrich their writing. We believe that these strategies give students the tools to support the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of complex choreography with specific, clear, and appropriate descriptions of the dance.

Dance is particularly difficult to write about, given its ephemeral form. It is challenging enough for an accomplished professional to view a fully staged dance work and speak with clarity about what dance critic Marcia Siegel describes as “the overwhelming complexity of stimuli that constitutes the experience of watching a dance” (1991). This problem is compounded in novices, who, because of their unfamiliarity with the forms and structures of dance, tend to write in generalities about what they see. Julie Malnig claims this difficulty stems from “students not trusting their ability to apprehend the work *for what it is*” (2009). When initially tasked with the development of an online, general education, dance appreciation course, we wanted to design a curriculum that provided students with dance-based content knowledge in order manage this complexity and help them develop what is referred to as dance literacy (Dils, 2007; Eisner, 1998; Giroux, 1992; McCutchen, 2006). Tina Curran et al. define dance literacy as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and analyze; using spoken language, written materials, and symbolic systems associated with varying [dance] contexts” (Curran, Gingrasso, Megill, & Heiland, 2011). In order to develop the students’ dance literacy, the original course design focused on the delivery of content: analytical frameworks for viewing dance, explanations of compositional devices, suggestions for writing dance criticism, tools for addressing aesthetics and bias, and other content areas important for the development of dance literacy.

As we began teaching the course, however, we found the students did not



have the skills to accomplish the writing tasks we were assigning. The course was delivering the content of an analytic framework, for instance, but the students did not know how to “convert the workaday terms [of that framework] into more subtle and expressive words” (Siegel, 1991) in order to describe the dances they were watching with specificity and clarity. A significant portion of the course-work was redesigned to focus on developing the skill of constructing specific descriptions from the continuous and ephemeral flow of dance movements in the choreography they were viewing. This chapter will outline how the curriculum in the course elicits quality writing in students new to the art form by reviewing three broad strategies. The first is to begin the course by having the students develop a specific lexicon to describe the movement they are seeing. The second is to scaffold the students’ experience of watching dance so that they can apply their lexicon to increasingly complex dance phrases. The third is to intentionally introduce creative activities throughout the course that allow students to have embodied experiences of the course content. These strategies have been successful in helping students in this online course learn how to write with maturity about dance through a variety of lenses.

## Establishing a Lexicon

Lesson 1 introduces the students to a framework through which they learn a common language to write about dance. The development of a shared representational system through which the qualities of a dance are encoded and decoded allows individuals to perceive, conceive, and represent their experience of dance (Curran et al., 2011). A variety of symbolic systems exist for representing dance, but as this is an introductory course, we chose not to teach a specified notation system. Rather, we develop students’ skills in using the English language to describe dance. We find that the majority of students are not prepared to describe human movement with detail and clarity. Their writing requires the development of a unique set of vocabulary and writing skills, or lexicon. Siegel likens a lexicon to, “a list of ingredients out of which the dance is cooked” (1991), and the students need more ingredients.

At the beginning of the course, we introduce the Euro/American system of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as an analytic framework to structure students’ perceptions. LMA is a system that provides a comprehensive language to discuss movement from the perspective of four major components: body, shape, space, and effort (Newlove & Dalby, 2004). An online lecture with accompanying visuals delivers detailed explanations and examples of the four components. Of particular use to the students in the development of their dance lexicon is the discussion of action drives (Table 17.1), which are a list of verbs used in LMA to distinguish movement qualities.

**Table 17.1. Action drives from Laban Movement Analysis**

ACTION	WEIGHT	SPACE	TIME
Float	Light	Indirect	Sustained
Punch	Strong	Direct	Sudden/Quick
Glide	Light	Direct	Sustained
Slash	Strong	Indirect	Sudden/Quick
Wring	Strong	Indirect	Sustained
Dab	Light	Direct	Sudden/Quick
Flick	Light	Indirect	Sudden/Quick
Press	Strong	Direct	Sustained

In an activity embedded in the first lesson, students watch clips of dancers executing a single movement. Students’ attention is directed to the way the body is moving by describing where in the body a movement is happening (body part), what that body part is doing (verb from LMA framework), and the quality of that movement (adverb). They create a detailed written description of what they see by using a body part, verb, and adverb. This is what we call the “three-component description” and it is used throughout the course to encourage students to use vocabulary that creates clear images of what precisely the dancers are doing in the choreography. The use of the LMA lexicon begins to structure students’ perceptions of the movement they are watching as well as the way they describe that movement. In early iterations of the course it was not uncommon for students to submit vague descriptions of simple movements, for instance: “The dancer moved quickly,” or “Her moves were lyrical.” After introducing LMA action drives and the three-component description into the curriculum, we saw a shift in the specificity of student’s writing: “The man’s hand slashed rapidly in the air.” or “The woman’s hip pressed softly out from her body.” To further students’ development of proficiency with the vocabulary, the assignment associated with Lesson 1 asks the students to use the LMA lexicon and three-component description to write a short paragraph about the way they move their bodies during a favorite activity.

From this structured and formulaic approach to description, the course material begins to coax students away from using precise LMA terminology and challenges them to find their own rich and descriptive language, or lexicon, for each dance they view. As Siegel claims, “since all dance is different, all viewing must attempt to start with an open field. We don’t work from a checklist of effort qualities or body parts— or steps in a vocabulary of movement, or anything else. We look at what’s ‘there’—meaning, what claims our attention” (1991). Although the course begins with what Siegel refers to as a “checklist approach,” using LMA and the three-component description we quickly steer students away from the idea that there is one “right answer” when describing a dance. We first model this by having



students watch a short clip of a single movement. For example, the dancer might raise her left arm up and reaches with her fingertips, then return to neutral, arms by her side. The students would read sentences that describe that movement in three different ways:

Your sentence for a clip like this might be: The woman's arm floated softly, **or** The dancer lifted her wrist lightly. **or** The dancer's fingers extended slowly.

The students then practice this in an assignment in which they watch clips of a single movement and then describe each one in three different ways. In an assignment from lesson two, a student wrote these three sentences about a single movement. "The dancer shuffled her foot meticulously." "The woman's foot lackadaisically wiggled about the floor." "The woman casually twisted her ankle to move her foot from ball to heel."

By asking students to incorporate the shared language from the LMA framework when writing specific descriptions of actual movement, the development of a lexicon provides a foundation for further work in understanding, analyzing, interpreting, and discussing dances they view and create as part of the course. It is in the development of a lexicon that students begin to take on the perspectives of dancer, critic, ethnographer, or choreographer (See Appendix for examples).

## Scaffolding

Students' tendencies at the start of our course are to make broad, finite statements interpreting or evaluating the dances they have seen. Their interpretations, though, are filled with superficial assumptions rather than deep investigations of the movement. For instance, a student might generalize about a dance, claiming it to be "sexual" or "creepy" without being explicitly aware of what movement qualities lead to those interpretations. Additionally, they are not supporting those general statements with specific evidence in the form of movement descriptions. Therefore, concurrent with the task of developing a dance lexicon, we introduce exercises to channel and focus the students' attention on the relevant features of the dances they are viewing. Course activities incrementally increase the complexity of their observations. This process of scaffolding the course materials creates opportunities for students to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate dances with a maturity that they might not have achieved on their own (Pea, 2009).

In this scaffolding process, the first task students complete is to view and describe short clips of dancers performing single movements. They are prompted to use three component descriptions (body part, verb, and adverb) to create sentences that are specific about what is happening in the body and how it is happening.

Next, the students watch a clip of slightly longer movement phrases and write more complex descriptions of the choreography. Finally, students watch an even longer clip of choreography and write a paragraph using the three component descriptions to be as specific as possible about what they are seeing (see sample below). As a way to reinforce the idea that there are many ways to view dance, they read and comment on other students' descriptions of the same clip.



She (the woman) gracefully extends one arm to the side and flicks her wrist like a feather. She then directs her attention to her hands as she loudly claps them together and creates a wave-like motion with them. The dancer later slides her foot lightly to meet the other foot and quietly stands motionless. (This clip is available at <https://youtu.be/QxctzPcmNxU>.)

At the beginning of the second lesson, students watch longer excerpts of choreography and write paragraphs describing the dances. Because of the increased duration, the students are prompted to first write sentences that describe the dance in general terms. From there, they construct sentences that utilize the three component descriptions to support their general claims. This develops the skill of using detailed movement descriptions as evidence for more generalized observations.

*D-Man in the Waters* alternates between seemingly chaotic

moments of scrambling with the stiff militarized posture of the dancers. This balance between catching up and maintaining order creates an unpredictable feeling in a dance that looks highly structured. At one point in the dance the dancers bend their knees quickly and hunch their backs until they get back to the front of the line.

The final activity of the second lesson is a short analytical essay that requires students to compare and contrast two of the dances (See Appendix: Lesson 2). For this assignment, they are asked for the first time to take a clear perspective about the choreography in the form of a thesis statement. The rest of the paper supports the thesis through writing paragraphs that follow the format from the previous activity: starting with general statements about the choreography then supporting those statements with specific three-component descriptions. Students are prompted to revise their writing, ensuring the thesis, general descriptions, specific descriptions as evidence, and any concluding or summary statements are supporting each other and the overall idea of the essay. By week three of the semester, students who are non-dancers are articulating mature perspectives about the dances they are viewing.

*Both D-Man in the Waters* (Bill T. Jones) and *Walklyndon* (Pilobolus) utilize walking and seemingly un-athletic pedestrian movements as a transition to short explosions of highly athletic, challenging dance choreography.

In both *Heaven* (Rennie Harris) and *Smoke* (Mats Ek), the choreographers used opposing augmented slow movements with disjointed fast movements to illustrate an unpredictable and unsettling theme.

In both *Time for Love* (Keone and Mariel Madrid) and *Desi-hoppers* (Shantanu Maheshwari, Macedon D'Mello and Nimit Kotian), the choreographer put very precise hits in the dance that corresponded exactly with the music even with the smallest beats making the moves stand out even more.

These examples demonstrate students' developing dance literacy in that they avoid broad evaluative or interpretive statements about the dances they are watching. Instead, the students' writing isolates and articulates specific movement qualities that support the students' perceptions of the relationship between the two dances they are analyzing. This assignment prepares students for increasingly complex and challenging assignments later in the course by providing an opportunity to discover how the development of specific movement descriptions both suggest an analytical perspective and can then be used as evidence for that analysis.

## Subverting Bloom's Taxonomy

Using the dance lexicon to describe movement with specificity becomes a foundational skill from which more complex analyses, interpretations, and evaluations are built. In one sense, the course follows a traditional model of Bloom's Taxonomy, from knowledge and skill, to comprehension and application, and finally to synthesis and evaluation (Worsnop, 2003). Description of actual bodies moving becomes evidence for analysis of choreographic choices. This analysis in turn becomes the foundation for interpretation and, ultimately, evaluation. This use of the traditional model of Bloom's Taxonomy helps to decrease the occurrence of the extreme, finite evaluations we saw early on in the course.

However, we also intentionally subvert the traditional taxonomy by inserting creative experiences throughout the course as a chance for students to embody the concepts about which they are writing. The students take on varying roles during the course including ethnographer, dancer, critic, and choreographer in order to experience dance through different lenses. Instead of leaving creative experiences as the summation of earlier learning, as Bloom's Taxonomy would suggest, we believe that the opportunity to create provides a formative experience. Early in the course we require the students to take and then write about their experience in a dance class, applying their still developing lexicon. It is important, particularly in dance, that students embody course content and thereby enhance their memory, understanding, application, and other levels of the taxonomy. Here are two descriptions from Week 3 assignment that requires students to attend and write about a dance class.

I attended a Modern class. We spent the majority of the class focusing on close contact with the floor and the idea of heaviness. While lying still on the floor, there was a sense of energy flowing through my whole body as I quietly inhaled and exhaled. With every exhale, my muscles slowly melted into the wooden floor. After few moments of stillness and silence, we gently fell to our right side as our left arm swiftly swept the floor to maintain that contact. We then smoothly rolled back to the center of our backs while making sure our feet remained intact with the floor. To make things symmetrical, we did the same thing to the left side and continued to do right and left sides. I quickly gained momentum as I soothingly moved from left to right while keeping in mind that all of my movements should seem like one continuous motion with no stops in between. Next, we transitioned onto our feet and concentrated on weight distribution of our body parts. As I stood still with my arms held high right by

my ears, I imagined that there was great length coming from the top of my head. Then, I heavily dropped my arms as my head and spine followed the quick momentum. While my arms were falling, my head also had a sense of heaviness, which made the whole movement easier as I didn't assist with any resistance, instead I simply allowed my top half of the body to fall. I enjoyed this class because it reminded me of what distributing weight across the body felt like.

Or

The lyrical/modern class I attended was enlightening because I was able to connect the combination we did in class to the compositional devices and elements of dances we have been learning about. The dance that I learned combined flowing, slow, and still movements with sharp and quick movements. For example, in the beginning of the dance I glided my foot in a circle in front of me gracefully, while simultaneously flicking my arms quickly into the air above me. I also noticed that the movement in the dance was often transposed from facing the front of the room to the back of the room, showing and hiding my face. For example, I stretched my fingers up into the air slowly facing the front of the room as if I was reaching for something, and then fell to the ground forcefully. I then repeated this movement to the back of the room. The teacher talked about finding a connection when we were reaching to the ceiling as if we are so close to having something and then we drop down because we didn't get it. I liked these visuals because I felt like it helped me connect to the piece and portray emotion. I felt as though the teacher wanted to make everyone in the room feel confident in their own ability. The lights were even turned off at end of class to make us feel comfortable in taking risks with the movement we learned.

In these examples, we can see the students relying on their physical and creative experience to craft both general and specific statements about the class. These accounts suggest that the opportunity to learn by doing both deepened the student's understanding of, and provided a personal connection to, the course content. Other creative assignments in the course include the creation of a photo montage as an expression of the student's identity and a choreographic project in which students create, perform, and film a dance which is submitted online (see Appendix: Lesson 5). We find that the inclusion of creative activities throughout the course facilitates students' ability to engage in higher-order thinking with course content.

As an example, a final assignment in the course involves students attending a dance class from a culture other than their own, and writing a paper that takes an ethnographer's perspective about the experience (see Appendix: Lesson 7). These are two students' thesis statements for the assignment: "However, by participating in this Afro-Brazilian Samba class, I realized that the erratic and vigorous dance movements of Samba portrayed the rebellious nature of its people and the connections they had with their gods," and "My experience in the dance leads me to believe that the Guinean dance represents the country's agricultural background, as well as the country's history in colonial resistance and recent artistic repression." These thesis statements demonstrate the students' abilities to integrate their embodied creative experience with concepts from course content in order to articulate mature statements about the relationship between movement and culture.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described three strategies we adopted to help students in an online dance appreciation course develop the ability to write about dance with specificity and clarity. The course begins by having the students develop a specific lexicon to describe dance, we scaffold the use of that lexicon into increasingly complex writing tasks, and we provide opportunities for students to embody course concepts as a way to enrich their writing. We believe that these strategies give students the tools to support the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of complex sequences of dance with specific, clear, and appropriate descriptions of the dance.

Within the first few years of teaching the online course, we began to see that student writing improved dramatically, often more so than in courses we taught face-to-face. This has caused us to apply the methods implemented in the online course in a variety of other courses across the curriculum as a way to help all of our students write more articulately about what they are seeing. This focus on dance literacy has led to substantial improvement in student writing across the curriculum. By creating intentional pathways for students to develop their skills in describing dance, requiring use of the movement description as evidence for their analyses, interpretations, and evaluations, and giving them opportunities to be observers, dancers, ethnographers, and choreographers, students are able to generate deep and rich writing about the art of dance.

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## Appendix

### Lesson 2: Assignment Directions

Write an essay that utilizes the following format: Please note that there are high expectations for the Assignments in this course. Please proofread your work carefully for spelling, grammar, and clarity of ideas.

#### Paragraph 1

Choose two of the dances from the Lesson 02 Viewings. For this paragraph, take a perspective in the form of a thesis statement about how the two relate to each other as you practiced in Part Two of the Lesson 02 discussion forum. That should be the final sentence of the paragraph. The first part of this introductory paragraph should set up the perspective.

Here is a sample introduction: (Please note I am replacing titles with “Dance A and B” and you should use the actual titles from the Lesson 2 viewings)

Although initially I thought Dance A and Dance B were fairly similar because both dances remain relatively close to the floor most of the time, I find the differences in these two dances to be more compelling as they reveal more clearly how opposing the choreographers’ artistic intentions were. The most obvious difference is in how Dances A and B use energy and time. Dance A is incredibly smooth and consistently slow, and the dancers move as if they don’t *have* any bones in their bodies throughout the entire piece. In Dance B there is a lot more variance as the dancers continuously alternate between sudden, sharp pulses in their bodies and soft, languid ripples. After taking some time to consider the meaning of the two dances based on how the bodies were moving, I have come to the conclusion that Dance A is making a comment about the steadfastness of nature, while I



interpret Dance B to be addressing the unpredictability of life.

Notice how the general descriptions of each of the pieces relate to the interpretations that are included on the thesis statement.

It is not necessary to interpret the dances; the thesis can be about movement qualities that the pieces share, how the movement and music go together or don't, or any other myriad observations. The most important objective is that the **thesis statement is very specific**, and that **the rest of the paragraph is related to that perspective**.

## Paragraph 2

Describe one of the two dances that you talk about in Paragraph 1. As you practiced in Part One of the Lesson 02 Discussion Forum, you should write two general sentences that describe the entire dance, and then two sentences that each describe a few seconds of choreography that stand out to you including three component descriptions, and that support your general sentences. **Your last sentence of this paragraph should relate to your thesis statement.** For example, you might say:

Dance A utilizes the concept of level well, as it contains many moments where the dancer's bodies appear suspended just above the floor. Throughout the dance, there are also multiple times when an individual dancer will make his or her way across the stage space with such smooth energy, it is as if he or she is moving through molasses. At one point at the start of the piece, a dancer delicately balances her torso on her two hands, elbows firmly bent underneath her stomach, while performing a painstakingly slow extension of her right leg parallel to the floor. Another moment in the dance that stood out to me was when one of the male dancers rotated his body, balancing precariously on one foot by executing a gradual spiral that started from his head and ended with his long leg reaching behind his body in a beautiful arc. When observing the fluidity, closeness to the earth, and consistent use of time in Dance A, one is reminded of the steady yet imperceptible growth of a tree or movement of a glacier.

## Paragraph 3

Do the same as above for the second dance you have chosen.

## Paragraph 4

Discuss in greater detail how you came to the conclusions that you make in your

thesis statement. You could address other movement qualities that you observed, or additional aspects of the pieces such as music, costumes, lighting, title, etc. Make sure that any observations you make about the pieces support your thesis statement. For example, you might say:

The choreographers for Dance A and Dance B made other choices that strengthen my belief about their artistic intentions. In Dance A, the music was quite calm and cyclical, and it did not have a recognizable melody. The consistency of tones without an easily discernible pattern reminded me of how there is form inside the chaos of the natural world. In Dance B, the lighting alternated haphazardly between being bright while directly on a few dancers, and being more subdued and casting a soft glow on the entire stage. These sudden changes in the look of the stage support my hypothesis that the choreographer was intending to comment on the ways that a person's life can change in an instance. . . .

## Paragraph 5

In the final paragraph, discuss the necessary tools for and the benefits of being an active audience member, and how you used those tools to create your thesis statement. Include in your discussion ideas and concepts from Lesson 01 Readings, “The Audience Checklist.” Make sure that you refer to the readings directly. For example, you might say:

After carefully examining Dance A and Dance B, I have come to the conclusion that to be an active audience member while watching dance, a person needs to consider the various ways the dancers interact with each other and the stage space. I think that how and where the dancers are placed on the stage gives an audience member a context for understanding the world created by the choreographer. Similarly, the specific qualities present in the interactions between the dancers offers some evidence about what is being communicated. In “The Audience Checklist,” Marcia Siegel describes choreography as being a “game” and that an engaged audience member must uncover what he or she thinks the “rules” of that game are. I resonate with this idea as I very much enjoy looking for and discovering patterns, and I plan to continue with that level of engagement whenever I watch dance.

## Lesson 5: Assignment Directions

Use the collage that you created in Lesson 05 Discussion Forum to create a short movement study. You will go through several steps to create your study.

Follow these steps:

### Part One: Generating movement material

- Using your collage as your source, create a movement inspired by 10 individual images. (You should have at least 10 distinct movements after this step in the process.) Think abstractly and creatively with this step in the process.
- String your image-based movements together, which will require you to memorize the sequence of movements. A viewer should see at least 10 different actions with your body. It should not look like you are making it up as you go along.
- Film yourself doing the 10 movements, include in your film a shot of your collage, and upload your video to YouTube. Follow the directions in Posting Videos to YouTube.

### Part Two: Manipulating the movement material

- Once you have the 10 movements memorized, make changes by using at least **four** of the Compositional Devices. For example, if you do a swing of the arm, try transposing that so your study also includes a swing of the leg. Another example would be if you quickly and lightly toss your arms in the air, you could contrast that with a slow press of the air above you. This would demonstrate a change in speed and weight. Note: when you layer in the devices, it will increase the length of your movement material. Consider the ways the compositional tools enhanced your collage. This should be a similar experience.
- Film yourself demonstrating your now **noticeably changed** sequence of movements, and upload the video to YouTube. Follow the directions in Posting Videos to YouTube.

### Part Three: Creating the dance and incorporating the concept of collage

- Look back at your collage and think about what it says about you. From the movement material that you have created, pick out what best express-

es the ideas present in your collage. Edit it, make a final version of your movement study, and memorize it.

- When you are confident that you have your movement study memorized, add yet one more layer to demonstrate the concept of collage. Anything that adds another dimension to your study. This could be several clips of music, speaking, costumes, a prop, or another element of your choosing. Consider filming your study in a unique space. Note: filming in a dorm room or living room is not really a unique space, instead try a hallway, a stairwell, or in the woods, etc.

Film your study. Your video study should be **at least** one minute and no longer than three minutes in length. You can also have fun with editing your study on iMovie (<http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/>) or another editing program to experiment with the idea of montage in film; however, this is not required. Then, go to the Post Lesson 05 Assignment YouTube Video Link and **embed all three videos there**. Follow the directions in Posting Videos to YouTube.

## Part Four: The written description

- Lastly, you will submit a **detailed** written description of your process **below** that describes how the images of your collage were translated into choreography, the decisions that you made about which compositional devices to use, and how to make one movement transition into the next. Make sure that your description includes vocabulary and concepts from the course, specific descriptions about what your body was doing and three component descriptions. (200 -300 words)

## Lesson 7: Assignment

Now you are ready to take a dance class in a cultural dance form that is unfamiliar to you. You will approach this class both as an ethnographer and as a movement artist, an observer and a participant.

- Enroll in a class of your choice. (See below for further guidelines on choosing a class.)
- Once you choose what type of class you are going to take, do some research to learn more about both the dance form and the culture from which it comes. Try a UW Library or Google search for articles or websites. Before you go to the class, you should have some idea of the history and current practice of this dance form and what it means to the cultures that created/dance it.
- After taking the class, answer the following question:

**What specifically did participating in a dance form from another culture teach you about that culture?**

Think thoughtfully about the above question, and develop a strong and specific perspective or thesis based on a synthesis of your movement experience in the class and your research about the culture of the people who created/dance it.

Here are examples of thesis statements that are specific and would work for this assignment:

“After participating in the East-Indian dance class, I have a deeper understanding of dance as a spiritual practice, and how creating specific gestures with the body enables one to feel a connection with the divine.” Or “The culture of hip-hop dance values individuality, and I was able to have a physical experience of that by all of the moments in the class that required students to make energetic and dynamic choices in their bodies.”

As opposed to thesis statements that are vague:

“After participating in the East-Indian dance class, I have a deeper understanding of how dance is important in that culture.”  
Or “The culture of hip-hop dance was revealed to me by taking the class.”

**Qualities of evidence:** The thesis should be based on and supported by TWO sources of evidence: extrinsic research and intrinsic research.

**Extrinsic:** This is not a research paper, so we do not expect extensive outside research for this assignment. However, the expectation is that students locate and incorporate respectable sources of information, and offer the reader a thoughtful consideration of culture. (note: the research should NOT be on the history of the dance form, but rather on its cultural significance)

**Intrinsic:** Consider carefully what evidence from movement is most effective in explaining your thesis. For instance, many social dance forms have fairly basic movements, but complex uses of interpersonal space. If your thesis addresses a connection to community or to a partner, your description should focus more on how you shared space than on recounting the steps you learned. Review the Elements of Dance and Compositional Devices in order to decide and clearly articulate what course concept best illustrates the point you are making. **Remember to always include three component descriptions to add to the specificity about the body.**

Structuring the paper

- Begin your paper by creating an introductory paragraph that names the class you took (style and studio), your general impressions of the class, and then outlines your thesis. See sample thesis statements above.

- The second paragraph should discuss the research you gathered before attending the class and should support your thesis. Remember that this information should address how the dance form reflects the CULTURE of the people who created it, rather than just the history of the dance form. (This is the extrinsic information.)
- The third paragraph should support your thesis and consequently the info you provided in the second paragraph by using three component descriptions of the dance moves you learned in the class and relating them to your research. (By doing this you are combining extrinsic and intrinsic research.) There should be aspects of your research integrated with specific three component descriptions throughout this paragraph.
- Lastly, the concluding paragraph should be a summation of these arguments that specifically points to how the dance class helped better your understanding of the culture.
- Make sure that you cite your sources!
- Finally, please review your work. Are you effectively making the point you were hoping to make?

# Performative Writing as Training in the Performing Arts

Patrick Santoro

While it can be enjoyable and meaningful for students to perform on stage, they often view a performance's end as just that—a definitive conclusion, a finished process. However, post-performance reflection, and revision, are critical components of art making. Offering writing strategies and examples of student work, this chapter advocates the body-centered, creative practice of performative writing as a useful method for training in the performing arts—an extended “stage” for students to revisit and reassess their work on the page as fully as on stage.

While performance students may find it exciting and meaningful to take on the role of a theatrical “other,” even when that other is one's self (as is the case of performance of personal narrative and autoethnography), they often find writing about their experiences post-performance of little value. But writing informs performance. While most students intuitively recognize Phelan's (1993) assertion that “performance's only life is in the present” (p. 146), and favor the *doing* of performance over the *writing* about performance, they must learn how to “re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself” (p. 148). This is not to discount how the act of performance creates knowledge, but rather, to position writing as an extended “stage” where the written word enhances the performance world. How, then, can performance training include both the preparatory work leading up to live performance as well as the reflection process that follows, allowing students to both experience and assess their work on the page as fully as on stage?

Adler-Kassner and Wardle's (2015) edited collection, *Naming What We Know*, uses the notion of threshold concepts to investigate the many interdisciplinary approaches in which the field of writing studies, in the twenty-first century, is committed to “the subject of composed knowledge and the questions we ask related to this broad term” (p. 2). Their examination (including reference on how writing is performative; see Lunsford, 2015) calls for a fresh look at understanding how writing functions and what writing allows. Working from within the same logic—a multidisciplinary approach to writing, and writing as an entry point for understanding the craft of performance—my goals in this work are several. First, I discuss the emergence of performative writing, referencing the contributions and perspectives of those working to define the form. Second, I use the work of performative writing to offer several writing strategies students can use to both think and write



about their live performance work, each accompanied by an example of student writing. Finally, I advocate for performative writing as integral to actor training.

Phelan's (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* signaled a radical shift in thinking about live performance. "Performance," she argues, "cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance" (1993, p. 146). In other words, for Phelan, performance's power lies in its ephemerality, its loss, that which cannot be replicated. As a discipline, performance studies takes an embodied approach—"performance as a way of knowing" (Pelias, 1999, p. ix)—toward investigating the human condition. Aware of writing's inability to capture all that materializes on stage, performance studies artists and scholars heed Phelan's challenge to find an alternate way to write about live performance as more than mere reportage—to write performance anew.<sup>1</sup>

In *Performing Loss: Rebuilding Community through Theater and Writing*, Kanter (2007) investigates how loss can be performed through language, describing performative writing as:

Writing that behaves like lived experience. Here, performative should not be confused with dramatic or theatrical. Not all writing for the stage is performative, and some writing that was not intended for the stage is highly performative. Performative writing, like the best live performance, gives the reader a real experience in an imaginary space. Performative writing does not just describe an event or experience—it mirrors, behaves like, does its subject. Performative writing asks its reader or audience member to embody the ideas at the center of the text. (p. 12)

Kanter's insight enables this discussion in several ways. First, it builds a foundational connection between writing and performance. Second, it positions writing as another venue in which to stage experience, more than duplication, but an active reengagement where writing *becomes*—a performance in and of itself. Third, it demonstrates the relational nature of performative writing, between texts, performers, and audiences.

Pollock (1998) offers a "suggestive framework" (p. 80) for performative writing: "not a genre or fixed form . . . but a way of describing what some good writing *does*" (p. 75). Aware of its broad meaning, she notes how "performative writing spins, to some extent, on the axis of impossible and/or regressive reference and yet out into new modes of subjectivity and even referentiality" (1998, p. 76). This "spinning" is

1 While discussions of performative writing emerge primarily from those working in performance studies, and while what constitutes training in performance studies is usually different from training in the discipline of theatre, the ideas herein are certainly applicable toward disciplines across the performing arts.

what allows for the page to escape itself, becoming a world of its own—evocative, metonymic, subjective, nervous, citational, consequential—where “shaping, shifting, testing language” (Pollack, 1998, p. 75) allows for the shaping, shifting, and testing of that which eludes language, the experiential that exists because of, and yet beyond, writing.

In his bid to legitimize performative writing, emphasizing how it surpasses the limitations of traditional scholarly writing, Pelias (2005) offers three assertions that are of particular interest to traditional student training in the performing arts. First, performative writing allows for a closer examination of human experience, “where the raw and the genuine find their articulation through form, through poetic expression, through art” (Pelias, 2005, p. 418). Second, performative writing facilitates identification and empathy—“recognition and resonance” (Pelias, 2005, p. 420)—allowing more meaningful knowledge of self and other. Empathy is a foundation of performer training, and, like performance, writing becomes “a space where others might see themselves” as well as “an invitation to take another’s perspective” (Pelias, 2005, p. 419). Finally, performative writing takes a relational approach, “an interpersonal contract that [a writer] can elect to engage” (Pelias, 2005, p. 421). Performative writing, thus, sets the scene for questioning: “by confessing, by exposing, and by witnessing” (Pelias, 2005, p. 421). Phelan, Kanter, Pollock, and Pelias each equate writing with epistemic power “to actually produce thought and knowledge” (Lunsford, 2015, p. 44)—in other words, writing as a means of inquiry, knowing, transforming.

Reflecting the “descriptive/prescriptive, practical/theoretical” (Pollock, 1998, p. 79) essence of performative writing discussed above, while acknowledging its mercurial nature (Pelias, 2007, p. 182), what follows are some of the writing strategies I use with students, whether or not an explicit discussion of performative writing takes place in the classroom. Accompanied by student writing excerpts, the strategies incorporate the ideas of a variety of writers (scholars and artists alike) whose thinking informs mine. They are offered as equally effective, loose structures both open to interpretation and adaptable. Further, the strategies are not presented as mutually exclusive; in fact, they overlap considerably. And while they are intended for use in the college-level classroom, they can easily be modified for younger students as well. Finally, since I believe in writing as a process, especially coupled with the equally generative process of performance, reflection and revision are embedded throughout. As such, students are sometimes asked to develop performances in phases, workshopping ideas that lead toward a culminating project. For almost all students, writing about performance creates new ideas for future performance work, as is the case in the following examples.<sup>2</sup>

## Write to Listen

Listening is a prerequisite for engaging in any kind of reflection, particularly for students in the arts. Listening functions as an important component of artmaking, as students learn to listen to and trust their own instincts alongside listening to and incorporating criticism from teachers and peers. In *The Muses Among Us: Eloquent Listening and Other Pleasures of the Writer's Craft*, Stafford (2003) refers to the writer as a professional eavesdropper: "By listening to the glories of conversation around me, I am moved to write, and I am reminded to listen closely to my own most quiet thoughts and dreams. In their inventive talk, my wise neighbors give me permission to take seriously my own internal voice" (p. 17). Writing becomes a site where performers can meaningfully engage their work, "a kind of bifocal attention" (Stafford, 2003, p. 32), where words evoke what we can (and cannot, or cannot easily) hear, what we know and what we do not yet know. The page—blank and waiting—listens.

Since many students are unaware of what it means to listen (or how to focus as a disciplinary ritual, for that matter), I offer the following pathways toward listening. Perhaps the most important advice I can provide is a paradigm shift. I share with students—early and often—how the act of doing, whether on the page or the stage, is, indeed, an action, active, alive. Thus, by redirecting students' awareness of their writing and performance pursuits, their insights (about process, themselves, others, etc.) shift.

I encourage students to listen alongside the other senses. While students will naturally gravitate toward sight (the most revered sense insofar as something that can be seen exists, and, therefore, can be "read"), they must be reminded of performance's sensorial labors in their totality: "The most secretive of the actor's bodies and, yet, arguably, the most ontologically primary . . . is the body of private sensation that constitutes itself for each of us just below the skin" (Graver, 1997, p. 231). How does the performance not only look, but taste, smell, feel, and sound? Observation through multiple senses asks students to consider facets of performance that often go unrecognized, or may be taken for granted. Whether describing a performance as howling and fiery, a gesture as slimy, or a facial expression as rancid, students begin to use the senses to offer unlikely and evocative comparisons, enhancing their choices with respect to dimensions such as character and subtext.

Additionally, I suggest students consider alternative forms of writing as another means of listening. While prose is the most obvious approach to writing in the college classroom (and usually preferred by teachers and students), students might find poetry, for instance, a more compelling way to story their experience. In her work performing the stories of others, performance ethnographer Anna Deavere Smith (1993) reveals how everyday discourse is "something that is like poetry .

. . . where ‘character’ lives” (p. xxxi): “Over time, I would learn to listen for those wonderful moments when people spoke a kind of personal music, which left a rhythmic architecture of who they were. I would be much more interested in those rhythmic architectures than in the information they might or might not reveal” (2001, p. 36). Beyond thinking of poetry as a rigid form, the poetic renders a world of heightened feeling—the emotional texture and depth of human interaction—“providing a richer sense of the presenting body. . . . for entering into and reporting what the body might know” (Pelias, 2008, p. 191). Thus, poetry on the page mirrors the poetry of both lived experience and the live performance that captures what it can of the former.

Finally, while listening is often characterized as leaning in closer, heightening one’s connection to what is being said, one can also effectively listen by taking a step back. To facilitate this distance between the performer and that which they performed, I provide students with digital recordings of their work, asking them to offer snapshots of their experiences—not their intentions, but the *performances that actually occurred*. Not only does reflecting on specific voice and body work bring awareness of such kinds of choices, it also allows for students to explore the “gaps” in their performance: those moments that went one way in rehearsal, but played out differently in front of an audience. While working from memory (in lieu of recordings) is certainly acceptable, or sometimes all that is accessible, memory is fallible. Further, while my intention is not to discount how performers feel about their experiences, providing concrete evidence offers students a lens for further investigation—fleshing out performative experience by *listening* through language.

The following excerpt illustrates a student working at the level of descriptive and analytical evaluation. Note how she creates aesthetic distance from the performance by using third person point of view, as well as her poetic choices in terms of formatting and repetition.

*She stands in one spot.*

*She rambles.*

*She stutters and stumbles as she tries to remember her lines.*

*She closes her eyes a lot.*

*She is nervous.*

*She gasps slightly for breath to remain calm, before returning to  
rambling.*

*She forgets the body, offering a slight and strained hand gesture to  
offer a visual of where things are located.*

*She never moves from that one spot!*

*She rushes through, slowing down for the parts she knew she had*

*memorized to perfection.*

*She adds as much detail as possible so the audience would feel like they were there in the room.*

*She learns that more doesn't always mean better.*

*She needs more rehearsal.*

## Write Vulnerably

Performing is vulnerable; standing on stage—even in silence—is to bare one's self to an interpreting audience. In their training manual on improvisation (perhaps the most vulnerable of the performing arts), Salinsky and Frances-White (2008/2013) note:

Shakespeare knew that questioning characters were characters who were not in possession of all the information and therefore sometimes unsure, and that this made them vulnerable. Improvisers do not enjoy being vulnerable because people do not enjoy being vulnerable. If we don't enjoy being vulnerable offstage, we are unlikely to welcome the feeling when a crowd of people are looking at us. We, as improvisers, are in the unique position of having to choose vulnerability. (p. 289)

Similarly, writers who choose vulnerability choose to exercise what great performers respect: "To be nakedly human is to believe that such displays link us deeply to our core" (Pelias, 2014, p. 188). Writing vulnerably is to compose that which is affective, that which is affected, that which affects, to wear one's heart on a textual sleeve, to reveal what we conceal, to risk judgment, dismissal, embrace.

The next example is from a student who, also writing poetically, utilizes two senses to describe his monologue about a formative moment that, at the age of thirteen, he cites marks the end of his childhood. His creation of sensorial metaphors serves as a subtextual map of his causal, two-part narrative arc: from the disbelief, embarrassment, and powerlessness of riding in the car with his mother on a quest to catch his stepfather in an indiscretion, to a cold, cynical indifference of what it means to grow up and no longer see parents (or the world) through innocent eyes.

*Silence: The sound of nothing at all. Auditory darkness. Deaf echoes that give way to an inaudible scream. Mute and shock, suppression and rage, building, together, an explosion, a suspension of time, the suspension of disbelief, numbness, emptiness, fullness, and yet nothingness . . .*

*Sharpness: A point of incision, the breaking of skin, the bubbling of blood. The discomfort—sliced, pierced, jagged, punctured, fractured. Brokenness attempting to put itself back together again. The damage—a wound, a scar, the shards, forever broken . . .*

Another student engages sense memory to more fully understand her identity. Specifically, she reconstructs the relationship with her deceased grandmother and, in so doing, reveals the impact of family on her love for food.

*Mint chocolate chip is my absolute favorite ice cream, and I cannot eat it without my grandma coming to mind. She loved her strawberry shortcake, too. Every time I would visit her, she always had the ingredients to make it. My Grandma was what you would call a “food pusher.” Most grandmas are. You could not even be hungry for the tiniest crumb, but somehow, she always had something else to eat. “Are you still hungry? I have cookies, strawberry short cake, and mint chocolate chip ice cream.”*

*Food is the great connector in my family, and it hasn’t taken me that long to figure it out either. Some of my all-time favorite foods are from my Grandma’s recipes, like corn bread casserole, which you always knew she was making by the savory smell wafting from the kitchen. It was one of the first recipes she ever taught me how to make, and I still remember how to make it to this day, without a written recipe in front of me. We cooked all the time. Many a winter break was spent with her, and we would always cook the foods we liked, or we would go out to get Chinese food because my aunt that lives close to her hates Chinese food. [. . .] One thing my Grandma always taught me was to love myself, no matter what.*

## Write to Personify

Without a body, there is no writer, no writing. Without a body, there is no performer, no performing. According to Ladrón de Guevara (2011), a performer inhabits six bodies—the textual body, the lived body, the ecstatic (or fleshly) body, the recessive (or visceral) body, the unnatural body, and the imagined body—noting: “A body always is, to a certain extent, indefinable . . . formed of a series of different elements that are combined, interrelated and, often, difficult to distinguish from one another” (p. 22). Graver (1997) also addresses the “ontological complexity” (p. 222) of the actor’s body, and while noting three valuable distinctions—interiority, exteriority, and autonomy—it is worth, in this context, detailing the first two:

A body's interior [emphasis added] hides its unseen, volitional mechanisms, the motivating forces that drive its observable behaviors. A body's exterior [emphasis added] presents its image to the world, but this image is not self-contained. It is marked, at least in part, as consequent in appearance or activity upon the character or developments of the body's interiority. (p. 222)

Graver's and Ladrón de Guevara's observations shed light on the actor's body as a network, despite the body's abstract, manifold, and contested nature. Writing, thus, becomes both a body and an act of the body—a way to personify the performer (and performance) in its multiplicity, allowing students to give shape, color, and texture to how (and what) they experienced on stage as well as how (and what) they experience *as they write*.

The following excerpt does more than just write the student's performing body on stage: she writes her subjectivity and the representation of her body. In her writing to more fully humanize herself as part of her fieldwork experience, she, too, engages vulnerably, acknowledging what was missing in her staged interpretation of church culture—a perspective she had hoped to script, but did not.

*I wanted to take the audience on a mental fieldtrip of my fieldwork to churches. I focused on three different locations on stage, each representing a different church. [. . .] I also wanted to touch on the difference in rituals of the churches based on denominations and how their atmospheres were similar but still very different.*

*[. . .]*

*I do feel as though my energy and physical transitions from church to church helped me out a little to keep the audience awake and follow me from location to location. I showed how people were acting in services [. . .] how exaggerated some of the members at church could be when they heard the music playing. The audience seemed engaged because they began to respond with a head nod, smirk, or slight laughter, but it still wasn't enough for me. I feel as though I failed.*

*I really wanted the audience to feel a sense of not being comfortable in their own skin in a church setting. I wanted to show them how tough it was to go to church as a bisexual, tomboyish female. Even though I thought I dressed the part in real life, I fear I gave off the vibe of showing interest in women. Hearing a pastor preach about sin and how being gay is one of them was uncomfortable. For whatever reasons I got overwhelmed and could not get out the main points that I wanted to portray. I was way too wordy about things*



*that the audience did not necessarily need to know. I feel as though I wasn't in the right mindset and I wasn't sure how to overcome the emotions that I was feeling to tackle the performance.*

*While performing, I felt embarrassment and nervousness. I felt as though the audience could see me thinking of what I wanted to say but didn't, and so I stumbled over my words a lot. My performance did not totally match my fieldwork and while performing I forgot the importance of my research. I thought one thing but showed something different. I was just happy to have gotten through the performance.*

## Write to Reimagine

Writing will always fall short when it comes to storying performance. “Performance,” Phelan (1993) claims, “occurs over a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, but this repetition itself marks it as ‘different.’ The document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present” (p. 146). Of course, in order to discuss a particular performance, students must make reference to said performance, but if writing is to embrace performance’s inherent fleetingness, students should cultivate reimagination over mimicry. Zinder’s (2009) actor training includes three components—body, voice, imagination, in that order. “Of all the actor’s tools,” he writes, “the imagination is the most powerful and complex, but at the same time it is the most difficult to tap into or hold onto” (2009, p. 4). Similarly challenging, writing to reimagine is to take an existing scene and infuse it with new life, constructing a new world without abandoning the former, to articulate what could not have been communicated by performance itself, to discover what makes the performative moment—then and now—possible.

While beginning with a context for his work and the intentions behind his staging choices, the writer of the following excerpt uses the page to generate additional associations about his closeted gay identity and his first sexual experience—with a woman. In this reimagining, he creates an internal monologue, taking himself deeper into both the performed moment on stage as well as the narrative within the moment.

*After years of angst and confusion, admitting to myself that I was in fact gay was one of the hardest realities I have had to face. All through my teenage years, I acted as I was socially trained. I dated girls, went to prom, and tried to behave as a normal, heterosexual*

*teenager was supposed to behave. I remember wanting to try out for cheerleader so badly, but that was not something a boy does in Alabama, so I never did.*

[. . .]

*Monica was a few years older than me, and quite a bit more mature. She had her own apartment, which is where we spent most of our time, ordering pizza and watching videos. After we had been dating for some time, it became obvious that it was time to take our relationship to the next level. Tonight would be our first time. It would be my first time.*

*This is it. This is what you've been waiting for. C'mon! Relax! Why are you so nervous?*

*Ok. This is fine. This is good. You can do this. You can . . .*

*Ok. Just relax. Enjoy yourself. This is supposed to be fun, right?*

*Ok. Here we go. Now. Think of something sexy. What's that movie we watched the other night? Cruel Intentions. Yeah. Sarah Michelle Gellar is hot. Oh, that scene where she's by the pool and she drops her towel and isn't wearing a bathing suit . . . wait . . . that was Ryan Phillippe. Why the fuck are you thinking of Ryan Phillippe at a time like this?!*

[. . .]

*My performance is an attempt to allow the audience to step inside my mind and feel the confusion and physical pain that resulted from the denial of myself. By intermittently breaking down and building up the imaginary wall between myself and the audience, I am able to tell a story that the audience can feel a part of. It is my intention that the audience is able to laugh at the neuroses of a confused teenager and possibly remind them of a time when their head and heart disagreed.*

"But theater, as we all know," Zinder (2009) reminds us,

is an instantly perishable art, so beyond making the creative moment appear, we also have to learn how to seize it before it vanishes . . . and learn how to manage the riches we have mined in order to give form to the products of our creative imagination. (pp. 11-12)

Performative writing grants entry to performance's "riches." Performance educators and practitioners have long understood the necessity and importance of the body,

and reflecting on performance through writing is another way of refiguring that presence in all of its intricacy. Like performance, writing requires training “until it becomes a habit” (Zinder, 2009, p. 9)—performative writing, in particular, is not “a matter of ‘anything goes’” (Pollock, 1998, p. 80), nor is it a matter of skill level. What it is, however, is active, disciplined engagement with writing as a process of discovery. A threshold indeed, writing often begets performance and performance often begets writing. While some students would rather leave what happens on stage there, saving writing for the English classroom, I am convinced by Pollock (1998), who urges: “To write performance is not in and of itself a betrayal. Rather . . . the betrayal consists in not writing it, in conceding to the deployment of language against performance and so to the absence/death of performance in processes of knowledge formation” (p. 79).

Artists must question themselves—their choices, their processes. The same is true of writing itself. In “Becoming Writing, Becoming Writers,” Colyar (2009) addresses writing as academic currency, generative, a reflection of the rhetorical self, sense making, and methodology—ultimately “a source of possibility rather than simply mechanical drudgery” (p. 435). Reframing writing, for students and for ourselves, is a necessity if we are to understand how writing functions in the performing arts. My approach to this work represents *a* way, not necessarily *the* way. Students may or may not find the particular writing strategies herein useful to their creative process, choosing instead other writing approaches. Regardless, what matters is that they write. While training is only as effective as much as the trainee is invested, training is also only as effective as the trainer. In other words, if we as educators present writing as integral to performing—and not ancillary—our students will broaden their understanding of *where* and *how* performance happens, enhance their artistic sensibilities and possibilities, and generate more critical, insightful, multidimensional, and inspired reflections from stage to page.

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# Where's that Confounded Bridge?

## Performance, Intratextuality, and Genre-Awareness Transfer

Peter H. Khost and David Hyman

This chapter contends that transfer of genre awareness can be improved in composition classrooms through understanding the rhetorics of popular music. Drawing on scholarship on transfer and genre theory, the authors present original study results and pedagogical recommendations based on their experiences leading upper-division student writers in the analysis and performance of musical texts. The chapter maintains a conceit based on the performative rhetorics of James Brown and Led Zeppelin. In addition to making the often-abstract rhetoric of transference and genre more accessible to students, the authors' approach suggests the relevance of multimodal and interdisciplinary performative strategies in the theory and practice of transference and genre awareness.

James Brown's "Get Up (I Feel Like Being a) Sex Machine," (Brown, Byrd, & Lenhoff, 1970) can be considered a metacognitive song. It is explicitly and consistently aware of itself *as a performance* of the moves it is making as it makes them. Brown begins the original 1970 recorded version bantering with his band: "Fellas, I'm ready to get up and do my thing!" Bandmembers respond, "Yeah! That's right! Do it!" Brown adds, "I want to get into it, man, you know?" The band replies, "Go ahead! Yeah!" (Brown, et al., 1970). This continues until Brown counts off the first beats. About midway through, this call and response returns, with Brown invoking bandmate Bobby Byrd for encouragement in leading the group to the bridge portion of the song: "Bobby, can I take them to the bridge?" Byrd affirms, "Go ahead!" and the process repeats with variations until the band transitions into the bridge. The track closes similarly, with Brown calling on his bandmates seven times to explicitly acknowledge that they will imminently "hit it and quit," which indeed they do as the song ends. These vocal cues supposedly first served Brown and his bandmates as spontaneous directions during improvisational recording sessions. But that originating moment henceforth became a trope for Brown and his band, as well as for other musicians.

One reappearance is in Led Zeppelin's 1972 song "The Crunge" (Bonham, Jones, Page, & Plant). In this track, however, the bridge never arrives, despite being invoked in Brown's style. Instead, singer Robert Plant explicitly remarks that the song's culminating section cannot be found, perhaps insinuating that Zeppelin cannot pull off what Brown and his band had mastered. Plant's delivery of the final

set of lyrics steadily degrades from soulful singing: “Take it home. Take it, take it, take it. Excuse me. Will you excuse me? I’m just trying to find the bridge. Has anybody seen the bridge? Please,” to plaintive speaking, “Have you seen the bridge? I ain’t seen the bridge,” and finally to avowal of confusion extending past the point of the music’s abrupt ending, “Where’s that confounded bridge?” (Bonham et al., 1972). “The Crunge” not only shares “Sex Machine”’s explicit self-awareness of its own moves in real time, but also adds an additional layer of metacognition by articulating awareness that it is reiterating a pre-existing trope.

Given the popularity and influence of James Brown’s classic, it is reasonable to claim that Zeppelin *transferred* elements of “Sex Machine” into their own performance. Moreover, they did not merely replicate these elements, but rather repurposed them into a distinct composition that both shares and extends the meanings of the original trope. Seen in this light, “The Crunge” successfully performs an act of genre transfer, a process that is vital to student writing development yet challenging to teach. Many writing scholars have noted that successful transference of generic tropes transcends mere formal mimicry by active participation in the social contexts that underpin those tropes (Bazerman, 1994, 2013; Bawarshi, 2003; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Miller, 1984; Nowacek, 2011; Russell, 1995, 1997; Yancey 1996). We add that such participation seems more likely when a given context is familiar and engaging to those who would transfer it to another context. What makes “The Crunge” enjoyable, and thereby effective as a text, is not Zeppelin’s compliance with generic codes lifted from Brown’s original context, but rather the band’s compelling performance and repurposing of those codes. In other words, Zeppelin knows what it’s doing and what it’s doing differently, and appears deeply engaged in those acts. That, in turn, engages their audience.

Postsecondary and secondary writing teachers can try to inspire such high degrees of awareness, engagement, and performative agency in students while helping them to learn to transfer genre knowledge. One means of doing so is to invite students to get inside of and to examine the workings of a genre in which they are already deeply engaged, an act we call *intratextuality*. This way students may better see that the relationship between composed texts (i.e., songs in this chapter’s case) and their genres is not rigid and fixed, that what we call *genre* is really a marker of performances, trails of moves made by people who have genuine reasons to make them and to make them their own.

Intratextuality rehearses students in the performance of genre traits in contexts already familiar and engaging to them. If students can understand what it means to perform the moves of a genre and what it feels like to be genuinely engaged in that act, that embodied awareness can serve as a metacognitive heuristic for future transfer needs of other kinds<sup>1</sup> and a benchmark by which to register the value of

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1 See Marquez (2015) for excellent similar claims about dramatic performance.



such acts. Given the unfamiliarity of many writing tasks to students, it seems advisable to establish motive prior to or along with methods for transferring across them. If compelling reasons to invoke prior genre knowledge cannot be established, then we cannot reasonably expect students to transfer such knowledge into less familiar and more challenging academic contexts. These challenges multiply when we expand the range of transfer beyond the sequential learning contexts and expectations within a single class or discipline to include relationships that cross curricular boundaries, an increasingly critical consideration for teachers of writing in contemporary high schools and colleges.



*Figure 19.1. That Confounded Bridge (digital collage by the authors).*

We find songs to be effective for practicing genre performance because of their appeal and accessibility. Students can easily identify songs that have significantly affected them, and tend to be willing and able to explore the songs' generic patterns. Students also often enter and exit our classrooms with music in their earbuds, and music plays during much of their time outside of class. This constant exposure



endows students with a native fluency in musical performance that can function as a rich precedent for genre-knowledge uptake, or an alternative version of what Amy Devitt calls an “antecedent genre” (2007). So, as a pair of music-loving writing teachers, we determined to gather theories and to develop practices that pertain to these attributes, which we present below. Following a quick review of some key ideas in writing transfer theory, we explain our methodology and methods, and we introduce some resources for teachers and evidence for researchers to consider putting to their own uses.

The most influential scholars in transfer studies have been coauthors David N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon. They state that transfer occurs “when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with other related materials” (1992, p. 3). Perkins and Salomon delineate two basic modes: *low-road transfer*, which “reflects the automatic triggering of well-practiced routines in circumstances where there is considerable perceptual similarity to the original learning context,” and *high-road transfer*, which depends on “deliberate mindful abstraction of skill or knowledge from one context for application in another” (1988, p. 25). These contrasting modes of transfer are also called *hugging* and *bridging*, the latter of which comprises our chapter’s conceit and chief concern.

The challenges of teaching for transfer tend to arise with contextual relationships of the bridging variety. With hugging, the proximity of the new circumstance to the prior learning context is so close that the process of transfer occurs naturally, almost automatically, due to the resemblances of context clues operating in both performances. Bridging, by contrast, involves building connections between contexts that are less obviously similar, and employs a level of deliberation, metacognition, and awareness of abstractions and analogies that are absent from low-road transfer. Bridging is by far the more fluid and challenging of the modes of transfer to define, teach, and assess. As a result, subsequent scholarship has attempted to develop and clarify bridging-style transfer in various ways. King Beach (1999) rejects *transfer* as too static a metaphor and offers *generalizing* in its stead, preferring its emphasis on the role of social contexts in learning as well as the fact that the types of learning covered by transfer includes transitions that go beyond changes in context: for example, changes in individuals affected or involved, or the types of relationships emphasized by the old and new learning performances. Elizabeth Wardle (2012) and Kevin Roozen (2010) suggest *repurposing*, which emphasizes both the rhetorical nature of sites of writing operating within different learning contexts as well as the role of problem solving in any act of transfer. Rebecca Nowacek’s (2011) revisioning of transfer as *recontextualization* is noteworthy for its emphasis on the interplay between transfer and genre recognition and awareness. She explains: “Because they serve as the nexus between stability and change, genres are powerfully positioned as a means of identifying and responding to a sense that there is a need that must be met or an opportunity that can be realized by making connections

between various contexts. A genre's constellation of associations provides ready avenues of connection" (2011, p. 20).

Ellen Carillo (2015) provides compelling primary and secondary research to support her view that without an accompanying mindful framework, students are less likely to transfer their learning gains. Her definition of transfer follows Beach's partial overlap with Perkins and Salomon: "when students *recognize* and *generalize* something in one (perhaps previous) course in order to allow for application in a different course" (2015, 105). Carillo says that metacognition, "literally thinking about thinking—is the hinge upon which transfer depends" (2015, 105). This view underwrites the theory on which we ground our method: it is not so much the content of any given genre but "*awareness* [itself that] is the transferable element" (Carillo, 2015, p. 107).

The metacognitive tropes inscribed into the text of the performances of James Brown and Led Zeppelin enact Carillo's process of genre awareness. Once recognized by the listener/learner, "Sex Machine" and "Crunge" provide models of metacognitive practice operating within familiar musical genre contexts. However, we must remember that such recognition is facilitated by our deep familiarity and engagement with the artists and the genres within which they composed and created. Without this familiarity, the transference of metacognitive practices cannot occur. Perkins and Salomon recognized that many apparent failures of transfer were due to this lack of prior understanding: "We can hardly expect transfer of a performance that has not been learned in the first place!" (1988, p. 28). This is why an essential part of our approach is that our students choose their own songs.

In our writing programs, and likely many others across the country, textual analysis is the activity that correlates best with transferable genre-knowledge learning. Textual analysis assignments of various kinds operate on the premise that understanding how one generic text works prepares students to understand how other texts work. Intratextuality offers a performative approach to this goal. The method entails moving around inside of a text to observe and understand its genre traits in action, and to perform those traits by literally and figuratively giving voice to the text. As students' engagement in the task is sustained by their fluency and relative authority in relation to content, opportunities to develop metacognition multiply—not (only) as a condition of transferability, but (also) as a habit of mind that can itself be transferred into different learning contexts. These students may never again have cause to analyze a favorite song's genre traits, but they will need to grasp and perform the social functions of various composed genres in other learning contexts. Our assignment is available in the appendix, and other materials are below.

Once students have spent considerable time inside of their songs, examining the features that have the most significant impacts on them and speculating about their significance within a given framework, we discuss these elements more specifically as genre traits, *per se*. We believe this approach yields a valuable and

lasting benefit (i.e., bridge) toward genre-awareness transference. It is not difficult for students to connect musical features to the social activities they reflect, when prompted by questions such as: How do you know it's a metal, R&B, or folk, etc., song? Which traits signaled that? What are the expectations that come with them? How are those confirmed, challenged, or denied in your song? What values are at play in this exchange? What tweaks to the song would change its genre designation? How would those tweaks, in turn, alter the song's effects on you and your expectations? How do questions of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, and regionality affect these effects and expectations? What if your context for listening to the song were changed spatially (e.g., at a bar, in a TV commercial), temporally (e.g., Friday night, Monday morning), or socially (e.g., alone, with friends)? Which genre traits serve as cues for determining the text's appropriateness and effectiveness in the given situations?

These discussion topics reveal the necessarily social nature of genres, which indicates that their constituent traits are active and changeable, literally and figuratively *performed*. A given rock song succeeds, for example, not merely by conforming to some ideal protocol for Rock-ness, but because it yields significant effects on audiences in relation to their contexts, subjectivities, and expectations. Performance and reception are thus necessarily implicated in the production of a song's meaning, a condition also true of writing in academic disciplines. Whereas a power ballad performs verses, choruses, and bridges, a scientific paper performs introduction, methods, results, and discussion sections. A country song employs first-person voice to increase expressiveness, and a history paper, the passive voice to prioritize validity. A pop hit becomes the nexus for exchange of capital, and a case study organizes exchange of information. These genre traits are all markers of values and their attendant social activities. Our anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that the challenging concept of genre performativity is easier to understand, enact, and transfer if one can rehearse such performances on familiar texts, whose content and contexts are highly engaging.

In fall 2015, we invited a section of an upper-division writing course to complete an anonymous, optional survey about their experiences with the intratextuality project. Seventeen of 20 completed it. Two separate Likert scale questions asked "how confident in performing the following acts were you," both before and after the intratextuality project (see Table 19.1). Because the sample size ( $n = 17$ ) is so small, standard deviations around the mean are large, and statistical reliability of the data cannot be established. Nevertheless, the directional indication indicates positive changes in students' confidence resulting from participation in the intratextuality project. All categories saw notable decreases in the bottom two self-ratings (not at all confident, not very confident), with all but one of them going down to zero. Meanwhile, the top two self-ratings increased across all five attributes. The two lowest rated *before* categories generated the strongest advances in terms of both

means and frequencies.<sup>2</sup> The indication is that the issues students felt to be most challenging benefited from the project.

**Table 19.1. Before/After Intratextuality Project Confidence Likert Scale Results**

n = ~17	Five-point scale: 5 = Extremely confident, 1 = Not at all confident								
	Before Project			After Project			Before/After Change		
	Mean	Bottom 2 Ratings	Top 2 Ratings	Mean	Bottom 2 Ratings	Top 2 Ratings	Mean	Bottom 2 Ratings	Top 2 Ratings
	SD.			SD.					
Analyzing what a text does	3.35	6	10	4.18	0	15	+0.83	-6	+5
	1.08			0.62					
Evaluating how well a text does things	3.35	3	8	4.12	0	14	+0.77	-3	+6
	0.84			0.68					
Writing from a POV inside a text	2.82	7	5	3.76	0	11	+0.94	-7	+6
	1.10			0.64					
Recognizing traits of a text's genre	3.12	5	7	3.63	1	9	+0.51	-4	+2
	1.18			0.78					
Identifying activities/values	2.88	7	6	4.00	0	12	+1.12	-7	+6
	1.13			0.77					

If these observed positive change levels were to hold up under the condition of larger base sizes, then the noted mean changes would prove to be statistically significant and the reliability of the positive effect could be stated with more certainty. Also, although confidence in one's own task completion—better known as perceived self-efficacy—is not the same as the task's actual completion, many valid and reliable studies have demonstrated positive correlations between self-efficacy and performance in various writing tasks (see Pajares, 2003). The following selected qualitative comments on the before/after question are also not generalizable, but they are descriptive of students' transfer-related metacognition in action: "I have

<sup>2</sup> This is an especially encouraging result since the assignment was designed specifically to increase understanding of genre as human activity by means of going inside of texts, the two lowest-rated before categories.

been analyzing literature since high school . . . kind of like a muscle I learned how to analyze things . . . [but] I never really thought of what a text can do to me.” “I still need to work on writing from inside a text, but I am definitely more comfortable with the idea now.” “I feel more confident about recognizing a genre’s traits and how a text can relate to different people.”

Of the seventeen students who responded, eleven reported being *much more* or *more* engaged in this task than in all of their other college-level writing; two said they were *much less* or *less* engaged. When compared specifically with other college-level textual analysis work they had done, their levels of engagement remained consistent with the above results. In addition, the students’ qualitative feedback provides insights into common tropes that can be used to acknowledge, teach, research, prepare, and enact transfer of learning. Three of the more prominent tropes, with examples, are 1) *Continuity*: “[Intratextuality] has somehow linked into all music I have been listening to for the past month I have been aware of this assignment.” “The experience of intratextuality is something that I plan on incorporating into the old system of things I used to do when I used to read in high school . . . definitely a more memorable experience.” 2) *Sociality*: “When I was completely finished, I was very excited and had my friends listen to it, though it was a bit awkward. I am proud of what I did.” “When I began to get the hang of it, it was quite enjoyable. Especially the looks I got whenever someone caught what I was saying.” And 3) *Pleasure*: “I was more engaged in [the intratextuality project] than other textual analyses I have done in college . . . music and writing are two of my favorite things, so the project was naturally a lot of fun for me.” “I find it interesting that we finally get to take a text and relate to it rather than tear it apart and analyze it piece by piece . . . After doing [that] for so long you forget to actually enjoy literature.”<sup>3</sup>

Although the results of our modest pilot study are not generalizable, they offer reasons to hope that heightened transferability may result from teaching strategies that incorporate performative intratextuality, and so warrant further investigation. However, it is important to remember the very real environments in which transfer takes place, and the challenges such environments present. As teachers, we want to perform the James Brown moments, spontaneously calling out to our students as fellow players to help take it to the bridge, to transfer funky collaborative riffs to new contexts, to make intuitive leaps from here to somewhere else without ever leaving the space of the jam. But our reality is more akin to Led Zeppelin; even when we know that we should have reached the bridge by now, we are often not sure where to find it. And in a sense, we never really do. As teachers, we try to create opportunities for our students to experience a-ha moments. But we cannot do this by only presenting them with recordings of our own breakthroughs and

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3 This is an instance of negative transfer, “where knowledge or skill [or habits, in this case] from one context interferes in another” (Perkins and Salomon, 1988, p. 22).

going-overs. Nor can we pretend that the authentic moments we suspect are keys to finding that confounded bridge are anything but scattered and scarce in today's environment of educational standards and assessments. We recall Adam and the Ants' lament: "It's so sad when you're young to be told: 'You're having fun'" (Goddard & Pirroni, 1980). Our work offers not a solution to these very real impediments, but a reminder to ourselves and others that we must always be on the lookout for these mysterious sources of authentic performance. Without them, we may have nothing to transfer but rote mimicry.

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## Appendix: Intratextuality Assignment

In a written script, please analyze how your chosen song<sup>4</sup> achieves a specific valuable effect on you, and argue that and how other people can benefit from this knowledge. Note: the focus here is more on what your song *does* than on what it *says* or *means*, though there will be some overlap among these phenomena. Record an audio performance of your script (i.e., voice over) that variously interacts with key features of the song in order to explain your experience of that text from "inside" of it. Manipulate your song's audio file with editing software like Audacity or GarageBand, including by pausing, excerpting, repeating, quieting, or slowing down the track, *and by singing along with it*.

You might think of yourself as a tour guide, leading your audience through highlights of your unique and significant experience of the song, pointing out the moves this text makes *as they are happening* in the recording, and analyzing the effects of those moves on you and potentially on other audiences. Your role in this composition, then, is active and performative; you are interacting with your song and your listeners. Among other possibilities, your aim may be to invite, inspire, and "teach" your audience to similarly experience the song's effects. Be sure to argue for *why* your audience should consider what you're offering them with your project: how what you have to say can benefit *them*. The more significant the effect(s) of the

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<sup>4</sup> Your choice of song must have lyrics in English, either originally or through translation. You may appeal for permission to substitute a poem for a song.



song, the better; imagine a spectrum of significance ranging from entertainment (lesser) to life-changing epiphany (greater).

Keep in mind that almost none of your listeners will be interested in knowing *merely* how your song's features work, and only a very few of them will want to know how it affects *only* you. So it will help to frame your analyses and experiences with some kind of proposal, invitation, challenge, argument, etc., that raises the stakes for your audience. Here are some examples of propositional frameworks to use or on which to potentially model another framework:

- My song can improve your love, etc., life, and here's how and why.
- How and why to be productively angry with some help from this song.
- Case study: hip-hop (or rock, pop, etc.) versus racism (or classism, etc.).
- Introducing the anthem of my generation (or race or class or gender, etc.).
- Caution: this is a dangerous song (and how and why to listen to it anyway).
- Just one line of lyrics (or one musical phrase, etc.) can change your attitude.
- My song may be more significant than your favorite song is, and here's why.
- The saddest (or happiest, etc.) song ever sung, and how and why to listen to it.
- Think that this song (or genre) is just a bunch of noise (or fluff, etc.)? Think again.
- Instructions for listening to this song to restore your faith in humanity (or love, etc.).



# Curtain Call: A “This Is the End” Retrospective

Steven J. Corbett, Jennifer LeMesurier, Teagan E. Decker, Betsy Cooper, with Anicca Cox, Maria Soriano, and Lindsey Allgood

This is the end, beautiful friend.

—The Doors

Riffing off of Henry and Baker’s words from the Special Issue, when it comes to learning to perform—revision is not just part of the creative process, “revision *is* the process”—we end this collection with several of our artist-teachers who demonstrate why deep reflection is not just the end of the creative process “it *is* the process.” Select contributors take a bow and reflect on the ends or whys of the theory, research, and experience of teaching and learning writing in and about the performing and visual arts. This final curtain-call includes short-short individual, yet interanimating, essays. We begin with the voice of our new friend and colleague (Maria Soriano) who contributed an original piece, followed closely by redux authors (Anicca Cox and Lindsey Allgood) who look back on their original pieces in relation to this new volume. When all is sung (danced, designed . . .) and done, we’d love for contributors (and ultimately all readers/viewers/listeners) to ask the same words poet-scholar Claudia Rankine (2014) asks of those of us who want more than just getting-along out of life: “Hold up, did you just hear, did you just say, did you just see, did you just do that?” (p. 55).

## Twists, Turns, Hours, and Experiments

~ Maria Soriano

In “Provocative Revision,” Toby Fulwiler (2008, p. 158) discusses the power of provoking students to revise and reconsider first drafts, suggesting that “The solution is usually in the writer’s returning to the piece, re-seeing it, looking more closely and finding through continued exploration, *the story that wants or needs to come out*” (emphasis my own). Sometimes, that story emerges best by way of another medium—one that is more personal, comfortable, or creative than plain old academic writing; speech, dance, film, sculpture, aria, or video game, to name a few. When performing or visual arts are connected with courses and writing, students are set free to apply and make meaning out of the curriculum in their own ways.

The combination also expands students' understandings of *creativity*, since many of my first-year writing students would never label themselves as “creative” or “artsy” people before we begin our concert poster unit. They immerse themselves in a lengthy process that involves listening to their favorite bands or artists, engaging with their imaginations to create concert posters that reflect the music, and writing about their design choices—a unit that combines traditional principles of academic writing with performative aspects of the arts.

This transformative sequence contains many twists, turns, hours, and experiments, but the end results grant students a deep sense of pride and lead them to feel true authorship for their work. The depth of explanation and personal connection with their project elements often leads them to produce writing that is strong, coherent, and well-developed in comparison to earlier essays. I can ultimately conclude that as a first-year writing instructor, my choice to incorporate poster design into my course has helped me realize how the elegantly interpretive nature of the performing and visual arts provides students with the room they need to write, create, and revise until that story *finally* comes out.

## Between Practitioners, Across Texts, Inside Our Classrooms and Our Own Understandings of Ourselves

~ Anicca Cox

Arguably, writing studies occupies a unique place in the field of available discursive spaces inside institutions of higher education. If Victor Vitanza and Susan Jarratt are correct, as they argued in one of our disciplinary origin-story documents, “The Octalog” we are, in fact, a “meta-discipline (1988). And yet, when we put our experiential practice to the wheel of process and production, we find ourselves in delightful camaraderie with others. It is not merely that we can engage with and animate the texts of other discursive traditions, but rather, we can cooperate with, integrate, align and realign ourselves in deep relationship with other ways of knowing, doing, being and understanding via our vehicle of written practice. Here, my co-authors and I have found particular synthesis with visual and performing arts along lines of values, practice, articulation and pedagogy.

In some ways, our fields have a seemingly natural alliance. In my own explorations, I found that art instructors value and use writing seamlessly to engage their students and themselves in modalities that achieve deeper cognition of artistic practice. And they have much to say back to our discipline in their attention to embodiment and to the subtle differentiations between objects and representation. And yet, these alliances between us are not simple. In fact, it may be true that all alliances are at the same moment, personal *and* political in nature. And each

alliance is based on relationship building, between practitioners, across texts, inside of our classrooms and our own understandings of ourselves. Perhaps the greatest gift visual and performing arts may offer to the crystallized rhetorical structures we often find ourselves within writing studies is the gift of a reliance on subjectivity. Not subjectivity at the exclusion of critical experience and discourse, but rather, the placing of value on subjective, personal *and* interpersonal, reflective and embodied experience as an *integral part* of critical practice. These practices of engaging interpretive, reflective and subjective modes are valuable. Rather than subsume them into the service of an unattainable, quantifiable, objectivity we are often pushed to do by assessment initiatives and standardizing curriculums, rather, they offer us vehicles to again, engage in work that give us pleasure and meaning, finding our way to understanding through the shared process of inquiry and experience.

## Write . . . Pause. Write-Pause. Write: Pause. Write and Pause.

~ Lindsey Allgood

When we collaboratively write, we must establish rhythm. Writing is an improvisational dance and physical performance. Language and linguistics give us the tools to choreograph and perform text together. When we collaboratively write, we tag team the choreography process, and we often subconsciously ask our partners very important questions: “Hold up, did you just say that? Did you just move that way?” As a performance artist, writer, and writing educator, I think about how I dance with my audience(s) in participatory performances and in the writing center, and how I danced with Michael Rifenburg over a thousand-mile distance as we drafted our essay.

This process raised several intriguing questions for me. What happens in the space and time between our writing and our pauses, and what are the constraints established by these rhythms that are often decided by punctuation, word choice, citation patterns, and drafting routines? Then, as when two artists collaborate, how does the merging of two writers’ habits, tics, and preferences affect the composed product? Perhaps the most interesting aspect of contemporary composing is how technology encourages us to rethink how we use time(zones) while establishing collaborative rhythm. In relation to tutoring, I think of how I time that crucial moment when a student turns their laptop or paper towards me, and when I choose to turn it back towards them. How does this rhythm, and the pauses between these actions, affect the student’s final product? Final composition products—student essays, paintings, ensembles, or book chapters—beg us to stop in stillness for a minute and ask, “Did we just *live* that?”

Without this question at the end of a composing, teaching, or learning experience, we cannot claim complete engagement with texts in all their forms, nor with any snippet of digested information. We cannot claim any sort of embodied knowing of our collaborators, our audiences, nor with our authentic selves. To claim and embody these essential experiences is the purpose of writing, and for me, the purpose of performance art. When we write, it is also important to ask ourselves of what elements the pauses in our collaborative rhythms are made. How do we reflect? When do we stand still? Where do we physically choose words? Answering these meta-questions helps us solidify the performative tools we use as we compose texts and ultimately as we compose our lives.

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# Contributors

**Lindsey Allgood** is a Writing Specialist at the Center for Excellence in Writing and Communication at the University of California, Irvine. Previously, she served as Lead Consultant and Fine Arts Writing Fellow at the University of Oklahoma Writing Center. She also taught composition at OU where she received her MFA in fine art with a focus on performance. Her work merges creativity, authenticity and mindfulness in writing practices in the classroom, tutoring sessions and beyond.

**Barbara Angeline** (MA in Dance Education, BA in Dance) is the artistic director of Hysterika Jazz Dance and Instructor of Dance Arts/Course Development Consultant at Rutgers University. She teaches courses in the history of Broadway dance, jazz dance, Broadway jazz dance, dance appreciation online, and dance studies. Her publications include *Vision Document for Dance 2050: The Future of Dance in Higher Education* for the National Dance Education Organization.

**Heidi Arbogast** is a Visual Thinking Strategies Trainer for museum educators and teachers. She served as the Curator of Education and Visual Literacy at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture for 16 years.

**Elizabeth Boquet** is Professor of English and Director of the writing center at Fairfield University in Fairfield, CT. She is the author of *Noise from the Writing Center* and *Nowhere Near the Line* and co-author of *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*, all published by Utah State University Press.

**Ivica Ico Bukvic** currently serves as the Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Interim Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research and an Associate Professor in the School of Performing Arts. His work as a trans-disciplinary artist and researcher is defined by enabling technologies. Bukvic is the founder and director of the Digital Interactive Sound and Intermedia Studio and the internationally acclaimed Linux Laptop Orchestra (L2Ork), director and co-founder of the Creative Technologies in Music degree option, Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology's Senior Fellow, and a member of the Center for Human-Computer Interaction with a courtesy appointment in computer science.

**Russell Carpenter** is Executive Director of the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity and Associate Professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University. Carpenter also serves as editor of the *Journal of Faculty Development*. Recent books include *Writing Studio Pedagogy* and *Sustainable Learning Spaces*. He serves as Chair of the Southeastern Writing Center Association Research and Development Committee.

**Rhonda Cinotto** (MFA) currently co-directs the dance program at the Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences. She has also taught in the dance departments at the University of Washington, Cornish College of the Arts, and Western Michigan



University, and she served on the Dance Educators of Washington board. In 2007, Rhonda graduated with an MFA in dance from the University of Washington. Prior to entering the MFA program, she was a member of Spectrum Dance Theater for eight years, touring throughout the Pacific Northwest, Mexico, Germany, and the Netherlands.

**Betsy Cooper** chairs the Department of Dance at California State University, Long Beach. She directed the University of Washington's dance department from 2001-2013, later serving as Divisional Dean of Arts. Betsy has enjoyed a decades-long performance career with classical and contemporary companies, nationally and abroad. Her scholarship probes the intersections of dance, politics, and censorship of the body in early modern dance and Hollywood musicals, and the uses of embodied and reflective writing to promote engaged learning. Betsy holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Washington, and a BA, *cum laude*, from Yale University.

**Steven J. Corbett** is Director of the University Writing Center and Associate Professor of English at Texas A&M University, Kingsville. He is the author of *Beyond Dichotomy: Synergizing Writing Center and Classroom Pedagogies* (2015), and co-editor (with Michelle LaFrance and Teagan E. Decker) of *Peer Pressure, Peer Power: Theory and Practice in Peer Review and Response for the Writing Classroom* (2014) and (with Michelle LaFrance) *Student Peer Review and Response: A Critical Sourcebook* (2018). His articles on writing and rhetoric pedagogy have appeared in a variety of journals, periodicals, and collections.

**Tracy Cowden** is Roland K. Blumberg Professor of Music and chair of the Department of Music at The University of Texas at San Antonio. Her professional life centers around making music with others, whether in duos, chamber music, or orchestral settings. As a pianist, she shares her love of ensemble music through frequent performances with artists and colleagues across the country, and by mentoring student pianists in solo and collaborative performance. She is also active in commissioning and performing twenty-first century chamber works.

**Anicca Cox** received her undergraduate degree in photography in 2004 and her master of arts degree in composition and rhetoric in 2010. Since then, she has worked as an instructor of writing, and a writing program administrator and also a casual maker of images for her own enjoyment. This chapter represents, for her, a delightful return to a consideration of the productive relationship between art and writing. She is currently pursuing her doctoral degree at Michigan State University.

**Molly Daniel** is Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Composition at the University of North Georgia, Gainesville. She teaches in both the Writing and Publication major and the first-year composition courses. She also mentors students in the McNair Scholars program and the honors program, where her students are studying digital rhetorics, embodied pedagogy, and antiracist writing assessment. Her current research focuses on digital embodiment, digital activism, and mindfulness.

**Teagan E. Decker** is Associate Professor of English and Assistant Dean of the Esther G. Maynor Honors College at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke. She currently teaches courses in composition and the humanities, supervises the senior project course sequence for the honors college, and teaches graduate courses in rhetoric. Her most recent publication is the co-edited collection *Peer Pressure, Peer Power: Theory and Practice in Peer Review and Response for the Writing Classroom*. She is currently engaged in editing another collection, *Writing Centers and Learning Commons: The Politics and Pedagogy of Sharing Common Ground*.

**Rebecca Diederichs** has been involved with Toronto's artist-run culture since the 1980s and has participated in exhibitions throughout Ontario, and in other parts of Canada. She has edited two monographs on Peter MacCallum, and written for *Lola Magazine*, Open Studio, and the Red Head Gallery, all in Toronto. She received an MVS from the University of Toronto and is a Writing Consultant at OCAD University's Writing and Learning Centre.

**Cary DiPietro** is an Educational Developer in the Faculty and Curriculum Development Centre at OCAD University in Toronto, Canada, where he provides leadership and support for curriculum development and strategic curriculum initiatives related to writing and academic integrity. His disciplinary background is in literary studies. He earned his MA and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Birmingham, UK. He is the author of *Shakespeare and Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2006; reissued 2009), which explores the interactions between two cultural moments, Shakespeare's and that of the early twentieth century. He is also co-editor with Hugh Grady of *Shakespeare and the Urgency of Now* (Palgrave, 2013).

**Katie S. Dredger** is Associate Professor and department chair at James Madison University (Harrisonburg, VA) in Middle, Secondary, and Math Education. Her research interests include social justice in teacher education, adolescent literacy, content literacy, and the effective and equitable integration of emerging digital literacies within K-12 education. You can find her on Twitter at @kdredger.

**Michele Eodice** is former director of the writing center at the University of Oklahoma and now serves as a Senior Writing Fellow in the Center for Faculty Excellence at OU. She is a co-author of *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice* (with Elizabeth H. Boquet, Meg Carroll, Frankie Condon, and Anne Ellen Geller) and *The Meaningful Writing Project: Learning, Teaching, and Writing in Higher Education* (with Anne Ellen Geller and Neal Lerner).

**Sandy Feinstein** is Professor of English and Honors Program Coordinator at Penn State, Berks. Since she began writing this chapter about four years ago, she has developed the medievalism course as part of a new integrative course initiative for the revamped general education program at Penn State. She has published articles on teaching both creative and academic writing. Her literary

scholarship ranges from examining beheading in a 12th-century French Arthurian romance to the remediating of canonical Arthurian texts in a 1990s animated television series. Her creative writing in poetry and fiction also engages medievalism.

**Susan Ferguson** is Director of the Writing and Learning Centre at OCAD University in Toronto, Canada, where she oversees academic support programs for students and leads a university-wide undergraduate writing across the curriculum initiative. Her research interests include writing pedagogy, feminist autobiography, embodiment, and pain studies, and her work is informed by interpretive social inquiry, disability studies, and transnational feminist theory. She has a Master's degree in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education from OISE/University of Toronto where her graduate research focused on embodied writing as a decolonizing pedagogical practice.

**Jeff Friedman** is Associate Professor of Dance Studies and Graduate Director, MFA in Dance at Rutgers University. His publications include book chapters and refereed journal articles in the US, Canada, UK, Spain, Germany, New Zealand, and Korea. He is the founder and Director of Legacy Oral History Project for San Francisco's performing arts communities, and Director of Rutgers' Dance and Parkinson's Program.

**Chris Gerben** is a content strategist in Chicago, and teaches professional writing for NYU. Before transitioning to marketing he taught full time for over 17 years at Stanford, Michigan, and Notre Dame.

**Roderick Grant** is chair and Associate Professor of Graphic Design in the Faculty of Design at OCAD University in Toronto, Canada. Before joining OCAD University in the fall of 2009, Roderick taught design at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. He holds an MFA degree in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design, and a BA in Urban Studies from New College of Florida. His pedagogical research centers on the critical investigation of visual representation, narrative construction, concepts of space and occupation, urban thresholds, and design processes across dimensions.

**Matthew Henley** (Ph.D., MFA) is Arnhold Associate Professor in the Ed.D. Program in Dance Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He received a BA in Religious Studies and a BFA in Dance at the University of Arizona. Matthew then danced professionally in New York City, primarily with the Sean Curran Company and Randy James Dance Works. After leaving New York, Matthew completed an MFA in Dance and Ph.D. in Learning Sciences at the University of Washington. He is serving as an Assistant Editor for *JODE*. His research explores the cognitive and social-emotional benefits of dance education.

**Summer Hess** is the managing editor of a regional outdoors magazine in Spokane, WA. She served as quarterly faculty at Eastern Washington University for three years.

**David Hyman** is Associate Professor of English at Lehman College/City University of New York. His scholarship and teaching focus on Comics Studies, English Education, and Composition. In addition to several articles and book chapters, he is the author of *Revision and the Superhero Genre* (Palgrave, 2017).

**Lindsay Illich** is a poet and the Director of the Writing Program at Curry College. Her research interests include invention and poetics, peer review, and reading and writing across the disciplines. She is the author of *Rile & Heave* (Texas Review Press, 2017) and the chapbook *Heteroglossia* (Anchor & Plume, 2016). *Rile & Heave* won the Texas Review Press Breakthrough Prize in Poetry.

**Peter H. Khost** is Assistant Professor in Stony Brook University's Program in Writing and Rhetoric, where he is also the Associate Director and founding Co-Principal Investigator of the Writing Research Lab. Peter is the author of *Rhetor Response: A Theory and Practice of Literary Affordance* (Utah State University Press, 2018) and coeditor of the *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*.

**Iris Kumar** is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at Curry College. She has an MA in Art and an MFA in Printmaking with a minor in Ceramics from the School of Art and Art History at University of Iowa. Her BFA is in Printmaking and Ceramics from the School of Art and Architecture at the University of Michigan.

**Faith Kurtyka** is Associate Professor of English at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. Her Interests include emotional engagement in learning, co-curricular learning, and feminist pedagogy. Her work has appeared in *Composition Forum*, *Composition Studies*, *Across the Disciplines*, and *Literacy in Composition Studies*.

**Jennifer Lin LeMesurier**, Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Colgate University, received her Ph.D. in English with a specialization in Language and Rhetoric from the University of Washington. Her research focuses on how movement practices are integral to the creation and reception of rhetoric. Her work can be found in such publications as *College Composition and Communication*, *POROI*, *Rhetoric Review*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*.

**Carrienne Leung** is a fiction writer and educator. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and Equity Studies from OISE/University of Toronto. Her debut novel, *The Wondrous Woo* (Inanna Publications) was shortlisted for the 2014 Toronto Book Awards. Her collection of linked stories, *That Time I Loved You*, was released in 2018 by Harper Collins Canada.

**Sohui Lee** is Faculty Director and Assistant Professor of the Writing and Multiliteracy Center at California State University Channel Islands. Lee serves as Associate Editor of *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* and has published multiple articles and book chapters in multimodal pedagogy, writing center studies, and creativity studies. She is co-editor with Russell Carpenter of the *Routledge Reader on Writing Centers and New Media* (2013).

**Meredith McCarroll** is Director of Writing and Rhetoric at Bowdoin College, where she teaches courses on American Literature, Film, Writing and Rhetoric. She is the author of *Unwhite: Appalachia, Race, and Film* (Georgia) and co-editor of *Appalachian Reckoning* (West Virginia).

**Kelly A. Parkes** is Associate Professor of Music and Music Education at Teachers College, Columbia University (US). Her primary research interests lie in assessment, music teacher education, and the applied music studio. She currently serves on the editorial board of the *Journal for Research in Music Education* and the *International Trumpet Guild* Board of Directors. Parkes was recently recognized as a “Lowell Mason Fellow” with the National Association for Music Education.

**J. Michael Rifenburg** is Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of North Georgia where he serves as Director of First-Year Composition. He also serves as Faculty Fellow for Scholarly Writing with UNG’s Center for Teaching, Learning, and Leadership. His is the author of *The Embodied Playbook: Writing Practices of Student-Athletes* (Utah State University Press, 2018) and co-editor of *Contemporary Perspectives on Cognition and Writing* (WAC Clearinghouse, 2017).

**Jennifer Salk** (MFA) is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Dance, and the Floyd and Delores Jones Endowed Chair in the Arts, at the University of Washington. She has taught and choreographed for festivals, companies and schools around the US, Europe, Turkey, and South America. She recently performed with Mark Haim internationally in *This Land is Your Land*. Her DVD *Teaching Experiential Anatomy in Technique Class* was published by Human Kinetics in 2010. Salk is a recipient of a Fulbright Specialist Grant and received the Distinguished Teaching Award at the UW in 2006.

**Patrick Santoro** is Associate Professor of theater and performance studies at Governors State University, where he teaches courses in storytelling, performance and social change, performing culture and identity, and writing as performance. His research explores loss, identity, and gender and sexuality through practices such as performance, auto/ethnography, performative writing, and experimental and documentary video production, and has appeared in *Text and Performance Quarterly*, *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, *International Review of Qualitative Research*, *Cultural Studies <-> Critical Methodologies*, and *Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Journal*.

**Maria Soriano** is Writing Center Director at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio. She teaches First-Year Writing, Business Communications, and undergraduate consultant training courses, and also mentors Graduate Assistants as they prepare to teach their own FYW courses. In addition to the chapter presented here, Maria’s research and presentations have also focused on writing centers and learning commons, Graduate Assistant training courses, and the labor of NTT faculty in the field of composition and rhetoric.

**Ariana Wyatt** is Assistant Professor of voice at Virginia Tech. Her recent opera engagements include appearances with Gotham Chamber Opera, Opera on the James, Opera Omaha, Opera Roanoke, Glimmerglass Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, the Juilliard Opera Center, and the Aspen Opera Theater. Symphonic highlights include appearances with the Roanoke and Charleston Symphonies and performances of James Whitbourn's *Annelies* in Israel, Prague, and the Kennedy Center.

**Justin Young** is Associate Professor at Eastern Washington University, where he serves as Director of the composition program and Writers' Center. He has published articles on literacy, writing pedagogy, and digital composition in journals such as the *Communication Design Quarterly Review*.







# Writing In and About the Performing and Visual Arts

The performing and visual arts have much to offer writing studies in terms of process, creativity, design, delivery, and habits of mind (and body). This collection is intended for teachers and researchers of writing in and across the disciplines, in both secondary and post-secondary settings, and for those outside of writing studies who wish to infuse more writing into their performing and visual arts curriculums and courses. Filled with evocative images and vivid descriptions, contributors showcase ways of knowing and doing in the performing and visual arts. Contributors also offer teachers in the performing and visual arts go-to practical designs and strategies for teaching writing in their fields.

**Steven J. Corbett** is Director of the University Writing Center and Associate Professor of English at Texas A&M University, Kingsville. **Jennifer Lin LeMesurier** is Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Colgate University. **Teagan E. Decker** is Associate Professor of English and Assistant Dean of the Esther G. Maynor Honors College at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke. **Betsy Cooper** chairs the Department of Dance at California State University, Long Beach. She directed the University of Washington's dance department from 2001-2013, later serving as Divisional Dean of Arts.

## Across the Disciplines Books

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