



Chapter 3: Orienting to the Mobile Surround

[A] nonrepresentational approach describes literacy activity as not projected toward some textual end point, but as living its life in the ongoing present, forming relations and connections across signs, objects, and bodies in often unexpected ways.

—Kevin Leander and Gail Boldt, 2013, p. 28

Imagine what you perceive as surroundings when you compose with a networked mobile technology like a laptop computer. You might sense a screen on your device. You might be vaguely aware of the backdrop of a wall or other horizon. If you are sitting, a table or other surface might collect objects that participate in your composing process: a cup of coffee, a stack of papers, books, food. Likely, you also sense things that have nothing to do with your writing. For example, when revising this chapter at a local Starbucks in Durham, a fellow patron brought in a two-foot-tall 1970s tape deck to restore at the table beside me. I couldn't help but turn toward what he was doing. He was using a strong cleaning fluid that smelled like alcohol and, as he told me later, was removing layers of musty cigarette smoke to try to make the technology functional again. People use shared places for pretty much every activity that matters to their lives, and this means that unpredictable and unrelated materials can shape the choices we make when composing with networked mobile devices. In this case, while I enjoyed talking to my fellow patron about his hobby, I had a hard time focusing on my writing once the tape deck restoration was underway. I wanted to ask more questions. I also had a difficult time ignoring the smell.

Materials like these, even when unusual, are somewhat easy to identify as participants in a composing session. But, what about all of the materials that are less easy to see. If you take into account the invisible infrastructures that impact composing, you would have to think about all that lies below the tip of the iceberg: the cultural, social, economic, and technological networks that extend across time and space to influence your movements. You'd also have to think about your own prior experiences as a writer and technology user and how these experiences travel with you into the places where you use your laptop. The surroundings that shape networked mobile composing extend broadly and deeply across the page, the building, the city, the social sphere, and the networked space of the internet.

Chapter 1 introduced transient literacies as negotiations with places, materials, people, and values that take place during networked mobile composing practices, and Chapter 2 examined how shared social places function as particular kinds of environments with respect to transient literacies by supporting perceived “flexibility” but actually influencing composing process through their situatedness. In Chapter 2, I argued that individuals and teams often choose common places for mobile writing based on personal desires, histories, and expectations but struggle to effectively align their needs with what the place affords. This chapter uses an embodied materialist approach to dig further into how individuals interact with surroundings when they compose in the transient commons places that collect people and their mobile technologies. In this analysis, I emphasize the role of human perception, given the strong role that experiences of place play in choices around locating mobile composing. My argument thus begins by drawing on Sara Ahmed’s (2006) concept of *orientations* and Lucy Suchman’s (2007) ethnomethodological approach to human-machine interactions. Taken together, I suggest that a focus on orientations and interactions provides a way to understand composing as an ongoing collaboration between writers and surroundings, while valuing how movements across places instill a familiarity with materials that influences future actions and perceptions of writing. I further offer a four-part heuristic framework—*materials, proximities, interactions, and sequences*—that researchers and instructors can use to refocus attention on how transient literacies are enacted in real time. Taken together, these four concepts offer language for positioning networked, mobile device use as a complex sociotechnical entanglement pushed forward by many materials (Barad, 2007).

After introducing this framework, I return to the question that I posed in the opening paragraph: How do we describe the surroundings that matter to networked mobile composing? Although there are multiple ways to parse this space, the chapter offers two frameworks unique to composing with networked mobile devices. First, I discuss three *dimensions of materiality* engaged during mobile composing. Rather than bifurcating physical and virtual space, I argue for thinking through the materiality of mobile composing by examining three dimensions that cut across physical and information spaces, as well as both apparent materials and invisible infrastructures. Second, I discuss three *dimensions of interaction* at which mobile composing practices result in the generation of complex agentive entanglements. My focus on dimensions of interaction takes seriously recent critiques of literacy research that locates the ends of literacy practices only in textual products. Drawing on Barad’s (2007) concept of intra-action, I identify interactional spheres that influence and are influenced by networked mobile composing. The commons, sociability, and attention are three important interactional agencies co-constructed during networked mo-

bile composing. By offering these frameworks, this chapter takes a step back from the challenges identified in Chapter 2 to lay the groundwork for closer attention to how and why individuals turn toward particular arrangements of information and materials when they compose with laptops.

Orientations as Links Between People and Surroundings

To inform an embodied materialist approach to researching composing, I draw from scholarship across disciplinary boundaries that was produced in response to problems and questions that are not my own. As Wiebe Bijker and John Law (1992) argued, “a model or theory, whatever its form, is a kind of statement of priorities: in effect it rests on a bet that for certain purposes some phenomena are more important than others” (p. 7). In this project, I have foregrounded theories that help me better understand how bodies move in relation with materials that they encounter as they cross spaces and times. Thus, I have turned to theories that emphasize human bodies as interactive confluences of histories, locations, technologies, cultural identities, and memories. Queer and feminist scholars of color have provided particularly compelling accounts of meaning-making from and with the body as a complex intersection of discourses and materials (Spillers, 2003; Williams, 1992). Theories in the flesh are a useful starting point for understanding bodies as active, living, and interactional processes at the cross-sections of people and their surroundings.

Theories in the Flesh

The Chicana feminist concept of a theory in the flesh links body, history, and cultural location to processes of making meaning. In the introduction to *This Bridge Called My Back*, Cherrie Moraga (1981) described the concept of a theory in the flesh as “one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity” (p. 23). What I want to emphasize here is that flesh is positioned as an interaction of various “physical realities” that coinfluence a drive to produce meaning. Importantly, theories in the flesh position these physical objects of life (e.g., skin color, land) as rhetorical or discursive, at the same time that typically rhetorical or discursive elements of life (e.g., social locations, desires) become physical, tangible, and material. Thus, by allowing for flexibility in what we understand as an influential or agential object, theorists in the flesh are able to understand bodies as produced in the intersection of multiple influences, as well as to trace this confluence as central to the impulse to act, speak, believe, and make meaning.

Theories in the flesh influenced later post-positivist realist theories of identity (Alcoff, 2006; Moya, 2002), which emerged in respond to a backlash against “identity politics” in the academy and activist circles. Post-positivist realist theory positioned social and cultural relationships that had previously been understood as barriers to individual rationality instead as agentive objects informing the experience and existence of bodies, as well as the potential for critical reflection and creative making. As Paula Moya (2002) explained it, “different social categories of a woman’s existence are relevant for the experiences she will have and that those experiences will inform her understanding of the world” (p. 50). Social categories and identifications were positioned not only as active but also tangible, concrete, and identifiable. Importantly, while social relationships, individual geographies, and past experiences become “objects” or physical realities in these embodied theories, those objects are not assumed to be static. Rather, as Moya emphasizes in her reading of Moraga’s work, experiences change over time but interpretations of our own experiences also change, affecting how prior experiences and relationships influence actions. Moya illustrates this idea through a close reading of the change over time in Moraga’s understanding of her own positionality as a light-skinned person of Mexican descent. This act of interpreting and re-interpreting the relationships between self and the objects of life is key to a theory in the flesh that is distinct from other feminist standpoint theories (Harding, 1991). Moya draws a distinction, in particular, between theories that “seem to imply a self-evident relationship among social location, knowledge, and identity” and a theory of the flesh which “explicitly posits that relationship as theoretically mediated through the interpretation of experience” (2002, p. 50). Working from this idea, the interpretation of one’s own embodied experience becomes an object—an active and agentive object—that can be understood to influence future choices and actions.

Literacy and composing scholars have largely overlooked the usefulness of theories in the flesh and post-positivist realists theories for understanding composing practices. Chela Sandoval has argued that the academy has often positioned U.S. Third World Feminist theories as relevant only to issues related to the raced experiences of people of color rather than as generative frameworks that can help explore more general experiences. These theories are relevant to composing in their unique physicalization of lived experiences and their positioning of bodies as confluences that are continually becoming and also continually interpreted. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that Moraga and Moya are both discussing lived experiences of trauma that emerged from living a raced life in a racist society. These theories thus emphasize that interpretation and generation of meaning is not always a learned art, but can arise from trauma. By focusing on “a politic born out of necessity,” Moraga emphasizes that composing sometimes is less a conscious

strategic course of planned action but instead an inevitable, tacit response to conditions that meet and cross in individual bodies: a form of “making do.”

Michel De Certeau (1984) in *The Practice of Everyday Life* described how mundane interaction with environments and structures of others’ creation—cooking, walking, renting—position people as producers of new embodied scripts. In De Certeau’s terms, production can happen inevitably, as an oppositional response to contexts and structures that attempt to structure behavior. Interestingly, De Certeau articulated these meaning-generative practices and tactics in behaviors practiced across a culture such as reading or walking. Chicana feminism’s theory in the flesh resists a totalizing descriptive meta-discourse. It exists as more overtly “multiple” in terms of voice and story than the descriptive mode in which De Certeau operates. A theory in the flesh is multiple and situated because it lives in bodies and, by extension, in accounts of experience. The advantage of seeing theory as living in bodies and accounts of bodies is that the objects that are associated through accounting for experience are specific, not generalized. As collections, U.S. Third World Feminist works such as *This Bridge Called My Back* and *Making Face, Making Soul* amass stories that explode easy categorization or identification, and Moraga explains that “the theme echoing throughout most of these stories is our refusal of the easy explanation to the conditions we live in,” but rather to explore the contradictions of experience and to respond to the exigencies created by their tensions and confluences (1981, p. 23)

This multiplicity and focus on situatedness helps theory in the flesh to remain relevant for a project like the one described in this book, despite how the spaces and times differ radically from those that were emphasized in Moraga’s or Moya’s work. These texts offer a theoretical grounding for a phenomenological approach that emphasizes the role of both environment and interpretation of prior experience on individual choices and actions. Philosopher Robert Sokolowski (2000) describes phenomenology as “the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience” (p. 2). By using the term *phenomenology*, I am aligning theories in the flesh with research approaches that emphasize “the activity of giving an account, giving a logos, of various phenomena, of the various way in which things can appear” (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 13). Phenomenological thought explores how the experience of the world, coupled with intense reflection and accounting for how that experience appears to us, can be a viable methodology for knowledge-making. The central methodology of phenomenology has typically been understood as Edmund Husserl’s (1970) “transcendental reduction,” a move to radically reflect on how objects in the world are understood and experienced. In traditional approaches, this reduction initiates radical reflection that involves understanding a separation between

the “natural attitude” of experiencing everyday life and the “phenomenological attitude,” which attempts to read that experience as a detached observer through a process of “bracketing” or setting aside objects in the world in order to reflect on how they appear and are experienced. For Husserl, this act is transcendental because it works through “the motif of inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge, the motif of the knower’s reflecting upon himself and his knowing life” (1970, p. 97).

Turning to Orientations

A problem for traditional phenomenological methods, however, is that experiences of individuals are often universalized in order to generalize about human nature, movement, and perception in ways that lose the situated perspectives that emerge from the accounts of Moraga, Anzaldúa, and other collaborators in the queer and Chicana Feminist collections that I have described. Sara Ahmed (2006) confronts this problem in *Queer Phenomenology*, which offers an alternative phenomenological approach that resists the impulse to normalize experience. Ahmed used the term *orientations* to describe tendencies built over time and through experience, through which bodies relate to space, time, people, and materials. Orientations are important because they create ways of “registering the proximity of objects and others,” and “shape not only how we inhabit space, but how we apprehend this world of shared inhabitance, as well as ‘who’ or ‘what’ we direct energy and attention toward” (Ahmed, 2006, p. 3). Orientations, Ahmed suggested, create potential by influencing how bodies extend into the world, as well as when people are liable to feel “at home” or what objects are likely to be within their reach (2006, p. 10). Importantly, in Ahmed’s estimation, orientations are never neutral but instead constructed through encounters with cultures, institutions, and designs that shape embodied tendencies over time.

Although orientations shape practices, we often experience them as invisible or transparent. In composing, we often realize that we have developed an orientation when we try to change our habit in some way. Have you ever noticed, for example, how difficult it can be to type on a keyboard that is not the one that you use routinely? The slight difference in spacing between the keys or alternative labelings can be enough to throw off your entire process. In her extended example of orientations, Ahmed focuses on sexual orientation, noting how often normative heterosexual and patriarchal orientations are assumed and encoded onto bodies. These normative ways of moving appear natural until we begin to deconstruct how cultures naturalize particular ways of being, which could be otherwise. Importantly, then, Ahmed suggests that “the body gets directed in some ways more than others,” which means

that bodies become habituated over time into normative associations and movements (2006, p. 15). In terms of sexual orientation, bodies are frequently socially directed in heterosexual directions: for instance, men are most frequently socialized to understand women rather than other men as sexual objects. To take on a non-normative orientation—to live queerly—means doing active work to build new proximities: to put one's body into proximity with other materials that shift, over time, how we move and what appears to be near us. Ahmed's conception of queering orientations builds on individual mindfulness or recognizing one's tendencies but extends beyond recognition into an attempt to actively resist socially naturalized orientations. Orientations to technologies, place, or materials are never "natural" or "pure" in spite of the extent to which they become transparent or seem inevitable. Constructions of tendency always shape how we move through the world, even as we continually reconstitute them through new interactions. And those tendencies are socially informed, rather than merely individual preferences.

Ahmed's concept of orientations, positioned in relationship to the theories in the flesh, offers a useful way to interrogate how people interact with surroundings when they compose. Because I am particularly interested in human-environment, human-machine, and human-information orientations that shape the circumstances of composing when people interact with their surroundings, I focus particularly on bodies in relation to and with technologies and other nonhuman materials. As I introduced in Chapter 1, Suchman emphasized how technology use can be understood as an ongoing production that takes place when humans and machines interact in specific circumstances. Placing Suchman's interactional theory in dialogue with the phenomenological theories I have just reviewed, I introduce four terms that can shape accounts of how mobile composers collaborate with their surroundings. As Figure 3.1 illustrates, my framework for understanding transient literacies in action focuses on materials, proximities, interactions, and sequences. In order to further elaborate this framework, let me first introduce a story of composing that can serve as an example for what each term can reveal about how bodies and surroundings meet in networked mobile composing.

Kim's Story and a Framework for Transient Literacies

A masters' student named Kim⁸ sat on a burgundy vinyl-covered bench seat with her laptop resting on the table in front of her. I observed about an hour of

8 This chapter draws from a case participant, Kim, who is also discussed in Pigg, 2014b. My argument in that chapter uses Kim's case to argue for the embodied and emplaced character of mobile writing. This chapter makes use of Kim's case to illuminate a method and set of vocabulary for establishing how transient literacies are enacted in practice.

her study session, which involved attention directed toward the screen, privacy protected with noise-cancelling headphones, and stamina maintained with a muffin and coffee that she had just purchased downstairs at the barista station. Kim was completing an assignment for a theory course for her degree: a reading response that asked her to synthesize and reply to ideas articulated in four assigned scholarly readings. To complete this task, Kim was reading PDF documents on her laptop, taking notes on them, and using these notes to draft a reading response that she would later submit to her instructor and classmates. While drafting the response, she also moved fluidly among less time-consuming literacy events such as reading emails or checking for updates to her social media accounts. She was occupied by the “page” on which she typed (a word processing document positioned at the right side of her screen to make room on the left side for the PDF course readings she perused simultaneously), as well as the positioning of her body in the room. She sat in a particular place within in a particular building located in a particular spot within Lansing. Her “page,” her laptop, and her body were also shaped by cultures and histories that were not immediately visible to an observer. All kinds of actors were involved in Kim’s composing process, becoming relevant to how and why she wrote in the ways that she did.

As for what made Kim’s environment unique, the materials interacting with and around her (including intangible actors such as values and histories) were shaped by needs, desires, and inevitabilities that enabled her literacy practices to be physically mobile: taking place across a number of locations in temporary bursts of time. When I interviewed Kim, she explained that she would never have started using the Gone Wired Café as a workspace if not for her decision to purchase a laptop computer. As she explained, “Before I had the laptop, I had a desktop, so if I was writing, I had to be at home, I had to be at my desk. And I had to be, you know, in that space, which was a lot different. Using a laptop, I can take it anywhere” (Pigg, 2014b, p. 259). While the idea that purchasing a laptop would require an individual to decide where to write might seem like an obvious point, Kim described that her newfound mobility also had immediate effects on how and when composing took place and what kinds of materials were involved. For example, she generally only used digital reading materials because, without weight and mass, they were easier to haul around on the move. Furthermore, she only took digital notes and annotations for similar reasons: she was likely to have faster access to online annotations via her laptop. Since she did not read print copies, the digital notes she took shaped her eventual draft. Building upon materials such as her laptop, the PDF readings, and these notes, she developed and practiced habits that massaged elements of the mobile environment into a coalition. The materials interacted as participants in her process and sometimes her written product, as well.

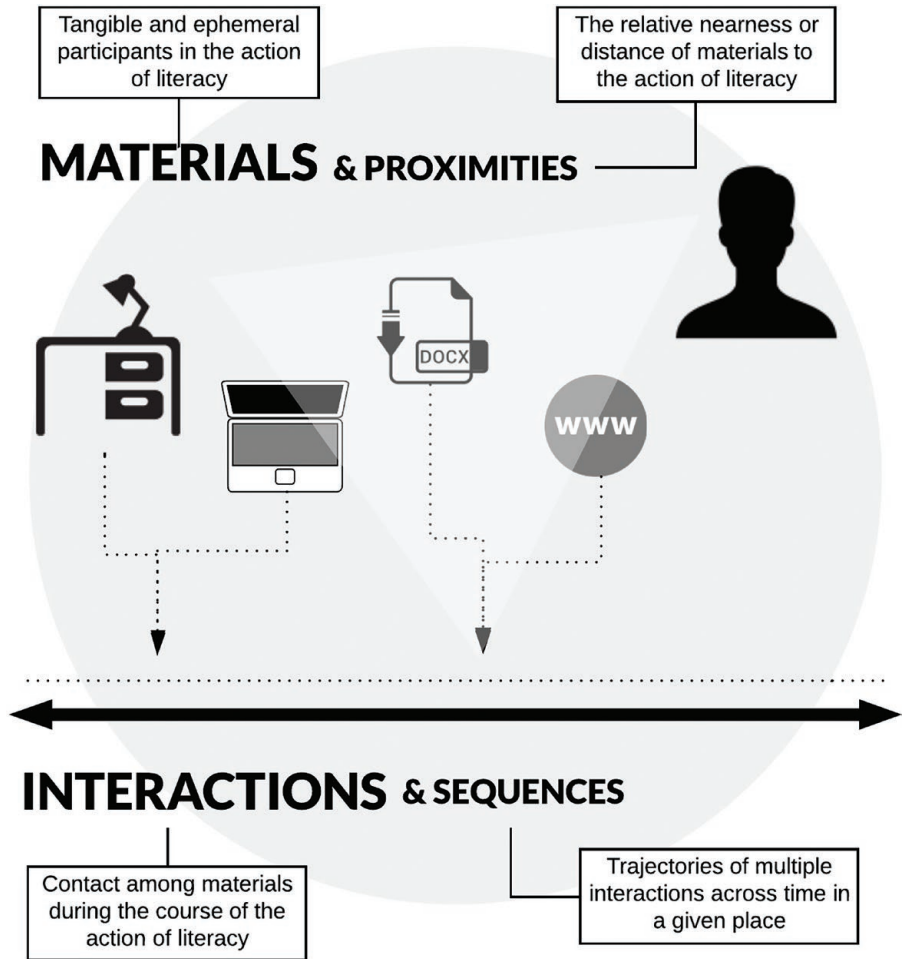


Figure 3.1. Tracing transient literacies in action.

Materials: The Resources of Environments

This book refers to participants in mobile composing simply as materials. Materials are agential, vital, active participants in composing: participants or collaborators in the sense described across a range of recent socially informed materialist theories of composing (Micciche, 2014; Shipka, 2011; Wysocki, 2004). The term allows researchers and educators to position these influences on composing as participants, rather than inert objects in service of a human subject who puts them to use. To draw on Suchman's language, one advantage of situated action studies is that they enable researchers to

“identif[y] the resources by which the inevitable uncertainty is managed” in a given case (2007, p. 86). I have chosen the term “materials” here as opposed to “resources” in order to reflect the sense in which these actors exert their own influence on unfolding scenes, rather than being taken up inertly in service of human interests. As the previous chapter established, using mobile networked devices for composing is always associated with attempts to manage uncertainty and impose temporary stability to flux. Composing processes in mobile frameworks involve decisions that could be carried out in a number of different ways. For example, when a classroom assignment is relayed to a student, there is typically no predetermined method nor pre-ordained set of materials to follow to complete the task (even if the course has an expected genre format). The materials that (or who) become invoked as participants meaningfully shape composing’s texture and outcomes. For example, a student like Kim might have chosen to script her reading response in her car during a commute using a voice recognition software that would transcribe her talk into text, or she might have chosen to sit with a composition notebook at her desk at home and write the reading response in one sitting after having read the articles from printouts collected in the university library.

But Kim’s particular choice on that Tuesday in *Gone Wired* was different, and her choice to use a laptop in *Gone Wired* invoked materials that needed to be brought into temporary alignment in order for her writing process to be effectively accomplished in ways that met her goals. To return to Kim’s example in more detail, it is relatively simple to categorize some of the materials she perceived as relevant to her composing task. For example, she discussed the importance of the built environment that surrounded her, such as the booth where she sat, technologies and interfaces ranging from her laptop computer to her headphones to the software platforms that provided the “page” on which she worked. However, she also referenced ephemeral “structuring resources” (Lave, 1988) that shaped the act but were less tangible in the scene, such as curricula, organizational schemes, categorical ontologies (Bowker & Star, 2000), languages and symbol systems, “ordering devices” such as plans, scripts, or routines (Suchman, 2007); and gestures (Prior, 2010) just to name a few. While no tally of materials that participate in literacy practice can be fully complete, Figure 3.2 visualizes and categorizes materials that Kim discussed when reflecting on her networked mobile composing practices when I observed her. As the visualization suggests, Kim invoked materials that included feelings, personal routines, and aspects of the room alongside those that take on more physical and observable mass: her PDF documents, laptop, and phone, for instance.

KIM'S MATERIALS

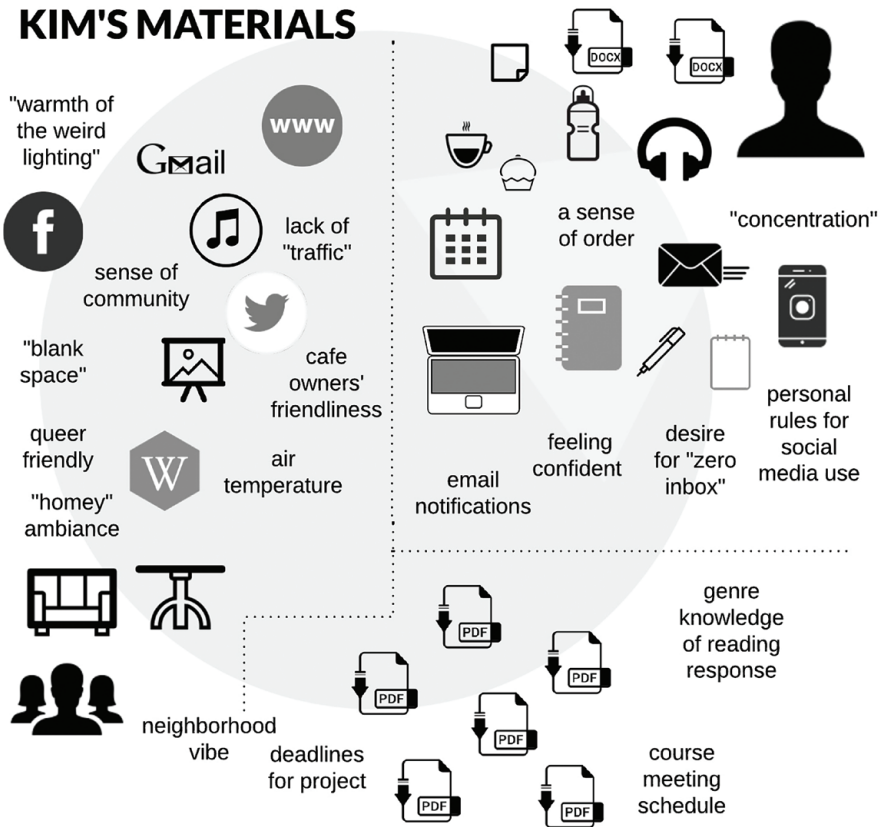


Figure 3.2. Selected materials that participated in Kim's reading response.

For Kim, then, accomplishing the reading response in the Gone Wired Café not only depended on access to readings, a software platform that enabled her to read the articles, and word processing software where she could see the letters that she struck one-by-one on her laptop keyboard. She also depended upon values like the perceived expectations of her graduate course, which shaped when and how she approached the reading response. For example, Kim's reading response was a weekly activity with a deadline before class began once each week: a temporality set in motion by course constraints. As in most cases of academic writing that are not timed tests, her instructor had assigned a product ("the response") that had taken on particular genre expectations as the course progressed as a result of feedback from her peer classmates and her instructor. Just as important were materialities that emerged from her identity and social positioning as a LGBTQ student. These more ephemeral issues became active participants shaping how she went about accomplishing the task assigned to her.

Proximities: The Relative Position of Materials

Infrastructures supporting practice are dynamic: they are relative to a user's needs and circumstances as experienced at a given time. To put this another way, materials with the potential to become participants in networked mobile composing practice hold relative positions in place and time that bring them closer to or farther from potential action. I use the term *proximities* to describe the nearness or distance of materials as they are positioned relative to a mobile composer moving across her trajectories of everyday practice. In my prior work describing Kim's case, I highlighted that proximities to relevant materials must be established in order for writing practice to take place even when mobile devices appear to enable use anytime and anywhere (Pigg, 2014b, p. 261). Here, I want to extend this idea by focusing on how social factors influence human perceptions of what is near or far from us. As Ahmed suggests, discursive and material relationships of nearness and distance affect whether or not particular materials become collaborators in our compositions. These proximities are not natural, but are continually culturally and socially produced. Suchman describes how "questions of location and extent" matter more to situated action research than assumptions about how "macro" structures such as cultural-historical systems or ideologies affect practice (2007). As with the role of plans or purposes, this does not mean that cultural artifacts or "social facts" are not meaningful to action. Instead, it means that materials are not assumed *a priori* to be active within a given scene as a result of a structuring macro-level institution (i.e., a culture, an economic model, a technological structure). Situated action research begins with a local scene and observed moment with an eye to identifying what materials are active and how they have been positioned, rather than assuming agencies that are predetermined by a given cultural or social frame.

To give a basic example of proximities that resonated across cases in my research, students described the Technology Commons and the Gone Wired Café as locations useful to them in relationship to each location's nearness to or distance from how they walked across campus or traveled across the space of the city, respectively. To echo Ahmed's point again, these proximities depended upon social positioning; people using a wheelchair to navigate a campus or a screen-reader to navigate device screens would no doubt experience the Technology Commons or the Gone Wired Café in a different proximity to their movements across campus space. Students tended to position these locations as useful merely because they were available and/or convenient, and we can deduce that they met personal requirements for comfort, safety, or emotional needs. Students frequently mentioned materials such as power outlets, coffee, comfortable chairs, Wi-Fi networks, computers, and software applications as

materials that drew them into the center. Business fraternity pledges Tiffany, Nicholas, and Nora, for instance, chose the Technology Commons for completing a digital video production project because it offered iMovie software. While their individual work toward the project had taken place using networked mobile devices (i.e., they recorded individual video clips using their cell phones), they needed this software in order to bring their individual online work into dialogue. Conversely, students I interviewed who rarely worked at the Technology Commons explained its challenges in terms of proximity as well, including how it positioned them either too near or too far from materials (e.g., often too near to other people, or too far from their homes or classrooms).

Table 3.1 illustrates a few proximities that shaped the use of the Technology Commons as a workspace. Many students described using the Technology Commons because it was centrally located near classes or parking spaces. Located in a central position near the student union and university library, the Technology Commons was near buildings where classes were conducted, the restaurants and food courts housed in the student union, and parking garages where many students began and ended their days on campus. Many students chose to write in the Technology Commons because it was convenient to locations they had come from or would need to reach. For example, sophomore engineering major Dean noted that he made locational choices “just depending on where I am.” Other students described walking to the Technology Commons after a class that had just ended in a nearby building. For example, Luna says that where she studies on campus “depends on the time of day” because her courses lead her to particular areas of campus. Luna described using the Technology Commons on a particular schedule: on “Monday, Wednesday, Friday” and “usually after my lab class” where she completed homework with a friend. The amount of time spent in the space was also shaped by proximity to deadlines created by course schedules. For example, Luna described how on those particular days she had two hours between her courses and thus spent around two hours in the Technology Commons. Students frequently measured time spent in the Technology Commons in this way—as filling in openings or “dead time” (Perry et al., 2001) created by course and meeting schedules.

Proximities like these recall Nedra Reynolds’ (2004) focus on how spatial practices such as dwelling and navigating link people’s habitation and navigation to how they make meaning about it. However, race, class, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability affect proximities and personal perceptions of which spaces are near and which are far. As Ahmed emphasized and scholars such as Terese G. Monberg (2009) have explored in writing studies, movements accessible to composers depend upon the unique confluence of physical realities that are manifested in their bodies. Materials appear as accessible or not to composers as the result of the meaning that they take on in relation to particular embodied

ments, and systematic oppression denies access to materials. Furthermore, the kinds of movements that are culturally valued and accessible often vary based on race and gender. Gesturing to Luce Irigaray's reading of the how acts of building rest on "the materiality and nurturance of women," Iris Marion Young recovers a lost sense of dwelling as preservation, an activity she associates with building a home through the collection and arrangement of particular objects. The politics of this work happen when cultivation extends beyond making the home a "commodified construction of personal achievement and lifestyle" or is enforced upon women as an oppressive, normative labor as in De Beauvoir's descriptions (Young, 1980, p. 132). It becomes a politics when it involves "maintenance" through the arrangement and preservation and use of things that give meaning to life and that connect past to present and future (Young, 1980).

For mobile composing, not every student owns a laptop computer, and not every student finds shared social spaces comfortable or usable. Understanding proximities as having a discursive dimension is important for less tangible forms of access as well. As Kathleen Blake Yancey and Teddi Fishman (2009) argued, mobile composing requires proximity to ephemeral materials such as social knowledge. As situated action researcher Michael Lynch (1993) described, collections of materials, or "equipmental complexes," become arrangements that "provide distinctive phenomenal fields in which organizations of 'work' are established and exhibited" (p. 123). In the case of transient literacies, how one is oriented to space, time, and knowledge plays a distinct role in shaping the material arrangements that will ultimately participate in composing practices.

Table 3.1. Proximities that led users to the Technology Commons

Kinds of Proximities	Sample Interview Excerpts
Travel Patterns	<p>"I usually just park here at garage A or I and I just make my way through the campus [and choose the first available place]" (Heijin)</p> <p>"[I choose to study at] whatever I'm closest to." (Dean)</p>
Social Relations	<p>"Sometimes I'll just study with people who are in different classes just for the company" (Luna)</p> <p>"We were planning to go to the library, but we were already there, so we were like let's just go and find a place to sit. And we had to really study for that quiz. So, we were like well, you know, let's just find a place to sit. And we found that place that was empty so we just sat there." (Sophia)</p> <p>"Tech commons is like a lot more livelier, I guess, so, not too quiet . . . I like to go to tech commons when I'm kind of like, kind of tired." (Max)</p>
Daily Schedules	<p>"[I go to the Tech Commons] usually after my lab class" (Luna)</p>

To continue with the example from the Gone Wired Café, positioning proximities as meaningful, relative positionings is useful for understanding why Kim accesses different materials in the café from Ed, Kathryn, or Dave, whom I have discussed over the past two chapters. To draw again on Kim's example, we might start by discussing how her positioning in time and space makes the Gone Wired Café a possible workspace. In her interview, Kim detailed how she lives in the neighborhood called the "Eastside" where the café was located and passed by it to get to campus. The café literally existed on her trajectory across the time and place of the city, as she uniquely knew and experienced it. Kim also found herself aligned with the cultural vibe of the coffee shop, which emphasized inclusivity for non-gender-conforming bodies. Once she entered the shop, Kim's location upstairs in Gone Wired with headphones sitting alone at a booth positioned her so that her laptop computer was in her direct line of vision. Comparatively, she was positioned at a relative distance to the incessant social traffic to the barista stand, and was unlikely to hear the chatter around her thanks to the headphones. As I have discussed in detail (Pigg, 2014b), Kim's proximities to online incoming social information were active as well. Instead of putting up barriers to interaction as she did with headphones or bodily positioning, Kim invited information from outside her immediate goal-orientation to enter her composing scene. Kim had signed up for notifications, desktop alerts that let her know immediately when an email or Twitter message was posted to one of her accounts. Thus, the word processor screen where she was drafting was interrupted repeatedly by incoming information that clued her into how her social networks had been updated. Although my example focuses most clearly on tangible materials that can be directly observed in her surroundings, metaphorical proximities were also in play. Across both observable and more hidden aspects of location, proximities describe why and how certain materials are invoked during the action of transient literacies while others are present but remain inactive or disengaged. When materials are near, it is more likely that they will participate in interactions, an idea I discuss in the following section.

Interactions: When Materials Meet

While materials are important to action, proximities create the likelihood that materials will be transformed, engaged, or mobilized—in short, that they will exercise rhetorical capacity. Situated action researchers often used the term interaction to refer to what happens when people related with materials in such a way that shaped their future capacity for action. In Suchman's terms, "interaction is a name for the ongoing, contingent coproduction of a shared sociomaterial world" (2007, p. 23). Within situated action frameworks,

interactions among materials both depend upon and generate temporary negotiated alliances that accomplish action. Suchman emphasized that her use of the term interaction for situated action theories built on the idea of interaction in the physical sciences to mean “reciprocal action or influence” but also in the social sciences to mean “communication between persons” (2007, p. 34). In this way, interactions among people and technologies implies working toward a “mutual intelligibility or shared understanding” while also influencing and being influenced by the other (Suchman, 2007, p. 34). To put it another way, interactions generate agencies. In this way, Suchman’s older conception of interaction resonates with the more radical co-involvement suggested by Barad’s conception of intra-action, which I will discuss in more detail. For her part, Suchman adapted her approach to interaction from the sociological research traditions of conversation analysis, but emphasized interaction among humans and nonhumans as co-producing agencies as various elements of local circumstances factored into action in unexpected ways. Because “circumstances of actions are never fully anticipated and are continuously changing,” Suchman argued, plans act in concert with what we encounter in particular places and times (2007, p.26). From the perspective of situated action research, action could always have been otherwise, as ongoing adaptations, transformations, and negotiations shape the texture of everyday practice (Suchman, 2007).

Similar frameworks have been useful for translingual literacy studies, focusing on the mobility and mutability of language. For example, Suresh Canagarajah’s (2013) approach to translingual practice focuses on how languaging practices depend upon a complex interplay among resources and their mobilization. In his terms, “The process of communication also reflexively alters context, changing the terms of engagement and meaning. The meanings and forms that are thus created are situational, arising from the modes of alignment between participants, objects, and resources in the local ecology (2013). Illustrating this orientation, Canagarajah’s study zooms in to focus on how what he describes in this quotation as “modes of alignment” are achieved in diverse language use scenarios. For example, Canagarajah traces how a group of migrant students use strategies and resources from their surroundings to come to an understanding of others’ codes, which often differ from their own and thus cannot be predetermined (2013).

To turn back to Kim’s reading response, interactions with participating materials in literacy happened constantly—so quickly that it is difficult to keep track of them. Through video recording, I was able to trace many of these interactions, making it possible to discuss forgotten, ephemeral, or fast-paced movements as they unfolded in contingent circumstances. As Pam Takayoshi (2016) described, the micro-level practices of digitally mediated com-

posing are difficult to account for retrospectively. In Kim's case, as she worked through various stages of composing the reading response (and attending to other smaller literacy tasks), a range of interactions became pieced together as the response slowly developed. Tracing these interactions at a granular level enabled me to pay attention to experiences with technologies and surroundings that were tacit and would be difficult to recall in a retrospective account. For example, during this session, Kim's interactions with social software were so fast paced and threaded through interactions with her word processing software that it would have been easy for her to forget how much of her composing time they comprised. As I described in the previous section, she often checked Twitter or Gmail as a result of receiving an on-screen text alert. As a result, these interactions with social media became braided through her interactions with the word processor page. I want to note here that, much like Suchman, my framework emphasizes interactions between humans and machines and explores composing through the lens of embodied encounters with materials. I have purposefully centered human bodies in this framework in order to better understand the bodily perspective from which an individual's composing practice takes place. However, it would be possible, and indeed is necessary, to think about how materials interact with other materials in a composing scene separate from the involvement of human bodies. This is a limitation to which my current framework cannot speak, and one that I trust other scholars working from materialist frameworks are also exploring through frameworks such as Thomas Rickert's (2013) ambient rhetoric.

Sequences: How Materials Interact Across Time

Situated action studies typically represent interactions that unfold during an observation of a bounded moment in time, and these interactions are described as a series of events (Lynch, 1999). Tracing interactions, then, not only illustrates how materials participate in action but also how they are arranged into meaningful sequences. Paying attention to sequences of interactions can illustrate how trajectories of action take temporal shape as a result of the unique circumstances of being in a given place in time responding to what has happened before. In Kim's case, for example, we could begin to look at whether and how the interaction of the on-screen text alert was or was not likely to influence her to stop composing in her word processing document and to check her email or social media. From there, we could trace whether and how this movement created challenges or new opportunities for the reading response she was drafting at the time. When read as linked together in sequences across time and materials, tracing interactions provides a way to ask new questions about how materials play an agentic role in composing.

This way of thinking about composing is unusual, but similar techniques have been used to understand embodied action in different domains. As ethnomethodological scholar John Hindmarsh (2009) pointed out, nineteenth-century physiologist Etienne-Jules Marey used chronologically sequenced photographs of human and animal movements to understand how activities like walking, running, jumping, or pole vaulting took place in real time. By capturing a series of snapshots that visualized and sequenced the relative positioning of bodies over a time scale, Marey parsed out how small movements compiled to form a way of operating that would nearly invisible while people were in active motion. Most of us do not stop to think about the positions that our bodies inhabit between where we begin and where we end an action, and attending to practices as sequences with duration enable a view on practice that is difficult to have while in process. Of course, literacy-in-action is not precisely the same kind of action as walking or pole vaulting, in spite of the similarities that Michel De Certeau has described. Furthermore, sociologists such as Paul Atkinson (1988) have argued that privileging sequences has led ethnomethodologically informed research to problematically assume all action is ordered rather than chaotic.



Figure 3.3. Example of Marey's embodied sequences.

Composing research tracing sequences of practices have typically focused on cognitive processes of expert writers with the goal of describing normative sequences of thinking (Flower & Hayes, 1981); however, the use of sequences that I am calling for is different. Rather than generalizing example sequences into normative models to describe what we should do when we write, I am calling for sequences as a tool for understanding the complex interactions that take place during situated moments of practice. More than anything, I understand tracing sequences as a useful tool in the repertoire of researchers and instructors who want to have conversations with people about the precise impact of materials such as technologies and elements of environments on

their composing. In specific contexts (informed by histories, cultural members, and other knowledge held in active bodies), tracing sequences of interaction offers a means for understanding how environments and embodiments intersect, and as a result, how composing conditions and processes blur. Sequences of interaction can illustrate when and how materials are mobilized and how they temporarily stabilize embodied, emplaced literacy processes: giving texture to composing process that we usually overlook or marginalize.

Dimensions of Materiality: The Spheres that Affect Composing

In the prior paragraphs, I have introduced an embodied materialist framework that can offer ways to shape accounts of composing practice, focused in particular on human-material interactions. Now I want to return to the question of how accounts produced through this framework can inform how we understand the surroundings that shape composing with mobile networked devices. When people like Kim read and write with laptops in places like the Gone Wired Café, materials emerge from different discursive positions relative to participants' values, capacities, and social positionings. One way to describe the surroundings of networked mobile composing is to focus on how these materials relate to the goals of composing that writers bring to their use of laptops and other mobile technologies. Understanding how different dimensions of materiality intersect when we write with networked mobile devices in shared social settings can help writers, educators, and researchers anticipate potentially divergent participants that composers must attempt to reconcile through the embodied action of composing.

To explain further, I have already discussed how prior research explores how participants in a composing process emerge from environments that surround individuals, as well as more hidden dimensions of infrastructure. Take, for example, Danielle DeVoss, Ellen Cushman, and Jeff Grabill's (2005) discussion of how the materiality of infrastructures affected a multimodal composing course. While creating short multimedia videos in Cushman's class, students' and instructors' plans were constrained by the classroom around them, the expectation of IT professionals at their university, and students' own choices and preferences. When mobile technologies are used for a composing task, they invite further complexities. Composing's materials are assembled from across divergent environments or domains, and the immediate surroundings in which mobile devices are used often do not harmoniously gather materials that are conducive to completing writing tasks. Jason Swarts (2007a) highlighted this issue while researching the integration of PDA de-

vices in veterinary students' learning practices. When using a mobile device while making rounds, students did not operate in the immediate vicinity of all information that they needed to usefully interpret available texts that guided their practice. Because information was not assembled in a way that formed intuitive context, Swarts suggested that these students operated more in “non-places” (Augé, 1995) than in coherent places. Based on his analysis, Swarts argued that “mobile technologies short-circuit locative assumptions and transfer more of the burden of interpretation back to readers and other resources in their environment” (2007a, p. 280). Transient writers are often responsible for making their environments, so to speak, because the places in which they compose are not already prepared for them.

DIMENSIONS OF MATERIALITY

1. Production Settings

values, tools, technologies, affects, and practices emerging from places of production



2. Circulation Settings

values, tools, technologies, temporalities, affects and practices emerging from disciplinary or organizational networks where writing will circulate



3. Personal Settings

values, tools, technologies, temporalities, affects and practices emerging from individual literacy histories



Figure 3.4. Three dimensions of materiality.

To return again to Kim, the physical surroundings in *Gone Wired* were not designed explicitly to support composing an academic paper. In order for *Gone Wired* to become an effective workplace for this task, Kim needed to bridge several gaps. In this case, she used materials such as her laptop (and the range of materials to which it enables access), her own knowledge, and other

personal technologies as participants that mediated this issue. Closely analyzing Kim's and others' composing processes in places like the Gone Wired Café, relevant materials emerged from at least three dimensions of their surroundings that intersect physical and information space, which are visualized in Figure 3.4:

1. the *production setting* or the immediate surroundings,
2. the *circulation setting* or the context related to a composing purpose and audience, and
3. the *personal setting or repertoire*, or the individual composer's technologies, habits, practices, and social positions.

When students compose with mobile devices, they take up materials from across these dimensions, which are already complex in themselves. Notably, these dimensions suggest that we need to be thinking in more complex terms than just the bridging of “physical” and “virtual” spaces during the action of mobile composing. Each dimension involves materialities and virtualities that emerge from across the multiple dimensions of hybrid space.

Production Settings

The first dimension of materiality important to composing with mobile networked devices is the production setting or immediate surroundings that emplace composing, inviting interactions with the tangible locale. Production settings always involve complex histories, cultures, and social meanings that are taken up as tangible materials shaping process. For example, as I have already described, Kim's booth created an inscription surface on which to place her laptop, as well as a barrier creating space between her body and others located around her. Although these tangible materials participated in how she was positioned, the values of privacy assumed in the café also allowed her to focus her attention almost completely on her screen without offending others around her. As I discussed in Chapter 2, this space was also accessible to her because of the history and redevelopment of historical buildings in the district where the café was located. Food, drink, and power outlets became different forms of sustenance, and their availability was uniquely tied to place. There were norms and economic expectations associated with the place that mattered as well (i.e., if you occupy a table, you should buy something).

Circulation Settings

Second, composing with networked mobile devices always engages a dimension of materiality related to an audience or domain where an eventual

composition will circulate. The dimension of materiality described by the circulation setting refers to the discourse communities or networks that exert powerful influences on composing through issues such as genre conventions, appropriate style, and delivery media. When transient literacies are practiced, circulation settings are often distinct from production settings, so materials from across them need to be reconciled. For Kim's reading response, materials from her theory course actively participated in how her processes took shape as a sequence of interactions. For example, the curricular expectations and timescales in place as norms of the class environment were central to Kim's process. She was writing on that day because the deadline for the course followed soon after: all students in class were required to submit a written response to readings two days before class so that other course members could read them to prepare for discussion. She was able to write in the café to meet this deadline because she had portable PDF journal articles and book chapters assigned as part of the course. The expectations and curricular organization of the class, then, became important materials shaping her choices and processes.

Personal Settings

Finally, a third dimension of materiality invoked in transient literacies are personal settings, or the repertoires associated with literacy habits and practices. Individuals bring technologies, organizing schemas, dispositions, and other relevant materials with them into their mobile workspaces, and these materials interact with those that emerge from both production and circulation settings. Although "personal," these repertoires include knowledges and gestures shaped by prior experiences, connections to cultures, social norms and constructions, land, economic positionings, built environments, and technological systems (Haas & Witte, 2001; Sauer, 2003; Spinuzzi, 2003). Individuals' idiosyncratic technologies, habits, and ways of organizing can run counter to or align easily with materials emerging from production and circulation settings. Imagine, for example, how time use habits associated with constantly checking one's social media accounts intersect with the expectations of time use associated with the deadlines of a course schedule. Imagine then reconciling both of these structuring materials with the rhythms of time-use encouraged by a coffeehouse setting, where the norm is to sit in a particular location with a cup of coffee for a finite amount of time. The forms of practical knowledge that I have called transient literacies involve assembling together materials from across these dimensions.

For an example of a particularly relevant material from her personal repertoire, Kim's process took place in the café, drawing on her course materi-

als, and what she referred to as “her workflow” (Pigg, 2014b). This workflow used a number of personal materials—including devices like phones, laptops, and social media sites—to bridge gaps among production and circulation dimensions. Kim generally began writing by invoking a cognitive and embodied blueprint for how she imagined she would spend her time; in Suchman’s terms, this plan became a relevant resource contributing to how her composing session would take place. What Kim called her “workflow” began with checking her social media feeds and interpersonal communication channels before settling into more focused tasks. At a more granular level, Kim’s workflow for the reading response was ordered purposefully: “so the readings, and then the notes, and then the reading response.” Specifically, she opened each PDF document one by one in the left-hand side of her screen. While reading the article, she took notes by transcribing or cutting and pasting text directly from the PDF into a new Microsoft Word document entitled “Notes” and marked the page number from where she took each direct quotation. After composing one notes document that contained the material she found most important from all four readings, Kim moved the notes document to the left-hand side of her screen and opened a new Word document on the right. Into this document, which would later become her response, she cut and pasted information from the notes document that she wanted to address (quotation marks around all cited material) and began to “compose around” this information. While Kim’s response text began by looking like patches of others’ quotations, she eventually cut bulky quotations, added elaborations and commentary, and synthesized across multiple readings until there were no traces that indicated she had used this technique.

Dimensions of Interaction: Agencies and Productions Beyond the Text

While it is useful to think about mobile networked surroundings by focusing on the kinds of materials that participate in goal-oriented production of texts or other artifacts, recent mobile literacies scholarship argues that texts and goals do not alone determine the shape of mobile literacy activity. Leander and Boldt (2012) emphasize this point in their critique of design pedagogies. They argue for a conception of literacy that does not imagine it as “projected toward some textual end point, but as living its life in the ongoing present, forming relations and connections across, signs, objects, and bodies in often unexpected ways” (p. 26). This way of thinking about literacy is consistent with the research approach that I have described thus far, and it opens the door for researchers and instructors to think about the different kinds of productions beyond text that are generated during mobile composing. I have

come to think of mobile composing practices as generating not only texts but also **dimensions of interaction**.

I use the term *dimensions of interaction* to name a way to take seriously how networked mobile composing practices entangle materials in ways that reinvent individuals' own habits and identities as well as shape the social contexts in which action takes place. While Suchman's concept of interaction remains helpful to thinking through this issue, Barad's use of the terms intra-action and engagement can extend Suchman's focus on mutual influence in order to better understand the new inventions generated when materials meet in everyday practices. Barad offers a complex way of thinking about matter as both always materially and discursively meaningful, as people who use networked mobile devices "intra-act with the matter of their worlds in ways in which they are transformed by matter and vice versa" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 125). Composing continually co-constructs both subjectivity and context, supporting a reinventing of oneself and the world. By focusing on dimensions of interaction, I intend to name a few slices of context that we can understand to be reproduced through networked mobile device use and that provide examples of how interactions participate in the "ongoing, contingent coproduction of a shared sociomaterial world" (Suchman, 2007, p. 23). Based on fieldwork, this book focuses on two contexts for/productions of networked mobile composing that are central to the experience of shared social space in commons places: *interpersonal sociability* and *attention*. As I will describe in the following sections, the influence of and production of each dimension entangles materials from across production, circulation, and personal settings.

Sociability

Sociability, a term I'm using to refer to interpersonal social atmosphere, is a dimension of interaction both invoked and composed with and in the presence of networked mobile technologies. Composing always involves interpersonal interactions, although this might not be obvious when looking at a lone individual sitting in a public place with a laptop. The social potential of mobile environments is mediated across platforms (i.e., face-to-face, online, phone lines) as well as across synchronous and asynchronous timescales. As a result, as Chapter 2 suggests, the sociability that matters to composing might differ from the ideal forms of social contact expected and cultivated in public places. For example, when composing with mobile devices, people often interact with others through multiple textual forms including text messages, blog and social media replies, and instant message communication. The people with whom they interact can be associated with the production,

circulation, and personal material dimensions of their composing, even when those interactions have nothing to do with the production of a given text. As a result, composing often blurs the boundaries of social domains and calls on people to reconcile social connections from their immediate surroundings, personal life, and work or school life. Sometimes these interactions are invited and centrally important to accomplishing a given literacy task: for example, receiving a peer review or consulting a text message that responds to an idea. Other times, as the cases I have discussed imply, social interactions that become part of composing processes are not easily integrated or aligned with our composing purposes or tasks.

Kim, for example, interacts with a range of other people who I describe more clearly in Chapter 4 as audiences, collaborators, and eventual influencers. Some of these people are directly related to the course context; however, Kim also threads interactions with different social media outlets through her workflow and accesses social contacts that are unrelated to her immediate task. The text alerts that I previously mentioned, which keep her updated about her social media feeds, are necessary from her perspective for staying informed about issues and people that matter to her. Of course, these social interactions are not always easily reconciled with interactions that are more directly task-related, including the online internet research that Kim accesses through Wikipedia. Reflecting on the role that the internet played in her work session, Kim said it's "multifaceted. It's a distraction, it's a resource." For example, she commended Wikipedia for providing important collective information but understood that introducing it into her work session also brought the lure of other places: "I can go look it up and find out more about this writer or this movement or whatever it is that I think I need to know about. But at the same time, when I open up Firefox, all those other tabs are there too. So it's not just a resource, it's a resource that I then use to distract myself." Although Kim largely relegated the in-person social potential of *Gone Wired* to the background (i.e., she did not interact with others face-to-face), she struggled at times to bring together interactions from personal and circulation settings.

Sociability has already become the subject of debates about the effects of mobile device use on contemporary student reading, writing, and learning. As I discussed in the prior chapter focused on the changing nature of shared social places, students who use phones and laptops in public frequently are assumed to be socially isolated. It is important that students develop means for accessing people who can provide feedback; texts that reveal shared information; and even search engines, online encyclopedias, blog pages, and other wired locations that hold collective knowledge. However, the steps that lead toward interactions with these kinds of materials, including those completely unrelated to a given task (e.g., a Facebook messenger conversation) and those

partially or fully related (e.g., co-present friends), often bring proximity to social potential that may not align well with the task at hand. As a result, cultivating the sociability around composing is central to successful academic, workplace, and community writing. By more closely analyzing how sociability is constructed in mobile composing situations, educators have the opportunity to better understand how students negotiate the often-dissonant social contexts that intersect as they cultivate proximity on the one hand to “enablers” of their literacies and on the other to the range of social potential surrounding them. This sociability also has implications for the role and function of shared social places, which I have already positioned as a commons where people access shared resources.

Attention

Finally, when students compose with mobile devices, their process depends upon and generates *attention*, or a changing state in which some materials appear salient to a writer and others fade into the background. An individual’s attentive horizon orients her to materials perceptible and accessible for literacy practice at any given time, and attention describes how a writer assigns prominence to those materials in ways that bring them into composing’s action. As I describe in Chapter 5, this way of thinking about attention assumes it as an ongoing production or invention: something composed. Positioning attention in this way opens it up to analysis, enabling us to understand it as a performance created in collaboration with places, technologies, and personal memory systems and habits. In this way, attention is always a production of mobile composing, and it is entangled with the burgeoning online information and densely connected interpersonal networks mobile composers bring from their personal repertoires.

When literacy activities are supported by mobile devices, materials that emerge from production, circulation, and personal settings often are not easily reconciled in writers’ attention. For instance, Kim described how working at home was difficult because materials present in her home space weighed so heavily on her focus that it was difficult to ignore them. In her words, “There are certain things that I can’t do at home because I get distracted. So the TV’s at home, my dog’s at home, all these things sort of either need my attention or demand, in some way, my attention. Here I can put my headphones on and be in this world.” At the same time, Gone Wired accommodated her body and mobile technologies (i.e., providing Wi-Fi and power outlets that would allow her to use her laptop) in ways that aligned with her preferences for how to do things. Her routines, available technologies, and course assignments aligned with what was available to her in the Gone Wired Café in ways that

created workable assemblies. And yet as I have already suggested, using her laptop in *Gone Wired* also introduced new materials that pulled at her attention and created the need for other kinds of negotiations in her composing process. For example, she often ignored people who sat around her in the café, even though she appreciated their presence and was attuned to many of their movements and actions. Attention is not always so neatly maintained, as Kim suggests when discussing her struggles with attention in production settings that offer different kinds of resources. Attention is often described as a central problem of contemporary university students, and so this dimension has already become an important point of tension and contention taken up and debated by instructors, employers, and public intellectuals.

Conclusion: New Focal Points

People who set up shop with laptops, smartphones, earbuds, and the social configurations that abound in coffeehouses, cafés and other similar locations give many reasons for being there (Sayers, 2009). Some need a place to sit between scheduled meetings, some need space to support collaborations on a “neutral ground,” some desire access to technological infrastructure that they do not have in their homes, and some want to get away from people, pets, or objects who are difficult to ignore when in their presence. In a sense, mobile surroundings are stable: their locations can be located on a map. However, they are also shaped by situations of the moment: deadlines that are approaching, the groups and individuals who happen to be around, the level of charge available on a laptop. The time/space of composing in these places, then, is always an experience of transience, an impermanent event shaped by conflicting forces. Furthermore, the “integrative” quality of mobile technologies and online social platforms (Levinson, 2006) that are common to contemporary writers blur boundaries across domain categories that researchers typically use to differentiate lifespaces for communication practice (e.g., personal, professional, academic, civic). This chapter has positioned networked mobile composing as a performance that engages the potential force of materials, while forging relations that produce new social spaces.

Attention and sociability represent new focal points for what matters to composing and provide frames for further exploring how mobile networked composing is experienced. These dimensions depend upon one another, as well. As Kim’s example in this chapter illustrates, cultivating attention depends on managing sociability using shared materials available in the commons. The social atmosphere of a place likewise depends upon how shared materials are taken up and how attention is distributed. Both of these dimensions of interaction furthermore shape the shared social locations that I have identi-

fied as a commons for mobile composing; how attention is paid and the developing norms of sociability within places can affect how composers access shared knowledge. Although these dimensions are intertwined, the following two chapters take them up separately to continue tracing how intersecting dimensions of materiality create challenges and complexities for networked mobile composers, while responding to ongoing debates about how students use mobile devices in daily life.