C&W

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COMPUTERS AND WRITING CONFERENCE 2019

Edited by Chen Chen and Lydia Wilkes

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COMPUTERS AND WRITING CONFERENCE, 2019

Proceedings of the Computers and Writing Conference

Series Editors: Chen Chen and Lydia Wilkes

The *Proceedings* publish peer-reviewed articles based on presentations from the annual Computers and Writing Conference. The WAC Clearinghouse and the Colorado State University Open Press make the *Proceedings* widely available through free digital distribution. The publishers and the series editors are committed to the principle that knowledge should freely circulate. We see the opportunities that new technologies have for further democratizing knowledge. And we see that to share the power of writing is to share the means for all to articulate their needs, interest, and learning into the great experiment of literacy.

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THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COMPUTERS AND WRITING CONFERENCE, 2019

Researching Collaboratively: Teachers, Teams, and Technology

Joy Robinson, University of Alabama in Huntsville

While driving here to the conference, I was looking for a way to describe modern collaboration. Collaboration is not new. As humans, we collaborate in trade, in living arrangements, in the arts to make music and images, and in many other areas. Now with improved technology and the tools to support synchronous and asynchronous teamwork, we might be in an age that future scholars will call the era of collaboration.

Crowdsourcing: The Story of WAZE

I want to talk for a few minutes about modern collaboration: Crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing is a portmanteau of crowd and outsourcing, meaning leveraging technology, specifically the internet, to outsource work from or to a crowd. The concept of gaining assistance from a large group of people is not new. In 1714 the British Government sourced a solution from anyone and everyone (a crowd) to help construct a device that could calculate longitudinal coordinates at sea. Applying technology to crowdsourcing, however, is new. Adding the internet to the mix allows us access to larger crowds and the ability to garner solutions through multiple channels.

A great example of today's crowdsourcing is one I use routinely while driving: Waze. Waze uses individual drivers to help improve the driving experience by collecting and analyzing data from the driving crowd using their app.

As an avid user of Waze, I have witnessed firsthand the amazing power of a crowd. When I first started using Waze, I did like many new Waze users. I poked at it a bit and took its advice to reroute or follow its routing with a large grain of salt. Until one day I was driving through Atlanta to a conference. During that trip, Waze directed left to move into the HOV lanes. It was a strange directive (back then it used to avoid E-ZPass lanes or express lanes, now there is a setting) so I looked at it skeptically, but complied. Now there were a few of us driving to the conference from Savannah, but I was in the lead; the other group left about 30min after I did. Shortly after moving into the HOV lanes I noticed the regular lanes on I75 were at a standstill. I scrutinized the Waze output more carefully. (It shows you red lines to indicate bad traffic.) When I looked, I saw red lines ranging almost all the way from Macon

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to Atlanta). There was a bad accident and only, only the HOV lanes (isolated behind a short wall) were clear and open. I made it to through to Atlanta and the conference in almost record time. My colleagues behind me suffered in 2hrs of bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Since then, I have let WAZE be my guide when I drive in unknown (and sometimes known) areas. As a modern collaboration tool, it is a stellar example of what collaboration supported by technology might look like in years to come.

I want to approach collaboration in two different ways today: first I will discuss collaboration in teaching and then about collaboration through digital tools. Along the way, I will talk quite a bit about myself as I explain my research and how and why I connect teachers, teams, and technology. After this talk, I hope you will understand more about collaboration, the ways digital tools can be helpful to us as educators, and what we might do to leverage digital resources now and into the future.

Background: A Tinkerer and a Talker

My background influences my work with collaboration and technology. When I was a kid, I was both a communicator and a tinkerer. I was the kid taking things apart and then explaining how I did it to everyone else. As you can imagine, both my hands and my mouth got me in quite a bit of trouble back then.

My tinkering led me to engineering; I went to school for biomedical engineering and then subsequently obtained a master's in metallurgical engineering. I worked at a couple of steel mills for about 6 years. My love of tinkering and talking served me well as an engineer. I performed experiments, wrote reports, performed more experiments, wrote more reports, gave oral presentations, etc. Soon I was called upon to write more reports, S.O.Ps (or procedures), guidelines, requirements, instructions, etc.

In 2000, I tinkered and talked myself into a job doing educational research for teachers. One thing led to another, and I became a technology specialist working for an administrative department at one of my alma maters—the Illinois Institute of Technology. At IIT, I was charged with developing a technology help desk that could build and service computer labs and provide technology solutions for the surrounding Bronzeville community. While I directed IIT's Digital Media Center the help desk put together technology training programs for high school students and community centers.

As center director, I saw how the Chicago public schools (one of the largest public school systems in the U.S.) deployed broadband across the southside, and I assisted their teachers in late evening classes on how to access the internet via modem before their schools were wired. I watched IIT build out its technology infrastructure, hire their first Chief Technology Officer (who was my boss), and deploy enterprise-wide software systems like Blackboard and an upgraded Banner. My help desk was responsible for building a dozen brand new computer labs in the community, in a few libraries and YMCAs, and in multiple elementary/middle schools. Additionally, we supported the hardware, software, and training programs for those labs and had some funding to help teachers procure technology, learn to use technology, and provide strategies to help them use technology in their teaching. It was these cumulative experiences as a young researcher, engineer, and digital media specialist that showed me how companies deploy technology and how people as users of that technology struggle: succeed and fail, with the tech tools.

History: Quickly Changing Technology

Just as I witnessed the last few Southside schools get wired for broadband connectivity, wireless internet was beginning to take hold. My department went from crimping and pulling wires to installing wireless Cisco routers. My video division moved from using hundreds of digital video tapes to just a few SD cards that could be reused almost immediately.

To illustrate how quickly technology was changing, let's take a quick look back in history. At the turn of the century, the term Web 2.0 was coined to explain the concept of improved software where software would be connected to the internet to permit user interconnectivity. This new architecture allowed users to start generating and sharing content such as pictures, blogs, videos, text, and most importantly ideas on the internet. Web 2.0 was a dramatic software innovation and ushered in new ways to improve content sharing and communication.

In the year 2007, the iPhone was announced to an amazing reception. People waited in long lines at Apple's then 164 stores on "iDay" for hours for the first iPhone. For me, the iPhone launch denoted a line in the sand where our most personal hardware devices (items we carry with us everywhere) finally met our expectations. And back then, most people were unaware of the kinds of technological, political, and ethical maneuvering happening in the background of our everyday lives. But iDay was a moment of hardware awareness for the public.

Figure 1 shows just a few of the innovations to influence teaching over the last 18 years, and I would like to call attention to two in particular.

First, one of the most significant influences for teaching is the learning management system (LMS) software which began with D2L in 1999. As of 2014, the LMS reached 99% saturation in the higher education markets with a vast majority of faculty members using it (Rhode et al., 2017).

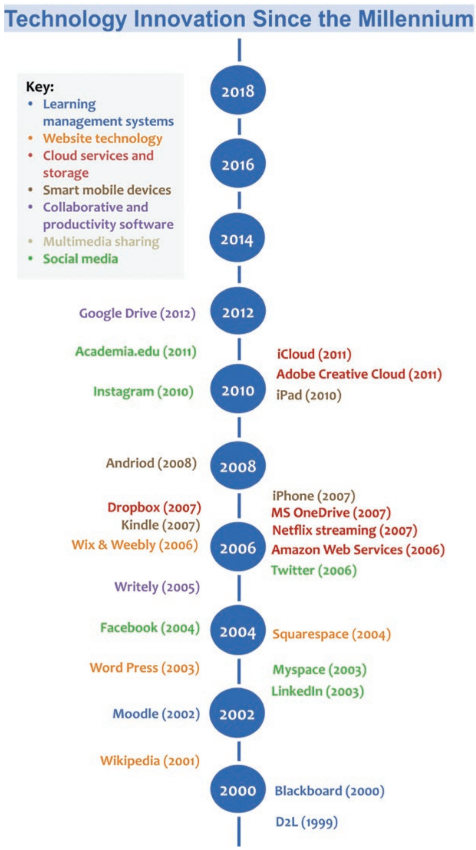

Figure 1. A timeline showing 20 years of technology tools that influence our teaching.These milestones help in some small way to illustrate just how far technology has progressed over the last 20 years. These events had a tremendous influence on teaching and our ability to connect, share, collaborate, and organize through technology.

Second, I would like to call attention to 2005, the year that spawned cloud documents and web sharing of those documents. These services like Writely which later became Google Docs, Dropbox, and Office 365, are now staples in today's workplace collaboration and communication.

So, let me bridge these ideas of collaboration and technology and apply them to our field: communication and writing. I want to add "learn" to this saying: to connect, share, collaborate, organize, and learn through technology.

Teachers: Understanding the State of the Field

My non-traditional entry to the field of writing and communication, as a center director and only part-time teacher/trainer meant I needed more experience in teaching at the college level. I applied for and was accepted to The Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellowship at GeorgiaTech. As a fellow, I was able to teach service classes and to participate in seminars on digital pedagogy and research methods.

Both courses were a really interesting glimpse into how a variety of scholars with different backgrounds taught writing and communication and managed the digital in their classrooms. The courses were designed to embolden these scholars to try more and do more digitally. Georgia Tech could support all manner of digital technology, and the fellowship encouraged our experiments and forays into these areas. I entered the required methods course with a number of questions.

Just how did writing and communication teachers who were not at Georgia Tech teach with digital technology?

- What did other scholars do and use in the classroom and how do they define digital pedagogy?
- What were the limitations of these digital ideas? How did teachers deal with these limitations?

For me, questions mean projects, and I decided to embark on a path to uncover answers to these questions. The research methods course even needed a final project. It was perfect! I convinced the rest of the class to jump in the deep end with me.

I wrote a grant and received support from the 4Cs to launch a study and collect teacher data. Three colleagues with the support of two mentors from the program helped me to create the survey and collect the data, perform interviews, and obtain teacher artifacts related to their digital teaching habits. We received responses from 328 teachers and conducted 65 remote interviews.

The first article from this research project came out in fall 2019 in *Computers and Composition*. We have titled the article: "State of the Field: Teaching with Digital Tools in Writing and Communication". It addresses a single research question: *How are digital resources used by teachers in the writing and communication classroom?* There was no room to address all of our other questions. So, look for more articles in the "State of the Field" series. I anticipate at least one more will be published next year.

In developing and conducting this research, we uncovered a number of really interesting conceptual issues. The first set of issues was centered around the actual questions we needed to ask. It was difficult to construct a survey that would provide us the answers we needed. It was easy to see why prior scholarship about pedagogy consisted of classroom anecdotes rather than data-driven studies (Lam and Boettger, 2017). Let me describe the issues first before I get to the survey results.

1. Teaching is a mystery

One, teaching is in some ways still a mystery. Especially in light of the digital tools and resources afforded to us as teachers and to students as learners. Sure, we make syllabi; we have a schedule; we have learning objectives, we give lectures, we might even have rubrics. But even more granular than that,

- What tasks do we perform in the classroom?
- How do those tasks relate to learning in the classroom?

So, the first part of this study focused on figuring out what our tasks were in the classroom. Previous researchers had written out some of these tasks. However, most of these researchers had done so more than 30 years ago. When my five colleagues and I deliberated, we could identify 14 different tasks conducted in our classrooms. The 14 teacher tasks are shown in Figure 2. They include all the tasks most of us do regularly in our classes. For example, we all plan our lectures and activities and track our student progress.

14 teacher tasks

1. Planning class lectures
2. Giving class lectures
3. Planning in-class activities
4. Facilitating in-class activities
5. Planning course assignments
6. Distributing course assignments
7. Collecting completed assignments
8. Tracking student progress
9. Distributing course materials
10. Distributing assignment grades
11. Giving your feedback on student work
12. Distributing your feedback on student work
13. Facilitating peer review
14. Facilitating in-class discussion

Figure 2. A list of the 14 teaching tasks present in the typical writing classroom.

2. How do we describe extent?

Two, we needed a way to describe the extent to which we use digital resources in the classroom. For example, if I asked for a raise of hands for how many of you use email in service to a teacher task, you might all raise your hand. Many of us use email to contact students about various topics, to receive late assignments, or to distribute class information. But, let's say you have an email assignment in class. If you teach professional communication, you just might. But with this question, how many use email in your teaching? I would not be able to tell the difference between you emailing a student about an assignment and you asking students to create an email in an assignment.

In reality, what we wanted to know is how you are deploying digital tools in your classroom. So, we developed a scale to help with this issue. As you can see by this figure, we took what is essentially a familiar ranking and co-opted its meaning. We replaced the responses with our own six-points scale:

1. plan with before class,
2. talk about in class, and
3. demo it during class, then
4. view (students see it in class), and
5. use (students use it as part of an activity), and
6. make (students produce it as an assignment).

We named the first three options on our scale: Teacher actions, and the latter three: Learner actions.

3. Tools - Today's Ephemera

Three, digital tools come and go. Tools, whether digital or not, are just tools. As such, as soon as their usefulness ends, they are removed from use. We, as a society, look for tools that perform required functions better, have improved software affordances, have more desirable features, or barring all that, are just cheaper than other tools.

And now to a short quiz. Don't worry it's really easy and I won't ask for answers out loud. If you miss one, just have someone near you explain it.

Some of us (perhaps most of us) remember the Blackberry. It was replaced (for the most part) by smartphones like the iPhone or phones like it.

- What about the slide projector? For those of you who remember the slide projector, it was replaced with PowerPoint software.
- What about the transparency projector? Well, we use a document camera now, sometimes called an Elmo.
- And the hardest of all. Who remembers the mimeograph? We used it to make copies and thus, it was eventually replaced by a copy machine or a printer.

In each of these examples, we can think of the replacement that is used today.

Digital tools are ephemera, here until something else better, easier to use, or cheaper comes along. A recent example of technology ephemera was evident in an article that evaluated teacher tool use in 2006 by Daniel Anderson, Anthony Atkins, Cheryl Ball, Krista Millar, Cynthia Selfe, and Richard Selfe. To put this article in perspective, 2006 was one year before the iPhone launch and four years before Google docs. At that time, Microsoft Word was our go-to writing tool. In 2006, researchers asked whether or not teachers were using Word or PowerPoint as tools in the classroom.

But what we really want to know (and what these scholars also wanted to know) was whether teachers were using composing software in their classes. We don't necessarily care about Word per se; currently, we can swap that out with a huge list of items that includes Word, Google Docs, Iworks, LibreOffice, AbiWord, and so on.

So, one last way to fix issues with our data collection was to find a way to talk about digital tools in broad categories, which we called resources. That allowed us to collapse the unending list of digital tools to 20 different digital resource categories (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Some resource and tool categories.

As you can see, we have collapsed apps like MS Word into a category called "Productivity software," PowerPoint and Prezi into a category called "Presentation software," and so forth. So, what did these three new ways to conceptualize questions get us? These ideas gave us a reasonably systematic way to describe the **tasks** we perform, the **extent** of these actions, against the digital **resources** we use in our teaching. So, what did we find?

4. Study Findings

We found a number of interesting things in answer to the RQ: *How are digital resources used by teachers in the writing and communication classroom?* Let me cover just a few points.

Important point 1: familiarity plays an important part in resource choice

Our data allowed us to speculate on how familiarity plays a part in our choices of resources. Teachers and students may be more comfortable with familiar resources that have broad availability on institutional and personal computers. These resources become the go-to choices for teachers faced with decisions about allocating limited time in their busy classrooms.

Important point 2: Familiarity constrains innovation

Teachers' return to and reliance on familiar resources can constrain our field's ability to innovate and leverage new technologies. By pushing beyond the familiar, we can begin to fulfill various disciplinary challenges to value and embrace technology as central to what we do.

Important point 3: Teachers sometimes teach themselves

Our study found that over one-third of teachers either teach themselves or use their own knowledge to support their digital pedagogy. Teachers do tend to collaborate to teach themselves tools.

However, in our field, we collaborate infrequently in research.

Little Collaboration: Our Teachers Don't Collaboration (Much) In Research

We are at unparalleled time in history where collaboration has created an unprecedented level of research cooperation "whereby human beings pool their experience, knowledge and social skills with the objective of producing new knowledge" (Bozeman and Boardman, 2014, p. 217).

Publication Collaboration

We can see this in our publication record. Researchers are collaborating more effectively:

If we look at the sciences,

- Among the Web of Science—over 75% of indexed articles are co-authored. This trend is not specific to certain disciplines.
- Among JSTOR articles (JSTOR stores 12 million academic publications across 75 disciplines) co-authored articles rose to over 60% in 2011;

And what about computers and writing fields?

- For technical communication, those of us in English departments publish collaboratively only 39.3% of the time (Lam, 2014).

- But when our departments are co-located in the sciences or engineering, we publish collaboratively over 85% of the time (Lam, 2014).
- A relatively casual review of articles published over the last 9 years (2010-2019) in Computers & Composition shows that 39% were co-authored in keeping with English affiliated Tech Comm authors.

As practitioners of communication and writing, we know collaboration is important. We know the world is comprised of teams operating in various contexts. Teaming is a demanded industry skill (Scott, 2014) and a long-standing goal for us as educators to include in our classes (Burnett, Cooper, & Welhausen, 2013). Skills to manage teams are essential competencies, now more important than ever since trends indicate a surge in collaborative activities due to newer workplace configurations such as Agile, Scrum, virtual teams, and others (McCulloch, 2016). But we as mentors, as sages, as facilitators, we as teachers often don't model collaboration in our scholarship or teaching.

Is it because many of us have horror stories surrounding collaboration including issues of social loafing, people taking credit when credit was not due, people stealing ideas or work, or systems that don't value collaborative work? Maybe this is why we don't include collaboration in our school programs in any frequency. Few of our programs have courses that center around collaboration. As of 2011, only 9% of Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) programs had a required course devoted to collaboration and only 15% included such a course as an elective (Melonçon and Henschel, 2013). Some of us might include collaboration in our courses, but we don't yet track that information.

When we do have collaboration in our classes, we don't often teach collaboration. Instead, we as instructors, assign a team project and just expect students to extrapolate what teams need to function well. We assume that collaboration methods are already known or emergent from practice rather than teaching students both to manage the team and manage the project. So, what do we need to do to teach and/or learn to collaborate?

A Google study

A recent Google study emphasized the importance of fostering productive team climates. The study code-named Aristotle—a tribute to Aristotle's quote, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" began in 2016. The goal of the study was to answer the question: "What makes a team effective at Google?" Google examined 51,000 employees in 180 teams over three years. They found that psychologically-safe environments were critical to establishing norms that allowed teams to be successful (Duhigg, 2016). So, as Google notes, in a team with high psychological safety, teammates feel safe to take risks around their team members. Noted scholar Amy Edmondson, insists that to collaborate effectively members need to feel protected from the inherent interpersonal risks associated with collaborative work (Edmondson, Higgins, Singer, & Weiner, 2016).

Data from Our Psychological Safety Study

My colleagues and I took a good look at this a few years back. We asked some of the same questions, but we wanted to know if education around these topics could help improve PS? We examined teams from three universities giving them training and collecting surveys on their progress. We found that training might help to make teams feel somewhat more psychologically safe, but that training likely needs to be more targeted and related to the collaborative activity they are undertaking. We also found that the duration of the team might have an impact on the PS level of the team. So perhaps with targeted training and an effort to keep members in a team for defined amounts of time, collaboration in teams, in general, can be improved.

Appeal: More Collaboration Needed

So, part of this talk is to call not just for more studies about collaboration, but to ask us to actually collaborate more regularly and update our tenure and promotion policies so that we obtain credit for those collaborations. There is a precedence for credit for collaboration in engineering, the sciences, and the social sciences. For us, collaboration allows us to make connections across disciplines and can add value to both our own and our students' experience. It allows those of us in the humanities disciplines to build bridges across the university and among universities and to further enhance the value we provide. And, we already know how to collaborate to learn things. We just need to use that same ingenuity to write and do research.

Learn to Leverage Tools: State of the Field

Let me return to digital tools to bring these ideas together. Recall that our data in the *State of the Field* study revealed a few things about how teachers leverage tools: teachers mostly relied on familiar leaving the newer tools and, thus, innovations with these tools unexplored. Of course, there are numerous good reasons for these decisions. But, instead of returning to the familiar in our teaching even in light of the numerous pressures to do so, why don't we let our goals and objectives guide us?

Research: Goal Setting Ideals

We can take our cues from empirical research. Typically, when we perform research, we do so to answer questions that we form. Using research questions is common regardless of the discipline, although how formally we address or consider our research questions is discipline specific. For example, in the sciences, they not only use overarching research questions but also hypotheses. In both instances, formulating an overarching question guides and shapes the research and helps to narrow and focus our efforts by pointing to a methodology, and providing a systematic way to proceed through the various stages. I suggest we do something similar in our teaching. That not only do we strive to bring our students the best, most appropriate learning experiences, but we do so with a digitally-focused pedagogical plan in mind.

Teaching: Goal Setting Via the Digitally-Focused Pedagogical Plan (DPP)

In our prior study, when asked the question, *"What is digital pedagogy?"* The answers we got back were myriad. Most of us pointed to assignments and what we do with them. For example, we might ask students to create a podcast based on their primary research, or produce a video demo about a particular piece of software.

When asked, *"What role does digital play in our pedagogical approach?"*, our responses focused on describing what digital tools do for us as teachers. Some said that digital tools were:

- Facilitation mechanisms: allowing us to produce share and show work.
- Highly adaptable resources: facilitating our teaching and helping students to adapt their work across modes.
- Content shapers: creating more diverse and interesting assignments, allowing classes to be much less one-dimensional.

While we do talk about the digital in terms of content and usage both in the classroom and by our students, our study revealed that we don't talk about digital as an overarching thread in our work. Let's reflect on that for just a moment: at this Computers and Writing conference, most teachers did not have a plan for how to systematically address computers/technology in their teaching.

How many of you have a digitally-focused pedagogical plan (DPP) that you could articulate? I know I didn't before this research. Our splintered approach to technology likely has to do with how we each were introduced to the digital realm, and the fact that innovative digital learning products were born barely 10 years ago.

1. Few of Us have a Digitally-Focused Pedagogical Plan (DPP)

Not having a DPP is an easily rectifiable problem. The simple act of articulating a plan (our DPP) will help us all to ensure we make more clearly related strides toward accomplishing our goals. Just like in our writing, whether we write in free form or from an outline, we will have in our head a direction we want to go. We need that same process operating with the digital in our classrooms.

2. Getting your plan in place: UX-ING THE PROBLEM

To help think through this issue, I suggest we apply a classic UX (or user experience approach) to this particular issue. User experience is one way to ensure that the user (in our case the student) is considered early and foremost in the process. UX helps to create something useful and usable and perhaps delightful for the user. Broadly a UX approach or process covers four areas in sequence.

1. You want to discover the issue and better understand the problem and the stakeholders.
2. You need to decide on an approach or approaches that will address the problem you have articulated.
3. You want to create a solution (it could be one of many solutions) that answers the first and second and is specific enough to be evaluated.
4. You want to employ a technique to evaluate your solution, so that if that solution is not working well, you can go back to step 2 and rinse repeat. Ultimately, if the solution proves effective, you want to continue to improve it.

Since we already have "discovered" the issue—we need a DPP, and it will help to guide us in the classroom, we can begin at step 2: Decide. We need to leverage our existing knowledge, and perhaps an existing framework to help us with this issue. Then once we have the framework, we can put our plan in place for a specific timeframe—let's say a semester, and then evaluate and make changes as necessary.

3. Habits of the Mind (HoM) as a Framework

One convenient framework to consider for this issue is the NCTE's Habits of the Mind (Council of Writing Program Administrators, National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project, 2011). NCTE's eight Habits of the Mind (or HoM) are habits that we might like to instill in our students through the writing, reading, and critical analysis experiences that we create in the classroom. The HoM framework gives us an overarching question to evaluate our actions against. While it is not a perfect framework (as it wasn't developed to specifically address technology), the HoM can help give us some guidance until we find a framework that better meets our needs.

Our teacher research did ask about the priority for the HoM values. The results are shown in Figure 4; the top three areas were engagement, flexibility, and creativity.

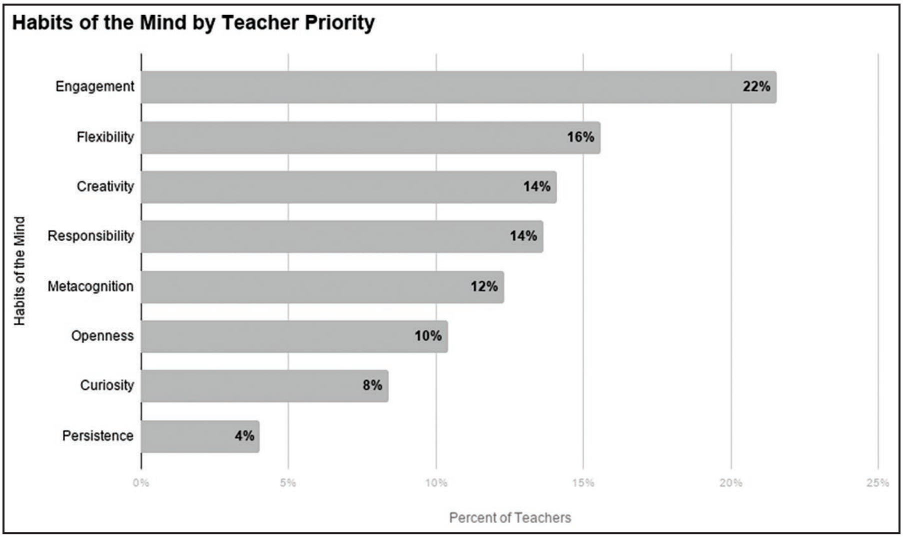

Figure 4. Priority for the Habits of the Mind areas in the Writing and Communication classrooms

4. Make A Digitally-Focused Pedagogical Plan

Now just because the majority of participants from my study valued engagement, doesn't mean that you do. Since your DPP needs to be personal, you would choose one of the habits that you want to inspire in your students. The more personal the choice, the more likely you are to stick to it. So, using the HoM helps to identify our approach. Next, we can wed that choice to one of the 14 tasks we perform in the classroom for your Decide step.

Here is an example of my DPP. For me, I value flexibility the most, and I want my students to have the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands. So, my question (somewhat like a research question) is "How do I instill flexibility in my students? Taking a look at one of the 14 tasks, I chose: Collecting completed assignments. And, the question now becomes, "How do I instill flexibility in my students through how I collect completed assignments?"

5. Create a solution - Step 3

Moving to step 3, I need to develop a solution that will address this question.

Well, I feel like there are numerous ways to introduce flexibility in this task. I might attempt to instill flexibility in these ways:

- Talk about how important it is for students to be adaptable and let students know this is an overarching goal of the class or a crucial takeaway in the class.
- Require that students have different types of tasks to perform to complete their assignments: I might ask my students to write a memo that accompanies a final report and includes a client video.
- Require that assignments are turned in using an appropriate digital format: I might ask that all drafts are completed in google docs while all finished deliverables are completed in PDF. I might also have students use Word to send in any memos related to the project.

6. Evaluate - Step 4

Moving to step 4, I would want to employ a technique to evaluate my solution. That way, if that solution is not working well, I will know and can fix it. In this case, I might have a simple two or three question survey at the end of the course that asks about whether or not they felt my solutions (from step 3) helped them be more flexible, why or why not, and how likely they would recommend my class to another student. Then each semester, I might (using the same questions) evaluate your progress and make changes if my users (students) are not responding well to efforts. In one of the subsequent semesters, I could pursue another teacher task toward the overarching HoM goal. For example, I might look at another task from our 14 tasks like, “Facilitating in-class activities”.

Also, with that goal in mind of instilling flexibility, I can concentrate on how I assess and introduce tools. As an example, if I want to ensure students are flexible, perhaps instead of concentrating on students being able to work in Photoshop, I would consider moving between a slate of photo editing tools. I might also think about how to help students do more in their use of photoshop, instead of just using Photoshop as a photo editor to do touch-ups. There are a number of ways to pursue this goal, once you have decided on your DPP, and of course a number of ways you can address it in the classroom.

7. DPP in Tenure

Let me also emphasize that having a DPP also gives you a clear narrative for your tenure file. Not only can you provide these experiences to improve your student’s expertise in class, but you can articulate this process and way of thinking about it in your annual review.

To Recap

Let me recap. Your DPP (digitally-focused pedagogical plan) need not be complex. Selecting one of the habits of mind would help to provide you with an overarching framework or plan that would help to focus your efforts. Your DPP can be very targeted initially, perhaps focused on one of the tasks you do in a complex teaching environment, and you can grow the tasks over time. Your DPP need not be long term; tackle it from semester to semester (or quarter to quarter) and one class at a time. Evaluate your progress using a short survey. Begin the evaluation at the start so you can watch students improve over time. Finally, having a UX process in place for how you manage your digital pedagogy will help to provide you with talking points about your class to your students, potentially improved student outcomes, provide you with data to support your annual review.

Collaboration: How Does the DPP Fit In?

How does all this impact how we collaborate? Well, remember when I talked about how teachers collaborate around tools and serve as resources for each other supporting our use and deployment of tools? I hope that we continue in this vein to share our DPPs: What's working? What's not working? and perhaps Why?

1. Unpacking our Progress as a Field

I envision us (all of us) looking field-wide at these issues. Digging deeper to understand better why some processes work well and some don't. We could begin with a simple collection of results from our DPP efforts. For example, as teachers using the DPP we might answer a three-question evaluation survey each semester/quarter. We would do the survey through openly available software and share the results widely with each other so that anyone who wants to tackle writing about it could.

The questions we might answer could be something as simple as:

1. What HoM was your focus?
2. What teaching task was your focus?
3. How did your students rate your effort? (using the NPS)

I suggest to answer the last question, we use something like the net promoter score aggregated from our students' survey. The NPS (cite) system is a 10-point standardized measure for customer satisfaction and gauges whether users (in this case your students) like your approach so much that they would tell their friends about it. The NPS allows you to rate your progress in the DPP and interpret the results at a glance.

2. Technology Agency

Second. Setting DPPs will eventually provide us more agency over the technology that proliferates in our lives. Instead of choosing technology for technology's sake or because we are pushed to a decision, we should choose our technology deliberately. We need to exercise our own agency in dealing with, using, and selecting technology. We need to make decisions about software that not only fit our goals but that reflects careful consideration of the software company's stated ethics statement.

We often don't think about this, but our tools are just as political as our news. As we choose tools, we buy-in to a particular type of ethics and politics associated with those tools. Ethics, in particular, is a thin line (crossed often) when it comes to apps and software. Developers, through some of the protocols issued in with Web2.0, can now watch our every website visit and click, collect our locations and observe what we read and download. This raw data is then translated into accurate predictions about our preferences and habits AND used, through machine-learning assumptions, to suss out our political leanings, sexuality, and race. Developers can then sell this information not just to the highest bidders but to every bidder. Therefore, we should investigate the End User License Agreement (EULAs) and visit the websites of those developers to see what they say they are doing with our data.

And tell our students to do the same. So yes, we need to make wise choices.

A Refrigerator Story

I began this talk with a story about Waze. Waze is a success story for its users and stakeholders. It is a great example of a tool that seems to fit the needs of users it supports. Waze provides their users agency to accomplish their goals of getting to and from work without the stress of waiting in a lot of traffic.

Let me end this talk by discussing a smart fridge. The story came from a recent clip showed by a student in one of my classrooms. I won't play it for you here as it has coarse language, but I will describe the scenario. For those of you who watched "Silicon Valley" the TV show on HBO the example comes from there.

Essentially, a few programmers live in a household together. One comes into some additional funding and purchases a smart refrigerator that has a programmable user interface and talking assistant. Another roommate complains that it is stupid to have a refrigerator tell you essentially what you already know: you just finished all the milk or whatever. On top of that, to make the fridge work, you had to scan everything you want to put into the fridge one by one. If you didn't, the fridge would complain that you put something into the fridge incorrectly.

This is an example of technology modifying the user's behavior to fit its affordances. However, if this technology fit one of your overarching goals (for example, to manage your food purchases and consumption), then the fridge is probably a reasonably good fit for you. If instead, you try this fridge and it does not bring value to you because of the way you eat or manage food, then it should be returned to sender.

This example is not designed to shy you away from exploration. We do need to explore. We need to try and test various apps, ideas, or ways to use technology. "Experimental moments" is a phase my colleague Lisa Dusenberry coined to refer to our various trysts with technology - trying to see what fits our needs and leaving behind those that don't. Some of our trysts can be small like trying out a different news app, a new website for citations, or exploring different ways to save your files on your computer. Regardless of what we decide to try, we should approach technology methodically, especially anything we use in our classrooms. We, as educators, must keep in mind that the technology we bring to the classroom should be answering a need or solving a problem. It should be helping our learners learn. Whether it is a smart map app or talking refrigerator, technology must provide us value.

Conclusions

Let me end by saying that we are in a technology evolution, we are being bombarded daily by messages, spammed by opportunities to purchase resources, while entities are tracking our data and making decisions about our lived experiences. All the while technology improves at an increasingly rapid rate.

However, we need to be willing to seek the tools that will advance our goals. We shouldn't just choose technology and stick with it because it's familiar. Rather, we should be willing to look. Remember too much familiarity constrains innovation and stifles creativity.

With limited time and opportunity and expanding student enrollment, we don't have the bandwidth to explore every tech app or digital resource, instead we should invest our efforts into strategically selecting and using tools that reflect modern workplace practice whether the tools help us with our writing, help us navigate effectively, lets us send emojis, or track the food in our fridge.

Most importantly, as teachers, we must deploy digital technology strategically in service to the practices that help our learners learn. As educators, whether we are in English departments or engineering departments, affiliated with libraries, or working in design studios, we must make strategic choices about what is important to both our students and our programs.

Finally, we must leverage our agency and not be subject to the political and ethical whimsy of developers: Their tools need not dictate our behavior.

Rather, we should choose tools that fit our expanding needs. AND regardless of how we use or interact with technology, we must remember that technology is not a substitute for nor should it supplant our interaction with other humans. Instead, our human interactions—our collaborations—should be enhanced by our improved ability to connect, to share, to organize, and to learn through technology.

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Ethical Dimensions of Virtual Collaboration: Peer Networks, Digital Technologies, and Multimodal Composing in an Online Writing Course

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Bill Hart-Davidson (2014) argued that peer networks can boost the learning potential of individuals, and he advocated "the use of peer networks, digital technologies, and multimodal composing as interventions in learning" (p. 218). Similarly, in their study about virtual collaboration in professional contexts, Linda M. Peters and Charles C. Manz (2007) noted that a virtual team's collaborative ability is only as strong as the relationships, trust, and shared understanding of the individuals who make up the team. This essay examines how the intersections and ethical dimensions of peer-to-peer learning and collaborative relationship building play out in the four-week online version of a business communication course. A major project for this course is a collaborative report and presentation based on a business-related intercultural communication scenario. Not only is the project timeframe shorter, but also the oral presentation shifts from a face-to-face classroom event to an online video presentation. Pragmatic and ethical issues become apparent in this fast-paced virtual collaboration, including accessibility, intercultural communication, time zones, trust, and workflow management. Scaffolding strategies that promote peer-to-peer networking and learning, while incorporating multiple checkpoints, can help ensure team success.

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This essay examines how the intersections and ethical dimensions of peer-to-peer learning and collaborative relationship building play out in the online version of a business communication course. A major project for this course

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is a collaborative report and presentation based on a business-related intercultural communication scenario.

I begin with a literature review that provides a rationale for teaching virtual collaboration. Next I briefly describe the challenges of the online course and major collaborative project. Following that, I discuss the pragmatic and ethical issues that became apparent in this fast-paced virtual collaboration, including accessibility, intercultural communication, time zones, trust, and workflow management. I then describe scaffolding strategies that promote peer-to-peer networking and learning, while incorporating multiple checkpoints, to help ensure team success. Finally, I offer some insights about teaching virtual collaboration based on student feedback and my own observations.

Preparing Students for a Distributed Workplace

Students already know that teams work best when team members trust each other and have a shared understanding. They may expect that, in the workplace, trusting relationships will develop naturally and be ongoing; however, Marie C. Paretti, Lisa D. McNair, and Lissa Holloway-Attaway (2007) argued that the rise of distributed work means that teams are not usually stable or long-term, but rather "flexible communities of practice, formed in response to specific needs and dissolved once the goals have been achieved" (p. 328). For short-term class projects, intentional social interactions are critical to cultivating good working relationships. Even if an ongoing friendship is not the goal, students must learn how to adapt to short-term collaborations by getting to know their teammates.

Students often have naïve beliefs about the workplace that need to be challenged. Paretti et al. (2007) observed that students assume the roles and purposes of a workplace team will always be clear, which they suggested presents a learning opportunity for developing "the communication skills needed to identify or establish such roles in the absence of structure" (p. 347). Yet the opportunity to work on a less-structured project is often met with resistance from students who want a clear, linear path to success. In a study of two online courses using Google Docs, Brad Mehlenbacher, Ashley Rose Kelly, Christopher Kampe, and Meagan Kittle Autrey (2018) found that students tended to defer to instructor authority; for example, rather than carefully consider a suggestion for revision they would "merely accept the suggestion because the instructor had made it" (p. 209). In addition, Mehlenbacher et al. (2018) noted that too much instructor presence in the team's document, however well intentioned, was a constraining presence: "If instructors are to work strategically with students in collaborative environments, and if their aim is to teach students how to work in these spaces, they must paradoxically resist the temptation to tell them what to do" (p. 214). Of course, this requires a willingness to allow students to become frustrated and to work through those frustrations, even as they cling to the notion that instructor feedback on drafts should be algorithms for an A.

Students learn by doing together. Hart-Davidson (2014) noted, "Within peer networks, there is a dynamic that arises from the rich set of resources each individual learner has to draw upon that boosts the learning potential—and the performance level—of each individual" (p. 213). Part of that doing together involves choosing and using technology effectively, which means evaluating technology based on the needs of the project, rather than a desire to try out a fancy new application. Sajda Qureshi and Ilze Zigurs (2001) noted case studies of corporate environments that suggest successful virtual collaboration is not so much about the sophistication of the technologies used, but rather on how those tools are used.

Finally, students become aware of cultural values and habits when they work with students from other cultures. Even student groups that appear homogenous on the surface may not be, which can become a source of conflict and a learning opportunity. Xusen Cheng, Shixuan Fu, Jianshan Sun, Yajing Han, Jia Shen, and Alex Zarifis (2016) found that, during virtual collaboration, "language, values (e.g. attitude, perception) and habitual behaviors" (p. 274) affected trust between multicultural groups and homogeneous groups. Students need to become aware of these potential differences, so that they are consciously thinking about what may be driving behaviors—including their own—rather than simply reacting.

Managing Challenges of the Short-Term Online Writing Course

Whether delivered face-to-face or online, Professional Communication for Business fulfills the advanced writing requirement for business majors. Four modules make up the course: Creating Digital Presence, Delivering Bad News, Facilitating Intercultural Communication, and Collaborating Virtually. All modules require digital and multimodal composition, and, except for the first module, all modules include a collaborative component: The Delivering Bad News and Collaborating Virtually modules require teams of two to three, and the Intercultural Communication module requires teams of three to five.

Like the face-to-face sections, the online section is hosted on Canvas, although with a different master course template to align the activities with the fully online format and the schedule with the university's four-week winter intersession, which runs immediately prior to the spring semester. The course also runs in four-week sections during the two summer sessions. Since fall semester 2017, I have taught 12 face-to-face sections of the course, and I taught the online version for the first time during the 2018-19 winter intersession and first summer session.

The focus of this article is the summer session and my strategies for managing the challenges of a short-term online writing course. The business students typically range from sophomore to senior and include domestic and international students. All are full-time students of traditional college age. Students taking the four-week online course are usually trying to graduate early or catch up to graduate on time. All are capable students and most are highly motivated. In this particular session, two students were taking the course from China; four were taking the course from states other than Ohio; and 11 were taking the course from either the Cincinnati or Cleveland metropolitan area. Some of the students were acquainted with other students in the class.

Weekly synchronous meetings through WebEx were required for the first three weeks of class. The operating assumption was that students would be available for a wide range of hours; however, scheduling meetings proved to be a time-consuming, frustrating task—and not just because of the multiple time zones. Although students were advised to do nothing else but focus on the class, some were working at jobs or internships, trying to complete coursework while traveling, or taking more than one course. With only 17 students, I still had to schedule three meetings per week, two of those in the evening, and I was unable to get a consistent commitment to establish regular meeting times each week.

The Intercultural Communication module for the online format was compressed from six weeks to 11 days (weekends included) to accommodate the four-week schedule. Teams and topics were assigned before the first day of the project, and the deliverables were a written report and a video presentation. Although the format of the written report did not change for the online course, the oral presentation shifted from a face-to-face classroom event to an online video presentation. Each student created a video of themselves presenting their section, and all video files were edited into one presentation by a member of the team.

The project required that teams research a topic on cultural identity, with the understanding that identities can intersect. Topics included age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, region, and nation. Students also looked at corporate culture; for example, companies with very different corporate cultures may be considering a merger; departments within an institution may have conflicting cultures; or a company may find itself at odds with local community stakeholders. The next step was to create a scenario, i.e., a business context in which conflicting cultural identities and values are creating misunderstandings. Once the scenario was approved, the team further focused its research on addressing that scenario. Working as either internal or external consultants, their task was to make a recommendation to present to executives.

All students in the online format had some experience with virtual collaboration by the time the Intercultural Communication module was launched. They were already familiar with digital platforms, such as Google Docs, and the preceding project also required partner teams to collaborate virtually.

Forming and Facilitating Virtual Peer Networks

What became immediately apparent to me was the need to be sensitive to how virtual teams were formed, and the brevity of the course heightened that concern. When teaching online technical writing courses during the regular semester (the business communication course is not offered online during the regular semester), I have found it helpful to organize teams based on current grades and engagement in the course. That strategy allows me to give some teams more autonomy and others more attention; however, during the regular semester, all or most online students are on campus, providing opportunities to hybridize the virtual collaboration with some face-to-face team meetings and face-to-face team conferences with me. For four-week and six-week online courses, I have had to consider the challenges of geographic distance, multiple time zones, and issues of technology access (especially for students taking the course from China). In addition, I have had to consider that, no matter how much "presence" I maintain in the course, my ability to observe and supervise team dynamics is constrained. I have to be ready for the possible and the unpredictable. For example, I try to balance teams by gender, race, and nationality as much as possible, but "balance" is not always possible, and also some student identities may not be obvious or disclosed. Sometimes personalities mesh better or worse than expected. Sometimes students experience events outside of the course that interfere with their ability to engage with the project and their team. Forming teams is already difficult in face-to-face courses that offer time for the instructor to get to know students better and for students to get to know each other better; forming virtual teams in short-term online courses requires faster decision-making with less information.

Before assigning teams, I asked students to email me with teammate requests, requiring them to work out agreements with potential teammates before doing so. Likewise, I considered requests from students who did not want to work with particular peers, which were usually due to interpersonal issues from the previous collaborative project. Some students requested to continue working with peers with whom they had already established good working relationships. I did not make any announcements to the class about specific requests; I simply assigned students to four teams once the due dates for requests had passed. As much as possible, I assigned teams based on geography and time zones, to avoid adding another layer of difficulty to an already difficult task. Although two international students taking the course from the U.S. did work with domestic students, three international students worked on a team together, which allowed them to share language and familiar social media applications, even though they were not all located in the same region or time zone. Some students located in the same metropolitan areas took advantage of the opportunity to meet in person, allowing them to hybridize their virtual collaboration. I tried to make the teams as balanced as possible, but my primary goal was to alleviate as many complications as possible, given the context of the compressed assignment.

The teams requested their top two picks for a topic, based on a provided list. Once topics were assigned they were on their own, but with support and timeframes for checking in with me. I encouraged teams to delegate tasks based on expertise and interests. With such a short time frame for completion, I allowed for prior knowledge, comfort level, and risk tolerance to dictate their decisions. I did provide opportunities to test new platforms and encouraged them to find work-arounds when they encountered challenges. At the same time, I was transparent about the benefits and drawbacks of technologies, allowing them to make some decisions about how they used those technologies, especially in their interactions with me. For example, I avoided surveillance mode by allowing students to decide when and whether I would get editing access to their Google Docs. They could wait until drafts were due to allow me access and then remove access after I provided feedback. Another option was to use Google Docs for drafting and to turn in PDFs or Word documents of their drafts.

Scaffolding a Short-Term Virtual Collaboration

Some of the scaffolding for the assignment happened in the course leading up to the intercultural communication project. For example, written and video introductions at the beginning of the semester helped students get to know each other, and allowed me to see whether they could successfully create and post videos. Full-class peer response to digital professional branding materials gave students more opportunities to get to know one another.

At the start of the assignment, students read about intercultural communication and contributed to a discussion about aspects of their own identities they were willing to share. This activity provided insights to me as well as to their classmates: For example, international students were keenly conscious of their identity as "international" in the U.S., but also noted how that identity disappeared once they were back in their home country. Just as noteworthy were revelations of some domestic students whose immigrant, first-generation, or lower socio-economic identities complicated stereotypes of our students as the privileged white middle- and upper-class. Many students found the university itself as a site that influenced their developing identities, as they were being exposed to people and ideas very different from those back home.

Another reading about collaboration was followed by a discussion prompt asking students to describe their best and worst team experiences in college—and why they believe those experiences played out the way they did. These discussions helped students to reflect on past experiences as preparation for their next team project, and they were also another resource for students to get to know each other as potential or assigned teammates.

Each team was assigned a different intercultural communication topic. Requiring substantial peer response and discussion was a strategy to ensure all students were exposed to a wider view of intercultural communication. Once teams were assigned, I encouraged social interaction prior to starting the project (in person or through video conference). I emphasized the need for empathy and etiquette, for example, not directly editing the work of teammates, but adding a comment to suggest, ask questions, or signal need for discussion in real time. At the same time, I encouraged them to look at the project as a joint effort that everyone should have a voice in, rather than individual parts to sew together at the end. I also emphasized the importance of being willing to give and accept feedback, preferably by talking through and negotiating changes, in real time, if possible. Students were required to create a team agreement and plan of action (formal or informal), which included choices of technology for communicating and composing, in addition to schedules for maintaining regular contact and writing together. These were exactly the kinds of agreements and plans an instructor cannot monitor, so the project included multiple checkpoints for peer and instructor feedback. The schedule ran as follows:

> Day 1: Reading and discussion on intercultural communication and personal identity
>
> Day 2: Team project work
>
> Day 3: Reading and discussion on collaboration; team scenario proposal; annotated bibliography
>
> Day 4: Small rough drafts incorporating sources (sections written by individual students)

Day 5: Written report outline

Day 6: Rough draft of full report

Day 7: Rough draft of slides for video presentation

Day 8: Final video presentation

Day 9: Team project work

Day 10: Team project work

Day 11: Final written report; reflective memo; self and peer evaluation

My feedback on drafts had to be explicit with fast turnaround, so that students could keep the project moving. A team member would contact me by email to clarify feedback or to ask for additional feedback; these interactions also had to proceed quickly.

Following the assignment, students evaluated themselves and their peers using the "Peer Evaluation Form for Group Work" (See Appendix). One anecdotal observation I have about using this form multiple times, in both face-to-face and online courses, is that the least-engaged team member tends to give all members high scores; however, they are usually contradicted by more consistent scores provided by their peers. The most unified teams also tend to rate members highly; teams with divisions tend to rate members based on those divisions; and some students provide scores that indicate they are oblivious to their own reputation on the team or to the work that particular peers have contributed. In other words, the numerical evaluations are generally more helpful as an indication of team dynamics, rather than as a grading suggestion.

More interesting, in terms of what students may have learned, are the responses to three questions below the rating scale, especially "What did you learn about working in a group from this project that you will carry into your next group experience?" The following is a summary of how students responded to that question:

- A clear understanding of tasks and division of labor prevents confusion and misunderstanding.
- Human interaction creates connection: A mix of in-person and virtual communication is ideal.
- Communication is everything: Stay in touch, stay on schedule, be willing to discuss, share ideas, and accept feedback.
- Attitude is key: Get everyone on the same page and cooperate with each other.

- Be comfortable with communication technologies.

Most team conflicts tended to be about misunderstandings over who was doing what and differing definitions of what constituted a timely response to group chat messages. One team had conflict over leadership, leading one student to reflect honestly about the desire to be always in charge versus the need sometimes to take direction.

In addition to the team evaluation, students were assigned a final reflection to self-evaluate in more detail their own understanding of and performance in collaborative team report writing and presenting. The online course format complicated those tasks with virtual collaboration, digital presentations, and compressed timeframes for delivery. Although the reflective prompts did not address intercultural communication specifically, some clues about student insights did emerge:

Virtual collaboration can shift some individuals' identities, depending on their confidence presenting themselves through digital technologies; i.e., some students felt more passive and less confident than they typically would be in face-to-face groups, while others were surprised to be in an unfamiliar leadership role.

- Distance can increase the risk of misunderstanding, even among colleagues who speak the same language, come from the same culture, and use the same familiar software platforms.
- Attempts to define and understand other cultures can lead to more stereotyping.
- Successful working relationships depend on understanding and respecting different perspectives and building trust among team members.
- Developing skills in virtual collaboration is necessary and valuable, even if face-to-face interactions would be preferable.

On Day 1 of the semester's final collaborative project—a produced video focused on best practices for collaborating virtually—students were assigned to read "Making Virtual Teams Work: Ten Basic Principles" (Michael D. Watkins, 2013). I asked them to discuss the principle that resonated most with them, based on their team experience in the intercultural communication unit. Nine out of 17 students chose "Clarify tasks and processes, not just roles and goals." Out of curiosity, I went back to my winter session results for the same question, and discovered that 10 out of 20 in that section chose the same basic principle. Students, it would seem, do not want to discuss nebulous concepts; they want to break down the project into identifiable tasks and deliverables that can be assigned to trusted teammates.

Conclusion: Instructor Insights

An interesting observation, one I have noted repeatedly over the past two years teaching the business communication course, both face-to-face and online, is that negotiating relationships on the larger team project is stressful for students. For the final collaborative project, students tend to retreat back to familiar—often "homogeneous"—partners or perhaps the one team member they connected with in the larger project. On the one hand, this highlights the need for students to reflect on their own trustworthiness and their own ability to connect with others, especially those from other cultures; on the other hand, it emphasizes the importance of learning how to develop trust and strong relationships on collaborative teams.

The following are some suggestions instructors can use to help nurture that process of building trust:

- Provide opportunities for students to get to know one another early in the semester and to give each other feedback on their work.
- Consider the demographics and context of a particular course section when assigning teams and topics.
- Make clear the purpose of the assignment and outline the tasks to accomplish the assignment.
- Balance team grades with individual grades on various components of the project.
- Provide students some room to play and fail in their digital communicating and composing processes without serious penalty.
- Establish instructor presence by being responsive, and supportive, while also finding unobtrusive ways to monitor progress and resolve conflicts.

A certain amount of conflict and confusion is part of the process of any collaboration—and not a sign of failure, even if it feels that way sometimes for students or for the instructor. Of course, reflection is an ethical dimension of virtual collaboration, and students—and instructors—often do not realize how much they have learned until they look back at how far they have come.

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Appendix: Peer Evaluation Form for Group Work

Your name ____

Write the name of each of your group members in a separate column. For each person, indicate the extent to which you agree with the statement on the left, using a scale of 1-4 (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree). Total the numbers in each column.

Evaluation Criteria	**Group member:**	**Group member:**	**Group member:**
Attends group meetings regularly and arrives on time.			
Contributes meaningfully to group discussions.			
Completes group assignments on time.			
Prepares work in a quality manner.			
Demonstrates a cooperative and supportive attitude.			
Contributes significantly to the success of the project.			
TOTALS			

Feedback on team dynamics:

1. How effectively did your group work?
2. Were the behaviors of any of your team members particularly valuable or detrimental to the team? Explain.
3. What did you learn about working in a group from this project that you will carry into your next group experience?

Adapted from a peer evaluation form developed at Johns Hopkins University (October, 2006). The author of the adapted form is unknown, but it is still searchable by its title.

Negotiating Ethics of Participatory Investigation in True Crime Podcasts

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Devon Ralston, Winthrop University
Charles Woods, Illinois State University

According to Edison Research, 73 million people in the US regularly listen to podcasts, with true crime stories proving to be one of the most popular subjects for podcasters to address. These true-to-life stories echo during our morning commute, while we work out at the gym, and during millions of other moments throughout our day, pouring out stories of suspects and victims through our earbuds and our car speakers. Yet, despite (or because of) their prevalence in our culture, investigating true crime podcasts as teachers and researchers invites intersecting concerns of ethics regarding this medium. Our panel presentation turns up the volume on the complex activity system of true crime podcasts as both genre and medium, considering ethics, narratology, and pedagogy through a case study of *Up and Vanished* (UAV). This podcast series provides the kairotic impetus for participatory culture where listeners are propelled, along with host Payne Lindsey, into investigating an unsolved cold case. This unique genre provides an opportunity for both narratological analysis and multimodal composing in the college classroom. Yet, in studying true crime podcasts, we must consider ethics adjacent to activism and visibility, as well as the potential for this digital genre as remix.

Content Warning: Though we will not describe crimes discussed in explicit ways, the following essay speaks generally about particular cases of violence against women.

Introduction

Much has been written about the potential and consequences of podcasting as a platform for the classroom. But little scholarship addresses the genre of true crime podcasting. The pieces that do cover the genre focus on the classroom success of using *Serial*, specifically in composition or high school writing classes (Godsey, 2016; Peterson, 2017). Working from Charles Bazerman, Carolyn Miller and Kerry Dirk's call(s) that our understanding of genre should move beyond specific features and criteria and instead exam-

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ine the actions created by and expected from the genre, we acknowledge that true crime is a genre that frequently explores a wide range of crimes, many of them violent. As such, we raise questions about what it means to follow crime stories, to be a fan of true crime podcasts and how to ethically navigate these topics in our classrooms. We also acknowledge the diverse range of people affected by crime and violence. We want to be thoughtful about victims and advocacy and our purpose here, in this work, is to draw attention to the rhetoricity of this genre through the lens of ethics, ethos, and pedagogical theories. In the following pages, questions concerning ethicality, authorship, power dynamics permeate our case study of *Up and Vanished* as we examine the implications of working with, and in, this genre. We begin by establishing that the true crime podcast genre has an impact on people's lived experiences and, moreover, that navigating this genre ethically is complex and nuanced. Building upon this section, we localize within the genre, focusing on Payne Lindsey, the host of *Up and Vanished*, paying specific attention to his role as both a host and an amateur investigator throughout the podcast. Our final section approaches the pedagogical implications of teaching a podcast such as *Up and Vanished* by engaging with potential ethical quandaries that might arise and by considering how theories concerning multimodal composition and remix might afford instructors the opportunity to approach questions concerning author ethos and participatory investigation.

Ethics and Participatory Investigation

Episode 1: "Okay. I had a pretty rough start. I was literally getting every type of nonworking number message in existence. And when I finally reached some people, it went like this:

> My name is Payne Lindsey. I wanted to talk to you about the Tara Grinstead case.
>
> The Tara Grinstead case.
>
> A podcast-
>
> A documentary series-
>
> If you don't mind-
>
> Sorry to bother you-
>
> A few questions about Tara Grinstead-
>
> I was hoping to talk to you about Tara Grinstead?

Nothing. Not a single person would talk to me. It was beginning to seem impossible. Everyone surrounding this case had their guard up. This small town in South Georgia had become this impenetrable community that just refused to rehash the whole wounds, or just plain too scared to talk. But I was determined that somewhere in this network of people was the answer, the key to what happened to Tara. But 10 years is a long time. 10 years of reporters and TV networks just exhausting these people for new clues and tips, or just trying to get a juicy quote out of one of the locals. And here comes me, this millennial podcaster trying to solve the mystery. I'd probably tell myself to piss off too."

This transcript gives a sampling of some of the responses that Payne Lindsey had as he began investigating the case. It establishes that the podcast has lived impacts, and that throughout, he's interacting with real people, who have complex histories and opinions about the case. We're able to see him here negotiating the ethics of the community that he's beginning to investigate and thinking about how his work fits in.

True crime podcasts are distinct from any other type of media due to both the delivery and content of each episode. The experience of listening to a podcast is deeply embodied, either broadcasted loudly, filling a room, or personal, with headphones that enter into our ears. The voice of the podcaster easily becomes relational, sometimes seeming like they're speaking to each listener individually. The subject matter of true crime is similarly complex. As much as we can distance ourselves as listeners of the podcast, we're hearing the stories of people whose lives have been destroyed and irrevocably ripped apart. In *Up and Vanished*, in particular, the series focuses upon unsolved crimes, interacting directly with loved ones who never had an opportunity for closure, who likely still live in fear. Due to these considerations of generic blending, consideration of ethics remains tricky. As teachers and scholars of digital rhetoric, what is our responsibility for engaging with and researching true crime podcasts such as *Up and Vanished?*

In order to first understand the implications for ethics, we must first consider the scope and trajectory of the podcast. I call upon Jenkins's concept of convergence. The podcast *Up and Vanished* has experienced massive success in its first season, but the reach is extended due to the companion website, responsive Q & A episodes, and social media following. This epitomizes convergence, "the flow of content across multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2–3). The intersection of this complex form of media greatly influences how it's taken up by consumers and what they're expected to do with the information they gain by listening.

For Payne Lindsey as he produced *Up and Vanished*, as well as all audience members who invoke on his journey for justice, the intention of the podcast becomes increasingly muddled. Is the exigence of the podcast the desire to investigate the case alongside Payne Lindsey or to simply be entertained? When we embrace the tension that consumers must grapple with as they listen to the podcast, we're able to re-imagine the layered intentions of audiences as socially constructed both by the multilayered platforms and the overlapping goals of their consumption. This is along with Jenkins's idea of convergent audience assumptions, with consumers socially constructed and noisy and public, not like the silent audiences of the past.

As the case of Tara Grinstead was unfolding in live time, consumers were able to offer up clues, ask Payne Lindsey questions pertaining to the investigation, and get closer to catching the killer each week. In a sense, the entire podcast took shape with the active participation and convergence of the audience. As Jenkins (2006) explained, "Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands" (p. 18).

As such, when we encourage our students to explore multimodal texts, perhaps including true crime podcasts, how can we account for the uncharted complexity of participatory culture, especially when the situations they might engage in are gruesome, and potentially dangerous? Although we can't account for convergence culture in general, I propose that we must localize the discussion of ethics for the case of *Up and Vanished* and think about the potential implications of studying a nebulous and trans-medial form of participatory entertainment. Online research ethics across platforms are tricky, especially when research subjects concern the real lives of humans, and in order to capture this complexity, I draw from Heidi A. McKee and James E. Porter's (2009) discussion of online research ethics and acknowledge that each research situation is unique and situated. Despite this, they posit that this does not mean that there are no precedents to draw from in each digital research situation.

Although the global reach of *Up and Vanished* make it difficult to anticipate effects and risks, we can center our ethical questioning on the concepts of convergence and active participation. We must ask ourselves, What kind of community is formed at the intersection of these different platforms? What are the stakes of active participation? Who is excluded from the conversation, and what are the obstacles to their participation?

Finally, in considering dynamic and ever-unfolding genres like that of true crime, the importance of community becomes centered. Rather than considering ethics in expectation and isolation, we should open inquiry with fellow digital rhetoric scholars, especially those who have implemented podcasting units in their classroom. This can be an imperative exercise in our own classrooms, and in fact, one that may be central for our students to understand the weight of participation and digital engagement that affects real people. This way, students will be able to take ownership over their understanding of ethics and how their own participation converges with other consumers and Payne Lindsey himself. They will be able to not only honor but also inquire into their embodied experience as co-researchers alongside Payne Lindsay and perhaps better understand the risks of inquiring into the dark and unsolved moments in others' lives.

Additionally, as McKee and Porter (2009) advised, we need to remember our attentive commitment to the lives of people affected by the research and media we produce. As I reference back to the transcript at the start of this section, for Payne Lindsey, this attentiveness is at the center of his podcast framing, and perhaps the reason why his investigation is ultimately successful. When we are able to ground our consideration of ethics for those most affected, especially those directly affected by the murder profiled in this podcast season, we'll construct a narrative and build a sense of ethos that is in response to the lived experience, and therefore, begin to develop strategies for sharing this work more responsibly.

"I am definitely NOT an investigator": Ethos in True Crime Podcasting

> Episode 1: "Mind you, I am NOT a podcaster. And I am most definitely NOT an investigator but I was determined to tell Tara's story. And most of all, I wanted to know what happened to her."

Clay Shirky (2008), writing in the midst of the social media revolution, argued that internet technologies were increasing the capability of human expression: "it isn't just a new way of having two way communication, it actually engages groups" ("Introduction", p. ix). Following Henry Jenkins' definitions of participatory culture, Shirky asserted that in the age of social media, the time in which he was writing, people participated because the tools existed for them to do so, but more importantly he emphasized, because they'd been invited to. While trends in participation have changed since Shirky and Jenkins first theorized the potential for community through participatory acts in social media, the desire of audiences to engage, in some way, has not; instead audiences converge in spaces where participation and niche interests intersect.

Though podcasting is now a media ecosystem on its own thanks to Apple's stand-alone podcast app as well as the wealth of apps like Stitcher, Over-cast, and Castro, the availability of topics seems practically limitless. If there's something you're into, there's likely a podcast that covers it. As Dario Llinares, Neil Fox, and Richard Berry (2018) explained in the introduction to *Podcasting: Aural Cultures and Digital Media* "Podcasting exemplifies the maxim that 'the specific is universal' by creating spaces for niche and cult content that caters for the more idiosyncratic cultures of interest." They continued, "Podcasting culture thus manages to be both personal and communal, a sensibility that is related to the active choice the listener has to exercise, and the modes of consumption—through headphones, car sound systems, home computers, mobile phones etc.—which imbue a deeply sonorous intimacy" ("Introduction" Llinares et al., 2018, p. 2). This intimacy creates a relationship between listeners and podcast hosts. There is a freedom in podcasting, a lack of gatekeeping that provides a space for uninhibited speech and attitude which can lead to familiarity and feelings of kinship. As Steph Ceraso (2018) argued, sonic encounters have subtle effects on bodily experiences, and to fully engage as a listener or composer requires attention not only to sound but to the embodied nature of listening. Podcasting, then, is deeply rhetorical, involving a complex network of actions and interactions which define its practices. I define podcasts as a media platform, a delivery system for niche genre topics. And so I turn our attention to one genre in particular: true crime.

As a genre, true crime is part documentary, part mystery, and part invitation. Since the success of *Serial* there has been a boom of true crime focused podcasts such as *In the Dark* whose first season details the 1989 kidnapping of Jacob Wetterling, and the impact on his family and friends. *Over My Dead Body* examines the unbelievable murder for hire of Florida State University college professor, Dan Markel. *Accused's* first season covers the murder of Elizabeth Andes and the only suspect local police ever considered. These are only three examples of a wide array of podcasts devoted to the genre. These are both investigated and narrated by investigative journalists and writers, unlike the podcast at the focus of our presentation, *Up and Vanished*.

Payne Lindsey, the host and narrator of *Up and Vanished* firmly asserts his identity in the first episode by what he is not. "Mind you, I am NOT a podcaster. And I am most definitely NOT an investigator…" Instead, he tells us that he is from Georgia; his grandmother lives near the area where the crime occurred and that he, like many of his listeners, is merely curious, seeking answers to what happened to a young schoolteacher named Tara Grinstead. There is an earnestness and a naiveté to Lindsey. We hear a conversation with his grandmother which is so endearing that I almost forgot the kind of podcast I was listening to.

James Baumlin and Craig Meyer (2018) asserted that we live in an age of ethos where issues of "trust," expertise, and "charismatic authority" have overtaken logos as the ground of popular discourse. When it comes to podcasts and true crime in particular, ethos is paramount to engagement. The host frames the narrative and provides details, determining what to tell us and when, revealing the mystery one episode at a time. It is through the host that listeners are pulled into a case, a crime, a story. And it is that host upon whom access to information depends. As Payne Lindsey described in the above podcast transcript, plenty of people did not want to talk to him. But he also (through his grandmother) found some who would and I can almost guarantee that his earnest approach and Southern drawl went a long way in the small town of Ocilla.

Nedra Reynolds (1993) reminded us that "ethos is created when writers locate themselves" (p. 336). With Payne Lindsey, we are firmly located in Georgia, in his grandmother's kitchen while she talks about the cookies she is making and what she remembers about the Tara Grinstead disappearance. Ethos, here, is an embodied narrative constructed and recorded for listeners. But it isn't only in moments of framing that Lindsey's ethos is cultivated. For the genre of true crime, establishing ethos is a continual process, sometimes unfolding in almost real-time as conversations unfold, as more and more people open up to the host or narrator, as more listeners get involved. And when the focus is on a cold case, attention and involvement is key if there is any hope of finding out what happened. Participation and awareness of a case can put pressure on a police force, on a community, and on individuals with information to come forward.

In Aristotle's view ethos requires possible or actual audiences. It cannot exist in isolation. In Greek, the meaning for "ethos" as "a habitual gathering place" emphasizes the relationship between speaker and listener. In fact, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (1982) argued that "ethos does not refer to your peculiarities as an individual but to the ways in which you reflect the characteristics and qualities that are valued by your culture or group" (p. 122).

As Payne Lindsey embarks on his podcast his ethos is constructed through similarity (I'm Georgian; I'm curious; I want to know what happened) rather than authority. In later episodes, he will conduct interviews with legal experts, private investigators and journalists, but initially, he's just a guy with a microphone. Though he is a media producer and certainly has more potential access to information than his listeners do, he asserts his own amateur approach to Grinstead's case, which in itself invites listeners to participate in the exchange of ideas via the podcast's website and Facebook page. The *UAV* website utilizes verbiage which suggest ways to actively participate: Listen. Investigate. Discuss. Contact.

Such participation not only drives continued listening but also creates advertising dollars. Podcasts are dependent on participation for monetization.

According to the latest Nielsen data on podcasting (2018) podcast listeners are more active on social media which leads to amplifying a particular true crime story. And this amplification drives traffic to podcast websites, to the podcasts themselves and potentially to the brands promoted by the podcast. As rhetoricians, we know the connections between ethos and advertising, and podcasts are an interesting rhetorical space to examine these connections. Hosts often read scripts promoting the brand or service, claiming how the particular brand like Hello Fresh has benefited them. There's a specific podcast-related code listeners can use for discounts, which helps the brands track audience reach. I mention monetization to draw attention to the dependent nature of speaker and listener and to keep in mind the layered motivation podcast hosts hold, which I assert is even more complexified in the genre of true crime. When engaging with the genre whether on our own or with our students, we can't shrug off the ways in which the economic potential of podcasts impacts its narrative and its episodic turn.

If we believe that genre is a discursive response, one that creates and reinscribes actions, we can more clearly acknowledge the rhetoricity of true crime podcasts and more specifically examine ethos not as fixed identities but as existing, shifting, and evolving over audiences, texts, experiences, and places as Nedra Reynolds (1993) suggested. For Payne Lindsey, this will mean embracing his identity as a podcaster, a producer, an investigator, a creator of communities as he moves from Season One of UAV to Season Two. And for the audience, it means subscribing, calling in, discussing, engaging in another case. Since 2016 when *Up and Vanished* was released Payne Lindsey through his company, Tenderfoot, has gone on to produce a second season of his show, an Oxygen TV special, three true crime podcasts (which Lindsey does not host). Lindsey's involvement exhibits the evolution of his ethos from amateur to professional over the course of two years, and as such his potential reach.

In the introduction to their collection, *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical Theory,* Baumlin and Baumlin (1994) asked "Does ethos remain. . . a definable (or defensible) rhetorical concept? Is it at all useful?" (pp. xxvi–xxvii). In considering podcasts whether as a site for analysis, for your own interests, or for the classroom, one can see, I hope, that the answers to these questions is a resounding, "yes."

Whose Story Is It Anyway?: Potential Ethical Quandaries in Teaching True Crime Podcasts

> Q&A with Dr. Maurice Goodwin 02.16.17: "In today's Q&A episode, Maurice will be answering your voicemail questions. If you haven't called the voicemail line yet, but you'd like to, the number is 770-545-6411."

Following a previous ruling by the Maryland's Court of Appeals, in November 2019, the United States Supreme Court ruled Adnan Syed was *not* to be granted a new trial following his conviction for murdering Hae Min Lee two decades earlier. This news was a stunning defeat for Syed, his lawyers, and Syed supporters around the globe who became familiar with his case through the first season of the true crime podcast *Serial*. Since the debut of *Serial* in October 2014, true crime stories have come to thrive in the genre, with podcasts like *S-Town* and *Up and Vanished* popularizing the auditory genre. Research for scholarship concerning podcast pedagogy offers a bountiful return, but how is podcast pedagogy complicated when teaching true crime podcasts where potentially messy ethical questions proliferate?

American fascination with true crime has always been of tenable interest. This interest spikes every so often through serialized accounts of farmhouse murders in America's heartland, news-helicopter broadcasts of white Bronco chases down California freeways, missing, and ultimately murdered, young girls in Colorado and Aruba, and the immediate author publication and listener consumption of true crime podcasts like *Serial* and *Up and Vanished*. Yet, there is no counterpart to the genre of the podcast, only predecessors in the form of television and radio recordings, newscasts, and magazine articles, genres which have found comfortable homes in our classrooms. True crime podcasts, however, lack the customary objectivity of newscasts on television and radio. How, then, do we consider author ethos when teaching true crime podcasts? To begin, instructors must acknowledge that the sometimes unbelievable stories are told by outsiders, people not associated with the case.

As host Payne Lindsey begins to circulate Tara Grinstead's story in *Up and Vanished*, he is honest with his audience from episode 1 of the podcast, explaining that to get started he simply Google searched cold cases in his home state of Georgia; he is also honest when he explains his reason for his podcast is due to the popularity of *Serial*. From this admission, the audience can surmise that Lindsey's motivation is not so much to help solve a cold case as it is to gain notoriety. However, it is fair to say that Lindsey's motivations are dynamic, changing as the story unfolds and as his sonic literacies evolve. As Milena Droumeva and David Murphy (2018) reminded us: "Sonic literacy in this rapidly evolving era has for us offered ways in which we can listen and attune ourselves as teachers to the lived experiences of our students" (2018). This attunement, or tuning (Zhang, 2012), is an essential complexity of designing assignments around true crime podcasts; moreover, students (and instructors) are privy to an embodied understanding concerning the development of sonic literacies: the audience becomes aware of the development of Lindsey's sonic literacies throughout the podcast, and, in turn, their own. Droumeva and Murphy (2018) referred to this as aural literacy, a deliberate understanding of the environment that has to do with the audible and the skill and training of the ear that are required in order to gain that understanding.

It is important to note that the podcast is Lindsey's, the audience is Lindsey's, but to whom does the story belong? Tara, who is missing and long-presumed dead? The suspects and relatives consumed by the case, each uniquely profiled during the podcast? Even Lindsey's own grandmother makes an appearance in this story, but to what extent was she involved in the case? With these questions in mind, how might we broach the idea of author ethos with our students? There is not one answer to that question, but instructors would be judicious to consider a pedagogy of listening and fashion assignments which teach this complex genre through theories guiding multimodal composition, theories concerning remix, or through the lens of community engagement and activism.

Before we take part in any theoretical land-grabbing concerning how to teach true crime podcasts, let us pause and consider the nuanced complexities of this relatively new genre. Neil Postman (1985) interrogated the future of journalism, education, and religion when they too become forms of show business. Today, we might consider asking what happens when our show business becomes a form of journalism? Highlighting this cyclical relationship between journalism and show business is a keystone avenue into discussions concerning ethos and responsibility concerning true crime podcasts with students.

The intersection of journalism and show business is power. In terms of the genre of the true crime podcast, understanding that power is not static and is mediated is critical. Mediated by whom though? In the case of *Up and Vanished*, Lindsey, the host, mediates power, acknowledging during the series that, as a self-described millennial podcaster, he did not understand the power he would come to have, and therefore did not understand the power of the genre within which he was working. To better understand Lindsey, we might consider his actions on his podcast through a pedagogy of listening (Zhang, 2012) lens, one which stands in opposition to a pedagogy of lecturing and deconstructs traditional classroom power dynamics, something instructors should account for when creating assignments focused on true crime podcasts. But is Lindsey all powerful? He, in fact, enacts a pedagogy of listening by inviting specialists and experts, some who are related to the case, and others who are not, to be on his podcast. In doing so, Lindsey distributes power among a host of characters associated with the Grinstead case and the *Up and Vanished* podcast; yet, it is imperative to note that while Lindsey is the arbiter of power here, he is also the person who can cut the cord, hang up the phone, or delete the voicemail. He chooses how Grinstead's story is told.

Ultimately, it is hard to argue that all of the power of the *Up and Vanished* podcast doesn't run through Payne Lindsey. Yet, we must also acknowledge the power of the technology—smartphone users are just a few clicks away from Grinstead's story through various podcast apps and platforms. Moreover, Lindsey operates above the law, as the content of his podcast—which concerns a police investigation—is not mediated by law enforcement. Rather, Lindsey's *activism* forces the hand of law enforcement officials in Georgia as the podcast follows its undefined path and gains popularity. Since Season One of *Up and Vanished* had no defined path, the audience was treated with listening to the events of the reopening of the cold case unfold in real time, much like those who watched the white Bronco chase on primetime television a quarter of a century ago. There is something enticing, something exciting, for fans of true crime, and particularly *Up and Vanished* listeners, about becoming a part of the case, which, in some ways, lets us grab just a bit of that aforementioned power, or at least provides us with the perception of doing so.

With a more nuanced understanding of power dynamics within the true crime podcast genre, instructors are prepared to decide which theoretical underpinnings to utilize in crafting assignments. The purpose is not to advocate for a singular podcast pedagogy, soundwriting pedagogy, or even a pedagogy of listening, but instead to engage with potential ethical quandaries that might arise when teaching true crime podcasts, and to consider how theories concerning multimodal composition, remix, or some other theoretical lens might afford instructors the opportunity to approach questions concerning author ethos and participatory investigation.

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Writing Landfills: A Critical Technological Literacy Approach to Electronic Waste

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This article considers the ethical implications of e-waste in computers and writing and how we can use Selfe's (1999) critical technological literacy to help students understand these issues. Drawing on Selfe's *Technology and Literacy in the 21st Century,* and further examining the status of e-waste as an environmental issue, I will introduce approaches and assignments that ask students to critically consider their own e-waste and how it impacts our field and professional practices.

Countless new communication tools, such as phones, computers, tablets, smartwatches are introduced to the market each year. A 2015 Gallup poll found that iPhone users buy a new iPhone as soon as the cellphone provider allows it (Swift, 2015). These purchases add to the 24 individual electronic products that a 2013 study by the Consumer Electronics Association found the average family owns (McCue, 2013). I fully encourage students to bring these electronics, these writing and reading tools, into class. We use our class time and tools to gather information and create texts. These tools are important to our writing classrooms as we use them to prepare our students to compose and design in ways that attend to both audience and medium. In using these tools in my own writing classes, I work to instill a critical technological literacy, advocated by Cynthia Selfe (1999) to promote "reflective awareness of the complex set of socially and culturally situated values, practices, and skills involved in operating linguistically within the context of electronic environments" (p. 148). I encourage my students to make meaningful choices when composing in these environments; they should be effective, not used because they are available or might look cool, and students should consider what the audience understands and has access to.

But a growing problem is how rapidly these tools proliferate each year, and how they, as Jennifer Gabrys (2011) wrote, are "designed and developed within material cultures of disposability" (p. 79). This modification of tools now presents an ethical challenge as to how writing instructors consider the lifecycles of these tools, and the impact they have on our field and our students. Now, as a part of "helping [students] to understand and be able to assess the

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social, economic, and pedagogical implications of new communication technologies and the technological initiatives that directly and indirectly affect their lives" (Selfe, 1999, p. 152), we need to think about the hardware itself in terms of sustainability, both physically and ethically, and what happens to them when they have lost their usefulness, quickly face obsolescence, and become electronic waste (e-waste). We need to incorporate this new reality into the reflective practice that informs their rhetorical choices in order to help students understand the process and end-results of not only the texts they produce, but the devices those texts are accessed on. Students should be aware of the larger impact of these technologies on our environment, especially as students compose texts for their professional and civic lives in order to think about their roles as citizens in this growing technological literacy. Dànielle Nicole DeVoss (2009) acknowledged that "As a field, however, we have not established a large-scale environmental sustainability initiative. Nor have we looked critically at our own technological footprints" ("Sustaining the Environment," para 4). Now is the time to do this.

This article argues that the obsolescence of communicative technologies and e-waste is a crucial element to be addressed by critical technological literacy. Influenced by Selfe's seminal work *Technology and Literacy*, as well as previous literature examining the problematic nature of e-waste and how environmental practices have already been addressed in writing classes, I will discuss two assignments that will help students think about these issues and how closely connected these issues are to our professional practices.

E-Waste

As mentioned earlier, so many of our technological communication tools, such as tablets, phones, and gaming systems quickly grow obsolete, and consumers are buying more and more devices to replace the ones they have. This increase in technology production is a new phenomenon, so the concept of e-waste is a fairly new consideration of technological advancement. E-waste can be defined as electronic equipment that is no longer of use or valuable to users. In other words, if an electronic device is not being used, whether it no longer works or no longer satisfies the user, it is e-waste. Sunyoung Kim and Eric Paulos (2011) attributed the acceleration of e-waste to the launch of the iPhone 4, writing "In just a single day, most of those fully functioning and relatively state-of-the-art mobile phones suddenly became of little to no use: migrating into desk drawers, storage bins, and garages" (p. 1). E-waste, like electronics themselves, is growing at a rapid pace. One reason for this is because, as Kim and Paulos further argued, most people don't consider obsolete technologies the same as generic, everyday waste because many of these materials still work or because people still have a sentimental connection to the technology. Gabrys (2011) has also suggested that this connection to technology has added to the problem of e-waste when she stated, “when electronic devices shrink to the scale of paper-thin and handheld devices, they appear to be lightweight or free of material resources” (p. 5). Size and weight, if not heavy or cumbersome, may give users the notion that these devices are not as harmful as they actually are.

But these outlooks on our own dated or unused technology are harmful. The United Nations Sustainability Council reported that, 41.8 million tons of e-waste were generated world-wide in 2014 but only 15-20% of this was recycled (“Discarded Kitchen,” 2015). Even when they are “recycled” they are often sent to other countries where they are scavenged for parts. Kristi Apostel and Shawn Apostel (2009) observed this phenomenon, stating machines are sent to “China, India, and various developing countries, where they are picked apart by hand, exposing impoverished workers to the hazardous components inside” (p. 2) More distressingly, dioxins from these electronics can filter through to water and soil of these countries, making countless inhabitants of these countries sick (Beech & Jirenuwat, 2019). Finally, it is important to note that the amount of global waste is expected to grow by 8% per year (Leblanc, 2018). As so much of professional communication is global noting the larger impact of these technologies is important for our students to understand.

What Can We Do?

Many in writing studies have discussed how to use writing as a way to advocate for better environmental practices (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002; Goggin & Waggoner, 2005; Myerson & Rydin, 2014), while others have proposed forms of “eco-” pedagogy to help students more deeply investigate environmental issues (Killingsworth, 2009; Tinnell, 2009). While this work encourages a critical lens and action in writing on critical environmental concerns, they do not address the physical nature of the tools they use to accomplish these writing goals. Teaching writing as action and critically approaching how we write about the environment is important in the long run, but still overlooks the material component of technology. Caroline Stone Short (2014) connected how we write about technology to the material aspect of technology and argued that a large problem with the material aspect of technology is how we refer to it in terms such as “virtual” or “new media” and how those terms encourage upgrade. Short wrote, “Although ‘the virtual’ and ‘new media’ work to ‘write over’ the histories of outdated digital technologies, the effects of these devices remain substantial” (p. 292). Writing about technology may change student mindset of how sustainable our devices truly are, but this may not account for these devices filling up landfills.

There have been some suggestions about what can be done regarding e-waste at institutional and pedagogical levels. At a campus level, Apostel and Apostel (2009) have suggested taking steps such as moving outdated machines to underfunded departments or other schools. Further, they suggested creating a freecycle list among academics so that still useful machines go to new homes. Meredith Zoetewey Johnson (2014) advocated for green computer labs that rely on power management through thin clients and strategic software. These changes at the level of faculty and administration are important approaches in reducing institutional e-waste and providing plans to make the machines used on campuses more sustainable. In terms of how e-waste is addressed in the classroom, Robert P. Yagelski (2001) discussed including "consequences of our uses of technology in terms of our existence as being in larger ecosystems and global communities of other humans and nonhuman beings" ("Critical Technological Literacy," para 3) in his non-dualist pedagogy for writing and technology. Writing about critical assignments, Shannon Madden (2014) argued that the university, through research and teaching, can resist exploitive corporate practices through writing assignments such as interface studies and analyzing the materiality of writing technologies by asking who is excluded from classroom practices because of the hardware. These are really useful suggestions, but to add to the longer-term awareness for our students, we must help them understand how writing for newer devices can isolate some users and can often impact how these users take in the information. Students must remember in their writing processes of writing for online environments, being online or digital means there is still a connection to the hardware that allows them and their audiences to access information.

iFixit

One approach to bring the physical realities of our technology into the writing classroom was discussed at the 2014 Computers and Writing Conference when Jenny Sheppard and Jen England discussed student projects for iFixit along with Brittany McCriger who works for iFixit. iFixit is an online wiki-type site that both provides users sets of instructions and allows users to contribute sets of instructions to repair their own electronics and other household items, including tablets, smartphone screens, and gaming consoles. Their focus is helping users think about repairing still useable devices rather than buying new items when something may go wrong. This includes elements that may seem unfixable to people such as replacing shattered screens, repairing broken computer fans, or replacing hard to reach batteries. iFixit advocates to end e-waste, and a large part of this discourse is that repair is more sustainable and better than recycling electronics. They state, "Apple tells everyone that the battery isn't user-serviceable. That's where we come in, filling the ecosystem hole that Apple created by manufacturing a device without an end-of-life maintenance and disposal strategy" ("Teach Us," para. 3). iFixit works to educate users on how they can sidestep corporate interests through repair and how those repairs can help with the e-waste problem.

iFixit partners with universities for writing assignments to create instruction guides for various large and small items that can be fixed, rather than thrown away. These assignments have been a useful way to put writing into action as others have advocated, as well as introduce the concept of e-waste and the long-term impact it has on us. There are three different iFixit assignments to incorporate into the writing classroom. There is the larger "Standard Project," which is creating a full user manual, the "Fast Fix," which is used to fix smaller, household items, and the "Editing Project" where students go in and edit existing manuals and guides on the iFixit project. I've incorporated the Standard Project assignment into my technical writing, which at my university is a service class for engineering and science majors. While learning the more practical aspect of writing instructions, students (many of whom are already invested in environmental concerns because of their majors such as Wildlife Biology and Environmental Engineering) further analyze the issue of e-waste from a communication perspective they had not had before and begin to think critically about what their own actions as consumers and what their fields can do for this issue.

Another class I have incorporated this assignment in is an Environmental Writing course. This class, primarily for English majors, focuses on writing as a form of action for environmental discourse, and how power through writing in a variety of genres, including instruction guides, can create changes. Many of these students, while perhaps interested in environmental issues, are being introduced to more specifics of environment concerns, what they mean, and what can be done. Therefore, many students are just learning about e-waste at the same time they are learning how to take action. They are able to both create guides to add to the iFixit database, and take a critical lens to the iFixit mission on their website generally. For this course, I chose the "Fast Fix" project as one unit in the course to fit within the larger scope of the course. Incorporating an iFixit project, even the shorter version of it, invokes the spirit of Brenda Miller (2000) who wrote, "Inherent in any goals to inspire a change in behavior resulting in environmental rhetoric and action is the need for sensitivity to those not familiar or empowered economically and technologically to access the material" (p. 165). As part of the assignment, we discussed audiences and users of both the technological devices and iFixit and the potential challenges for those audiences.

Activities in both courses do focus on writing as action, but they also help students think about the ethical concerns associated with technology and the more general throw out culture and begin to think more about how their own technologies impact their lives. Many students turned to electronics in their own homes that don't work, including toasters, electric kettles, even an electric guitar. Student not only think critically about the sustainability and life-cycle of electronics, they also get the practical takeaways. Many students write in a style they have not used before. Additionally, iFixit makes these projects incredibly intuitive with countless resources to help students take on a project with many different moving parts. They provide manuals on how to write technically, how to take pictures, and how to edit and proofread with grammar guides. When students complete a "checkpoint" (various draft stages of the project), the iFixit team replies with constructive feedback within a few hours to a day. They also keep in close contact with instructors, checking in throughout to get a larger sense of how students are engaging with the project. Students receive very practical experience; they are writing in a genre they have most likely not written before. They work in teams and must work with a specific style and meet very real deadlines. Students also reported being more engaged and expressed their excitement of having written in a new genre and added another writing experience to their résumés and portfolios.

Technology Inventory

A technology inventory is another assignment that asks student to interact more with their critical literacy of technology and begin thinking about all the technology they have had access to as individuals and as part of their families when they were growing up. This assignment is based on the technology autobiography. The technology autobiography assignment asks students to reflect on the technology that has had an impact on their life and perhaps influenced the choices they made in education and their careers. As Karla Kitalong, et. al. (2003) wrote of technology autobiographies, "In writing narratively and autobiographically about their own relationships to technology, students reveal both idiosyncratic and culturally embedded responses to rapid technological changes" (p. 220). Further, they stated that the autobiography "provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their own attitudes and practices concerning technology" (p. 230). The technology inventory asks students to do similar work, and this reflection also challenges them to acknowledge their relationship with the technology as a material object. Critically reflecting on the life of their gadgets helps students understand their own relationship with technology and how continuously relying on new technology has a global impact on the communication we do worldwide.

A technology inventory asks students to consider all the technology they remember having in their lifetimes and trace where it may have ended up.

The class begins with questions from the technology autobiography, such as, "What were your earliest experiences with technological devices or artifacts and what were they? What do you remember about using them? What were the popular gadgets in your house while you were growing up?" The assignment expands these to ask questions such as "Do you still have those technologies? Are they still usable? Were they passed down? What forms of technology are found in your home today? How did you receive them? How old are they? How do you decide to get new technologies? What has happened to your previous technologies?" These questions help to point students to ALL the technology they have interacted with in their lifetimes.

Most technologies they remember having are first cell phones, iPods, and portable gaming units. We also open the conversation to other electronics, such as televisions, DVD players, or the iHome charging/portable stereo-speaker unit. Students have fun with this part of the assignment, remembering the colorful iMacs they had, their first gaming system, and all the memories associated with them. As they begin to be critical, many students are unable to even recall what might have happened to them, but more often, students and their families still have outdated game consoles and cell phones in their home. One student counted 28 different electronics in their family home, but noted only 14 currently being used. Others discussed how they or members of their families have thrown out these electronics not realizing they could be recycled, or cited how recycling electronics is not as easy as recycling other materials or that the information about how to recycle electronics is not easily accessible. Whatever happened to all of their electronics, until the moment of their Tech Inventory, students essentially had no idea how much impact their technological devices have and how the physical aspects of these just remain, with no clear purpose.

The technology inventory is an assignment where the social and economic implications of the relationship between producer and consumer troubles students. Some students argued that smartphone and other electronic manufacturers need to be more responsible and find ways to make smartphones and other gadgets more sustainable by building them with fewer toxic materials and making them easier to repair. One student wrote in a reflection:

The idea that the consumer and not the producer is responsible for their waste is a fairly new one, and one I personally believe we need to reverse. As individual citizens, we can only make so much of a difference, however, if large companies take ownership of their trash and make products that last longer, biodegrade, or are otherwise are less wasteful. . .

This generated productive conversation about the roles each person has in a company when it comes to sustainability— from research and development to packaging and marketing. And many took these comments and began to think about other ways they could work to influence electronic producers. They also begin to think about how to educate people about e-waste and what kinds of texts and messaging would be helpful in explaining how other people can make better, more sustainable choices, including writing public policy.

Conclusion

It is then interesting to see where students take this awareness to further projects, thinking about ways to produce texts that can work across a variety of technologies, where users don't need to upgrade for the best experience; they think about lower tech solutions, making videos shorter, making more meaningful decisions about links, images and other information that may slow a device down. They start to think more critically about the modes they want to compose in and how different modes can impact the hardware the information is accessed on. They ultimately look at how the texts they create for the different rhetorical situations can influence purchasing decisions and the impact on the greater environment and think more reflectively and critically about the choices they can make in their designs. Further, the reflection on what has happened to all the gadgets they have used in their lifetime encourages them to trouble their purchasing choices, especially as newer models of smart phones, tablets, and computers are released nearly every year.

Access to technologies is still an important issue when teaching and preparing students to compose in electronic environments. But it is no longer the only consideration: we must begin to think access on too many devices and the damage this can bring to our environment and what can be done. The projects I have outlined are just a few ways in which academic institutions can respond productively to the environmental, and ultimately social, consequences of technological evolutions.

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Learning Ownership Through the Use of Photovoice in the Production of an Academic Reader

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This paper illustrates how a group of photojournalism students co-created meaning and constructed a communal image through the photographs they took for an academic reader compiled by the Communication Skills Program at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Through photovoice, these students were empowered to find their "voice" in the creation process of the reader, which mitigated their marginalization. They became active partners in their individual and communal education process and challenged their marginalization on campus. In Freirian terms, these students have challenged the oppressed role by participating in the co-creation of a reader used to teach academic writing.

In August of 2018, the American University of Beirut (AUB) released its fifth locally-compiled and published academic reader, *Pages Apart*, for English 203, a core academic reading, writing, and composition class. The process of creating this reader involved engaging students taking a photojournalism class to address the needs of the publication and find suitable photos from around Beirut and Lebanon to include in the book. The students took photographs that would speak back to the articles from a Lebanese lens. Through these photographs, these students became participants and agents in the shaping of the reader by using photovoice, a photographic technique that helps the photographer represent their community (Wang & Burris, 1997).

This paper shows how student participants co-created meaning and constructed a communal image through their photography, thus becoming active partners in their individual and communal education process. Throughout the paper, I weave in my experience as an instructor of English at AUB, the lead editor of the reader, and the faculty adviser of four student clubs to better explain pertinent academic, cultural, and social contexts as well as witnessed cases of marginalization. First, the paper offers a brief history of the American University of Beirut to provide background information and contextualize the argument. I then present a definition of marginalization drawn from Jose Causadias and Adriana Umaña-Taylor's (2018) reframing of marginalization to explain why AUB students, despite their elite academic status in

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Lebanon, are marginalized in their academic community. After explaining what photovoice is and how it came about, the paper gives a brief description how the students utilized photovoice in challenging marginalization. I argue that, through photovoice, these student participants assumed ownership of the reader and enhanced their voices in the visual production, co-creation of meaning, and shaping of the curriculum.

A Brief History of the American University of Beirut

Established in 1862, the American University of Beirut became the educational hub of the region. In the Department of English, the Communication Skills Program (CSP) offers composition and writing classes to over 7,000 students who come from different parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Europe, Asia, and North and South America. However, the Lebanese and Lebanese expats constitute the largest percentage of the student body.

AUB is considered the most expensive university in Lebanon. In a country where the minimum monthly wage is 304 USD, AUB's one credit hour costs 689 USD for undergraduates enrolled in the social sciences. Therefore, many students find themselves unable to afford AUB tuition fees. More than 60% of students apply for financial aid, receiving assistance exceeding 30 million USD in need-based grants, scholarships, need-based student loans, graduate assistantships, and work-study programs (Facts and Figures, n.d.). Since financial aid is given to students in need, numbers show that a large percentage of students come from economically underprivileged families. This economic disparity places the economically underprivileged students on the periphery in a country where great emphasis is placed on outward display of money.

Following the establishment of the French Mandate in 1923, the official languages of Lebanon became Arabic and French; however, bilingual education at both public and private schools continued even after the independence of Lebanon in 1946. Lebanon also has a large population of naturalized Armenians who settled in Lebanon following the Armenian genocide of 1905. They established Armenian schools that teach Armenian and Arabic as primary languages and French or English as second and third languages. AUB as an English-speaking institution can often marginalize student populations whose first language is not English. Below, marginalization is defined generally and in the context of this study.

Marginalization Defined

Marginalization is traditionally defined as the treatment of an individual as peripheral or insignificant based on their race, religion, culture, or general beliefs. Causadias and Umaña-Taylor (2018) redefined marginalization as "multidimensional, dynamic, context-dependent, and diverse web of processes, rooted in power imbalance and systematically directed toward specific groups and individuals" (p. 707). The authors recognized the fluidity of the term and redefined marginalization as a dynamic concept that is context-dependent and not necessarily entangled with clear-cut discrimination. According to Causadias and Umaña-Taylor, youth experiencing marginalization can alter their situation, so the label is not unchangeable. The authors clarified how marginalization has many different definitions and meanings depending on the context, for it can be related to discrimination against social groups or academic marginalization related to educational policy. This context-dependency, they argued, "can be defined and redefined in immediate settings of families, schools, and neighborhoods" (p. 710) or "social positioning" (p. 709). In one of its many facets, marginalization, they argued, is "the enforcement of a social order purposefully guided and enforced by those who hold power" (p. 710). Therefore, marginalization is recognized as context-dependent and not necessarily against one particular ethnic group.

One of the aims of this paper is to argue for the presence of a spatial case of marginalization at AUB. "As a spatial analogy of social positioning," Causadias and Umaña-Taylor (2018) stated, "the term *marginalization* … is consistent with other terms rooted in spatial symbolism, including *subordination* (to keep down), *oppression* (to weigh down), and *exclusion* (to keep out)" (p. 709). For the sake of this paper, the term is used in line with Causadias and Umaña-Taylor's definition to include any form of alienation or sidelining "enforced by those who hold power" (p. 710). In this sense, many groups of students at AUB experience marginalization for various reasons, as presented in the following section.

How AUB Students Experience Marginalization

Nonnative Speakers

Students at AUB struggle to find their academic voice (personality, style, or tonality) for several reasons, be they educational, economic, or political. Most students studying at AUB are speakers of English as a second or third language, and many have studied in schools following the French system and find the American liberal arts program at AUB to be unfamiliar; they are also not prepared to do all their learning in English.

Save for those who study at the American Community School or at American or English schools in the Arabian Gulf (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, etc.) where the primary language of instruction is English, many students find themselves in the first few years at AUB struggling with a language of instruction they had learned as a third or fourth language. Some French educated students ask friends to translate entire lectures, and many copy or purchase class notes from other classmates, as I have discovered through my teaching and mentoring experience. The educational system differs from what these students were accustomed to at school, and this puts them at the periphery and may make them feel as outcasts. As someone who works closely with students through student clubs, I hear students complaining that they feel like "phonies" in their academic environment. This covert form of alienation solicits little attention from the university, and I have heard many instructors claim that pressuring students to perform by enforcing strict timelines, overwhelming the students with material, and giving difficult exams is part of the academic culture of AUB. This causes a myriad of challenges for students and encourages unhealthy competition. For example, pre-med students tell stories of how some try to compromise other students' success by stealing and hiding study notes and materials causing some students to drop their majors altogether. Unfortunately, this negative result is downplayed by the overall political turned social discrimination in the country.

Political Pressures

National politics and political parties have been the cause of the religious-based civil war which lasted for two decades; the war's aftermath has infiltrated the walls of the University. Annual elections for the Student Representative Committees become political parties' power struggle on campus where students affiliated with different political parties outside the university try to garner the largest number of votes for their group. National TV stations and newspapers cover the event, which shows the nature of pressure these students experience during election times. In recent years, the situation has been controlled and guided by the dean of students, and students are no longer allowed to rally under a political banner or use their affiliated political party's name in their campaigns. As a result, campaigning students started targeting students from their religious communities to vote for their preferred candidate. Students are sometimes verbally harassed if they refuse to comply, but little has been done at the administrative level to try and remedy the situation. Instead, AUB uses extreme measures to try and contain the situation instead of solving it. For example, in recent years, student elections were cancelled, and students were expelled because the elections turned violent. For this reason, students sometimes find themselves between a rock and a hard place where they want to join the representative student body but are weary of the exhausting underground political fight on campus.

Social and Environmental Crises

The unstable political situation in Lebanon and the power struggle between political parties left the country with a corrupt political elite and an environmental crisis that ignited a revolution on October 17, 2019. Lebanon in recent years has become one of the most polluted countries in the world (Salameh et al., 2018) that still suffers from power and water outages. For the youth in Lebanon, hope for change seems out of reach, and students at AUB seek to find their voice by participating in highly regulated student activities (clubs and student elections) but have slim opportunities to participate in the curricular conversation at AUB.

Still, clubs are not always the answer. In the fall semester of 2018, the Gender and Sexuality Club at AUB was pushed by various religious groups to cancel a Halloween party mixer for the LGBTQ+ community after members of both the club and the community received numerous death threats from outside the university. When the club's faculty adviser expressed his concern about student liberties in an email to the AUB faculty, he was met with a myriad of emails stating that such liberties are not tolerated in the Lebanese community and that there is no need for a Gender and Sexuality club at AUB in the first place. Therefore, students sometimes find themselves voiceless and marginalized for their academic, political, or even sexual orientation. To better engage students and give them a sense of empowerment, the editorial committee of English 203's reader decided to involve students in the compilation process of the book by giving them a chance to find their voices through photography.

Photovoice and Empowerment

Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris (1997) defined photovoice as "a method by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (p. 369). Photovoice uses photographic images taken by the less powerful and fortunate to empower participants and induce change within and outside the community (Wang & Burris, 1997). Wang and Burris developed photovoice based on Freire's notion of critical consciousness and feminist theory, and their work has been instrumental in studying marginalized groups in different populations. Photovoice's foundation is documentary photography (Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988), and it engages the youth in smaller parts of bigger projects (Wang et al., 2000). Additionally, photovoice projects help youth shape their social identities and "can be instrumental in building social competency" (Strack, et al., 2004, p. 49). Samantha Warren (2005) argued that, as more attention is paid to the visual dimension of social life, “the visual world becomes another ‘text’ to be read giving clues about the cultures that produce it” (p. 1). Warren also argued that image is data, and Carey Noland (2006) asserted that, through photography, participants choose images that represent them and their views, for the visual organizes the experience of external reality (Wright, 1992). In this sense, the academic reader at AUB, *Pages Apart*, became the project through which students at AUB participated in the academic conversation and the shaping of their social and political identities in spite of pervasive marginalization.

The Reader

The American University of Beirut (AUB) released the first edition of its custom published Reader for Academic English in 2007 to adapt the teaching of the course to our students’ needs and interests. The faculty, realizing that international editions of readers published in the United States cannot speak to the particular audience of AUB, decided to compile and publish a homegrown reader that includes international texts of various genres that are relevant to the AUB community. The committee selected to work on the reader collects, edits, and writes author biographies, questions, and activities for each text. Now, eleven years and five editions later, the committee continues to custom publish a reader springing from the knowledge and experience of the Communication Skills Program. The fifth edition of the Reader, *Pages Apart*, was released in August of 2018.

This edition began with the “Art of Composition” where a multitude of articles cover strategies for reading, reflective and academic writing, using sources, and voice. Like the rest of the reader, these articles came from a variety of sources and were previously published in academic and peer reviewed journals, while some were book chapters. The remaining chapters included op-eds, textbook chapters, personal narratives, exposés, essays, poems, and short stories written by renowned writers from around the world and selected for their relevance to Lebanese students.

Learning Ownership

Freirian Theory and Voice in Relation to AUB

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paolo Freire (1970) explained that the oppressed are not marginals but rather have succumbed to the structure that marginalized them. He added that “the solution is not to ‘integrate’ them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that that they can become 'beings for themselves'" (p. 74). To achieve this, the teacher must become the student's partner and engage them in critical thinking. This should involve a trust in the student's creative abilities. As an educational hub that prides itself in graduating world leaders, AUB is concerned with maintaining a high ranking in the region through faculty research and the employability of students. Consequently, AUB hires leaders in their fields and assumes that, by being exposed to such great minds, the students are bound to learn. This view may unintentionally support the banking model of education Freire warns against, and it may also contribute to the marginalization of students by considering them fresh minds in need of guidance.

To empower students, Freire (1973) suggested that "People should be active participants in understanding their community's issues, facilitated through the sharing of mutual experiences, and become agents of community change" (p. 73). Ira Shor (1993) built on Freire's work to emphasize education's capacity to promote democracy and equality among students and teachers in order to advance literacy and knowledge. In involving students in the production and selection of photographs for the reader, the editors have invited students into a dialogic rhetoric where they negotiate meaning through their lens. Shor insisted that students need to be taught how to question answers and not how to answer questions so that education becomes what students do instead of what is done to them. In the case of the reader, students engaged in producing a visual composition in the shape of an academic book for their peers to use. This authorial responsibility made students an integral part of the reader's production rather than reinforcing their marginalization on the periphery of AUB.

The photojournalism students who participated in the project had completed English 203 for which the reader was compiled, and they were reminded of what the class objectives and learning outcomes were. They worked with these objectives in mind and towards instigating the change they wished to see in the curriculum. Though their contribution was in interpreting the texts through their photos, they dictated the visual representation of the book and thus contributed to centering AUB in the reader. Their work had more influence than predicted. When informally asked what they thought of the photographs that were taken by previous English 203 students, current students agreed that it made them more interested in leafing through the reader to see how their fellow students read and interpreted the articles.

Further, to use terms from the New London Group (1996), students engaged in designing their (and their peers') social futures by representing Lebanon, Beirut, and AUB in the manner they saw fit rather than in the way the editors considered suitable for the reader. The student photographers related the texts, whether they spoke about Beirut, Lebanon, or the Arab world or not, to their experience and their immediate surroundings. They recreated meaning that they presumed future English 203 students could relate to. However, the New London Group warned that putting knowledge into action might not be as feasible as presumed, for students might be incapable of transferring their knowledge to practice. This is where the teachers step in to guide the learners in their attempt to develop a critical and cultural understanding of these practices, for immersion in the practice does not guarantee mastery of practice. Here, the student photographers studied, in a prior semester, the foundations of photojournalism; however, it was in applying these skills to the reader that they learned how to perfect their skills. At the same time, they contributed to the conversation taking place about the reader for they have contextualized the articles and placed them in a local frame better accessible to students with a shared cultural background. With such participation, student photographers have repositioned themselves closer to the center than at the periphery of AUB, and they have succeeded in challenging their marginalized status.

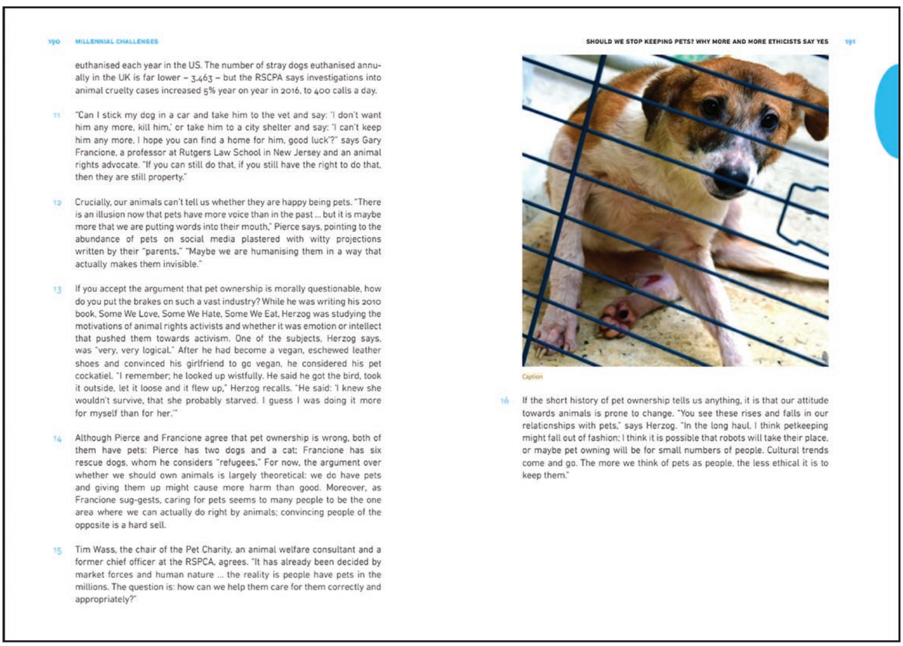
Co-creation of Meaning: Voice, Authority, and Empowerment

Photovoice may empower student photographers in constructing their voice. Paul Matsuda and Christine Tardy (2007) argued that readers of academic texts create a persona of the author or what they refer to as voice. They stated that "Shifting the discussion of voice from the sole province of the writer to the jointly constructed reader-writer interaction can provide rich insight into the readers' role in the process of constructing voice" (p. 247). Through their photos, AUB students vocalized their understanding of the texts and articulated a contextualized message, for voice does not emerge necessarily in writing alone. The multimodality of this project lends itself to the construction of voice through photographs without the need for a foreign language to mediate this construction. Students interpreted, borrowed, and even appropriated the author's voice in the recreation of meaning suitable for their world, culture, and circumstances even when the editors sometimes challenged the students' choices of photos.

Many of the photographs that were taken by the students were contested by the editorial team, and it was my decision as the lead editor to insist on giving these photos, and by extension the students, a representative platform or voice. In one instance, one of the editors insisted on including a photograph of a "happy" dog being pampered instead of the caged dog that the students had chosen to be included with the article "Should we stop keeping pets? Why more and more ethicists say yes" (See Figure 1). The students explained that in Lebanon and especially in Beirut, keeping dogs in small apartments is seen as caging them; also, pets are obtained from pet stores that cage pets in display windows until they are sold. Students, therefore, depicted a reality as they have seen and understood it. In this sense, the students have joined the rhetorical conversation if only through their choice of included photos.

The students chose, in some cases, photos that are completely rooted in a Lebanese context even when the article generally addressed American or international audiences. In "Eating, growing, thinking: The food chapter," the students chose to include photos of Lebanese vegetarian "fatayer" or pastries with "The economic case for worldwide vegetarianism" (see Figure 2). Such an example illustrates how voice is created through the choice of a Lebanese food article since the Lebanese cuisine has been generally associated with vegetarianism with popular dishes like hummus, tabbouleh, and veggie fatayer.

Students partaking in this project chose to represent their realities through their trained photographic lens and to articulate, through a photograph, their reality. Whether the article speaks in particular about Lebanon or not, it was represented with a photograph from Beirut or Lebanon in general. Warren (2005) stated that it is through the act of viewing that we experience the world we live in and bring cultural, social, and psychological knowledge to our understanding of this experience. In this manner, the photograph ceases to be a mere presentation of a topic and becomes a representation of the reality of this student and her understanding not only of what the article discusses but also the reality that represents it. The photograph here has become a composition of comprehension and expression.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euthanised each year in the US. The number of stray dogs euthanised annually in the UK is far lower – 3,463 – but the RSCPA says investigations into animal cruelty cases increased 5% year on year in 2016, to 400 calls a day.

11 "Can I stick my dog in a car and take him to the vet and say: 'I don't want him any more, kill him,' or take him to a city shelter and say: 'I can't keep him any more, I hope you can find a home for him, good luck'?" says Gary Francione, a professor at Rutgers Law School in New Jersey and an animal rights advocate. "If you can still do that, if you still have the right to do that, then they are still property."

12 Crucially, our animals can't tell us whether they are happy being pets. "There is an illusion now that pets have more voice than in the past ... but it is maybe more that we are putting words into their mouth," Pierce says, pointing to the abundance of pets on social media plastered with witty projections written by their "parents." "Maybe we are humanising them in a way that actually makes them invisible."

13 If you accept the argument that pet ownership is morally questionable, how do you put the brakes on such a vast industry? While he was writing his 2010 book, Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat, Herzog was studying the motivations of animal rights activists and whether it was emotion or intellect that pushed them towards activism. One of the subjects, Herzog says, was "very, very logical." After he had become a vegan, eschewed leather shoes and convinced his girlfriend to go vegan, he considered his pet cockatiel. "I remember; he looked up wistfully. He said he got the bird, took it outside, let it loose and it flew up," Herzog recalls. "He said: 'I knew she wouldn't survive, that she probably starved. I guess I was doing it more for myself than for her.'"

14 Although Pierce and Francione agree that pet ownership is wrong, both of them have pets: Pierce has two dogs and a cat; Francione has six rescue dogs, whom he considers "refugees." For now, the argument over whether we should own animals is largely theoretical: we do have pets and giving them up might cause more harm than good. Moreover, as Francione sug-gests, caring for pets seems to many people to be the one area where we can actually do right by animals; convincing people of the opposite is a hard sell.

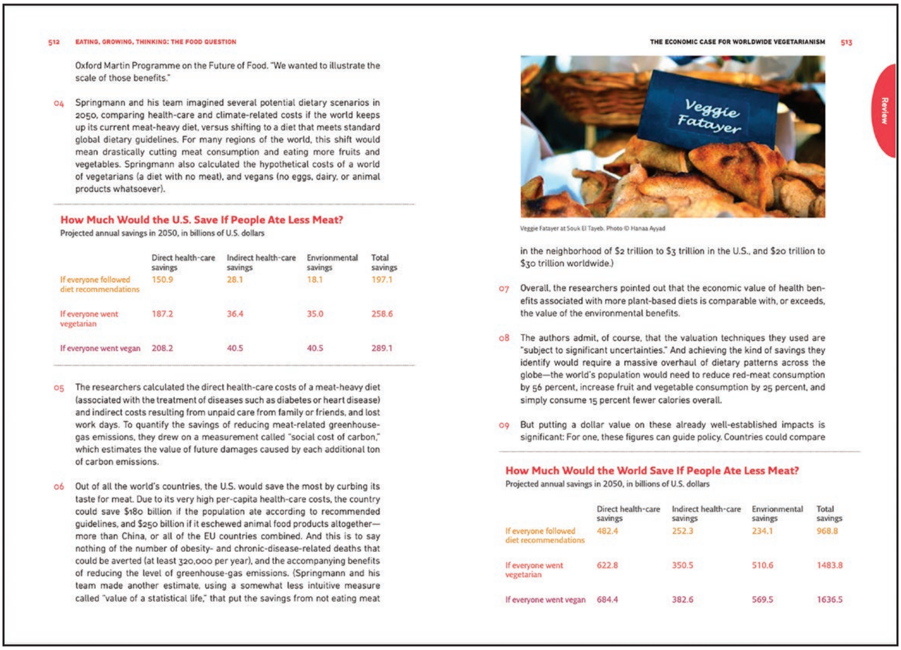
15 Tim Wass, the chair of the Pet Charity, an animal welfare consultant and a former chief officer at the RSPCA, agrees. "It has already been decided by market forces and human nature ... the reality is people have pets in the millions. The question is: how can we help them care for them correctly and appropriately?"

SHOULD WE STOP KEEPING PETS? WHY MORE AND MORE ETHICISTS SAY YES 191

Caption

16 If the short history of pet ownership tells us anything, it is that our attitude towards animals is prone to change. "You see these rises and falls in our relationships with pets," says Herzog. "In the long haul, I think petkeeping might fall out of fashion; I think it is possible that robots will take their place, or maybe pet owning will be for small numbers of people. Cultural trends come and go. The more we think of pets as people, the less ethical it is to keep them."

Figure 1: Student-selected photo of caged dog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Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food. "We wanted to illustrate the scale of those benefits."

04 Springmann and his team imagined several potential dietary scenarios in 2050, comparing health-care and climate-related costs if the world keeps up its current meat-heavy diet, versus shifting to a diet that meets standard global dietary guidelines. For many regions of the world, this shift would mean drastically cutting meat consumption and eating more fruits and vegetables. Springmann also calculated the hypothetical costs of a world of vegetarians (a diet with no meat), and vegans (no eggs, dairy, or animal products whatsoever).

How Much Would the U.S. Save If People Ate Less Meat?
Projected annual savings in 2050, in billions of U.S. dollars

	Direct health-care savings	Indirect health-care savings	Envrionmental savings	Total savings
If everyone followed diet recommendations	150.9	28.1	18.1	197.1
If everyone went vegetarian	187.2	36.4	35.0	258.6
If everyone went vegan	208.2	40.5	40.5	289.1

05 The researchers calculated the direct health-care costs of a meat-heavy diet (associated with the treatment of diseases such as diabetes or heart disease) and indirect costs resulting from unpaid care from family or friends, and lost work days. To quantify the savings of reducing meat-related greenhouse-gas emissions, they drew on a measurement called "social cost of carbon," which estimates the value of future damages caused by each additional ton of carbon emissions.

06 Out of all the world's countries, the U.S. would save the most by curbing its taste for meat. Due to its very high per-capita health-care costs, the country could save $180 billion if the population ate according to recommended guidelines, and $250 billion if it eschewed animal food products altogether—more than China, or all of the EU countries combined. And this is to say nothing of the number of obesity- and chronic-disease-related deaths that could be averted (at least 320,000 per year), and the accompanying benefits of reducing the level of greenhouse-gas emissions. (Springmann and his team made another estimate, using a somewhat less intuitive measure called "value of a statistical life," that put the savings from not eating meat

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Review

Veggie Fatayer

Veggie Fatayer at Souk El Tayeb. Photo © Hanaa Ayyad

in the neighborhood of $2 trillion to $3 trillion in the U.S., and $20 trillion to $30 trillion worldwide.)

07 Overall, the researchers pointed out that the economic value of health benefits associated with more plant-based diets is comparable with, or exceeds, the value of the environmental benefits.

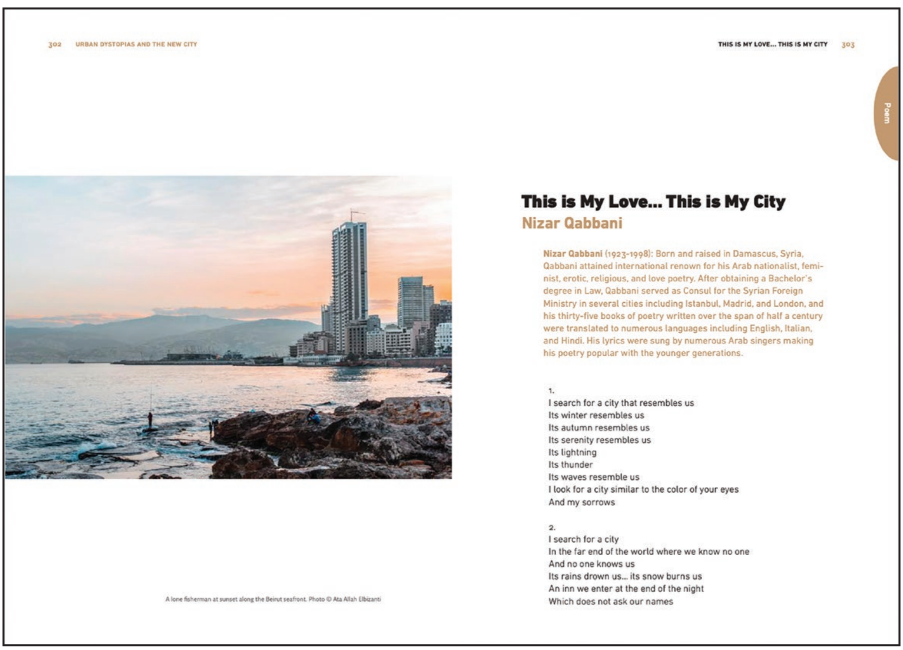
08 The authors admit, of course, that the valuation techniques they used are "subject to significant uncertainties." And achieving the kind of savings they identify would require a massive overhaul of dietary patterns across the globe—the world's population would need to reduce red-meat consumption by 56 percent, increase fruit and vegetable consumption by 25 percent, and simply consume 15 percent fewer calories overall.

09 But putting a dollar value on these already well-established impacts is significant: For one, these figures can guide policy. Countries could compare

How Much Would the World Save If People Ate Less Meat?
Projected annual savings in 2050, in billions of U.S. dollars

	Direct health-care savings	Indirect health-care savings	Envrionmental savings	Total savings
If everyone followed diet recommendations	482.4	252.3	234.1	968.8
If everyone went vegetarian	622.8	350.5	510.6	1483.8
If everyone went vegan	684.4	382.6	569.5	1636.5

Figure 2: Student-selected photo of Lebanese cuisine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A lone fisherman at sunset along the Beirut seafront. Photo © Ata Allah Elbizanti

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Poem

This is My Love... This is My City
Nizar Qabbani

Nizar Qabbani (1923-1998): Born and raised in Damascus, Syria, Qabbani attained international renown for his Arab nationalist, feminist, erotic, religious, and love poetry. After obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Law, Qabbani served as Consul for the Syrian Foreign Ministry in several cities including Istanbul, Madrid, and London, and his thirty-five books of poetry written over the span of half a century were translated to numerous languages including English, Italian, and Hindi. His lyrics were sung by numerous Arab singers making his poetry popular with the younger generations.

1.
I search for a city that resembles us
Its winter resembles us
Its autumn resembles us
Its serenity resembles us
Its lightning
Its thunder
Its waves resemble us
I look for a city similar to the color of your eyes
And my sorrows

2.
I search for a city
In the far end of the world where we know no one
And no one knows us
Its rains drown us... its snow burns us
An inn we enter at the end of the night
Which does not ask our names

Figure 3: Student-selected photo of Ain el Mreisseh bay in Beirut

Similarly, a poem by renowned Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani about an abstract city was accompanied by a scenic view of Ain el Mreisseh bay in Beirut (Figure 3). The choice of photo to represent not the content of the text but the reality of the photographer emerges as research in how one adjusts her lens to speak back to the text. In this way, the students had a say in how the reader is visually shaped and how they are seen and represented as Lebanese working on a book for a generally Lebanese audience. They took charge of shaping the context and challenging the content. As Warren (2005) argued, here "voice" is used in a political sense "as a medium or agency of expression" or "the right or opportunity to express a choice or opinion" (p. 870). "Voice" communicates a message to a wider audience; a message that would have otherwise remained unheard if former methods of photograph collection in the reader compilation process were followed, or if photographs were either obtained from professional or "foreign" sources.

In participating in the assemblage of the academic reader, the students have become more involved in the creation of notions of self and place in a larger social context and in fighting the marginalization they are facing at AUB. Thomas Gullotta, Gerald Adams, and Carol Markstrom (1999) argued that a sense of belonging emerges from being a valued member of the society, and this arises from contributing to the society. In Lebanon, the history of a war-torn, sectarian country can be altered through such communal activities as well as a restructured identity and voice. By choosing photographs from AUB, Beirut, and Lebanon, the students have become involved in the emergent voice of the reader.

Research Implications and Conclusion

In studying photovoice in the creation of a home-grown academic reader, several questions arise that invite a deeper reflection on the subject. More studies should be done on the production of locally compiled and edited readers on other marginalized groups of students in other Lebanese universities as well as in other countries, and on how the involvement of students in such productions promote engagement and agency. A larger-scale study surveying English 203 students and their reactions to the reader and its photographs should be conducted to examine the effect of photovoice on the audience of this reader. Results from such studies will aid practitioners at AUB and other universities in the Arab World in understanding the importance of voice and agency through the production of locally compiled readers that speak directly to ESL learners. Marginalization can occur not only because of unstable political situations in the region or the discrimination that Arabs face nowadays post September 11 but also because we are using a colonial language not only in communicating with the world but in communicating among ourselves. A question remains: Should AUB share its reader with other English programs at other universities, or would that undermine the authorial presence of these programs by expecting them to use a reader compiled with the AUB student in mind without a consideration of the more general Lebanese audience? Finally, further studies on the topic can contribute to mitigating the marginalization of not only AUB students but all Lebanese students at their respective schools and universities.

Unlike readers compiled at the American University of Beirut in previous years, *Pages Apart* enabled student photographers taking photojournalism classes to co-create meaning and contextualize the articles for a predominantly Lebanese audience. Students became participants in the shaping of the reader and contributors to the communal learning process. These students were invited to transcend the boundaries of Freire's definition of the oppressed and become active and engaged partners in the shaping of their and their peers' education at AUB. They helped construct a communal image that shifted their status from a marginalized group to active participants in the shaping of their curriculum. Through their photographs, they not only offered a different viewpoint of the articles but also took charge of the construction of meaning. Thus, the experience of students at AUB suggests that student-shaped readers may be useful tools to give voice to populations that are marginalized in some academic contexts.

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3,000 Podcasts a Year: Teaching and Administering New Media Composition in a First-Year Writing Program

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Callie F. Kostelich, Texas Tech University
Tanner Walsh, Texas Tech University
Sierra Sinor, Texas Tech University
Michelle Flahive, Texas Tech University
Leah Heilig, University of Rhode Island

This roundtable shares our experiences designing, implementing, and teaching a podcast episode as a required new media assignment across our entire first-year writing program. We start with the rationale for this new media assignment and concerns around teacher preparation and then turn to more specific teaching experiences focusing on students' research questions in a post-truth era, scaffolding the assignment for students, approaches to teaching a new media assignment in a low-tech classroom, teaching academic discourse through podcasts, and transcripts and accessibility.

In spring 2017, our department chair mandated a major overhaul of our First-Year Writing (FYW) program in response to negative narratives about the program on campus, low retention and success rates, and budgetary concerns. This overhaul necessitated designing new delivery models for our two-course sequence, a new curriculum, new teacher preparation and professional development, and new assessment efforts. Regarding curriculum, the previous model of FYW was designed around a scaffolded, yet quite stale, writing sequence that involved no new media or multimodal composition. The administrative team viewed it as imperative to incorporate multimodality into the new curriculum in meaningful and purposeful ways. One way that we addressed this exigence was by designing and implementing a required podcast episode as the final assignment in English 1301, the first course in our two-course sequence.

This roundtable shares our experiences designing, implementing, and teaching this assignment. This implementation ultimately equated to over 50

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instructors teaching podcasts to over 3,000 students in the 2018–2019 academic year (the inaugural year for the program-wide podcast assignment).

Michael J. Faris: The WPA's Perspective: Rationale for a Podcast Episode and Supporting Teachers

For inspiration for a required multimodal assignment, we used Jeremy Cushman and Shannon Kelly's (2018) podcast episode assignment at Western Washington University as a model for the prompt and scaffolding. As the writing program administrator, I had various reasons for privileging a podcast episode instead of another multimodal assignment.

First, podcasts are an inquiry-driven medium, and because they are a new mode of composing for students, they can defamiliarize research and writing practices. First-year students transitioning into college often carry with them expectations for formulaic genres and research practices (e.g., thesis chasing), but teaching with new media "invites students to see writing in a new way" (Sady, 2018, p. 259). Assigning an inquiry-based new media assignment could encourage students to consider how to ask research questions, incorporate research, play with arrangement, enact rhetoric as more than merely logical argument, and attend to audience expectations in new ways.

Second, podcasts can center accessibility and disability. This claim may seem counter-intuitive, as most podcasts are not accessible because they lack transcripts and require a hearing audience. However, we designed this assignment with accessibility in mind. The prompt is written in a way that a Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing student can create a podcast: students are asked to start with a question, to make intentional audio choices (which can include silence), to include more than one voice in their project, and to incorporate research. With this flexibility, students could create a silent video using sign language and captions (for example) and meet the expectations (see Buckner & Daley, 2018, on accessibility and teaching with sound). Further, assigning podcasts affords teachers the opportunity to teach for and about accessibility. The assignment requires a transcript that includes descriptions of sounds, which encourages students to consider diverse audiences, issues of access, and how transcripts and the descriptions of sounds are rhetorical (Zdenek, 2009, 2015; see Heilig's discussion below). This assignment design further provides teachers the opportunity to discuss with students the ethics of creating accessible projects.

Third, as with many new media assignments, a podcast episode helps students to attend to composing choices. For our assignment, we required students to write a reflective explanation of their personal and rhetorical goals and the choices they made in the podcast episode by adapting what Jody Shipka (2011) called a statement of goals and choices. This aspect of the assignment requires "students [to] assume responsibility for describing, evaluating, and sharing with others the purposes and potentials of their work" (p. 112).

Having a standard new media assignment presents challenges for preparing teachers, especially inexperienced teachers who are learning to teach writing for the first time and likely have little experience with new media composing. For new teachers, teaching a podcast episode can be cognitive overload: they are teaching inquiry, refining research questions, research practices (including interviewing), new media composing, the affordances of audio, intellectual property, and more. However, one benefit of a standardized assignment is that it "drives inexperienced instructors beyond their comfort zones, *compelling* (rather than merely encouraging) them to experiment with models and strategies" (Dively, 2010). We supported new teachers through this process in a variety of ways: exploring pedagogical problems and approaches together in our required practicum; workshops for teachers and students hosted by the department's Media Lab; and teaching guides with suggestions for scaffolding and in-class activities. We stressed that the goal with this assignment was not becoming a master with sound editing but rather to practice transferable rhetorical skills around inquiry, research, audience, arrangement, and intentional and effective composing choices—an approach advocated by Tarez Samra Graban, Colin Charlton, and Jonikka Charlton (2013) that focuses on exploration, play, inquiry, and risk taking rather than technological mastery, for both teachers and students.

Callie F. Kostelich: Teaching Podcasts in a Post-Truth Era

As the assistant professor of practice for First-Year Writing at Texas Tech, I teach three large lecture FYW courses each semester. At the beginning of the podcast unit in English 1301, I introduced the assignment guidelines in lecture, and graduate instructors worked with students in their discussion sections to brainstorm and formulate inquiry questions. We had a significant number of students wanting to take on such issues as "Who really shot JFK" to more recent topics stemming from the 2016 election. Admittedly, this focus on "truth" took me by surprise. While I was aware that we would teach research skills in the podcast unit, it struck me that we would need to address how students see themselves as ethical participants in the construction of content, particularly digital content that has wide reaching implications.

In a timely December 2018 post to the WPA Listserv, John Duffy wrote of the importance of our work in this post-truth era: "Every day, more or less, we tell students that their claims must be truthful, that assertions require relevant evidence, and that when making arguments they should consider other points of view." In light of Duffy's advice, the podcast serves as a fertile place for doing this important work. It is a unit that encourages students to use their own voices, to embark on primary and secondary research, to conduct interviews, and to make strategic rhetorical choices in the construction of their podcasts. We teach crucial skills in this unit that allow students to develop a toolkit to better process and vet the information they receive, as well as to consider themselves as rhetors within the information cycle.

Granted, these are skills that we teach through various forms in FYW classes and are not limited to the podcast. The podcast, however, provides an opportunity for students to use the "unique rhetorical capacities that sound offers to us as a medium" (Greene, 2018, p. 145). Through sound, specifically vocalization and rhetorical listening processes, students learn to consider the rhetorical concepts we teach—ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, rhetorical distance, and so forth—as they craft their podcasts. Students have to think about what content they are including, why they selected this content, and how they will convey it solely as a sonic text. While students certainly have a voice in and ownership of their written work, podcasts are innately personal. In this regard, sound is "an embodied event," one that allows students the distinct experience of having a literal say in their work, of processing and articulating their composition using sound to convey emotion, increase listener engagement, articulate the power of strong logos, craft a sense of urgency in response to a kairotic moment (Greene, 2018, p. 145). Additionally, podcasts encourage students to not only engage in a conversation but to see themselves in it as rhetors entering a larger conversation. Working with sound can, as described by Bump Halbritter and Julie Lindquist (2018), "help not only to foreground listening as an ethical practice for researchers but also to conceive occasions for experiential learning." Because podcast creation is often new for our students, they are more willing to take risks with their work. Their goals often become less about mastery of content (i.e., I am right about this topic or I know best) and more inquiry-driven because the process of creation is inquiry based. In essence, learning how to create a podcast provides opportunities for students to think about learning something new with their topic, as well.

Finally, as students craft their podcasts, they get to experience how "sound works as an affective mode" (Ceraso, 2014, p. 115). Podcasts serve as an avenue for students to process not only what an audience may experience and learn from listening to the recording but what the students themselves experience from creating it. Through the distinct use of sound, podcasts provide an avenue for students to connect directly with their subjects, to peel back the layers of abstraction, and to deeply engage, inquire, and reflect. It is, at least, a notable start for our students.

Tanner Walsh: Scaffolding for a Podcast Episode

While I had prior experience as a teaching assistant in philosophy, fall 2018 was my first time teaching FYW. I led two discussion sections of English 1301 consisting of mostly first-semester college students. Because the podcast assignment was a new project for many students that went beyond the traditional written assignment, and because we wanted to emphasize the importance of putting rhetoric into practice, it was necessary to provide useful scaffolding for students throughout the unit. My approach to scaffolding was largely based on the scaffolding provided by the program. While there are different existing models for scaffolding audio production—like Eric Detweiler's (2019) adaptation of the *progymnasmata*—our program's model follows Cushman and Kelly's (2018) scaffolding for their program-wide podcast episode. I employed a sequence of four practices to carry out this assignment: 1) analyzing examples of podcast episodes; 2) narrowing broad student topics; 3) developing students' plans of action; and 4) workshopping during class.

Analyzing example podcasts provided a frame of reference for students who had little to no knowledge of what podcasts are capable of. In class, I played example student-produced podcasts, pausing them frequently to discuss with students the choices creators made—for example, the use of mashup interviews, background music, audio transitions, and introductions for issues and interviewees. During each pause, we discussed which choices seemed to be rhetorically effective for the audience and why.

Second, although most students had in mind important issues they wanted to tackle, their issues were too broad for a short podcast episode (e.g., obesity in America). We used class time to narrow their issues to specific aspects and perspectives. In one class session, I asked students to write about their podcast topic before we workshopped a few topics as a class to narrow the scope through various sub-aspects of the issue. After modeling this sort of brainstorming activity, students worked in small groups to generate ways to narrow their focuses.

Next I had the class create a plan of action by mapping out their respective rhetorical situations: their audiences, exigences, and purposes. Then, we discussed rhetorical choices (e.g., cheery music to complement a humorous episode or solemn music for a more serious effect) that would help to have certain effects on listeners. We subsequently developed goals and timelines so that students could identify manageable tasks and be accountable to themselves. In subsequent class meetings, we talked about if the goals were met and how to overcome the obstacles they faced.

Last, I devoted some class sessions to workshopping so that students could have a dedicated space to work. During workshops, I was available to answer questions, help troubleshoot software issues, discuss rhetorical choices they were making, assist in finding royalty-free audio, and provide advice on crediting sources. (A particular challenge I faced was that students were using a variety of software and devices to record and edit their episodes; I showed some features of Audacity and tried to help students transfer that knowledge to other software.)

The assignment was a success. Students created unique podcast episodes touching on different issues, such as answering questions about why people are distracted while driving, how a student personally overcame obesity, and how legalizing marijuana affects the U.S. economy. Some students paired up and started a dialogue, having guest interviews come on their show. Another student wanted to avoid the risk of using copyrighted sounds and music, so he vocalized all the sound effects himself for comedic effect.

Overall, because of how I implemented our program's scaffolding for the podcast unit, the students produced creative and compelling podcast episodes. Analyzing existing podcast episodes helped students understand conventions of podcast episodes and potential possibilities for how to design and arrange a podcast episode. Having the freedom to investigate their own issues engendered a passion for the project. Planning out the rhetorical situation and production of the episodes made it easier to bring the students' abstract ideas to concrete sounds. And devoting class time to workshops allowed for time for troubleshooting and fine-tuning final touches to their episodes. Thus, I am proud of what my students accomplished and the obstacles they overcame, and I believe they were surprised by their own achievements.

Sierra Sinor: Teaching New Media in a Low-Technology Classroom: Mistakes Were Made

In fall 2018 I was a new master's student in the Technical Communication and Rhetoric program at Texas Tech. I taught two English 1301 discussion sections, each with 25 students, most of whom were first-semester college students and over half of whom were first-generation college students. Neither of my classrooms had a computer, reliable outlets, or any real access to recent technologies—we had chalkboards and chalk. Instead of relying on digital technologies to teach my students, I used interactive lessons and games to build an environment that encouraged exploration, risk-taking, and mistakes that translated to confidence, creativity, and self-sufficiency in their final podcast assignment. While many in the field might believe we need high-tech classrooms "where more direct teaching and learning with digital technologies could occur" (Adsanatham et al., 2013, p. 285), I follow Douglas M. Walls, Scott Schopieray, and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss (2009) in understanding classroom spaces as interfaces that can be "hacked" by instructors who "can make that space useful and more pedagogically appropriate in the context of that class and that semester" (p. 275).

Because I wasn't familiar with podcasts, I had to Google "what is a podcast?" To my surprise, it was not a thing an injured green bean wears. Vegetable-based medical care might have been easier for me to grapple with emotionally as a teacher who was preparing to confront the complicated prospect of teaching a technology-based assignment in a classroom devoid of modern technology. I couldn't draw on personal past experiences or effectively demonstrate the use of the platforms (given my classroom), but I do know what a medical plaster cast looks like.

I was transparent with my students about my inexperience with podcasts and related composing technologies and shared with them when I struggled with technologies, too. I reinforced that messing up was not a death sentence but never trying was. My classrooms became a place to reduce the stigma around mistake-making and to collaboratively normalize failure. To cultivate this environment, I implemented various practices to get my students both physically and mentally engaged in their learning.

One strategy was to have students write their podcast/technology problems on the chalkboards; I asked everyone to stand by issues representing their top frustration. Often another student in class had the answer for these issues and could explain the solution. If no one could explain it, a team of volunteers would research the answer using their phones or personal laptops and then explain the solution to the class. This sort of classroom "hacking" (Walls, Schopieray, & DeVoss, 2009) encouraged students' initiative and problem-solving that then translated to their work outside of the classroom on their podcasts. They were finding answers for themselves and each other. They were claiming ownership of their learning process and taking the initiative to find solutions.

I made our lessons interactive: instead of lecturing about rhetorical situations, which they needed to consider as they structured their podcasts for a selected audience, I provided each group creative prompts and asked them to build responses and deliver them to the class with their justifications. In playing with these diverse prompts, students gained familiarity with oral delivery of their information as required in their podcasts, as well as thought through their choices and made mistakes in an environment that was supportive and safe.

These kinds of interactive activities in class allowed me to push students to ask questions, defend their claims, and become confident in their work. These were games we played in class. In games, sometimes you make mistakes. Instead of this being a shameful experience, within this environment we could laugh and then ask, "What would make this better?"

This lack of recent technology in my classroom—which initially terrified me—led to these "hacks" and practices that cultivated a classroom environment which encouraged my students to get up and get involved in their own learning. I got to be a part of an environment that didn't just accept mistakes but also sparked risk-taking, confidence, and self-efficacy. I learned that the people in my class were good humans, and they were perfectly capable of accomplishing the goals that I put in front of them. Yes, they made mistakes, but mistakes, in a supportive environment, are essential to learning both individually and collectively. As much as I wanted to, I could not simply transmit information to them or force them to do the work. However, I was straightforward and clear with what I expected from them, and I upheld those standards. I trusted them to do their work in and outside of my classrooms, and dammit if that isn't exactly what they did.

Michelle Flahive: Disrupting Appropriateness Approaches in FYW with Podcasts

During the 2018–2019 year, I taught two sections of FYW per semester as a first-year Ph.D. student. One challenge that students had in this unit was deciding how to select tone and voice for their podcast episode. Not only was the genre itself new to many students, but the blending of the podcast genre with inquiry and research left students unsure of whether they should (as the episode hosts and researchers) enact the voices of podcast hosts or scientific researchers. To help students strategize for selecting tone, voice, and style, I built activities into our unit which drew students' attention to the commonplaces of genre and audience awareness in academic discourse—particularly by relying on students' own discursive practices. Activities that denaturalize standardized linguistic practices work to disrupt appropriateness pedagogies—pedagogies that devalue the discourse practices of minority students by using U.S. dominant linguistic forms as a standard of appropriate discourse in academia (Flores & Rosa, 2015). One of my goals with the activity I describe below, then, was to help students see voice "as a phenomenon that has import . . . in being a *thing* heard, perceived, and reconstructed" (Royster, 1996, p. 30).

Activity

An example of a three-part activity, meant to draw student attention to genre choices, took most of one class period in this unit. At this point, students had already drafted a driving inquiry question. The activity followed a three-part sequence in which students practiced guided reflection through free-writing, engaged in collaborative discussion in a group activity, and participated in a class discussion:

1. Free-Write: Students reflected on our previous three assignments and the choices that they made in tone and style for each assignment and how those choices affected their audiences.
2. Group Discussion: Students shared their examples and were challenged to ask questions about and/or contribute to each other's examples. Then, I asked students to imagine that they had to convey this same purpose to a different audience orally (e.g., friends, family, classmates in a history or biology class) and give three examples of changes that they would make in their message (like choices in vocabulary, sentence structure, length, etc.).
3. Class Discussion: I asked each group to give examples from their discussion of the difference audiences to whom their messages were directed. As students listed audiences, I listed them on the board. I then asked for examples of changes students would make to their message in order to present an oral argument to each audience. As a class, we discussed why we would make changes to tone and style by reviewing ethos as a relationship between the rhetor and the audience and exploring the implications of those changes for being heard and listened to.

Discussion

Implementing activities like the one described above provided space to discuss strategies for selecting tone, voice, and style by exploring examples that were authentic to students' own experiences. During discussion, students identified changes they would make in vocabulary, diction, and style based on context and how those choices affect trust and credibility among students' various discourse communities. Students gave examples of idioms, slang, vocabulary, and grammatical structures that they use in different contexts and discussed how they make those choices. Practicing tone, voice, and style selection in a low-stakes environment also provided the opportunity for students to carefully consider who their podcast audiences might be and which types of choices would best reach those audiences. Examples of student podcast episodes with statement of goals and choices in these sections reflected thoughtful consideration of audience expectations. By implementing these types of activities, I was able to provide opportunities for students to tap into their own experiences as social capital, thereby bringing authentic context to the classroom while valuing students' discursive practices.

Leah Heilig: Transcription as Play

My first experience teaching podcasts was in fall 2018, when I was a fourth-year Ph.D. student teaching English 1301 and serving as Assistant Director in the program. With this assignment, I wanted to emphasize the importance of accessible content. A quick formula to describe disability is "ability + barrier = disability" (Horton & Quesenbery, 2014, p. 3). Individual impairment is a false construct made by barriers that are built to exclude. Podcasts have a clear barrier to accessibility: they rely on sound for access. When they are assigned in composition classrooms, instructors have a responsibility to account for podcasts' ostracizing nature.

Sean Zdenek's (2009) work, as well as a collective response posted to the WPA Listserv (Brueggemann et al., 2018), made it clear transcription improves accessibility. But when made mandatory in my class, transcripts were not always well received. I'm not going to say my students didn't care about transcripts. Many are more aware of transcription's importance than I am. The impressions I'm about to outline aren't from student apathy. They're from frustration, stress, and poor communication on my part. Transcription felt redundant to students: why ask for a document saying the same thing as their podcasts? They saw it as extra work that overwhelmed them when they already had many other demands on their time. Transcription is often a new skill added onto a complex assignment. I can't offer infallible pedagogies for resolving these concerns. Transcriptions are hard. There's no way to mitigate their time-intensive nature. But I do think we can make them less redundant. I offer the frame of creative play as one way to do that.

"Play" is centered on observational discovery, allowing flexible guidelines for problem-solving (Gruber, 2017). To make transcription playful, I experimented with what I'm calling ADEPT: Analyze, Design, Experiment, Prioritize, and Translate.

Analyze

Creating transcripts is assumed to be just for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing people, but their accessibility has wider impact. Technology fails. Someone forgets headphones. Maybe a listener hates someone's voice. Determining who transcripts are for therefore requires not only an audience analysis, but an analysis of the contexts in which these audiences "listen." Repositioning transcripts in terms of *situation* transforms transcripts from a retrofitted document to having rhetorical merit.

Design, Experiment, and Prioritize

Transcripts are also a site to **Experiment** and **Design** BEcauSe TYpE **af-fects~! TONE**. Transcripts are often considered `flat or boring`, reinforced when transcripts are divorced from audience. Comic Sans, for instance, elicits immediate associations. Transcripts can work *with* audio-based projects. When prioritized, they allow for experimentation, playing with rhetorical choices—such as music and structure—before committing to the time-intensive work of editing audio. Transcripts are low-fidelity; they save time.

Translate

Transcription decisions are not divorced from cultural knowledge. An exercise I've used, adapted from a similar exercise given to me as a graduate student in a web accessibility class taught by Sean Zdenek, is to ask for a description of "The Imperial March" from *Star Wars* to someone who has never heard it. What results are questions regarding context. Who hasn't seen *Star Wars*? Why does someone need it? Sometimes, even, what is "The Imperial March"? These questions facilitate a range of answers—experiments. The prompt may seem basic, but it highlights translation: who is the audience? Why are they listening? Where might descriptions be unclear or contested?

A more inclusive pedagogy ascribes value to transcription. Transcription can be **MALLEABLE**, emphasizing rhetoricity. Play, hopefully, makes transcription less redundant and more intentional.

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Student Reflections on Digital Literacy

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Scholars in composition have been advocating reflections and ePortfolios over the past few decades. Transfer of writing skills from one context or mode to another is among the primary benefits of reflective writing. Our own multimodal writing program has embraced ePortfolios as a learning tool and space for reflections. In an effort to understand and refine our locally developed ePortfolio platform, we have been analyzing student reflections since 2016. For this project, we collected a corpus of student reflections from more than 1,000 ePortfolios, and in this paper we describe and demonstrate two methods we are considering for systematically analyzing student reflections for programmatic assessment, focusing specifically on improving student transfer and meta-awareness in digital composition. Our corpus contains multiple subcorpra, but for this project we focus on student reflections about electronic communication. Findings support ePortfolios as a space for students to take ownership of their digital composition. Further, this study emphasizes the value of mixed-methods approaches to composition studies.

Students in our department's writing classes are often enthusiastic (and at times surprised) by the variety of genres and technologies we address. Their reactions are not the result of the unusual nature of our approaches, but they are the result of the persistent belief that writing classes are strictly about language training or dominated by the traditional essay format. In reality, technology and writing instruction have a long history we can point to (Palmeri & McCorkle, 2017). Almost twenty years ago, coinciding with strong calls for multimodality and multiple literacies (Lunsford, 2006; Selfe, 1999; The New London Group, 1996), our (large Midwestern public research) university developed a multimodal, writing across the curriculum program. One of the newer elements of the program is our locally developed and managed ePortfolio platform (Lutz, Blakely, Rose, & Ballard, 2016; Lutz, O'Connell, & York, 2014). Recently, our ePortfolio initiative has become an integrated practice into all sections of our first- and second-year required writing courses. Because the system has been developed and managed in our program, we have been able to use it as a site for programmatic assessment and research.

This paper presents the methods and some initial findings of a mixed-meth-

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ods study we've conducted concerning composition student reflections on their digital literacy with the goal of developing practices to increase student transfer and self-awareness in digital composition. First, we'll discuss some of the existing literature surrounding ePortfolios, transfer, and multimodal writing. Then, we'll connect it to our position within the writing program and how it relates to this ongoing project. This will follow with a focus on the mixed-methods analysis we conducted on a selection of ePortfolios. After an overview of the results, we briefly explore implications for future research into student writing using ePortfolios.

ePortfolios, Transfer, and Multimodal Writing

The use of portfolios has been a benchmark in first-year writing for years, and the popularity of content management systems like WordPress or Drupal has made it possible for programs and instructors to utilize ePortfolios as a digital space for students to practice reflection and multimodal composition. Scholars such as Miles Kimball (2005) considered the benefits but also challenges of using an online system, warning instructors to align ePortfolio practice with portfolio pedagogy. This can be maintained, he argued, through actions that include the continuation of meaningful reflections. In the years since Kimball's work, researchers have continued to explore and advocate for ePortfolios, particularly for its potential to support writing, reflection, and knowledge transfer (Blakely, 2016; Cambridge, Cambridge, & Yancey, 2009; Jenson, 2011; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak, 2014). Because of this scholarship, our department recognizes ePortfolios as an active space for multimodal composition which is incorporated into both introductory writing courses within the program.

As programs across the country continue to adopt multimodal composition and ePortfolios into their writing courses, the need for research on the success of these practices grows. Studies show that students' identification of the "perceived similarity" between composing and online composing within the context of their own writing increases the likelihood of transfer (Shepherd, 2018). In addition, meta-awareness has been used to promote the creation of multimodal content through transfer, remediation awareness, and elements of adaptive remediation such as literacy linking (Alexander, DePalma, & Ringer, 2016; DePalma, 2015). Methods of analyzing the success of the implementation of these ideas are largely qualitative, relying on interviews and surveys as data. Although these methods have proven valid and applicable, there is inherent value in exploring a range of methods, and the call for empirical research in writing studies (Haswell, 2005) leaves us searching for ways to incorporate quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to scholarship.

ISUComm, WOVE, and ePortfolios

ISUComm is Iowa State University's communication-across-the-curriculum initiative. The goal of ISUComm is to strengthen student communication and enhance students' critical thinking skills by creating opportunities for them to practice communication skills throughout their academic careers. Students are required to take an ISUComm course every year of their time at Iowa State, including two foundation level, one advanced course, and one in their major. When ISUComm was developed, it adopted the WOVE (written, oral, visual, and electronic) model for thinking about communication. The WOVE model of communication emphasizes each mode of communication as an equal contributor to composition in first-year writing courses and continues into advanced composition courses. ePortfolios are used to emphasize the importance of digital literacy and the process of remediation. The program, therefore, requires students to engage with and produce forms of communication across a range of modes and media types because of their relevance in the world outside of composition (advertisements, websites, etc.). To help emphasize the electronic portion of the curricula, or the ability to create, understand, and analyze content online, graduate students and faculty developed an ePortfolio platform now known as ISUComm ePortfolios (Blakely, 2016).

ISUComm ePortfolios is the platform developed at our university for use in our classes. It is a customized multi-network WordPress installation with setting, themes, and plugins that connect it to our university network, ensure student privacy, and give students substantial, although not unlimited, control over their own WordPress site. ISUComm ePortfolios were developed as a space for students to curate a collection of their work and write reflections about the kinds of communication they work on in our writing courses. It is also a powerful teaching tool that gives teachers and our support team needed access to student sites to facilitate learning and troubleshoot challenges that students encounter.

Investigating Student Writing

The most emphasized portions of the portfolio are the reflective elements, where students are encouraged to think back on their writing process, choices, and experiences. At our institution, as the use of ePortfolios continues to grow, we are continually working to improve the ways we use ePortfolios in our courses. While the system was developed and managed by our writing program, students are free to continue using the system throughout their university careers, promoting the transfer of composition beyond the introductory writing course.

For our writing program, the system is a beneficial tool as a means of assessing student writing as well as helping students develop a better understanding of electronic communication through reflection and digital composition. Once ISUComm ePortfolios were in use, their potential for investigating became clear. In one sense, ePortfolios have become a large repository of student writing representing hundreds of courses across a period of years. And the collection continues to grow each semester. In our courses, students are asked to write reflections about the projects they are working on, such as textual and visual analyses. Over the course of the semester, students are asked to collect their work and write more targeted reflections that incorporate examples of their work with written, oral, visual and electronic modes of communication. To assess these reflections, instructors use a rubric with 5 components:

1. Supports claims with evidence from their own work
2. Makes connections (between assignments, across courses, across contexts)
3. Addresses specific choices about their writing (especially about feedback)
4. Makes inferences and analyzes (not simply a narration or list of tasks)
5. Uses terminology specific to the assignment, objective, and rhetorical aims

We don't use these categories solely for evaluating students in class, however. Like other writing programs, our program regularly engages in programmatic assessment. Over the past few years, the programmatic assessment process has involved collecting data through the evaluation of student ePortfolios. These rubric categories are the same categories used for our programmatic assessment initiative, and at the end of each semester, a random stratified sample of ePortfolios is rated for how well the students achieve these objectives. The program assessment has helped us to refine our assignment prompts to be more direct and explicit about the task of reflection in our writing classes. However, the current practice of random sampling and rating is time consuming and limited in scope. The research presented here is, in part, an attempt to find additional avenues for systematically and empirically assessing student writing using ePortfolio reflections.

Special Reflection on Electronic Communication

In conjunction with programmatic assessment, we continue to research ways to promote transfer and meta-awareness in the digital composition process. To ensure students are thinking about how they communicate and create content on the web (or electronic communication), students are prompted to write a special reflection on their electronic communication. This assignment requires students to write a reflection about the ways they've composed online during the semester, and how it has impacted their understanding of digital spaces. In their reflection description, the following questions are asked:

What are the advantages to being able to author web content, rather than merely being able to browse it?

- What does web composing give you the power to do as you communicate with a particular audience?
- How is web composing similar to and different from other types of communication you have done in the past?
- Now that you've become a web composer, what do you see yourself being able to do with these skills and abilities in your personal, professional, and/or academic life? (Remember that not all the skills and abilities you have developed are technical!)

Asking students these questions allows them to reflect on how their use of the ePortfolio has impacted their digital literacy directly and during the composition process, which provides us the opportunity to assess their meta-awareness within their project rather than after its completion.

Methods: Striving to be RAD

Based on the existing literature within ePortfolios, transfer, and multimodal writing and our existing corpus of student reflections on electronic communication, we chose to conduct a mixed-method analysis of our ePortfolios to determine how students were understanding their relationship to digital composition, specifically how they believe the ePortfolio has impacted their digital literacy. What follows is a report on the methods, some initial results, and a brief discussion.

Our approach for this project involved three stages. First, we collected a corpus of student reflections on electronic communication. Then we conducted a qualitative thematic analysis alongside a keyword analysis of student reflections on electronic communication. In both the thematic analysis and the keyword analysis, we were attempting to characterize the content that was written, the main claims being made, and the evidence used to support these claims to better understand the student perspective on electronic communication.

The corpus for this project contains student work from ePortfolios created between 2017 and 2018, during which time our research team collected consent from students to study ePortfolio reflections. In total, we gathered data from 1021 student ePortfolios and after removing empty pages and sorting the results, the final corpus contains 4742 pages of student writing (Table 1). The number of sites included in the collection process is relatively small compared to the number of users on our platform due to our IRB constraints; however, we are working with institutional stakeholders to expand our research efforts in the future.

To gather texts for analysis, we wrote a Python application to save JSON files containing page information from WordPress's REST API. Then we processed the data using a second Python script to extract page content from the JSON data, saving each page as a single text file. The resulting corpus is a collection of text files, and each text file is named based on the title of the webpage and contains the text written by a student. Not all ePortfolios in the study were complete, and some students used titles that did not identify the content clearly. Still, students in our writing classrooms created ePortfolios following an assignment structure, so we were able to manually sort the text files into 10 subcorpra based on their titles. Since our program focuses on written, oral, visual, and electronic (WOVE) modes of communication, we were able to identify reflections on each mode using the title of the pages (pages on the ePortfolio are separated based on mode). Our target subcorpus for this study, electronic communication, contains 656 text files (Table 2).

Table 1. Student reflection corpus

Unit	Number
Student ePortfolios	1021
Pages of Student Writing	4742
Word Tokens	1,778,071
Word Types	21,749

Table 2. Mode based subcorpra

	Pages	Word Types	Word Tokens	Type/Token Ratio	Tokens Per Page
Written	454	8,577	208,841	.0411	460
Oral	439	5,945	125,171	.0475	285
Visual	427	6,423	131,993	.0487	309
Electronic	656	6,327	200,099	.0316	305

Thematic Analysis

For the qualitative methods portion of this project, we conducted a thematic analysis of a reflection within a sample of ePortfolios, specifically those dedicated to electronic communication. We gathered a total of 654 reflections, and from this selection we randomly sampled 70. From these 70, 35 were analyzed as part of our pilot study to determine what themes or codes we could identify before moving forward. During an initial analysis, a total of six primary codes were identified (Table 3). These codes ranged from advantages of creating an ePortfolio to references to tools such as WordPress or Google Sites. After the codebook was established, coding was completed using the qualitative analysis software NVivo. The codes we established were based on preliminary themes we identified within the reflections. Advantages, for example, was coded when students reflected on the benefits of learning to compose electronically. Challenges was used when students reflected on negative experiences or setbacks to using electronic communication.

Table 3. Codes and occurrences of the thematic analysis

Codes	Reflections	Instances
Advantages	29	61
Challenges	10	16
Future	15	29
Multimodal Communication	16	21
Social Media	5	6
Tools	14	18

Keyword Analysis

To conduct the keyword analysis, we compared the sub corpus on student reflections on electronic communication to the other samples of student writing as a reference using Log-Likelihood. The tool we used was AntConc 3.5.8. Initially, the comparison yielded a list of keywords that we sorted by keyness for further analysis. After reviewing the top keywords we selectively reviewed Key Words in Context (KWIC) lines to better understand how the keywords were being used in context. Below we present only a small sample of the findings.

Results

In the space here, we cannot fully address the codes in the thematic analysis, nor can we detail the uses of each keyword from the keyword analysis. Those findings will need to be reported in a later project. For now, both the thematic analysis and the keyword analysis reflect the idea that students believe producing digital media is a valuable activity. We make this claim based on the number of instances students were noted reflecting on the advantages of using electronic communication as well as the key recurring key words within the same corpus of reflections. It should be noted that students may be inclined to affirm the importance of class curricula, as they perceive their grade being dependent on affirming the value of class content. However, the specificity and variety of student observations may be more telling.

Thematic Analysis

In this paper, we will focus on the advantages themes since they occur the most often across samples. After seeing that the advantages theme was the most frequently occurring theme within the reflections, we were eager to explore it further. As a frequently occurring theme, it can provide us with some insight into how students interact with the ePortfolio and their understanding of electronic communication.

There is a direct question within the assignment that asks students to reflect on the advantages of online communication, but we wanted to know what advantages students were identifying and how they were talking about them. We went through the excerpts from the reflections where students talked about advantages they felt they had after creating an ePortfolio. Some subthemes that emerged revolved a lot around agency. Several students explained the power, control, or allowance using an ePortfolio gave them over their ability to communicate with others on the web. Below is an example that represents expressions of agency that were identified within the reflections.

The example comes from a student writing about web composition and reaching audiences. The student wrote, "That advantage is that you are able to personalize it, and make it you [sic] own and have it reflect who you are as a person…web composing gives you the power to personalize in order to communicate to which ever audience you wish." This student focuses on the ways in which web composing extends their ability to reach an audience. Observations like these reflect the relevance of electronic communication in the lives of our students. Creating an online representation of their work has helped them think about the way they construct information and how they engage with audience.

Keyword Analysis

The keywords listed here had a high keyness value, indicating that they are statistically much more frequent than in the rest of the corpus (Table 4). The words with the highest keyness (website, web, electronic, etc.) in the list reflect the primary subject matter for the pages. Students are specifically writing about electronic forms of communication on their ISUComm ePortfolio, so they are usually discussing the web. Sorting through the list is a starting point for characterizing the content of the pages. On a first glance, the words with the highest keyness value may seem obvious. But going down the list we can see some interesting groupings emerge.

Table 4. Selected keywords representing the subcorpus of student reflections on electronic communication.

Term	Keyness	Term	Keyness	Term	Keyness
Website	3977.76	Own	549.16	Power	274.83
Web	3453.14	Your	547.99	Design	239.13
Electronic	1144.29	Create	529.59	Advantage	200.51
Composing	1127.01	Able	497.51	Easy	199.77
ePortfolio	1106.22	Author	434.2	Professional	186.51
Site	1050.78	Allows	396.76	Personal	186.02
Content	1015.23	Can	326.68	Designing	181.64
Creating	881.33	Composer	313.99	Reach	153.07
You	807	Control	307.11		
Advantages	634.06	Gives	302.62		

Further down the list we see words focused on creating, words such as *creating*, *create*, *composer*, *design,* and *designing*. These words are related to the students discussing what it means to make digital artifacts, not simply consume them, and when students use these words, they are talking about themselves as creators of digital and multimodal texts. This is important to show that our classes are working to bridge the consumption production divide that we see with multimodal composition.

Another group of terms we can see are words that are associated with control and ownership: *you*, *own*, *your*, *author*, *can*, and *control*. These terms show that students are invested in the ways they can personally engage with digital production. And a final group we can see focuses on the power and advantages of electronic communication: *advantages*, *able*, *allows*, *gives*, *power*, *easy*, and *reach*. Reviewing these groups of terms shows that students are identifying as creators and view the work as empowering, relevant, and manageable.

Looking a bit closer at two of the words together there are some more interesting findings. The list of keywords shows both *you* and *can*, and a closer examination reveals that students often use the phrase "you can" followed by the verbs listed in Table 5. The verbs that follow the phrase "you can" reflect the ways students feel empowered when working with their ePortfolio.

Table 5. Common verbs following the phrase "you can"

You can:		
Add	Control	Edit
Appeal	Create	Find
Change	Customize	Learn
Choose	Do	Make

Discussion and Conclusion

Through our independent analysis, we both noted a significant focus on ownership and power. Students expressed investment in the use of digital tools to create electronic forms of communication.

Because of our findings, we support the following claims:

- Providing spaces for students to become meta-aware of their composition allows students to take ownership of digital composing.
- Mixed-method approaches help us determine how students are reflecting on their experiences.

Limitations and Future Research

There are, of course, some important limitations in the research presented here, which space limitations do not allow us to fully address. Researchers face obstacles when conducting research that involves collecting and studying authentic student writing. One of the challenges for researchers is sorting and analyzing data. Fortunately for researchers, the challenges that are involved also represent rich opportunities for further study. Using what we have gathered here, we plan to refine our collection and sampling procedures and work with additional researchers who will look at the data from new angles. As we do so, we also plan to stratify the data by demographic data, performance in the class, and writing features.

Although most studies concerning transfer and multimodality use qualitative methods for assessment, we found a mixed-method approach allowed for a wider variety of data collection from our students. Eventually, we look forward to introducing interventions and varying the writing prompt to determine the best strategies for promoting meta-awareness and transfer amongst first year writing students.

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Digital Rhetoric and Gatekeepers of Knowledge: AlMaghrib Institute, Islamic Pedagogy, and Authority in Neoliberal America

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This selection from my mix-methods project focuses on the Muslim American community and the new class of authority that has risen—a digitally savvy rhetorical authority as opposed to the traditional Islamic model with a developed pedagogy. Online information credibility and digital literacy research has shined light on the heuristic strategies of the general populace as it becomes increasingly taxing for an individual to sift through misinformation. Even digital native millennials have been found to overestimate their literacy skills as seen in studies of college-aged students, something that is corroborated in my own work. I build upon these findings to determine the implications of the digital search for Islamic knowledge and the extent to which literal interpretations of the faith have forced their way into mainstream discourse through neoliberal and hyper-capitalist ideologies, skewing the notion of religious normativity in America and degrading Islamic knowledge to a form of intangible capital, useful only for its passive transfer and ability to produce data for the new class of authority. I examine closely one organization in particular, AlMaghrib Institute, which utilizes this specific type of digital rhetoric.

Capitalist Pedagogy

Tradition in Islam has become an increasingly politicized term, one that can be used by groups of varying orientations (perhaps most notably *Salafi* and *Wahhabi* groups that make literal interpretations of religious scripture) to establish themselves as the more genuine Islamic authority. The irony of the modern interpretation of the term is that it often paints the traditional group as being antiquated and in numerous other ways outdated. And yet tradition is not some kind of stagnant status in Islam, rather it refers to a very much alive practice that has changed over a period of over 1400 years. Islamic tradition can then be viewed as the rhetorical form around knowledge transfer, passed down from the Greeks and built upon by Muslim intellectuals, and does not refer solely to the substance of the knowledge. Rhetoric goes hand-

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in-hand with knowledge traditions, regardless of whether or not it is used in a noble process of transfer. While Aristotle (1957) despised the use of "empty speak" rhetoric by sophists in their condemnation of Socrates, he would validate, as all scholars of rhetoric must, its close relationship to knowledge. As Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (2000) explained, "rhetoric is synonymous with meaning, for meaning is in use and context, not words themselves. Knowledge and belief are products of persuasion, which seeks to make the arguable seem natural, to turn positions into premises—and it is rhetoric's responsibility to reveal these ideological operations" (p. 14). Thus, in order to understand the state of Islamic society and its relationship to knowledge, you must look at the rhetorical practices around it—which reveal its "ideological operations" which I interpret to include its motivations. Furthermore, it is necessary to focus on digital rhetoric given its pervasiveness in modern discourse—be it political or religious in nature. As Barbara Warnick (2009) called for more case studies of online political mobilization and "rhetorical criticism of positive instances of the use of new media technologies," an area of criticism that she characterized as "noticeably under-researched" (p. 19). I would add that it is also necessary to examine the use of digital rhetoric as a means to replace traditional pedagogical forms—i.e. online education that removes key components of Eastern knowledge traditions like Islam. Extending this to Muslim Americans, we can see a pattern in which Islamic authorities treat the individual as receptacle of information (or producer of data to be used later for their own purpose) and not a carrier of knowledge.

In the following sections, I will first give a brief overview of recent influence over Islamic pedagogical and rhetorical traditions as well as the neoliberal reality that has consumed all things digital. I will then highlight several aspects of my case study on AlMaghrib Institute, a hybrid educational organization that relies heavily on digital rhetoric, while utilizing the work of Warnick (2007), Gary Bunt (2009), Douglas Eyman (2015), and Richard Lanham (2007) to unpack the rhetorical and capitalist motivations behind their digital practice. I argue that a neoliberal sensibility has subverted traditional Islamic pedagogical practices. Accordingly, Islamic organizations have turned to a kind of digital rhetoric orientated toward "attention economics" as Lanham would say. I end this paper with my call for online Islamic educational organizations to turn to rhetoric, communication, and writing scholars in order to avoid the pitfalls of shoddy, myopic, and capitalist-motivated pedagogy.

Islamic Tradition and the Unavoidable Neoliberal Tinge

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Western presence (be it through direct colonial governments or indirect trade and political influence) brought with it an education system designed to "educate Muslims in their own lands against everything that Islam stood for" (Nasr, 2012, p. 10). A blatant Orientalist and missionary-like message in the classroom was paired with increased and cheaper production of Western literature (due to the paradigm-shifting power of the printing press)—all leading toward the deeply rooted inferiority complex that plagues most post-colonial lands. The result was a dual education system, creating a disparate view of Islamic and Western knowledge in society. Islamic Studies scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2012), himself having been a student and teacher in both styles of education, remarked on this divide and its importance to the Muslim world today:

Since Islam is a religion based upon *tawhid*, upon unity, you simply cannot continue to train students according to two different worldviews and also with a compartmentalized mind; it is crippling. Nearly every student in American universities today has a compartmentalized mind, and religion remains intellectually on the margin [….] The integration of knowledge has been destroyed. (p. 11)

> A compartmentalized mind as Nasr described it results in a modernist group of Muslims and modernist style of education that is actually secularized. Muslim Americans might consider themselves to be "orthodox" or "conservative" theologically, yet their minds operate in a purely secular and "scientistic" manner. I would add that this "scientistic" mindset of modern Muslims in America has melded with neoliberal ideology that "subsumes and consumes all of previous history" (Fisher, 2007). In this sense, the "God" they worship is not just science but the actual attainment of wealth, prestige, power, and societal status. Indeed, imbued in the digital rhetoric of Islamic institutions like AlMaghrib and their most prominent scholars (many of whom have dual educational background like Nasr, often from both American and Islamic schools and often times in STEM and religious fields) is a hyper-capitalist mindset that de-emphasizes traditional pedagogical practices.

The marketization of Islam is not unique, nor is the neoliberal framework through which I critique the rhetorical practices of Islamic authority (see Bunt, 2009 for his critique of what he calls the modern "Islamic Knowledge Economy" that exists largely in cyberspace). And to be clear, when I utilize a neoliberal critique of the Internet and digital rhetoric, I am not stating that all digital media are engrained in a white American hyper-capitalist mindset. Non-white cultures must be given credit for their contributions to digital media. For example, Angela Haas (2007) wrote about wampum belts in Indigenous American cultures situating Native Americans as techno savvy and with a long intellectual tradition.

It is then more prudent to take a critical look at the overriding influence of a white, western ideology like neoliberalism, which envelops other cultures (and really, everything) in its purview much like colonial powers once did to the Other nations (and of course this influence still manifests through postcolonial economies, education systems, etc.). This all-encompassing nature is the reason neoliberalism becomes the appropriate manner of viewing American Islamic authority. Neoliberalism has done something to us, individual humans—not just the various technologies and online spaces we navigate. As Wendy Brown (2017) wrote in her own critique: "neoliberal rationality disseminates the model of the market to all domains and activities—even where money is not at issue—and configures human beings exhaustively as market actors, always, only, and everywhere as homo economicus" (p. 31). Brown's term "homo economicus" is essential in understanding why neoliberalism is the framework for which we must now understand all social developments. The term indicates a disintegration of the individual human (as seen in metadata aggregating processes of web-based platforms like Google, Facebook, and Twitter), and I would agree with Brown's deeply affective statements that underline her thesis: that "neoliberalism is the rationality through which capitalism finally swallows humanity" (p. 44). The de-emphasis of the individual here directly undermines the Islamic tradition's high value on student-teacher relationships, that is face-to-face and human-centric interactions. This de-emphasis is paired with a number of other neoliberal transformations of society, one being the concern for speculative value over actual tangible currency. Ironically, neoliberalism strives to undermine authority by gaining popular support as an anti-elitist, pseudo-populist, and increasingly anti-intellectual movement. It despises regulation and gatekeeping of any sort, which once again disrupts Islamic tradition and its explicitly laid out terms like *mujtahid*—a difficult-to-attain title charged as being a custodian of knowledge. Neoliberalism opposes any such closed and opaque structure—deeming it as anti-freedom and anti-democratic. As Nathaniel Tkacz (2005) wrote in his work focused on Wikipedia and online consensus-based platforms: "neoliberalism is one response to the closed society. . . one articulation of openness" (p. 179). For a tradition like Islam that has relied on a strict gatekeeping structure through the religiously trained elite (*'ulama* in Arabic) with its various categories of authority, neoliberalism and indeed digital technology at large threaten the previously held pedagogical paradigm. The marketization of all spheres of life displaces traditional pedagogy and changes how Muslims view knowledge in a 21st century digital environment.

Extending this to Islamic organizations, we can see a similar pattern in which these digital age authorities treat the individual as receptacle of information (or producer of data), and not a carrier of knowledge. This neoliberal paradigm relegates the individual even while it markets itself as empowering. It was not until the years in which Islamic authority began taking form in America (as the majority of second generation Muslim American immigrants came of age in the 90's, correlating with the tech boom of the 90's) that a shift from the "traditional" and person-to-person education system in Islam to a re-mediated digital companion started to occur. While some authority felt comfortable engaging in a pluralist rhetorical tradition (like Zaytuna College that draws upon Western rhetorical tradition as well), producing Islamic knowledge in a specifically American context, others looked to modernist movements from the Muslim world (*Salafi*, *Wahhabi*, and other "revivalist" philosophies) and paired them with a specifically American ideology—namely the hyper-capitalist and neoliberal policies creating what Mark Fisher (2009) would call "capitalist realism" in which no other options exist. One such institute I examine prefers the term "orthodox" to establish themselves as unchanging, established, and widely accepted—and yet they do no acknowledge the obvious modernist influence, be it from the Saudi institution that educated its founder and many of its teachers or the neoliberal ideology woven into its fabric.

A Neoliberal Institute

AlMaghrib was founded in 2002 by Ustaadh Muhammad Alshareef, who is based in Ottawa, Canada. It has operated in several countries, although most of their activity remains in the United States. As Bunt (2009) mentioned in *iMuslims*, Alshareef founded the institute seemingly focused on Muslim youth growing up in the West (US and Canada at first) as evidenced in their use of vernacular: "AlMaghrib in MEmpHIS: Everyone's Saying Yyyyyeaaahhhh!!!!" (p. 122). Indeed, given the language used it appears clear AlMaghrib targets a younger audience, using pop culture as a backdrop for cultivating community. For example, their site lists one of its teachers with this description: "Shaykh Kamal El Mekki has been dubbed the Black Belt of Dawah." For Richard Lanham (2006), this type of vernacular persuasion that so directly speaks to a certain youth culture in an "economics of attention." Lanham, a scholar of rhetoric who turned his sights to the "information economy," stated plainly that "attracting attention is what style is all about. If attention is now at the center of the economy rather than stuff, then so is style" (p. xi-xii). This assessment of modern rhetoric amounts to the same kind of "empty speak" that Aristotle warned us about, though it does not preclude the ideological substance beneath the style. Lanham went on to describe that “style and substance, fluff and stuff are loose and baggy categories but useful ones even so” (p. 157). The fluff is the stuff. When AlMaghrib uses culture references and social media-speak, the pervasiveness of such a rhetorical style is actually revealing the organization’s true motivations. It is noteworthy then that this style can be seen all throughout AlMaghrib’s digital presence. The organization is closely associated with numerous websites and social media accounts through their instructors and administrative leaders, linking to each other for various events, articles, seminars, etc., forming an extended network, or as Eyman (2015) would call them “ecologies of circulation,” of like-minded digital Islamic authorities. Eyman in fact made the connection between digital text circulation and sophistic rhetoric, that is rhetoric that avoids stable knowledge and is instead veers towards fallacy or outright deception.

Eyman (2015) drew upon the economic aspect of circulation (utilizing but differentiating from the Marxist understanding of circulation that includes production, distribution, exchange, and consumption):

[W]hile circulation ecologies represent the places, spaces, movements, and complex interactions of digital texts as they are produced, reproduced, exchanged, or used, the exchanges and uses that take place within those specific ecological circumstances are governed by the economics of circulation (which in turn are subject to the constraints and affordances offered by the situated ecologies in which the texts circulate). (p. 84)

> In other words, the circulation of digital texts via AlMaghrib’s extended network and the various platforms on which the organization is active must be situated in its particular context (an American business enterprise competing with other business). This context is evident in their rhetorical choices, with an example on their website under the subheading “Our Experience”:
>
> Knowledge can be read from a book, and listened to on MP3. Why then would you sacrifice your time and money to attend a weekend or two onsite with an instructor and a group of people?
>
> Simple. Because knowledge needs to be lived and experienced in real life as opposed to just listened to on the side. We guarantee you our unique, trademark style of the perfect blend of mind-blowing academics, pure spirituality, and lively classroom interactions. It’s addictive, it’s enlightening, it’s real brotherhood and sisterhood, it has you crying one mo-

> ment and laughing the next, and it's potentially life-changing. We apologize in advance, but you will experience withdrawal symptoms after the class finishes until the next one comes along!
>
> The marketing angle is hard to avoid here. Like other educational institutions (or entities in a neoliberal environment), AlMaghrib is competing to get as many people to attend their classes as possible, but they are also selling a good time, not just intellectual stimulation. They want potential students to know that they will have fun with the "mind-blowing academics" and "pure spirituality" to go along with "real brotherhood and sisterhood" and will be wanting more since their classes are so "addictive."

Colloquial language fills the site, fitting Lanham's framework of "attention economics" while also evoking other specifically American ideas:

> Our mission is simple: to empower people through the best Islamic learning experience possible in order that they live more fulfilling lives in this world, and be better prepared for the next life.
>
> We do this based upon an ethos of excellence and a refusal to accept excuses for poor quality. We offer trademark double and single-weekend degree-level seminars centered on a comprehensive academic curriculum, and taught by the leading and most engaging instructors in the West.
>
> We are the pioneers in professional English-language Islamic education being first on the scene, but we are always learning. That is because there is always room for improvement. Using the best multi-media materials around, helped by hundreds of volunteers across the entire AlMaghrib family, and supported by a dedicated admin and logistics team, it is no wonder we have raised the bar and continue to raise it on how knowledge is not only addictively sought…but also loved!

While the word "pioneer" might cause a natural pause given its settler colonial connotation, more striking is the "ethos of evidence" that avoids any substantial explanation of academic pedigree and/or credibility on the various topics the organization teaches. Instead they utilize the reinforcement of how addictive and sought out their style of education is. It mirrors a sort of consensus-based and sophistic idea of the truth—because so many people trust us, you should too, and we are going to use that circular logic to convince you. They also make clear that they have "the best multi-media materials around" hence the "excellence." Using and advertising its use of digital media is obviously a big component of AlMaghrib's strategy, and in fact the organization has some of the most streamlined and sophisticated looking interfaces of any Islamic organization I have seen, which in turn feeds into the ethos question. When entering a digital space, the audience must judge the *ethos* behind the rhetoric and its source(s). This is complicated by the fact that many websites do not clearly state the author/source so the audience must then utilize other heuristics. Warnick (2007) cited a study of Indymedia (an open publishing network of journalist collectives) finding that users judge site *ethos* by factors such as visual design and layout, information structure, and usefulness rather than by who wrote site content. Since AlMaghrib's site looks sleek and professional, and they claim to "refuse to accept excuses for poor quality" they must be credible, right? As Warnick summarizes: "The notion of field dependence can be shown to function very effectively as a mechanism for explaining how epistemological contexts and the evaluation standards that grow out of them play a role in online knowledge production practices" (p. 67). The implication here is that AlMaghrib, while seemingly unaware of digital pedagogy work within Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition, is well aware of how their digital rhetorical strategies play a role in the audience evaluation of their credibility.

Scholar Zareena Grewal (2014) pushed this assessment further and labeled AlMaghrib's approach as "indoctrination" of Muslim youth (p. 330). Regardless of whether indoctrination is the right manner in which to describe AlMaghrib (I prefer to label them as more didactic), it is clear that their focus is on the effectiveness of their outreach to Muslim Americans. This points to the more business-minded side of the institute, giving credence to Bunt's (2009) description of the "Islamic knowledge economy" and how various entities take part in a capitalistic endeavor for market dominance (p. 45). In fact, AlMaghrib claims to have taught "over 80,000 unique students" around the world with that number growing every day, in addition to being "the leading Institute teaching premier Islamic education in the West with the largest on-site student body." The institute states clearly its goal of making Islam as easy as possible to teach while not taking away from the quality of the instruction. As for its mission, or "vision" as listed on the website:

> The vision of AlMaghrib Institute is to become the largest and most beneficial learning system in Islamic history. We envision our learning system entering every nation of the

> world, and being accessible to all people who seek to gain a deeper understanding of Islam.

The language here indicates a capitalistic motive—to be "the largest" institution inherently means they want to beat out their competitors. They want to enter "every nation of the world" like a multi-national corporation. They are not just interested in altruistic knowledge production and transfer like one might naively believe of an educational institute, they want a monopoly. As Mark Fisher (2009) writes: "Over the past thirty years, capitalist realism has successfully installed a 'business ontology' in which it is *simply obvious* that everything in society, including healthcare and education, should be run as a business" (p. 17). It is this kind of mentality that encourages an abandonment of "tradition," i.e. pedagogical tradition that has been developed over hundreds of years. This works in unison with Lanham's (2007) argument that the Internet is "a pure case of an attention economy" (p. 17). The competition is not for some kind of knowledge-based search for truth, but instead for eyeballs, clicks, retweets, etc. which in turn means power in the information economy.

Continuing with their youth-oriented outreach, AlMaghrib also holds conferences and events like "IlmNight" and "IlmFest" ('*ilm* being the Arabic word for knowledge). Even here the language on the website can be characterized as informal, but more noticeable is their advertising that "[everyone you know will] be talking about it for months afterwards, so just make sure you can say that you were there." If AlMaghrib can make itself essential to its congregation/customer base much like social media platforms, it will become the powerful, monopolistic force of Islamic knowledge it proclaims to be. In this sense, AlMaghrib is quintessentially American in its hyper-capitalist approach while it forgoes traditional Islamic pedagogy.

Digitally Responsible Pedagogy

While it is of course impossible to remove technology and digital rhetoric from the modern pursuit of knowledge, the manner in which certain organizations and scholars go about utilizing digital tools begs to question their understanding of digital pedagogy. To go back to Bizzell and Herzberg (2000): "rhetoric is synonymous with meaning, for meaning is in use and context, not words themselves. Knowledge and belief are products of persuasion, which seeks to make the arguable seem natural, to turn positions into premises—and it is rhetoric's responsibility to reveal these ideological operations" (p. 14). Without a metacognitive understanding of how digital knowledge transfer works, i.e. a well-developed digital pedagogy, organizations such as Al-

Maghrib are imparting substandard knowledge upon their congregation in pursuit of attention. Knowledge, much like the humans seeking it, is devoured by the capitalist forces and motivations underlying an educational authority's mission. In order to avoid perpetuating a degradation of knowledge, American Islamic authority must turn to experts within the field of digital rhetoric or else risk being absorbed into neoliberalism entirely. As James Porter (2010) wrote about this existential question concerning the digital economy and the practice of knowledge transfer:…is it possible that rhetoric can help shape and influence the digital economy and social networking? My answer to that question can be summed up in two phrases: "information" and "knowledge work." If the basis of a digital economy concerns (a) the development of "information"—and not just information as a static product, but more important the transformation of information into useful knowledge; and (b) if the digital economy concerns the delivery and circulation of information via social networks in ways that create value for users, then writing teachers, communication scholars, and rhetoric theorists certainly have a lot to offer this discussion. (p. 190)

If Islamic institutions want to engage in responsible digital scholarship in a neoliberal environment, they must turn to writing and composition scholars in order to understand more than just how their audience understands ethos in cyberspace, but also how to engage in a more positive relationship with digital rhetorical practices. It they do not, Islamic knowledge will undoubtedly be reduced to bits of data, merely transporting from one passive receptacle to the next while the authorities themselves are primarily concerned with attention, and in turn their power and influence.

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Access and Ability: Digital Spaces Mediate Differences in Ability

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We share our personal story about how we have developed our own communication that bridges and connects different cultures, languages, and modes of communication through online collaborative writing sessions for a doctoral dissertation. In order to theorize our experience, we combine Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011)'s *Translingualism*, and Syverson (1999)'s *An Ecology of Composition*. These two theories provide the lenses through which the writing process is viewed, and we integrate these theories to provide an explanation of our experience that does not rely on the language of accommodation and disability.

Two writers, Manako Yabe and Philip Hayek, worked collaboratively to edit Manako's doctoral dissertation over the course of nine months. Her dissertation focused on deaf patients' and healthcare providers' perspectives on Video Remote Interpreting. Manako was looking for a second pair of eyes on her work, as well as someone who could help bridge some cultural gaps between deaf and hearing communities. Manako is deaf and communicates through American Sign Language (ASL) and written English, and Philip is hearing and does not sign. Manako is from Japan, and Philip is from the United States. The differences between the two include linguistic differences, cultural differences, and differences in ability. In light of these differences, the resulting working relationship represents an extraordinary writing situation.

Translingualism and Ecologies of Composition

We faced many communication challenges when we began our working relationship. The hearing writer is a native English speaker and non-signer. The deaf writer is a native Japanese speaker and uses English and American Sign Language (ASL) as non-native languages. We grew up in different countries with different cultures, America and Japan. Beyond the differences between American and Japanese cultures, we also faced differences between hearing and deaf cultures.

In addition, the hearing writer is from the field of rhetoric and composi-

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tion, while the deaf writer comes from the fields of social work and disability/deaf studies. Although both the hearing and the deaf writers have been in academia for a decade, they had different writing styles and language expressions that are a result of their cultural values and institutions. Communication had to be negotiated across all of these differences, what Rebecca Leonard and Rebecca Nowacek (2016) called the experience "a textual manifestation of the intellectually adventurous, rhetorically challenging work of negotiating the overlap of knowledge, identities, and languages" (p. 261).

Google Docs offers a common, shared digital space, which combines the word document and real-time chat online. Meeting simultaneously in person and online in the digital space of the Google Doc, the writer used her own laptop, while the editor worked on a desktop with a 27-inch screen that allowed both to view the Google Docs and chat on the same screen (Figure 1).

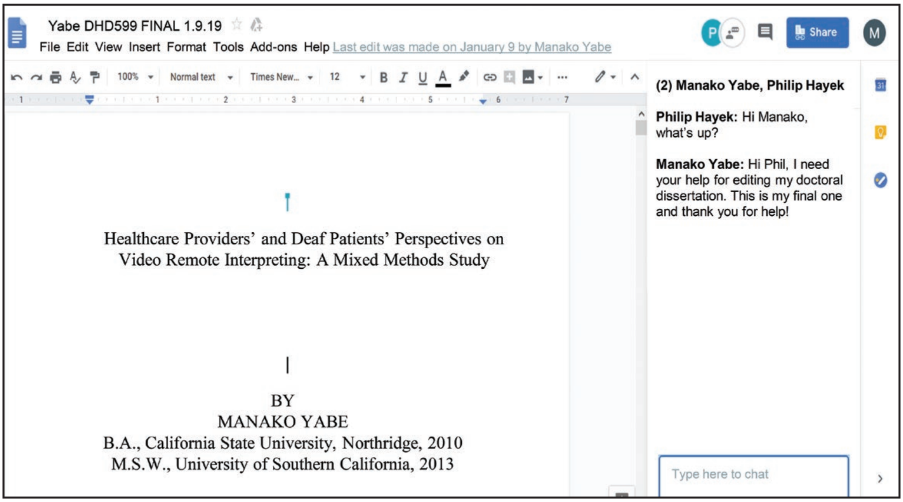

Figure 1. Google Doc - An Example of Doctoral Dissertation Writing

Over nine months, an ecology of composition emerged that bridged and connected different cultures, languages, and modes of communication because of the shared digital space. The shared writing experience is unique because the digital space effectively mediates the language barriers between the two participants, rather than accommodating the writer's communication needs. We both worked in and through text, not audible speech, in a digital space that we could share. Our edits appeared to both of us simultaneously, on different screens but in the same digital space. Our thoughts, as expressed through text in the chat function, appeared to one another immediately with a keystroke, again on different screens but in a shared digital space. The technology increases the rate of feedback between the two writers, and the shared digital space shrinks the temporal dimension of the ecology of composition. Both writers share the same physical/digital space, and also the same temporal space. This is different from even the standard tutor/tutee ecology of sitting next to each other and sharing a single paper document, passing it back and forth as it is worked on by one, and then the other, writers. In that scenario the document changes hands, and in our unique ecology the document is at once owned and shared by each writer.

In the next section, we explain how technology and digital spaces provide an ecology of composition that promotes a shared agency between participants rather than a hierarchical relationship.

Translingualism

We explored Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur (2011)'s *Translingualism* that came from writing center scholarship. Although we worked on dissertation writing outside of the writing center context, we tried to expand knowledge and understanding of translingual practice for "the hearing writer versus the deaf writer" because applying this established theory to a new population would lead to increased understanding between the hearing and the deaf writers. Translingual practice helped us analyze and identify why the two writers were struggling and why, and helped us communicate why an error has occurred, rather than just fixing it (Horner, Lu, Royster, & John, 2011). These issues arise from cultural differences or communication and language expressions (see Figure 2). For instance, English contains articles, but Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and ASL do not contain articles (Folse, 2009; Vicars, n.d.).

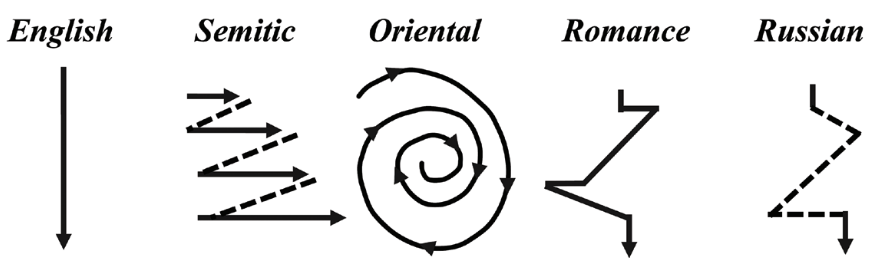

Figure 2. The Movement of the Various Paragraphs in Different Languages (Kaphan, 1996, p. 15)

Historically, writing centers were based on monolingual practice (Rafoth, 2015). Over the years, writing centers have shifted to multilingual practice, due to increasing multilingual student populations in higher education (Bruce & Rafoth, 2016). Moreover, Sarah Nakamura (2010) suggested the best practices for international student writers and U.S.-educated student writers should be considered separately. Rebecca Babcock and Terese Thonus (2012) suggested ideas for best practices for diverse writers, including disabled/deaf writers, second-language writers, and graduate student writers. In recent years, some writing centers have begun to shift to translingual practices.

In translingual practices, language contact happens when two or more languages, or people from different linguistic backgrounds interact with each other (Coronel-Molina & Samuelson, 2017). Some scholars from rhetoric and composition referred to this language contact as code-meshing (Young & Martinez, 2011), while other scholars from linguistics called this as translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Scholars from both rhetoric and composition, and linguistics have researched translingual practices for non-native English speakers in communities and classrooms (Canagarajah, 2013). In addition, a few scholars from both rhetoric and composition, and linguistics have researched translingual practices for non-native English signers who are deaf in early and higher education (Holmström & Schönström, 2017; Kusters, 2017; Murray, 2017; Snoddon, 2017; Swanwick, 2017).

Scholars from rhetoric and composition have researched translingual practices for non-native English speakers in writing centers (Hauer, 2016; Horner & Tetreault, 2017; Newman, 2017). Translingual practices apply to the cross-linguistic process in writing centers such as when a tutor and a writer communicate through writing, speaking, reading, and listening. However, very few scholars from both rhetoric and composition, and linguistics have researched translingual practices for non-native English signers in writing centers. Recently, Brice Nordquist (2017) published his book, *Literacy and Mobility,* which provides glimpses of the complex translingual practices of a deaf student who blends Spanish, English, and sign languages in a classroom, but not in writing centers.

Furthermore, Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011) explained that translingual practice "sees difference in language not as a barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening" (p. 303). Therefore, including "signing" in this statement is an important addition to this scholarly work. This approach can apply when working with international deaf students or U.S. deaf students who use sign languages. Since translingual practice is still relatively new for writing centers as it was introduced by Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur (2011) just a few years ago (Guerra & Shivers-McNair, 2017), there has been very little discussion about how a translingual practice applies to the cross-linguistic process between hearing writers and deaf writers.

There have been very few studies about deaf writers in writing centers

(Hitt, 2015). For example, Gail Wood (1995) provided a case example of tutoring sessions with a deaf signer and a hearing tutor, exclusively in English, exclusively in writing, exclusively on a computer. Rebecca Babcock (2012; 2011) conducted her dissertation research for tutoring with deaf writers and hearing tutors through interpreters in writing centers. The author compared the differences between face-to-face tutoring sessions with deaf writers, interpreters, and hearing tutors versus face-to-face tutoring sessions with hearing writers and hearing tutors. Tyler Gardner (2016) shared his tutoring experience with a deaf writer through an interpreter.

Importantly, Margaret Weaver (1996) argued that writing center scholarship talked about the privilege of race, gender, or socioeconomic status, but not the privilege of hearing or disability in writing centers. Kerri Rinaldi (2015) criticized that the writing center theory limited its application to disabled writers. Sharon Locket (2008) wrestled with the orthodox practice for working with non-native, deaf, and learning-disabled writers in writing centers. Allison Hitt (2012) suggested a universal design for learning and pedagogical accessibility to make disabled/deaf writers inclusive in writing centers. These scholars have discussed the best practices for working with "the hearing tutor versus the deaf writer" by adapting different theories and approaches, but none have explored the translingual practice with "the hearing writer versus the deaf writer" as having equal roles in a collaborative relationship.

While the literature addressed translingual approaches for deaf children in early education and for deaf lecturers in higher education, many gaps in the knowledge and research on proposed theories for working with "the hearing writer and the deaf writer" remain. These gaps also include a lack of evidence-based research on translingual theory for deaf writers who use sign languages. It is essential to conduct evidence-based research to identify whether translingual practices apply to face-to-face, online, and hybrid writing instructions and collaborations between "the hearing writer and the deaf writer."

An Ecology of Composition

Margaret Syverson (1999)'s *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition,* offered a theoretical lens through which to view how technology played a role in making our communication successful. According to Syverson, ecologies contain interrelated and interdependent complex systems, each of which contains four attributes: emergence, embodiment, enaction, and distribution (Figure 3). Distribution and emergence were closely linked with our translingual writing experiences. For example, the distribution of the activities and experiences was not conscious, but emerged nonetheless. Our roles as the editor and the writer were effectively shared, with no clear distinction between the two. We both embodied the roles of reader, writer, and editor. Our writing process was not separated but distributed. Syverson argued that in ecologies of composition relationships and behaviors emerge and guide the writing process. Our communication relied heavily on the technology that was able to mediate the distribution, emergence, embodiment, and enaction of our writing process. Our relationship and behaviors, therefore, were largely shaped by a shared and stable digital space. New digital spaces such as Google Docs expand the realm of the physical dimension in ecologies of composition, and in our case, worked to mediate potential problems encountered in the other dimensions.

An ecology of composition contains five analytical dimensions: Physical, social, physiological, spatial, and temporal (Figure 3). Thanks to technology expanding the physical dimension to include digital spaces, we used Google Docs to communicate. Both hearing and deaf cultural perspectives inform the social dimension and present communication problems in a strictly physical context, but upon entering the digital space, issues such as needing a third-party ASL interpreter no longer existed. Analyzing the psychological dimension, we recognized how we used different cognitive processes in writing, speaking, and signing. Once again, upon entering the digital space we had a shared experience where we both filtered our cognitive processes through the action of typing on a keyboard. It was important that we shared both digital space and physical space in our unique writing process. Our relationship and behaviors became shared and distributed, resulting in a shared agency during the writing process that is a natural occurrence in an ecology of composition.

	Physical	**Social**	**Psychological**	**Spatial**	**Temporal**
Distribution					
Embodiment					
Emergence					
Enaction					

Figure 3. Syverson's Ecological Matrix (1999, p. 23)

Syverson (1999)'s "ecological matrix" helped us understand why our translingual online writing experience was effective, but presented problems for prescribing how to build a similar ecology in a different writing context. Theories of ecologies of composition rely on the underlying scientific complex systems theory. The main point of interest in complex systems theory for rhetoric and composition studies is the emergence of stable patterns within a system without central control. Any kind of stimuli within or outside of a system, which Syverson called "perturbances," are not determinant. She stated, "the correspondences between the structural changes and the pattern of events that caused them are historical, not structural. They cannot be explained as a kind of reference relation between neural structures and an external world" (Syverson, 1999, p. 128). That is, we can write a history of our writing situation and identify what circumstances might have triggered the success and organization that we enjoyed, but none of these things can be seen as a determinant. However, we argue that the introduction of shared digital space in a different writing context can result in similar shared behaviors, if not an overall similar ecology.

Spontaneous self-organization is the term used in complex systems theory to explain how complex systems order themselves. William Kretzschmar, writing in 2015, outlined the principles of complex systems as they apply to language use, to include dynamic activity, random interaction, information exchange with feedback, reinforcement of behaviors, and finally, emergence of stable patterns without central control. The reinforcement of behaviors in complex systems hints at some kind of coordinated action. In a collaborative online/physical writing situation like the one we shared, this coordinated action as a result of reinforced behaviors could be seen as a shared kairotic literacy.

Historically, there were two different and not entirely compatible understandings of *kairos* in rhetoric studies. In one view, *kairos* refers to propriety. Knowing the *kairos* means understanding an order that guides rhetorical action. This aligns with what we might call common sense or tastefulness, a common mental construct that informs action and is used to assess the appropriateness of actions. This traditional sense is simplified as defining *kairos* as the right or opportune time to do something, or right measure in doing something: right time, right measure. *Kairos* has been studied within rhetoric as an independent force that the rhetor must accommodate and also as an ability whereby the rhetor creates an opening, or a *kairos;* both models are rooted in reasoned action. Additionally, Debra Hawhee's (2004) work on bodily rhetorics made room for an immanent, embodied, and nonrational model of *kairos,* that aligns with complex systems theory's insistence on nonrational, spontaneous self-organization. Hawhee's model of *kairos* depicts a kind of instinctual awareness.

Writing in 1999, Syverson claimed that "computer-mediated communication masks physical and social differences, including race, age, physical disability, status, and gender, allowing participants to interact more democratically"

(p. 151). But we have seen that this technology works differently to arrive at the same result. The differences, or conflicts, or perturbations that arise in writing situations can be mediated, not masked, by the technology. The digital spaces not only allow for communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries, but also offer the writers a shared intent by reinforcing certain behaviors that lead to the ordering of the larger ecology. These behaviors include chatting about the changes and content of a document while working on it, and working on a document while being aware of another writer doing the same thing in the same space at the same time. The differences are not masked; they are shared, and this results in a shared kairotic literacy. A shared kairotic literacy in a rhetorical situation represents the spontaneous self-organization seen in complex systems.

Posthumanism insists that we look at composing situations as sites of distributed agency, not just between reader and writer, but shared with objects, systems, and ecologies. Jason Barrett-Fox and Geoffrey Clegg (2018) told us that "posthumanism, as an orientation, recognizes that cognition and agency have actually been distributed (rather than individual) for millennia" (p. 237). Distributed cognition and agency hints at shared kairotic literacy and spontaneous self-organization in complex systems. All of these theories, from disparate and distant fields in academia, are talking about the same thing. Bruce McComiskey's (2015) three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric moved beyond a two-dimensional rhetoric that sees all material and social realms as contradictory, where two primary ideologies compete, to a rhetoric that mediates between conflicts and *complex differences*.

Just as Syverson (1999) pointed out fifteen years prior, about perturbations in an ecology: "any attempt to represent the conflict via conventional rhetorical models of argumentation does violence to the phenomenon, which cannot be reduced to well-defined oppositions between individuals, oppositions that proceed in a chain of reasoning towards any logical conclusion" (p. 181). McComiskey (2015) represented digital contexts as the catalyst for needing a mediative rhetoric. According to McComiskey, the decentering of information, as it is distributed in digital and online spaces, increases access but decreases coherence and continuity. He also argued that the nonlinear document structures of online writing increase flexibility but decrease control of purpose and intent. But, as we can see from ecologies of composition and complex systems theory and understandings of posthumanism, control of purpose and intent has never belonged to a single actor, and purpose and intent can emerge without any central control. That is what the digital space offers writers working with different abilities and across languages and cultures. The difference in ability and language and culture represents ruptures or perturbations in communication, which are mediated by the technology rather than being prioritized in the order of dominant sociocultural norms.

Final Thoughts

To end, we hope that this discussion can inform the development of communication design that uses online digital spaces. Our discussions have expanded Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur (2011)'s *Translingualism*, and Syverson (1999)'s *An Ecology of Composition* to include shared digital spaces. Because many universities' courses rely on online course management systems and online communication already, the distinctions between online, face-to-face, and hybrid writing courses are misleading. In practice, most writing courses are hybrid courses because teachers and students alike rely on technology and digital spaces to read, write, and edit, either individually or collaboratively. We access reading assignments and paper prompts from course management software online, we write in word processors and submit online to the same course management system. Teachers and students communicate via email and online discussion forums.

Due to rapid popularization of online learning and teaching, new concerns have been raised, such as effective online teaching practice and online accessibility for students with disabilities (Conference on College Composition and Communication [CCCC], 2013). Thus, CCCC Executive Committee adopted "A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)," which suggests that our onsite pedagogies be migrated to the online instructional environment.

But in practice this is what onsite instructors have been doing for years. When a new technology becomes available, we see if it will accept our traditional pedagogies, and how it might encourage us to adapt those pedagogies to work in digital spaces. Our student populations continue to be increasingly diverse, bringing with them different cultures, languages and abilities. More research is necessary to discover how technology and online spaces can mediate these differences in a writing situation.

What our experience illuminates is an opportunity to use the digital space of Google Docs to mediate differences in language, culture, and ability. Access and ability, or access/ability, can be distributed naturally and equitably in online environments. The relationships and behaviors that emerge between two people in this ecology of composition are the result of a shared agency. The system itself doesn't privilege one or the other actor within a system. Just the opposite, the system encourages behavior that equally distributes agency among the participants, regardless of external, sociocultural determinants of ability.

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PROCEEDINGS OF C&W 2019

This book includes selected proceedings from the 2019 Computers and Writing conference, exploring topics in digital rhetorics, multimodal composition, and pedagogies. Contributions engage the 2019 conference theme, Mission Critical: Centering Ethical Challenges in Computers and Writing, using a variety of theoretical, pedagogical, and research-based approaches familiar to scholars of digital rhetorics, multimodal composition, and closely related fields.

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