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## Multimodal Composing Across Disciplines: Examining Community College Professors' Perceptions of Twenty-First Century Literacy Practices

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MULTIMODAL COMPOSING ACROSS DISCIPLINES: EXAMINING COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE PROFESSORS' PERCEPTIONS OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LITERACY  
PRACTICES

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## ABSTRACT

### MULTIMODAL COMPOSING ACROSS DISCIPLINES: EXAMINING COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSORS' PERCEPTIONS OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LITERACY PRACTICES

Elizabeth Bensen  
Old Dominion University, 2015  
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Providing a close examination of how professors approach twenty-first century literacy practices and production of multimodal texts, this project focuses on community college professors' perceptions and expectations of students' composing abilities pertaining to academic discourse across disciplines. Participants included 24 professors from a variety of disciplines at a large community college. The project examined survey responses, assignment guidelines, course syllabi, course outcomes, and video interviews of five of the 24 participants. Video interviews provided greater insight into participants' perceptions and expectations. Additionally, research questions targeted course and assignment design, course outcomes, and assessment practices. Data findings suggest that despite access to technology, increased availability of mobile devices (for both instructors and students), and ample information technology support, student production of multimodal texts is occurring minimally at the site in question. Participants appear to struggle with meeting course outcomes and addressing course content when attempting to integrate modes other than written or alphabetic; therefore, they do not actively pursue a multimodal pedagogy.

Recognizing the value of integrating digital technologies into course and assignment designs is often challenging for community college instructors who might struggle with understanding the technologies available to them or who do not possess the skills or time to

develop technologically advanced courses. However, literacy practices today include producing texts in written, visual, aural or digital modes, all of which encourage the use of digital technologies and production of multimodal texts. Most recent scholarship has not fully examined whether making meaning of and producing multimodal texts is congruent with academic discourse in a community college setting. Indeed, community colleges enroll “43% (7.5 million credit students) of the postsecondary education student population, yet they continue to be the most understudied” (Kater & Levin, 2013, p. ix). Reporting on faculty perceptions across disciplines, this study provides a valuable analysis of the challenges community college professors confront and confirms an interest in developing a multimodal pedagogy, but recognizes that resistance occurs due to limitations in time and ensuring alignment with course outcomes.

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This dissertation is dedicated to David M. Bensen and Carolyn Handa both of whom I wish could have seen me finish this project.

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing represents a unique mode of learning—not merely valuable, not merely special, but unique.

(Emig, 1994, p. 89)

In 1977 Janet Emig (1994) claimed that writing “uniquely corresponds to certain powerful learning strategies” (p. 89). Emig also recognized a connection between writing and other modalities, but she noted that “[v]erbal language represents the most *available* medium for composing” (p. 89). More than three decades and a turn of the century later, a focus on language and composing written texts continues to pervade pedagogical practices in post-secondary classrooms. In the twenty-first century, Emig’s claim continues to resonate across modes and styles of learning and pedagogy. The academy continues to privilege the written word; however, recent interest in designing assignments that integrate multiple modes of composing in first-year composition (FYC) suggests the need for a comprehensive examination of the relationship between multimodal pedagogies and how faculty perceive that students are learning to situate themselves within the academic discourse community. While it is clear and has been firmly established in much scholarship that the business of teaching writing has evolved beyond composing alphabetic texts on the printed page, what is not clear is in what way multimodal composing impacts the academic discourse community (Ball, 2004; Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007; Wysocki, 2004; Kress, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Some evidence suggests that instructors may not consciously consider what part of the writing and research processes students are reproducing while composing multimodal texts. Additionally, most recent scholarship has not fully examined whether composing, using new media—in written, visual, aural or digital modes—is congruent with academic discourse in a community college setting. Scholars such as

Kathleen Blake Yancey, et al. (2004), Anne Francis Wysocki (2004), Cheryl Ball (2004), Cynthia Selfe (2007; 2009), and Richard Selfe and Cynthia Selfe (2008) have recognized the changing teaching practices that are occurring in the composition classroom and also recognize the value of integrating a variety of modes and literacies into student projects; however, a specific examination of whether multimodal composing encourages student awareness of and engagement in the academic discourse community is lacking. More specifically, a thorough examination of whether multimodal composing encourages student awareness of and engagement in the academic discourse community is lacking at the community college level. Currently, community colleges enroll “43% (7.5 million credit students) of the postsecondary education student population, yet they continue to be the most understudied” (Kater & Levin, 2013, p. ix). Because community college students make up such a large portion of higher education students, a strong need for a closer examination of faculty perceptions and expectations in a community college setting is justified.

Based on an interest in the shape of multimodal composing in 2005, Anderson et al. (2006) conducted and implemented a “research initiative of the Conference on College Composition and Communication,” which lead to surveying educators on multimodal methods (p. 60). In their report they establish a connection to scholars such as The New London Group, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, and Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis who argue from semiotic and linguistic perspectives that composing and making meaning in the twenty-first century are not limited to the alphabetic mode. Making meaning of a text today moves beyond the alphabetic text to include a full range of semiotic resources (p. 59). Additionally, Anderson et al. “designed [the survey] to identify how individual teachers and their composition programs were, in 2005, working to integrate multimodality into writing classes” (p. 63). Their study

sampled writing instructors across the nation with forty-five participants responding to their survey. Of these forty-five, only two are from two-year colleges, which is not a strong representation of community colleges (2006, p. 66). Regardless of the demographic background to their study, Anderson et al. provide a valuable discussion that focuses on how multimodal composing enhances twenty-first century literacy practices. They articulate the results of a study that looked at how programs and individual teachers are integrating multimodal composing practices into their curriculum. The survey questioned the following areas pertaining to multimodal composing: defining and teaching, assessing, software and hardware, professional development, instructional approaches, and tenure and promotion (pp. 68-78). As they explain the results of the survey, Anderson et al. also focus on questions or concerns brought up by respondents but not directly addressed in their survey. Clearly the survey had limitations, but this seminal survey offers a base line from which scholars, compositionists, and educators in general may draw to broaden notions about developing theories pertaining to multimodal pedagogies.

My interest in multimodal composing for this project comes from a desire to understand how the teaching of writing and the pedagogical practices in a mediated classroom impact the wider academic discourse community. My teaching career began in 2000 at the secondary level with an undergrad degree in English Education. Convinced I would spend my career in a high school classroom, I eagerly participated in student-teaching activities, working with three teachers who afforded me ample opportunities to experiment. And experiment I did. I asked my students to produce visual projects to represent imagery in poetry and/or fiction. They wrote poetry to mimic Shakespeare's use of iambic pentameter. They played games. They wrote songs. They presented as groups and individually. Not truly surprising projects occurring, but they were all new to me. However, the pedagogical purpose for each of these activities was primarily to

encourage students to make meaning of assigned readings and demonstrate comprehension with the projects they produced. At the time I was not aware of the growing scholarly interest in encouraging students to produce works in a multitude of genres and modes. After I finished student teaching, full-time positions at the secondary level were scarce, so I returned to the academy as a Graduate Teaching Assistant at a mid-size Midwestern university where I began teaching FYC after taking a two-week crash course. Thus began my journey into teaching writing. This journey included recognizing the value of the personal voice smoothly integrated with the academic voice. It evolved to include encouraging students to compose multivoiced and multigenred arguments. This meant moving outside of my comfort zone with primarily alphabetic texts to design assignments that challenged the more conventional composing process, as well as reinforcing twenty-first century literacy practices and meeting the course outcomes of the institution at which I was teaching.

After I gained full-time employment at a community college on the East coast, I began to experiment even further and was surprised to find resistance not only from administrators and fellow compositionists, but also from students. Those first experiments in a community college setting began eight years ago, and while I still encounter some resistance, I continue to ask students to produce, visual, aural, and digital projects in the forms of audio, digital, visual, and video essays. More of my colleagues and administrators are more accepting today, but on some levels they question the validity of composing outside of conventionally accepted practices. Although still a work in progress, my pedagogy has evolved to include a balance among modes of composing while still meeting course outcomes. And as I quietly design assignments that fit well with twenty-first century literacy and composing practices, I am noticing that some of my colleagues—although still skeptical—are starting to show interest in engaging students in a



composing process that not only meshes well with producing digital scholarship but that also engages students in making meaning of the curriculum presented to them and that prepares them for the workforce and for continuing in higher education. Thus my pedagogical journey is one that has developed from a perhaps naïve perspective about what it means to educate a student body in a fast-paced, technologically advanced environment to a more sophisticated perspective that recognizes the nuanced and diverse forms of communicating in the twenty-first century.

The New London Group redefined and expanded on notions of literacy to suggest that “[a] pedagogy of Multiliteracies [. . .] focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). No longer being confined to the bound, alphabetic, print text suggests and perhaps demands a need for a shift in pedagogical practices to welcome multiliteracies and multiple modes of composing across disciplines. As an educator-researcher, my professional goals often focus on disrupting traditional pedagogical practices of teaching composition. While I understand the importance of the written word and will not neglect the teaching of alphabetic texts in my professional practice, I am aware that the possible physical options for composing texts have expanded drastically in the twenty-first century. I am also aware that for some English departments FYC is a course that focuses on a number of outcomes as established by the Council of Writing Program Administrator’s (WPA) Outcomes Statement, which proposes a common approach to teaching, including the following categories: Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing; Processes; Knowledge of Conventions, and Composing in Electronic Environments. FYC. The amended 2008 iteration included digital composing with the addition of the digital plank, adding the category Composing in Electronic Environment. The current iteration of the WPA Outcomes Statement, continues to propose a common approach to teaching FYC by focusing on similar categories to include

Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading and Composing; Processes; and Knowledge of Conventions. On the surface the newest version appears to remove the digital component; however, language within the introduction promotes the use of digital technologies, suggesting that digital technologies are a natural occurrence in twenty-first century composing practices. These outcomes are manageable, encouraging a pedagogy that recognizes that at the college level we expect our students to arrive to class prepared to develop content without spending an inordinate amount of time teaching basic rules. Composition instructors must prepare students for composing in a variety of disciplines within the academic environment; these same students will then move on to compose in digital and multimodal formats in the workplace. Indeed, the 2014 WPA Outcomes Statement encourages writing across disciplines, recognizing that “[a]s students move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, their abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines as these writers move into new settings where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge.”

Understanding the existence of diverse and often complex purposes to the teaching of writing does not mean educators across disciplines should focus only on alphabetic texts, as the avenues for making meaning have expanded considerably. Gregory Ulmer (2007) claims that “The problem is now set: We need a practice of writing adequate to the internet/Web, and it will not look very much like what is recommended in most composition textbooks” (p. xiii). Ulmer verbalizes a valid concern and while in recent years more textbooks such as *Compose, Design, Advocate: A Rhetoric for Integrating Written, Visual, and Oral Communication* by Anne Francis Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch (2012) and *Envision In-Depth: Reading, Writing, and Researching Arguments* by Christine L. Alfano and Alyssa J. O’Brien (2011) recognize the value of composing in a variety of modes for the twenty-first century, there is still much room for

examining the impact and acceptance of multimodal composing within the academic discourse community and across disciplines. Additionally, many compositionists are finding ways to integrate modes into their pedagogy regardless of textbook in use. The challenge—the overarching goal—is to find a good balance among the modes—visual, aural, print, digital—in such a way that redefines the academic discourse community for twenty-first century composing practices.

Finding this balance is at the crux of my concerns about whether the multimodal texts students compose are considered academic arguments. The challenge for educators today is to encourage students to consciously situate themselves as “both within and against a discourse, or within and against competing discourses, and working self-consciously to claim an interpretive project of their own, one that grants them their privilege to speak” (Bartholomae, 2002, p. 94). Because the definition of the academic discourse community is in flux and highly nuanced due to the rapidly changing means for communicating in the twenty-first century, developing a well-balanced multimodal pedagogy becomes quite challenging. In *Situated Language and Learning: A Critique of Traditional Schooling*, James Paul Gee (2004) confirms that in the past most students who grasped the conventions of academic language usually moved on successfully in their academic careers. Although students were making texts in computer-mediated environments in 2004, what has continued to evolve are the ways that students are learning. Today, students are gaining knowledge in computer-mediated classrooms with instantaneous access to a wealth of information (i.e. via computer labs and classroom use of a variety of mobile devices to include smart phones and tablets). If students are not in a mediated environment provided by their educational institution, they are accessing information via the Web or via

applications on their personal mobile devices. Because they are so thoroughly engaged with media to gain knowledge, Gee suggests that

[t]oday, to hedge your bets, you probably want to make some sort of peace with academic learning—with school-based learning. But there are new ways with words, and new ways of learning, afoot in the world—ways not necessarily connected to academics or schools. These ways are, in their own fashion, just as special, technical, and complex as academic and school ways. (p. 2)

He goes on to point out that “[t]hese new ways are the ways with words (and their concomitant ways of thinking) connected to contemporary digital technologies and the myriad of popular culture and specialist practices to which they have given rise” (p. 2). He raises some interesting points that throw light on the current trend toward multimodal composing in FYC and across disciplines. Outside of the academy, students are learning in new ways that educators often find challenging to integrate into the classroom. The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism and Internet and American Life Project published “How Mobile Devices Are Changing Community Information Environments,” which reported on cell phone, smart phone, and tablet usage by Americans aged 18 and older. The report claims that “84% [of all adult Americans] own a cell phone and/or tablet computer” and that “47% [of this same group] get local news or information on their cell phone or tablet” (Purcell, Rainie, Rosensteel, & Mitchell, 2011, p. 2). Additionally, the study revealed that 70% of the participants in the 18 – 29 age group used their cell phones to access local news and information (Purcell, Rainie, Rosensteel, & Mitchell, 2011, p. 6). These findings confirm that participants are accessing information through multimodal means, demonstrating a need to reinforce these practices in the academy and across disciplines. Additionally, coupled with Gee’s 2004 arguments these findings are cause for further examination of how students are gaining knowledge and making meaning of texts outside of the classroom and how the new technologies they are acquiring translate to new forms of composing

in the academy. Additionally, the conflation of hands-on technology with academic learning necessitates a remodeling of how educators address “new ways of learning.”

A 2010 study that examines research writing in upper level courses offers insight into composing practices within specific disciplines further establishing the context for the study introduced for this project. Cynthia Haller (2010) conducted a study on three student research papers in an upper division research—junior level—writing course. She questioned the manner in which students learn to recognize academic arguments in source materials and how they integrate and use them in their own writing. She asks, “What does it mean to construct an academic argument using disciplinary discourse?” (p. 34). Haller found that “[o]nly students who had had extensive experience with reading and writing within their disciplines and across a range of disciplinary contexts were able to successfully identify, explain, and engage discipline-based criteria for writing” (p. 36). Her focus on an upper-division course is relevant because it is in FYC where students begin to learn their way around the academic discourse community. If they continue to experience problems understanding academic arguments beyond FYC, then it is possible that educators are not approaching the subject in a way that encourages students to retain knowledge to carry forward into their disciplinary studies. Haller addresses to some degree the Toulmin method of argumentation to identify the logos of academic arguments (p. 35). This is perhaps a good place to start addressing the validity of asking FYC students to compose both conventional print and mediated arguments because logical appeals demand students produce academic arguments grounded in evidence and research regardless of mode of production. Additionally, in 2004 Anne Wysocki argued that compositionists were already aware of the value of multimodal composing, but did not have a good sense of the how and why of it. While, the recent spate of scholarship suggests an evolution of thought pertaining to the validity of

multimodal composing, the focus to this study is to assess instructor expectations and perceptions of what students bring to specific disciplines and how they might design multimodal assignments and whether they truly integrate them into their curriculum as a means for enhancing meaning making in the academic discourse community.

My intent in this project is to take the claims made in studies such as Haller's and Anderson et al's further to gain a sense of not just conventionally written academic arguments, but also an understanding of multimodal arguments, and how they relate to the academic discourse community from community college faculty perspectives. To address how faculty might be approaching twenty-first century literacy practices this study uses quantitative and qualitative methods to examine faculty perceptions and expectations of students' ability levels when composing for the academic discourse community. This study also examines how and whether multimodal pedagogy plays out in existing course designs and assignments by asking and responding to the following questions:

- What are instructors' expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines?  
How are these expectations modified when asking students to compose multimodal texts?
- How does an instructor design a research assignment that reconciles instructors' expectations of multimodal academic writing with conventionally accepted composing/literacy practices?
- How do instructors target learning outcomes that involve integration of information across modalities?
- How do instructors assess multimodal projects with respect to learning outcomes and expectations of the academic discourse community?

The focus in these questions is on instructor perceptions and expectations; to that end this study will also examine the pedagogical choices instructors make as they design and then implement assignments regardless of mode of composing. These questions provide the primary focus for this study to make connections to how faculty participants approach learning outcomes in their individual pedagogical practices as well. What is missing from much of the scholarship pertaining to multimodal pedagogy and multimodal composing is whether the production of multimodal projects meets outcomes for the academic discourse community and across disciplines in a community college setting. An examination of participant responses reveals a more specific view of twenty-first century literacy and composing practices for educator-researchers across disciplines in a community college setting. Such an examination also recognizes the value of composing beyond the printed page to hopefully dispel notions of the superiority of alphabetic texts over other modalities of texts.

In the following chapters I provide an in-depth look at the theoretical framework behind the study, the methodology in place, and how study participants' responses played out in response to survey and interview questions. Chapter two is a discussion of the theoretical framework, which serves to define terms pertinent to understanding multimodal and twenty-first century literacy practices for the academy. Chapter two also provides the historical context to the teaching of writing by defining academic discourse, digital academic literacies, and multimodal literacy expectations. It will trace the definition of academic discourse from the 1980s to the present, identify the various types of academic literacies that have developed in the last two to three decades, and clarify twenty-first century multimodal literacy practices in relation to developing a multimodal pedagogy.

Chapter three provides an overview of methods used to collect and analyze data and identifies the use of a mixed-methods approach to studying multimodal composing in the composition classroom. Elaborating on the use of qualitative and quantitative data and employing grounded theory, chapter three will describe the approaches to the study and its limitations. Chapters four, five, and six are the findings chapters in which I report on faculty background, examine expectations for both conventional and multimodal composing, examine how faculty perceive assignment designs relate to learning outcomes, and examine assessment practices pertaining to types of writing assignments, both conventional and multimodal. These chapters are detailed reports on the results of the study to discuss the relevance of participants' responses and to provide an in-depth examination of the data collected through survey responses and interview questions. Chapter four examines survey responses, presenting data about faculty background, discipline/program writing expectations, and individual instructor expectations. Chapter five analyzes participants' responses and artifacts, pertaining to assessment practices, focusing primarily on types of writing projects participants assign and assess and on how participants modify assessment practices when shifting from conventional to multimodal assignments. Chapter six analyzes participants' responses and artifacts, pertaining to assignment design and types of writing projects participants assign, focusing primarily on assignment design with regard to learning outcomes and digital academic literacies. Chapter seven discusses the overall significance of the study findings. Chapter seven also clarifies specific practices in place for faculty participants and further discusses the relevance of the study in a community college environment. It articulates and clarifies arguments for the purposeful integration of multimodal composing to validate the significance of a purposeful shift in pedagogical practices in the



teaching of writing across disciplines. And, finally, chapter seven discusses future prospects for this study.

## MULTIMODAL LITERACY: (RE)MIXING AND (RE)DEFINING PEDAGOGY

### **Introduction: Theoretical Underpinnings**

As interest in multimodal pedagogy has grown in higher education, the theoretical underpinnings have also broadened to support it as a reputable means for instructing students on making meaning of twenty-first century texts. This growth may fuel instructional desires to pursue a multimodal pedagogy and perhaps raise a more deliberate awareness about the variety of composing practices available to educators and students today, varieties that are beneficial in a community college setting where educators work with a diverse body of students with differing ability levels. Community colleges have the added challenge of assessing academic preparedness for often underprepared students while continuing to meet well-defined outcomes. Instructors understand the need to develop a pedagogy that captures traditional and nontraditional students who come to them often ill-prepared for college level work. This means that

whatever standards are used to develop curricula and assess students, the math, reading, and writing skills must be tailored and applied by students in specific disciplines as they proceed through the postsecondary curriculum. The challenge in educating academically underprepared community college students is less about prescribing standards than knowing how to teach transferrable skills. (Perin, 2013, p. 89).

With respect to developing a multimodal pedagogy, the opportunity to design assignments that appeal to the different learning styles of underprepared students that encourage engagement and transferability implies the possibility to create an educational environment that leads to a greater number of successful graduates. This is not to suggest that multimodal pedagogy does not recognize established standards or outcomes; multimodal pedagogy is another means for preparing students for either directly entering the workforce or transferring to a four-year college or university well-versed in twenty-first century literacy and composing practices.

This chapter addresses a number of scholars to establish definitions of terms and the development of a multimodal pedagogy across disciplines. Scholars such as Anderson, et al (2006), Ball (2004), Ball and Kalmbach (2010), Ball and Moeller (2007), Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Handa (2001; 2004), Jenkins (2006), Kress (2010), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001; 2008), Lauer (2009; 2012), Lutkewitte (2014), Palmeri (2012), Selfe (2007), Takayoshi and Selfe (2007), Ulmer (2003; 2007), and Wysocki (2004) have contributed both theoretical and practical works to discussions about multimodal pedagogy. The primary theoretical framework for this project brings together theories pertaining to multimodal pedagogy and digital/multiliteracies. These existing theories have provided a solid foundation from which to discuss twenty-first century literacy practices and draw conclusions in my study about how instructors design courses and assignments to encourage students to make meaning of and produce multimodal texts. I am specifically drawing on what I consider complementary theories pertaining to multimodal pedagogy, digital/multiliteracies per The New London Group's contributions to literacy theories and Carolyn Handa's recognition of digital literacies. I have found the The New London Group's works applicable to a study that focuses on pedagogical practices in relation to multiple modes of composing and multiliteracies because they establish a context from which to re-define pedagogy and academic literacies. I have also found Handa's contributions to digital rhetoric and digital literacy relevant to a discussion about twenty-first century literacy practices because she recognizes the rapidly changing methods of teaching writing in the classroom. The New London Group rethinks the face of literacy pedagogy as it applies to "cultural and linguistic diversity," supporting an egalitarian education system that recognizes the existence of multiliteracies, thus reinforcing their argument that "[a] pedagogy of Multiliteracies [. . .] focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone"

(Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). Additionally, Cope and Kalantzis acknowledge that “[n]o longer do the old pedagogies of a formal, standard, written national language have the utility they once possessed” (p. 6). The New London Group’s influential works have informed the evolution of thought and research pertaining to multimodal pedagogy and twenty-first century literacy practices in higher education in general, but more specifically their works are readily adapted to a community college environment for the purposes of this project because they recognize a multiliterate student body, consisting of traditional, non-traditional, and multicultural students who possess a wide range of skills. Handa’s (2001; 2004) work looks at visual rhetoric in addition to digital rhetoric and digital literacy, and her claims have made a valuable impact on how compositionists view composing today because her definitions of digital literacy are inclusive of visual and aural literacy (2001, p. 2).

What follows in this chapter is a review of scholars and educators whose contributions have informed discussions about multimodal composing in practice and in theory. Additionally, I have organized the chapter by focusing on defining phrases pertinent to understanding what it means to consume and produce twenty-first century texts to provide insight into the community college mission with respect to meeting course learning outcomes and developing course content for a diverse student body. The first two sections define the phrases academic discourse and (digital) academic literacies. The third section defines multimodal literacy and focuses on existing expectations and perceptions of what constitutes multimodal composing. This chapter attempts to contextualize a current conversation about multimodal pedagogy and multiliteracies as they have evolved within English Studies and subsequently within the fields of Composition Studies and New Media Studies. It is not my intent to narrow definitions as expounded on here;

rather, my hope is to provide a context within which to address these terms in relation to a discussion about multimodal pedagogy in a community college setting.

### **Defining Academic Discourse**

As the body of scholarship and theory about multimodal pedagogy evolves, post-secondary educators have been and continue to be well aware of the pre-existing ability levels, ideologies, and backgrounds that students bring with them when they enter the FYC classroom and the academy in general. However, in the twenty-first century, the shift toward composing texts beyond the printed page and written word has caused a paradigmatic re-thinking about how students assimilate to or become familiar with the academic discourse community. Many freshmen begin their studies lacking well-developed critical thinking and writing skills, and they may or may not recognize their existing ideologies, but one goal for writing instructors who have adapted an expressionist pedagogy is to move freshman writers toward a conscious awareness of their independent voices to give them agency in the academy. Agency is a key concept to contemplate when defining academic discourse because it suggests a pedagogy that recognizes the value of empowering students to take ownership of the projects they produce. Other instructors adopt approaches that adapt a rhetorical stance in which instructors teach rhetorical awareness to then engage students with academic discourse. While not specifically targeting voice and agency in the academy, Cheryl Ball (2004) tackles arguments surrounding expectations about new media scholarship and whether new media productions are too far outside the conventions of acceptable forms of communication in the academy. She posits that making arguments in a combination of modes to include visual, aural, video, animated, or written texts encourages readers to make meaning of these in a more critically evaluative and analytical manner because they will “understand new media scholarship as a way to use multiple modes of

communication to form persuasive meanings [. . .] instead of always relying on written, linear text” (pp. 404-407). Ball is getting at the crux of my own concerns about whether the academy views the multimodal texts we ask students to compose as truly academic arguments because she confirms that conflicting ideas exist about what constitutes an academic text in the twenty-first century. She is addressing this from the more practical and less theoretical standpoint of a scholar who wishes to publish credible new media texts recognized and accepted as scholarship as opposed to developing a recognized and accepted multimodal pedagogy.

The perhaps conflicted ideas of how to identify what an academic text looks like and what scholarship might be accepted by the academy suggests a gap exists in defining the pedagogical implications of assigning multimodal projects. Today, the ubiquitous access to mobile devices (i.e. laptops, tablets, smart phones) further blurs the lines of what constitutes an academic text. How students communicate and produce texts suggests the need to consider past definitions of academic discourse to then remix definitions to align with twenty-first century literacy practices. Although The New London Group (2000) does not tackle the specific idea of new media texts as academic, they do provide a framework for rethinking literacy practices at the onset of the twenty-first century; they also define pedagogy as “a teaching and learning relationship that creates the potential for building learning conditions leading to fully and equitable social participation” (p. 9). This means that students are participating in educational settings learning to “negotiat[e] a multiplicity of discourses” in both their public and private lives (pp. 9-10). Recognizing the value of multiliteracies and the existence of “the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies,” The New London Group puts forth a definition of pedagogy that promotes meaning-making with regard to Designs of Meaning that result in “transform[ing] knowledge by producing new constructions and

representations” (p. 22). This definition addresses the pedagogical implications of integrating “multimedia technologies” into the classroom because it suggests a need to fully consider how digital technology encourages students to make meaning of texts; however, it is important to understand definitions of academic discourse in light of twenty-first century literacy practices and literacy pedagogy to encourage students to make meaning of a variety of texts to perhaps minimize the accepted practice of trivializing other modes that might appear to supplement the written word.

Two of the primary questions for this study ask, *what are instructors’ expectations for academic discourse across the disciplines*, and *how are these expectations modified when asking students to compose multimodal texts?* What follows is a review of the literature applicable to academic discourse beginning with the 1980s and moving through the early twenty-first century to contemporary times. Defining academic discourse beginning with the 1980s provides a historical context that theorizes primarily about written texts. Moving to more contemporary definitions provides a current context of academic discourse and its applicability to this study.

**Scholarly Significance of Academic Discourse.** Recognizing the challenges students face as they assimilate to and become familiar with the academic discourse community is not a new phenomenon; rather, addressing how students begin to adjust to academic writing and interpret a number of discourse communities within the academy has been in question and under examination since at the very least the 1980s when Rhetoric and Composition first began to gain recognition as a valid discipline (Bartholomae, 1985; Berlin, 1987, 1988; Bizzell, 1992; Cushman, 1999; Faigley, 1986, 1992; Flower and Hayes, 1981; Harris, 1997; Hawisher, 1996; Rose, 1989; Sommers, 1980, 1982; Trimbur, 1994) . Defining academic discourse in terms of faculty expectations and perceptions oftentimes results in conflict as instructors of writing

grapple with meeting departmental and college course outcomes. The academy itself consists of disciplinary discourses each of which entails composing for the academy, yet defining academic discourse for each discipline requires recognition of specific outcomes as well. David Bartholomae provides a definition of academic discourse pertinent to this study because he establishes arguments about composing for the academy in the 1980s providing a seminal discussion from which to theorize about composing today. Published initially in 1985, one of the more influential texts to have an impact on a discussion about academic discourse from a print perspective is Bartholomae's (2002) "Inventing the University." Presenting an argument that pertains largely to basic writers, Bartholomae addresses some of the issues current educators face. His arguments continue to be relevant today because he establishes the notion that writers must situate themselves so that they are able to visualize both the writer and the reader. Bartholomae's arguments emphasize how contemporary educator-researchers grapple with what it means to compose for the academic discourse community. His claim addresses a component of the rhetorical situation—audience awareness—which does not change regardless of mode of communication. Audience awareness is applicable to all modalities. The student writer must view him- or herself "within a privileged discourse, one that already includes and excludes groups of readers. [. . .] The writing, then, must somehow transform the political and social relationships between students and teachers" (p. 78). Bartholomae addresses how students approach audience awareness and whether they are able to move beyond writing "for the teacher" and toward writing in their own voices to represent themselves as subjects who bring their existing ideologies to the classroom. He argues that this "is a problem of power and finesse" (p. 78-79). This same "power and finesse" occurs when students produce projects in other modalities. However, it could be argued that the multimodal projects they produce give



them more agency in the discourse of the appropriate discipline because students tend to engage more with texts in other modalities (see “Chapter Five: Data Analysis Part Two: Assessment Practices” page 121 for a brief discussion about student engagement), yet it is the instructor who must define how and why such projects meet academic outcomes, to not only establish the context in which students are composing, but also to clarify alignment with course outcomes for what many perceive to be unconventional academic texts.

To further prove his points and continue his discussion, Bartholomae includes a section that discusses a number of student essays examined for their content and structure, characterizing each essay based on the syntactical strengths, and identifying essays for their clarity and successful attempts at communicating in a recognizable academic voice. The final point he makes is that students

will need to learn to crudely mimic the ‘distinctive register’ of academic discourse before they are prepared to actually and legitimately do the work of the discourse and before they are sophisticated enough with the refinements of tone and gesture to do it with grace or elegance. (p. 97-98)

However, if the academy has not clearly defined how multimodal texts fit into currently accepted practices, Bartholomae’s argument suggests a need to redefine academic discourse and how educators might readdress their contemporary expectations of students. To place Bartholomae’s argument in more contemporary terms, a redefining of academic discourse based on twenty-first century composing and literacy practices will clarify how students are “mimic[ing] ‘the distinctive register’” that Bartholomae points out and that reflects creating an academic voice beyond written, alphabetic texts. But what is in question now is how students “mimic ‘the distinctive register’” when producing texts in other modalities. Such redefining also necessitates a remixing of pedagogical practices to provide the context for what a visual, aural, or digital text looks or sounds like from academic terms.

Perhaps aligned with Bartholomae's claims from a more recent perspective, Joseph Harris (2006) in *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts*, offers advice to students and writing teachers about the intertextuality and interplay of words and language that occur when writing for and in the academy. He suggests a *rewriting* of ideas based on the work of others and what is perhaps most intriguing about his claims is that in *rewriting*, authors strive toward adding to and extending on others' ideas to then take ownership of that work and make it their own. While the extent to which students may expand on an argument depends largely on assignment guidelines, recognizing how to develop and extend on others' ideas is perhaps one of the key ingredients to successful writing in the academy. Harris's claims are reminiscent of claims pertaining to writing to learn activities that promote using writing as a tool for learning (McLeod, 2012, p. 55).

However, making meaning of academic texts is often challenging for novice writers because they not only wade through scholarly articles often written in voices with which they are not familiar, but they also learn to develop arguments in their own, individual voices. And the challenge increases when asking students to produce an academic argument in other modalities without recognizing what it means to do so.

While it is clear that a redefining of academic discourse is necessary for the twenty-first century, it is also important to consider commonly accepted definitions. A traditional definition of academic discourse claims that "[t]he 'academic discourse' theory of composition [. . .] favors rhetorical analysis of the genres of academic writing. In doing so, this theory looks at conventions of address as well as at the persuasive intent of all forms of writing" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 1185). This more traditional definition focuses primarily on print texts with respect to understanding and applying the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, genre, stance, medium) in a first-semester composition course and shifts to include understanding and applying

the rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos) when analyzing and writing sophisticated arguments.

In *Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness*, Patricia Bizzell (1992) claims that academic discourse “comprised the ways of thinking and using language that prevail in the academy” (p. 3). Peter Elbow (1991) defines academic discourse as “the discourse that academics use when they publish for other academics” (p. 135). While I may not be in complete agreement with Elbow’s definition, I do see some merit to isolating academic discourse to an academic audience because it is the acceptable discourse desired for scholarly publications. However in “Reflections on Academic Discourse: How It Relates to Freshman and Colleagues,” Elbow’s primary focus is the teaching of writing outside the confines of academic discourse. To address his concerns, he proposes three arguments for teaching writing. The first argument recognizes that students remain in their academic careers for a short time; whereas, their professional careers and their life adventures will outlast college experiences. The second argument suggests that students should write to “render experience rather than explain it” (p. 136). And the third claims that teaching students to write in a nonacademic discourse in turn helps them to understand academic discourse because it is often more beneficial to relay a concept in lay terms to garnish a deeper understanding (p. 136-137). Elbow’s arguments are still relevant in today’s highly mediated environment because students render thoughts and experiences as they shift from composing for an academic environment to, for example, a corporate environment that recognizes the value of communicating in a digital environment but from a less academic perspective. One of the core components for this project is to understand how faculty engage students with the technology available to them to foster the use of a wide array of composing tools to then translate students’ academic experiences to their more real-

world experiences or prepare them for transfer to a four-year college or university. Although Bartholomae's and others' more conventional definitions of academic discourse and Elbow's perhaps more expansive definition focus on the written word, these arguments parallel a twenty-first century desire to encourage composing in a medium that perhaps is more relevant to a student's life outside the academy, a medium that renders thought in what is now becoming a common form of communication, the digital medium.

**Pedagogical Expansion of Academic Discourse.** As my pedagogy and experience in the classroom evolved, I began to gain an understanding that asking students to compose, for example, an audio essay, in many ways afforded them more agency in their arguments. Such awareness suggests the need to provide instruction on how to use audio editing software and encourages students learning to use resources such as Audacity and then editing their audio essays in ways they had never encountered before. Composing a written essay is more common place than an audio essay and the excitement of hearing their own voices as opposed to reading their written words is often more engaging for students (and sometimes a bit intimidating). However, the concern still is whether the academy considers an audio essay *academic enough*, reinforcing Bartholomae's claims about moving students toward recognizing their own "power and finesse" to not only give them agency in their works regardless of mode, but also providing the affordances for producing academic texts per twenty-first century literacy practices. Producing an audio essay is not in a recognizable print form; however, students gain more agency in their work when producing a text that not only articulates their ideas but *sounds* like them as well; the challenge is to produce a text aligned with the expectations of academic discourse.

Becoming comfortable with communicating for the academic discourse community begins in a perhaps subconscious manner when students are undergrads learning to maneuver through the often confusing mounds of scholarship pertaining to academic arguments in their specific disciplines. Reading the works of experts in respective fields as models to follow and then begin writing in their own voices, is one way to move students toward mimicking experts' styles of argument. Students learn to use signal phrases to signify a shift in voice to someone who is an authority figure. I am not convinced understanding of academic discourse occurs for all students. However, my own experiences demonstrate that I began to become more comfortable with writing in an academic voice when I reached upper division courses and perhaps even as late as graduate school when I was pursuing a master's degree in English and American Literature. What I did appreciate as an undergraduate was that I was learning to communicate in a concise manner with a more mature voice than in previous years. I was also learning to appreciate the beauty of language as a means to convey my own arguments. This appreciation fostered the understanding of what it means to communicate for the academic discourse community. Knowing how to join and expand on established conversations and skillfully learning the rhetorical cues involved are key elements to defining academic discourse itself.

**Working Definition of Academic Discourse.** A re-reading of Bartholomae's "Inventing the University" prompted me to question how existing definitions of academic discourse in higher education welcome and encourage producing in a digital medium that extends beyond the printed, written word. Redefining or remixing definitions of academic discourse begins to close the gap between theory and practice. Closing the gap perhaps minimizes some of the more skeptical arguments against multimodal composing and creates an avenue for embracing the

development of a multimodal pedagogy. Another key concept to emerge from this project is that study participants continue to define academic discourse based on conventional wisdom, which can place obstacles in the way of redefining academic discourse based on digital media and consuming and producing texts in multiple modalities.

Although not quite as expansive as Elbow's 1991 notion of "render[ing] experience," Joseph Bizup (2008) suggests that "discourse that explains is part of [the] accomplishment," encouraging students to experience a greater understanding of the human condition and thus moving beyond explaining and toward expansion of thought. Bizup suggests that "research should be regarded not as a sterile exercise in recovering what is already known but as a socially embedded act of inquiry that aims to further the collective understanding of a particular discourse community" (p. 72). With respect to defining academic discourse, the goal is to gain a sense of how to assimilate students into or familiarize them with the academy without losing sight of individual ideologies and subjectivities. I am not suggesting an assimilation similar to that of *Star Trek's* alien collective the Borg, where all minds are linked as one; rather, I am suggesting an assimilation into a discourse community in which students learn languages, epistemologies, and conventions that recognize the differing backgrounds students bring to a community college setting. Affording students opportunities to familiarize themselves with academic conventions encourages students to become individual subjects who utilize similar resources and tools to produce texts grounded in examples, evidence, and research and which results in developing a student body of individuals who expand on ideas and think critically and productively by means of twenty-first century literacy skills. And these student writers can do so using a variety of modes of communication beyond that of the alphabetic, print text.

As my experiences as a writing instructor have evolved, so, too, has my idea of what it means to compose a text in the twenty-first century. I embrace the written text because I understand and have a comfortable relationship with the conventions of a formal, written academic voice. In recent years, my definition of a text and the academic voice includes much more than hard-bound alphabetic texts. Much like my students, I produce familial video and audio projects to share precious moments. In my professional practice, my classroom expands to include the digital space, which means I provide teaching resources to my students in a digital environment via blog sites and in a Course Management Platform (CMP). This also means I teach distance learning courses and I often assess student work using video casts to comment directly on student-produced blog sites. I am also increasingly producing video and audio lectures and find that communicating with students in multiple modes garners much more engagement in the classroom. More formally, my notions of the academic voice have evolved to include multiple modes and multiliteracies as defined by scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century to include The New London Group, Cope and Kalantzis, and Handa. With these thoughts in mind a working definition of academic discourse suggests that students *become involved with and produce disciplinary texts grounded in examples, evidence, and research and which results in expanding on ideas and thinking critically and productively by means of twenty-first century literacy skills (i.e. fully utilizing the broad spectrum of composing resources to produce written, visual, aural, and digital texts).*

### **Defining (Digital) Academic Literacies**

In a study that examines educators' perceptions of students' composing abilities it seems self-evident to define the term *literacy*. And it cannot be ignored that this project examines study participants' perceptions of students' literate skills across disciplines in a community college

setting. Writing about academic under-preparedness in community college students, Delores Perin (2013) acknowledges that

[l]iteracy competencies signaling readiness for college-level courses in history, science, and technical subjects include the ability to compile, understand, and summarize written information; interpret the meaning of words and phrases; analyze text structure; evaluate authors' claims; convey complex ideas and information, and ones' own arguments in writing; and produce well-organized compositions using appropriate writing style and grammar. (p. 89)

Perin emphasizes the primary notions of expectations for composing in the academy. Yet defining literacy per twenty-first century standards is often challenging because educators must acknowledge the multitude of methods for making meaning of texts. A traditional definition confirms that reading and writing might be the primary foci. However, literacy often entails much more because it includes but is not limited to alphabetic literacy, audio literacy, computer literacy, critical literacy, digital literacy, electronic literacy, information literacy, media literacy, new media literacy, remix literacy, and rhetorical literacy.<sup>1</sup> Although literacy alone might not be a course outcome for FYC, most courses do acknowledge reading and writing from a rhetorical stance and instruction occurs to promote students' making meaning of texts produced in a variety of modes. James Paul Gee (2000) contends that given the numerous modes of composing available to students, "[w]e are living amidst changes, changes creating new ways with words, new literacies, and new forms of learning" (p. 43). Today, defining academic literacies involves acknowledging the multitude of literacies that exist in the twenty-first century and from which The New London Group introduces the term "multiliteracies," as emerging from "the multiplicity of communications channels and media" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). Although this project is focusing on faculty perceptions and expectations of students' composing abilities, the underlying concept is about how students make meaning of texts in a technologically advanced age. Defining literay(cies) for the academy and for the purposes of this project clarifies



the importance of establishing a pedagogy that acknowledges the existence of multiple modes of consuming and producing texts. Also for the purposes of this discussion, I will focus primarily on digital academic literacies to make stronger connections to twenty-first century composing practices. This section, then, establishes the theoretical framework in relation to the question, *how does an instructor design a research assignment that reconciles instructors' expectations of multimodal academic writing with conventionally accepted composing/literacy practices?*

**Scholarly Significance of (Digital) Academic Literacy.** In the last two decades or so, Rhetoric and Composition scholars as well as New Media scholars have worked toward defining and identifying shifts in thinking about academic literacy(ies). In 1994 The New London Group met to flesh out what was becoming a complicated process of teaching the beauty of communicating in a rapidly changing, technologically advanced world. While not specifically defining academic literacies, they did define the term “multiliteracies” to describe the “multiplicity of communications channels and media [and] the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). The group focused on addressing literacy pedagogy as a means to define new “modes of meaning-making” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). Clarifying the changing face of literacy pedagogy, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) posit that “[m]eaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal in which written-linguistic modes of meaning are part and parcel of visual, audio, and spatial patterns of meaning” (p. 5).

In a closely related discussion, Anne Wysocki and Johndan Johnson-Eilola (1999) in “Blinded by the Letter: Why Are We Using Literacy as a Metaphor for Everything Else?” attempt to question the term *literacy* as well as address what it means to be literate at the onset of the twenty-first century. They consider the relationship between and within technology and printed words, questioning what today might appear to be conventional definitions of literacy.

They describe literacy “not as a monolithic term but as a cloud of sometimes contradictory nexus points among different positions. Literacy can be seen as not a skill but a process of situating and resituating representations in social spaces” (p. 367). Wycoki and Johnson-Eilola make an interesting point. Although literacy itself might not be a skill as much as a means to represent how people communicate, I would argue that as students enter the academy and the FYC classroom, they begin to gain a sense of their pre-existing literate skills in relation to the academic discourse community, oftentimes with overt instruction meant to challenge students’ existing ideologies. Students possess foundational skills based on their individual experiences with social media, smart phones, YouTube videos, etc. While these skills are often accomplished in a virtual setting, they are done so with the expectation of a wide audience in public settings, albeit virtual. However, the traditional writing classroom often and typically views writing as an individual act in which the self is at the center of the experience. Yet current methods of composing and writing often occur in public forums (i.e. creating public blog sites to produce texts; updating statuses on a daily basis on social media sites) with the added intention of reaching an audience who responds immediately to posts and comments. So what does communicating in public, virtual forums mean when defining *literacy*? It means that definitions of literacy include digital literacy to promote making meaning of texts beyond the individual and toward a more public view of communication. In addition to consuming and producing texts in digital formats in their personal lives, students are increasingly consuming and producing texts in digital form in the academy as well and often in public discussion forums. Communicating via digital and public forums, suggests a strong need to not only promote a pedagogy that encourages a critically literate student body, but also encourages a critically literate faculty who considers the full spectrum of tools students use to make meaning of texts in the academy.

Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola (1999) address the “private, unsocialized, dreaming self” with respect to Sven Birkerts’ arguments in *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* and Birkerts’ ideas of the self reading portable print books in private spaces (cited in Wysocki & Johnson-Eilola, p. 357). They also address the “interiorization of a self” with respect to eighteenth-century reading conventions. Their claims are reminiscent of Louis Althusser’s notions of ideologies and subjectivity that suggest a sense of the self in relation to human interaction in the public sphere (p. 358). In FYC specifically, course design that acknowledges the self might begin with a personal narrative in which students reflect on and critically examine a specific event or chain of events related to the development of their own literacy or another significant and memorable moment in their lives. The subsequent assignments might gradually move toward more formal, academic voices as students learn how to paraphrase and summarize and then participate in the research process, with a primary focus on information literacy. Students begin with the self and then move toward a more public, academic voice, thus developing a sense of academic literacies. I am not suggesting that academic voices are primarily public, but with respect to “new ways of learning” the academy itself is recognizing the public self. Outside of FYC or even Advanced Composition, assignments may or may not encourage self-reflection, but as the data for this study will reveal in subsequent findings chapters, some disciplines almost demand a more interior focus as students make meaning of texts directly related to field work and other more discipline-specific tasks.

Self-reflection and a focus on subjectivity and the self prior to developing an academic voice is relevant to most courses in which developing strong information literacy skills is tantamount to students’ gaining a sense of not just academic discourse as a whole, but the discourse that applies to their specific field of study. As students become more experienced in

their fields, they begin to join the conversation with experts, thus developing information literacy skills encourages them to develop their academic voices to become experts themselves. FYC courses lend themselves well to developing academic literacies because they introduce information literacy skills, especially in the second semester of a two-semester composition sequence. Teaching information literacy skills stems from working closely with college librarians who today have developed well-designed, online research guides that direct students through the research process, including selecting a topic, understanding types of information, finding books, finding articles, using Web sources, evaluating sources, and citing sources. The current practice of using online research guides has proved to be an invaluable resource for teaching digital information literacy skills. In addition to developing information literacy skills, composition instructors must find a satisfactory method for students to write in a recognized academic voice without losing sight of their individual voices. Most writing instructors are aware that students must master rhetorical moves such as clarifying purpose, audience, ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos in order to develop academic arguments (i.e. arguments that expand on existing ideas and that are grounded in examples, evidence, and research, significant elements to academic discourse and developing academic literacy practices). Writing instructors specifically are hyper aware that an expectation and outcome of a second-semester composition course is to guide students through the process of synthesizing voices and arguments of others with their own and do so in such a way that encourages them to provide ample, credible, and relevant evidence and support to avoid making broad generalizations. In the twenty-first century, focusing on the self/subjectivity and the foundational theories behind teaching FYC have not changed, but what has altered are the specific pedagogical methods that now integrate twenty-first century literacy practices. Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola (1999) claim that literacy “involved [. . .] understanding

ourselves with the making and changing” of information (p. 366). They are arguing for a deliberate recognition of the human condition and the subjectivity of the self in relation to technology and the exchange of information. Such an argument is key to defining academic literacies for twenty-first century composing practices.

In the previous paragraph, I posited that developing information literacy skills is a primary element in the definition of academic literacy. Teaching information literacy skills today requires developing strong digital literacy skills as well because much of the research students conduct is via online library catalogs and databases. The writing classroom often encourages and demands a smooth integration of new media texts for students to both consume *and* produce, suggesting a need to address and recognize the vast numbers of literacies available to students. However, and what I will address in subsequent study findings chapters, is that when defining academic literacies, what is not clear is how digital or new media texts are utilized and then addressed in other disciplines. Definitions of literacy continue to evolve in relation to established notions of what constitutes academic discourse, but the onset of new literacies complicates how educators view literacy. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) claim that “[a]t present, one of the hottest ‘literacies’ going around in this sense is ‘digital literacy.’ It is emerging in many education policy documents as a core educational goal” (p. 21). Examples of evolving definitions occur in numerous scholarly publications. And for the purposes of connecting The New London Group’s framework and definitions of multiliteracies to digital academic literacies, I will draw on examples from Carolyn Handa’s (2001) publications in *Computers and Composition*, as well as from Elizabeth Daley (2003) and Daniel Anderson (2008) who provide examples of how definitions of literacy have expanded in the twenty-first century. In an editorial comment to two special issues of *Computers and Composition*, Handa elaborates on the fact that a growing trend

toward the inclusion of and interest in visual rhetoric and visual literacy in Composition Studies scholarship suggests the time is ripe for dedicating a conversation to both with respect to digital literacy. Daley expands on definitions of literacy by focusing on media literacy and Anderson focuses on computer literacy in a mediated classroom. While all three present slightly different perspectives of literacy, their goals are to contribute to discussions within a discipline that continues to grapple with what literacy means in an age of digital composing.

A discussion about twenty-first literacy practices cannot occur without addressing digital composing. Handa (2001) clarifies that with the introduction of sound, ideas about literacy evolve to include digital rhetoric and digital literacy. This evolution reflects the growing pedagogical shift toward multimodal composing (p. 1-2). The argument presented in special issues of *Computers and Composition* suggests that

incorporating digital elements into writing—especially in the form of Web pages and multimedia projects—demands that we draw on our knowledge of rhetoric perhaps even more than our knowledge of HTML, design issues, or graphics software. Images and sound are rhetorical. (Handa, 2001, p. 2)

These special issues serve as a reminder of the important task composition instructors have to ensure that integrating digital rhetoric into the writing classroom does more than push “the Wow! factor” (Handa, 2001, p. 2). Handa also offers a detailed definition of digital literacy, which is significant to mention because her arguments align well with many contemporary approaches to thinking about how digital literacy impacts students’ composing processes in the twenty-first century. The arguments she presents in 2001 are the beginnings of what will become an in-depth discussion of and movement toward multimodal composing which includes digital composing. She clarifies that

*Digital literacy* includes the abilities involved with visual literacy: being able to decipher images semiotically, as well as understanding how to make images integral to an argument and, ultimately, doing so with ease. It also encompasses the abilities demanded

of us by visual rhetoric: understanding how images are rhetorical and how rhetorical elements function in digital compositions. However, the term also includes aural literacy and rhetoric: understanding the degree to which sounds are rhetorical and can be used as an integral part of digital argumentation. (p. 2)

As Handa's comments suggest, definitions of literacy are highly nuanced and she acknowledges that a semiotic analysis of visual literacy extends to include aural literacy. She also situates definitions of digital literacy with scholars such as Richard Lanham, James Berlin and Jay Lemke. Lemke defined digital literacy with the more specific term *multimodal* in 1998 and while his arguments may appear to be outdated, it is significant to realize the history involved with defining literacies in relation to multimodality because the mere suggestion of modes of composing implies they fit well with The New London Group's notions of multiliteracies, which further suggests a plurality of literacy practices exists today that was not in existence prior to the 1990s. While Handa acknowledges that many in the field of Composition Studies resist a deliberate focus on digital rhetoric, she also argues that "our thinking about digital rhetoric and literacy needs to continue the work begun by" established scholars (2001, p. 4). Her arguments are a driving force when defining digital academic literacies because they encourage a deliberate focus on the multitude of literacies that exist today to then expand on movements toward multimodal composing.

Since 2001, *Computers and Composition* has continued to publish articles pertaining to digital rhetoric and literacy, supporting the notion that interest in multiple modes of composing continues to grow (Sullivan, 2001; Rose, 2004; Selber, 2004; Iswari, 2006; Rice, 2006; DeWinter & Vie, 2008; Porter, 2009; Clark, 2010; Fulwiler & Middleton, 2012; Killoran, 2013)<sup>ii</sup>. For example, the September 2012 issue is devoted to writing literacy narratives in a digital age. Susan Kirtley (2012) recognizes the vast and varied composing technologies available to students in the twenty-first century; she argues that "[a]ssignments such as

technological literacy narratives help illuminate technology in the writing process and assist composition instructors in understanding and incorporating new technologies into the writing classroom” (p. 191). In the same issue of *Computers and Composition*, Yu-Feng (Diana) Yang (2012) reports on her findings pertaining to English language learners composing multimodal digital stories. She discovered that English language learners “integrated various multimodal resources for their digital story design,” including audio, visual, written, animation, and additional effects in their narratives. Kirtley’s and Yang’s publications in *Computers and Composition* confirm scholars and educators’ continued desire to gain a better understanding of new literacies in the twenty-first century. The expansion of publications pertaining to digital literacy confirms Handa’s interest in and persistence with examining digital rhetoric and also confirms a paradigmatic shift in thinking about how to address the existence of multiple literacies in the twenty-first century.

Two specific examples of the expanding definition of literacy come from Elizabeth Daley (2003) and Daniel Anderson (2008). In “Expanding the Concept of Literacy,” Daley (2003) presents ideas similar to Handa’s about literacy, recognizing that literacy, as a foundational idea, “means the ability to read and write, to understand information, and to express ideas both concretely and abstractly” (p. 33). Handa approaches a discussion of literacy as it pertains to digital rhetoric/literacy and while Daley’s ideas are similar, her primary focus is on media literacy. While not specifically addressing Bartholomae’s “Inventing the University” she suggests a perhaps student-centered approach to assimilating students to the academic discourse community, albeit with twenty-first century tools and resources that are still in question by the academy. The point is, though, that to engage students in a composing process that welcomes twenty-first century literacies and engages students as novice researchers, the academy is moving



toward a re-purposing or re-mixing of academic discourse. In “The Low Bridge to High Benefits: Entry-Level Multimedia, Literacies, and Motivation,” Anderson (2008) also expands on the concept of literacy, suggesting multimodality as a means for motivation, creativity, engagement, and agency in students. Basing his arguments on Bruno Latour’s notion of human actors interacting in a network where an interchange of skills and ideas occurs, Anderson more specifically extends the concept of computer literacy, as opposed to Handa’s and Daley’s arguments pertaining to digital and media literacy. He argues Latour’s ideas that an interchange between humans and objects (technology) encourages a pedagogy that views computer literacy less as a passive activity and more as encouraging “a set of skills, in favor of processes through which multiple literacies can flow, processes like borrowing, mixing, layering, and sharing” (p. 41), further confirming the recent trend toward a re-purposing of the teaching of writing. In her introductory comments to *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World: A Critical Source Book*, Handa (2004) makes connections to other disciplines to put forth a similar argument for rethinking and revamping methods used to teach writing (p. 2-3). However, Anderson connects his arguments to literacy, claiming that “literacies emerge through interchanges of things and people, [affirming] a human agency to counter technical determinism” (p. 41). Confirming Henry Jenkins’ (2006) arguments that ask educators to think deliberately about moving students beyond being consumers of new media to becoming producers, Anderson counteracts the idea that technology in the classroom suggests technological determinism. He contends that a mediated classroom that encourages students to compose in other modes leads to classroom experiences that are rich in literacies, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. Anderson claims that applying alphabetic literacies to new media can build bridges to classical rhetoric and remediates (Anderson uses “recuperates”) older forms of communication and media (p. 52). He suggests that “these bridges

are built from rhetorical concepts that transcend particular literacies: concepts like ethos, pathos, and logos, and the well-worn modes of persuasion” (p. 52).

Anderson’s arguments confirm a commonly accepted conception of academic literacies that promote rhetorical analyses of texts to further promote an understanding of the rhetorical appeals. Indeed, and as noted in “Defining Academic Discourse” above, “[t]he ‘academic discourse’ theory of composition [ . . . ] favors rhetorical analysis of the genres of academic writing. In doing so, this theory looks at conventions of address as well as at the persuasive intent of all forms of writing” (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 1185). Academic literacies, then, are directly related to the academic discourse community and encouraging students to successfully transition into the academic discourse community is a clear objective for my personal pedagogy and for FYC before students become engrossed in a specific field of study. Handa, Daley, and Anderson present arguments that recognizably upset conventional thinking about academic literacy because they acknowledge the movement toward digital literacies in the academy. But what can be drawn from arguments that clarify academic literacies for the twenty-first century is the notion that academic literacies are not easily defined and are not confined to the written word. It is a combination of a number of scholars to include Handa’s, Daley’s, and Anderson’s arguments that approach a clearly defined, yet greatly nuanced definition of twenty-first century literacy practices. Moreover, understanding the existence of multiliteracies as addressed by The New London Group in 1994 and within a multiliterate student body encourages a natural shift toward developing a multimodal composing process that works well within the academic discourse community and promotes the existence of digital academic literacies.

**Working Definition of (Digital) Academic Literacies.** Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel (2006) claim that

[t]he pedagogy of multiliteracies focuses strongly on how cultural and linguistic diversity and the burgeoning impact of new communications and technologies are changing demands on learners in terms of what we have identified here as the operational and cultural dimensions of literacies. (p. 16)

Recognizing emerging literacies along with the value of New Media scholarship and reinforcing these new and changing demands in course and assignment designs encourages students to compose beyond the printed page and the written word. I am critically aware that many of my instructional colleagues at the community college level are not quite as eager to make this shift with me, so I work toward creating a balance between the written word and other modes of composing to satisfy the broader needs of a community college curriculum. Although never abandoning alphabetic texts, I do encourage my students to compose using digital technologies which implies that my professional and pedagogical practices have evolved along with scholarship that both theorizes and articulates how and why multimodal composing occurs in the classroom.

My current definition of digital academic literacy derives from years of communicating within and for the academy and has evolved from a strictly formal, academic voice to a still formal voice but one that is perhaps softened with a more personal touch. I am aware of the importance of making arguments and supporting them with well-researched evidence and for me that evidence comes from either published scholarship in the field or from my own direct and relevant observations. And as an educator-researcher, I am highly cognizant of meeting college outcomes that address the often challenging demands that occur in the classroom in the twenty-first century—challenges such as students making meaning of and for a variety of disciplines with ample means of communicating available to them. These challenges are accentuated in a community college setting where students' widely varied ability levels suggest educators across disciplines must accommodate the needs of a diverse student body. I am also highly cognizant of

departmental outcomes that reflect the WPA Outcomes Statement (See Appendices A and B for the current FYC outcomes in use at the community college on which I focused for this project).

The current version of the WPA Outcomes statement claims that

‘composing’ refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies. Writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images and graphical elements into texts intended for screens as well as printed pages. Writers’ composing activities have always been shaped by the technologies available to them, and digital technologies are changing writers’ relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways.

In 2008, the English department at the community college examined for this study revamped both first and second semester outcomes to match the previous version of the WPA Outcomes Statement which includes a statement about digital technologies. The addition of a digital technologies statement implies acceptance of composing in a variety of modes, which further implies the need for a redefining of academic literacies to include multiple modes of communicating and composing. Thus, *literacy* alone is too one-sided; it is not broad enough to encompass all forms of making meaning of texts. Defining (digital) academic literacies may also be too narrow, but for this project digital literacy comes to the forefront and almost demands recognition of The New London Group’s definition of multiliteracies to be inclusive of modalities other than linguistic or alphabetic. *Twenty-first century literacy practices are defined by the multitude of forms of communication that currently exist. A working definition of digital academic literacies recognizes the inclusion of aural, digital, visual, and written texts as ways to make meaning of texts across disciplines.*

### **Re-Configuring Multimodal Literacy**

The previous two sections defined academic discourse and digital academic literacy with the goal of connecting to multimodality. This section will focus on defining current expectations and perceptions of what multimodal literacy is by addressing seminal works from those scholars

who have made direct contributions to multimodal composing practices and who have defined what constitutes multimodal literacy practices for the twenty-first century. Not losing sight of the importance of engaging students who critically evaluate texts and produce equally critical texts, Handa continues the work she began in 2001 in two special issues of *Computers and Composition*, offers views of both traditional and contemporary classrooms to establish the rapidly evolving notions of what it means to teach writing in the twenty-first century. She notes that in a conventional classroom, “[v]isuals were incidental props, tricks to spark students’ interest in writing, more than viable communicative modes in themselves” (p. 1). She also describes what appears to be the norm for the twenty-first century: heavily mediated classrooms filled with students who arrive with advanced technological skills and equipped with cell phones and access to the Internet (p. 1). Handa establishes literacy expectations based on digital technologies available early in the twenty-first century and in doing so, she reminds readers of the rhetorical tradition from which so many writing instructors come and in which many are more comfortable. She further notes that “[f]irst conceived of as a tool for orators, rhetoric developed into a tool for writers only after printed texts became the communicative medium of choice” (p. 2). She reminds readers that because many writing instructors are familiar with the conventions of teaching for the medium of the written word on the printed page, they often steer clear of other modes of teaching writing and producing texts. Multimodal literacy expectations were perhaps not at the forefront of Handa’s arguments, and multimodal literacy was also not an accepted pedagogical practice at the onset of the twenty-first century; however, much of the conversation stemmed from changing and evolving ideas pertaining to the teaching of writing in light of the digital tools available.

Acknowledging instructors' existing comfort zones highlights why expectations of students' composing abilities continue to rely heavily on conventional, alphabetic texts. And it is the efforts of scholars such as Handa and The New London Group that facilitate a movement toward integrating other modalities into not just the writing classroom, but also across disciplines. Handa's arguments in *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World* make connections to other disciplines to put forth an argument for rethinking and revamping methods used to teach writing, and perhaps revitalize expectations about what constitutes twenty-first century literacy skills. Providing an overview of what appears to be a technologically savvy student body, she recognizes that "[o]ur students, however, may be technologically sophisticated yet rhetorically illiterate" (p. 3). Handa's collection of essays and her works in *Computers and Composition* have influenced the evolution of thought pertaining to new ways of learning because she provides a framework for considering what it means to make meaning of digital texts at the turn of the century and into the first two decades of the twenty-first century. And she does so without losing sight of the work of writing instructors who as little as ten years ago were attempting to identify new methods of teaching writing inclusive of aural, digital, and visual texts. Composition instructors' knowledge of the rhetorical situation and its application to digital rhetoric, then, becomes vital to developing a critically literate student body. Handa elaborates by suggesting that educators "prepar[e] students to communicate in the digital world using a full range of rhetorical skills [to] enable them to analyze and critique both the technological tools and the multimodal texts produced with those tools" (p. 3). Implementing "a full range of rhetorical skills" suggests the need to develop a multimodal pedagogy to ensure students are both analyzing and producing digital texts to reflect academic and twenty-first century literacy skills.

This section, then, contextualizes a theoretical background to reconfigure notions about multimodal literacy, situating it within current composing practices and within discussions pertaining to multimodal discourse. To accomplish this, I will discuss current definitions of multimodality and the nuances identified by scholars such as Claire Lutkewitte (2014). It addresses the overarching research questions for this study that ask *what are instructors' expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines?* and *how are instructors' expectations modified when asking students to compose multimodal texts?* It also provides the context for the *accepted composing/literacy practices* recognized in subsequent findings chapters along with the growth of multimodal composing practices in the twenty-first century.

**Scholarly Significance of Multimodal Literacy.** A careful review of the literature and scholarly claims regarding academic discourse and digital academic literacies supports claims that there is much interest in multimodal composing within Composition and English Studies. Current definitions of multimodality and multimodal texts clarifies how perceptions and expectations of students' composing abilities might evolve. Pamela Takayoshi and Cynthia Selfe (2007) provide a foundational definition in "Thinking about Multimodality." They suggest multimodal texts are "texts that exceed the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound" (p. 1). Claire Lauer (2009) further defines terms by noting a difference between the terms multimedia and multimodal. She suggests that multimedia is a non-academic term used in industry and that focuses on the production and distribution of a product. Multimodal is an academic term used in rhetoric and composition and with a focus on design and process. She also clarifies that mode refers to the ways composers represent information including words, images, sound, and animation. Media refers to the resources used to produce a product such as "books, radio, television, computers, paint brush and canvas, and

human voices” (p. 227). In 2012, Lauer published a follow-up Web text in *Kairos*. In this article she further extends her argument to include definitions of new/multi/modal/digital/media texts by interviewing scholars in the field and posting audio interviews within the Web text. She interviewed Cynthia Selfe, Jason Palmeri, Cheryl Ball, Gunther Kress, and Scott DeWitt. Interviews revealed that even as multimodal scholarship has become more prevalent, the term itself is problematic when considering audience.<sup>iii</sup> Selfe suggests that although she asks her students to compose audio, visual, and written texts, she does not use the term multimodal outside of the field and refers to the texts her students compose as Web pages, podcasts, or videos. Palmeri refers to multimodal as digital writing. Ball admits that she begins semesters referring to multimodal texts, but by the end of the semester she uses terms interchangeably. Kress finds the term “multimedia” problematic, addressing visual literacy as a more comfortable term. DeWitt recalls that the term “multimodal” entered the conversation when Cynthia Selfe joined Ohio State’s program and acknowledges that its use is problematic for the general public. Lauer’s arguments and interviews do expand on definitions of multimodal, but they also confirm the debate about usage of terms and that departmental definitions are still not clearly delineated, further suggesting that individual instructors use terms as they fit into their pedagogical practices. The murkiness that surrounds perceptions of terms and their pedagogical implications continue to cause some speculation about multimodal literacy practices; however, Lauer’s study along with Anderson et al’s add to the discussion to perhaps clarify how educators are identifying with literacy practices despite the lack of a clear definition of terms. What is also clear based on current discussions and the results of the study for this project is that most educators acknowledge the use of digital technology as a means for students to consume information without truly understanding how students are making meaning of these same texts.



Further acknowledging that the teaching of writing is increasingly moving toward composing in multiple modes, Ball in 2006 establishes the expectation for students to critically analyze, not only alphabetic texts, but also texts in other modalities. She builds on her argument by addressing the need to develop a method to effectively educate students on how to critically analyze multimodal or new media compositions. In “Designerly [Does Not Equal] Readerly: Re-Assessing Multimodal and New Media Rubrics for Use in Writing Studies” she defines designerly as “an interpretation strategy that focuses on the materiality with which a text is composed,” and readerly as an act at which “readers can actively discover meanings in a text that writing studies would find useful according to its literary, rhetorical, and aesthetic traditions” (p. 394). Her goal is to provide a readerly analysis of a digital, multimodal text that offers a comparative view to Kress and van Leeuwen’s and Lev Manovich’s designerly analysis models and in doing so, she contributes to the context in which multimodal composing and multimodal pedagogies began to develop. The importance of recognizing Ball’s contributions to the discussion is that she solidifies a framework in which to theorize and consider not just how texts are produced, but also *why*. Understanding *why* is a strong element of encouraging students to make meaning of a variety of texts in the composition classroom and beyond, thus clarifying what it means to be a critically literate student in the twenty-first century.

Additionally, ongoing theorizing suggests there is a grammar to multimodal composing that has not been fully addressed, but that can be equated to Kress and van Leeuwen’s ideas in *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (2001) and *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2008) and Kress’s (2010) claims in *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. Through their combined efforts, Kress and van Leeuwen offer a social semiotic approach to multimodality by

examining visual rhetoric and visual literacy; I should point out again that although their focus is semiotic, Kress and van Leeuwen provide valuable contributions to developing a sense of multimodal literacy skills because their theories facilitate thinking about texts in multimodal as opposed to monomodal ways. In *Reading Images*, they “concentrate on ‘grammar’ and on syntax, on the way in which these elements are combined into meaningful wholes” (2008, p. 1). They focus on “people, places and things” to describe both the complex and less complex manners in which visual elements make statements (2008, p. 1). Defining “visual grammar” in social and cultural terms, Kress and van Leeuwen focus on group practices, noting that their definition of visual grammar is “quite general,” as its purpose is to encompass images found in Western cultures in oil paintings, magazine layouts, comic strips, and scientific diagrams. However, their focus in the twenty-first century moves beyond these elements toward billboards, televised commercials, and the World Wide Web (2008, p. 3), further confirming an interest in multimedia forms of communication and multimodal composing. They also acknowledge that because visual communication is no longer reserved for experts—those trained professionals in the media—educators will find a need to develop new methods of teaching (2008, p. 3). Kress and van Leeuwen’s claims reinforce the need to recognize the existence of multimodal literacy and reinforce definitions of multiliteracies as put forth by The New London Group. I would also add to the discussion that increasingly visual rhetoric assumes sophisticated means of making arguments (i.e. the visual mode along with written, aural, and digital modes) and I am convinced that pedagogical foci need to include methods of making students critically aware of flashy and sophisticated arguments found on a Web site or intriguing arguments in email advertisements and text messages or even arguments presented in social networking sites such as Facebook,

Instagram, Pinterest, or Twitter, necessitating a need to address multimodal texts as they apply to the academic discourse community and to promote twenty-first century literacy practices.

**Working Definition of Multimodal Literacy.** Current pedagogical practices are a direct reflection of twenty-first century literacy and composing practices. It is not so uncommon for educators to develop skills producing aural, digital, video, and visual texts as they work on designing courses for both face-to-face and online environments. Changes in course design that are inclusive of other modalities reflect a desire to develop firsthand knowledge of what it means to be literate in the twenty-first century. Additionally, current communication patterns and social media contribute to communicating in a variety of modes. Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, and Twitter often welcome texts in visual, verbal, and aural modes. And it is no secret that students enter the FYC classroom and classrooms across disciplines with well-developed technological skills, but from a much less academic perspective. They post videos from their smart phones to share a night out with friends, a scene from their daughter's wedding, or the joy of watching their child take her or his first steps—their goal is to share wondrous moments in life as opposed to presenting an argument. They also scan social media for posts pertaining to more political and newsworthy events and comments and they share these posts with their family and friends as a means to perhaps educate or inform others of more global or domestic events of interest to them. In the twenty-first century the evolution of composing in perhaps less formal and more socialized ways in the private sector could be seen to parallel the evolution of composing in more formal, academic ways for the academy. Whether students are composing status updates or scholarly arguments the digital tools they use encourage fully embracing a multimodal literacy. A balance between conventional methods of composing and

more edgy digital modes seems to work well in course design because a focus on twenty-first century composing and literacy practices is often more appealing to twenty-first century students

A perhaps simplified definition of multimodal literacy reflects composing practices both inside of and outside of the academy and suggests the utilization of different methods or different means of composing to produce a text. Focusing primarily on literacy pedagogy, The New London Group (2000) also played a significant role in defining the term “multimodal” as it applies to “cultural and linguistic diversity” (p. 10). In the introductory chapter to *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) define multimodal as recognizing that “written-linguistic modes of meaning are part and parcel of visual, audio, and spatial patterns of meaning” (p. 5). Indeed, these “patterns of meaning” are important to developing a multimodal pedagogy to design assignments and courses that adapt to twenty-first century literacy practices. Definitions of multimodal composing exist in a much larger context with the onset of scholarly studies. Anderson et al.’s (2006) survey asked participants to define multimodal composing.<sup>iv</sup> The survey results revealed that 68% of the respondents define multimodal composing as including “audio, video, animation, words, images, and others” (p. 69). But beyond this definition, most departments had not clearly defined multimodal composing. What the survey also reveals is that multimodal pedagogy is ongoing at the individual level with little recognition at the departmental or college levels (Anderson, et al., 2006, p. 69). These findings align with the findings of this project and although I will not discuss the results until subsequent findings chapters, I can attest to the fact that small pockets of individual instructors are integrating multimodal projects into their curriculum, but these types of assignments are not widespread and are often viewed as supplemental to more conventional assignments. Additionally, the instructors who assign nontraditional projects do not recognize

the language or scholarship of multimodal composing. They are primarily looking for creative ways to more fully engage students with course content and to meet course outcomes.

In a more recent publication, Claire Lutkewitte (2014) defines multimodal composition in broad terms as “communication using multiple modes that work purposely to create meaning,” which reinforces multimodal literacy practices (p. 2). Ideally, I would like to see multimodal composing fully recognized and defined to include but not limited to composing via written, visual, aural, and digital means to encourage greater understanding of the human condition and expand on existing ideas and bodies of thought. I would argue that the phrase “multimodal composing” implies that a combination of written, audio, video, and digital texts is in place to accomplish communication in a variety of ways to promote multimodal literacy. *A Working definition of multimodal literacy, then, acknowledges the use of aural, digital, video, visual, and written texts in such a way that students are making meaning of a variety of texts, thus promoting twenty-first century literacy skills. Multimodal literacy practices encourage students as both consumers and producers of texts in an academic environment via a combination of modalities.*

### **Concluding Thoughts: Remixing Academic Literacy**

This chapter confirms that the combined efforts and publications of scholars such as The New London Group and Carolyn Handa establish existing frameworks pertaining to multimodal pedagogy and multiliteracies. However, what is missing from their arguments is a discussion about whether the production of multimodal projects meets outcomes for the academic discourse community across disciplines in a community college setting. Their foci have been on multiliteracies and digital literacy in broader terms as opposed to narrowing to outcomes in a community college environment. This project attempts to bridge this gap by examining community college professors’ expectations for the academic discourse community, how these

professors modify expectations if/when integrating multimodal assignments, how they design assignments to meet expectations, how they target learning outcomes, and how they assess multimodal projects.

Recognizing that a gap between theory and practice exists is perhaps one way to begin addressing resistance toward developing a multimodal pedagogy that recognizes the value of multimodal literacy skills. Although many scholars have contributed to newer and what can be perceived as edgy methods of teaching writing across disciplines, the conversations do not fully discuss what makes multimodal texts academic and whether these same texts meet outcomes for the academic discourse community and across disciplines. In this literature review, I have identified the existing scholarship that seems most pertinent to the current discussion, but scholars such as The New London Group, Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, and Carolyn Handa provide a framework to establish the groundings for multimodal pedagogy as a means to understand the existence of multiliteracies, to include digital academic literacy. However, it should also be noted that Bronwyn Williams (2007) in the Foreword to Cynthia Selfe's *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*, expresses concern about developing a multimodal pedagogy. She is aware that the twenty-first century student possesses self-interest and has a self-driven willingness to experiment with multiliteracies, suggesting an emphatic desire to change classroom practices. Williams claims, "[a]s teachers then, what we are faced with now is how best to connect our classroom practices with the thoughtful voices that have begun to theorize how all of these ways of communicating fit together" (p. xi). In order to accommodate changing literacies and changing modes of composing, "we have to re-imagine both the ways in which our students are learning to compose and communicate as well as the goals and outcomes we create for our writing courses" (Williams, 2007, p. xi). Finding a way to

balance modes of communicating or encourage them to “fit together” is indeed a challenge writing instructors face each semester, but I would also argue that perhaps a remixing of course design not just in writing courses, but also across disciplines will more closely meet twenty-first century composing and literacy practices to encourage a well-rounded student body who is critically aware of effective communication in today’s fast-paced, technologically advanced world.

It is indeed important to recognize the value of producing texts that meet the expectations of the academic discourse community, but that also meet twenty-first century literacy standards and modes of communicating. Finding a balance between the value of a conventional research project that relies primarily on alphabetic texts and a project that integrates modes is a challenge FYC instructor’s face each semester not only due to resistance but also due to lack of access and experience in FYC students who come from widely varied backgrounds. This literature review in addition to highlighting relevant theoretical frameworks, has defined academic discourse and digital academic literacy. It has also clarified expectations about multimodal literacy in relation to multimodal discourse and developing a multimodal pedagogy. While it is not possible to include the entire spectrum of scholars who have contributed to redefining and remixing terms, I have focused on those scholars who are most relevant to developing a multimodal pedagogy with an eye toward remixing notions of literacy for twenty-first century standards.

## METHODOLOGY

### Overview

The integration of digital technologies and modalities other than print, written, or alphabetic as discussed for this study emerged out of my interest in twenty-first century literacies pertaining to the teaching of writing. The growing body of research on multimodal composing emphasizes a shift in pedagogy to include digital technologies in the classroom that promote twenty-first century literacy practices. Scholars such as Ball (2004), Ball and Kalmbach (2010), Ball and Moeller (2007), Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Handa (2001; 2004), Jenkins (2006), Kress (2010), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001; 2008), Lauer (2009; 2012), Lutkewitte (2014), The New London Group (2000), Palmeri (2012), Selfe (2007), Takayoshi and Selfe (2007), Ulmer (2003; 2007), and Wysocki (2004) have theorized about and offered practical ideas for the integration of modalities other than alphabetic into course and assignment design. Adopting a mixed methods approach, I examined faculty perceptions about student's composing practices. I also examined how participants might modify assignment design when shifting from conventional to multimodal projects.

A mixed methods approach afforded me with ample opportunity to collect quantitative data to identify demographic details and to quantify, for example, participant comfort levels with digital technology in the classroom (i.e. quantifying how many faculty are comfortable or not comfortable integrating digital technologies into their pedagogical practices). Additionally, I applied a grounded theory approach, to collect and examine qualitative data (i.e. video interviews) as a means to analyze faculty perceptions about their pedagogical practices in relation to multimodal literacy theories. To fully appreciate whether multimodal pedagogy is in



use, I examined faculty across disciplines to determine their perceptions and expectations of students' composing abilities for the academic discourse community. Limiting my study to the first two years of college in the specific context of one college provides an intriguing look into participants' experiences with composing practices. Furthermore, an analysis of faculty perceptions and expectations is a way to understand the possible existence of a multimodal pedagogy outside of the discipline of English. Another one of my goals is to address preconceived notions that alphabetic texts are superior to academic texts produced in other modalities. Therefore, analyzing participants' perceptions and expectations of students' composing abilities, utilizing a mixed methods approach allowed me to investigate ideas relevant to using multimodal literacies in a twenty-first century community college setting.

This chapter describes my mixed methods approach and research design. I first outline my use of mixed methods (quantitative, qualitative, and grounded theory). Next, I describe the site of study, participant selection, the invitation process, administration of the study survey, and how participants completed the survey. I then describe data collection to include collection of survey responses, video interviews, and sample documents (syllabi, assignment guidelines, and rubrics). And finally, I describe the process I underwent to analyze data, reflecting grounded theory methods (i.e. first and second cycle coding and writing of analytic memos), taking into account contemporary methods applied to multimodal pedagogy.

### **Research Design: Mixed Methods**

In the seminal issue of *The Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Abbas Tashakkori and John Creswell (2007a) define mixed methods research in their editorial comments in "The New Era of Mixed Methods." Tashakkori and Creswell (2007a) suggest that mixed methods involve "research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws

inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry” (p. 4). For the purposes of my study, a mixed methods approach involved examining qualitative and quantitative data gathered from survey responses, syllabi, assignment guidelines, rubrics, and video interviews. From this data, I was able to draw conclusions specific to faculty perceptions of composing practices and their perceptions of integrating digital technologies and other modalities into their pedagogy. In a subsequent issue of *The Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Tashakkori and Creswell (2007b) suggest that “[a] strong mixed methods study starts with a strong mixed methods research question or objective” (p. 207). They also argue that “when a project explores mixed research questions with interconnected qualitative and quantitative components or aspects (e.g., questions including ‘what and how’ or ‘what and why’), the end product of the study (conclusions and inferences) will also include both approaches” (p. 207). Tashakkori and Creswell confirm the need to clearly define research questions for a mixed methods approach, and the research questions for this study provide a means to review data to determine the “what and how” and the “what and why” of twenty-first century literacy practices and developing a pedagogy that encourages integration of digital technologies to promote multimodal composing.<sup>v</sup> The primary research questions for this study ask *what* are participants’ expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines, and *how* do participants modify expectations when shifting from conventional to multimodal assignments?

My use of a mixed methods approach stems from my desire to gain basic information such as how many participants use digital technologies in the classroom, but I also wanted to understand why participants make the choices they do and how their perceptions drive their pedagogical decisions. With Creswell and Tashakkori’s claims in mind, I utilized both

quantitative and qualitative data to gain a better understanding of not only numerical and demographic data, but also the more detailed cognitive processes of instructors as they contemplate the implications of designing writing assignments. The study aimed to gather two types of information: 1) basic demographic details to include specific disciplines and the number of faculty involved in writing intensive courses (or perceive themselves to be teaching writing intensive courses), and 2) detailed thinking processes behind participants' perceptions of academic texts (to include alphabetic, aural, digital, and visual) and their expectations of students. Statistical information coupled with more detailed written survey responses and video interview responses provided data rich with information from which I could make evidence-based generalizations. I also relied on grounded theory as a systematic approach for qualitative methods and to establish guidelines for examining written survey responses and interview transcripts. Utilizing quantitative and qualitative data provided a foundation for me to collect and analyze data that focuses on study participants' expectations and perceptions of students' writing abilities and composing practices for the twenty-first century.

Grounded theory, specifically, provided the theoretical foundation for me to participate in writing analytic memos and coding of qualitative data. I employed two cycles of coding per grounded theory as defined by Johnny Saldaña (2013): First cycle In Vivo Coding and second cycle Theoretical Coding. In Vivo Coding provided me with initial terms as they emerged from the study headings and written responses and from which to categorize responses. Theoretical Coding provided a foundation for confirming the validity of categories that emerged based on the survey design and headings in the survey, but that also emerged from a first cycle analysis of the data. Additionally I applied Kathy Charmaz's (2006) definition of theoretical sampling, which is similar to Saldaña's ideas about Theoretical Coding. Charmaz promotes the use of theoretical

sampling as a means for directing researchers toward drawing specific conclusions as they emerge from the data (p. 100). Theoretical sampling emerges after the initial stages of coding and Charmaz suggests that “the purpose of theoretical sampling is to obtain data to help you explicate your categories” (p.100). The survey itself supplied categories based on each section and worked well when categorizing quantitative responses; however, theoretical coding and sampling pushed the boundaries of categories as I determined key concepts that emerged from both survey responses and video interviews (see Data Analysis: Coding/Memo Writing below for more details).

### **Data Collection**

**Site of Study.** The specific site of study is at CBK Community College,<sup>vi</sup> a large community college consisting of 20,000 plus full-time equivalent (FTE) students. It is the third largest within a twenty-three college system, offering a wide venue of delivery methods to include face-to-face, distance, hybrid, and dual enrollment courses in high school settings. The college offers “20 two-year occupational/technical degrees, eight occupational/technical certificates, five two-year college transfer degrees, one transfer certificate, and 41 career studies certificates requiring less than one year of full-time study” (*College Catalog*, 2014). The college consists of three campuses to include suburban, urban, and rural. The suburban campus is the main and largest of the three. The college also consists of four schools to include the School of Business; the School of Humanities and Social Sciences; the School of Mathematics, Science, and Engineering; and the School of Nursing and Allied Health. The English department is housed within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. It is not a degreed program, but offers greater than fifty sections of first- and second-semester composition courses each semester to contribute to other degreed and certificate programs. As is often the case, first-year

composition courses at CBK Community College prepare students for writing in other disciplines; specifically, most disciplines and programs require English 111, the first-semester composition course as a prerequisite for most 200 level courses. English 112, the second-semester composition course is required before taking 200 level English courses, but is not a prerequisite for all 200 level courses. English 112 is also a required general education course for transfer to most four-year colleges and universities and for graduation purposes in degreed programs at CBK Community College.

**Participant Selection.** This study had the potential to examine 600-plus confidential survey responses generated by faculty participants. In the fall 2013 semester, I invited faculty to participate via an electronic mail invitation sent through the college listserv (See Appendix C for a copy of the email invitation). The college's Information Technology Department compiled a list of current faculty across disciplines, and I was able to track responses via an electronic spreadsheet. I sent multiple email invitation reminders during the fall 2013 semester, with twenty-six faculty responding to my call and twenty-four of these fully participated in the survey. Faculty participants represent the following disciplines: Developmental English (1), Early Childhood Education (1), English (11), English as a Second Language (1), Geography (1), History (2), Math (1), Nursing (1), Paralegal Studies (1), Psychology (1), Science (1), Sociology (1), and Teacher Preparation (1). I narrowed selection of participants for video interviews to five faculty based on their agreement to participate and who suggested they integrated digital technologies or other modalities into their pedagogy or they included strong research and information literacy skills in their courses. These five participants represent Early Childhood Education (1), English (1), History (1), Sociology (1), and Teacher Preparation (1).

The invitation introduced myself as the researcher, included a brief description of the study, and specified that participation was strictly voluntary and confidential. The invitation also clarified that participants would agree to the following:

- completing a survey that would take approximately forty-five minutes;
- supplying copies of syllabi, assignment guidelines, and grading rubrics;
- possibly participating in a video-taped interview in the event I required clarification about survey responses, syllabi, guidelines, and/or rubrics.

In addition to the above, the invitation specified that study results would be published in a dissertation and could possibly be published in a scholarly journal or Web site and could be a part of an academic presentation. After participants contacted me to agree to participate, I then sent them a response with further instructions on how to complete the survey (see Table 1 below for specific language).

**Table 1. Electronic Mail Instructions for Completing Survey**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. The survey is titled: "Disciplinary Composing Practices and Expectations."

To participate, please click on the link below.

Sincerely,

Beth Bensen-Barber ([ebensen-barber@reynolds.edu](mailto:ebensen-barber@reynolds.edu))

-----  
Click here to do the survey:

<http://composingpractices.limequery.com/index.php/survey/index/sid/574431/token/z4swj655fruny5a/lang/en>

If you do not want to participate in this survey and don't want to receive any more invitations please click the following link:

<http://composingpractices.limequery.com/index.php/optout/tokens/langcode/en/surveyid/574431/token/z4swj655fruny5a>

If you are blacklisted but want to participate in this survey and want to receive invitations please click the following link:

<http://composingpractices.limequery.com/index.php/optin/tokens/langcode/en/surveyid/574431/token/z4swj655fruny5a>

**Survey Responses.** My study was designed to question current teaching practices in primarily writing intensive courses, as well as how participants are considering the writing and research processes with regard to the academic discourse community, course learning outcomes, and twenty-first century literacy practices. I administered a survey instrument over the fall 2013 semester and established a due date of 8 October 2013 by which to complete the survey. Participants responded to twenty-seven closed and open-ended questions divided among six sections in an online survey (See Appendix D for a complete version of the survey). Prior to

administering the survey, I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from both Old Dominion University and from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) at the community college examined. The survey used for this study is titled “Disciplinary Composing Practices and Expectations” and I administered it through LimeService, a free online survey platform for designing, implementing, and evaluating questionnaires. I primarily relied on the design and implementation resources offered by LimeService and collected initial responses using LimeService’s evaluation tools in the form of spreadsheets and Word documents, but transferred data to spreadsheets of my own design for coding purposes. LimeService also offers a tracking tool for administering surveys and for identifying when participants have completed surveys, which proved to be useful when sending reminders. Upon accessing the questionnaire, the first screen participants viewed included a thank you and additional details pertaining to the study. Table 2 below contains language as it appears on this screen.

**Table 2. Initial Screen in the Questionnaire**

Thank you for participating in this study! The following questionnaire consists of a series of questions pertaining to faculty expectations of students’ writing practices. Please complete the survey by 8 October 2013.

To further assist with this study, please email the following documents to eb2921@email.vccs.edu: Syllabus, Assignment Guidelines (for those assignments discussed in survey) Assignment Rubrics (for those assignments discussed in survey) It is voluntary for you to submit these documents; however, submission will provide valuable data for the study.

Thank you for participating in this study; the researcher will contact you should she require further information or details from you.

I designed the survey to determine participant expectations for academic discourse, participant expectations of multimodal academic writing compared with more conventional academic



writing, participants' targeting of learning outcomes, and assessment of both written and multimodal projects when considering learning outcomes. My goal was to understand how faculty across disciplines are targeting learning outcomes when designing both conventional and non-conventional research assignments and if participants are participating in a multimodal pedagogy, how they might be targeting learning outcomes for projects in modalities other than print/written/alphabetic. To formulate questions for the survey, I followed the design of a survey administered by Anderson et al (2006), which targeted faculty in writing programs. Anderson et al's survey provided an effective foundation from which I could model my own study, designing questions pertaining to faculty background, assignment design, and assessment practices. The purpose of modeling my own survey on Anderson et al's was not to perform a direct comparison between my own study and theirs because my focus is specifically on an interdisciplinary community college setting. Anderson et al's survey contained the following categories: Multimodality and Praxis, Assessment of Multimodal Compositions, Teaching Resources, Technology Resources and Infrastructure, Pedagogical and Technological Training, Assessment of Technology Training, Scholarship and Tenure/Promotion, and Individual and Program Demographics. In order to adapt this survey, I changed categories to meet the needs of my focus. Since my study focuses on faculty across disciplines in a community college setting, I adapted the survey questions to accommodate this audience. I divided the survey into the following six sections:

- Faculty Background
- Discipline/Program Writing Expectations
- Instructor Expectations
- Types of Writing Assignments

- Assignment Design
- Assessment of Assignments

Section one of the survey, Faculty Background, served to ask questions to identify discipline/program, years teaching, writing intensive courses, classes taught, comfort level with digital technology, and assessment of students' strengths and weaknesses. Questions in section one provided basic demographic details with some descriptive information about strengths and weaknesses. Section two, Discipline/Program Writing Expectations, determined the importance of writing to representative disciplines and programs. It should be noted that at CBK Community College a program is defined as offering degrees and/or certificates of some kind and disciplines are defined as existing within a program. Section two also asked participants to provide a brief narrative of what they expect their students to know about academic writing for their specific program or discipline. Section three, Instructor Expectations, served to determine whether individual courses/instructors include a research and/or argumentative research project in their course design. It also asked participants to select from a number of items to identify specific goals for students' learning of both conventional, written assignments and assignments composed in other modalities. Section four, Types of Writing Assignments, asked participants to identify the specific types of projects they assign and assess. These assignments include conventional thesis projects, multimodal (visual, photo, audio, digital, oral) projects, and collaborative projects. Although asking only three questions, section five, Assignment Design, provided some of the foundational data for a discussion of course learning outcomes with regard to both written and multimodal assignments. Participants selected from a number of items that applied to their specific courses/pedagogy and then provided a brief discussion of how they target learning outcomes in research assignments. Section six, Assessment of Assignments, served to identify assessment practices for both written and multimodal projects in place for each

participant, criteria used to evaluate student writing, and development and implementation of assessment practices for both written and multimodal projects. Each findings chapter identifies applicable research questions before moving into examining participants' responses.

While quantitative data provided basic demographic information such as faculty disciplines, years teaching and types of assignments, qualitative data comes from more detailed written survey responses to questions that ask faculty to reflect on their personal pedagogical choices, perceptions about writing, and expectations of students' writing/composing skills at the college level. Because qualitative research "is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem," I included open-ended questions on the survey to encourage participants to elaborate on their perceptions and expectations (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Additionally, in *Composition Research: Empirical Designs* Janice M. Lauer and J. Williams Asher (1988) note that a qualitative study "closely stud[ies] individuals, small groups, or whole environments" (p. 23). Lauer and Asher focus on composition classrooms; however, this particular study did not study classroom behavior. Since my focus was on faculty, I was able to draw conclusions about participants' perceptions of writing based on responses to open-ended survey questions and video interviews. The qualitative data collected for this study is pertinent to gaining insight into how and why instructors make choices pertaining to writing for the academic discourse community and for twenty-first century literacy practice in the first two years of college.

**Video Interviews.** I also received IRB approval to video interview eight to ten of the survey respondents, but narrowed my selection to five in the interest of time and limiting data. After collecting survey responses, I moved on to conduct interviews over the course of the spring 2014 semester and transcribed them over the summer. The final question of the survey

instrument asked, “would you be willing to participate in a video-taped interview should the researcher require additional details/clarification about your responses? If so, please include your name and contact information in the space provided below.” Six of the twenty-four participants did not include their names and contact information, which not only limited my choices, but also assisted me with narrowing down selection for video interviews. After an initial review of survey responses and in order to clarify some responses, I narrowed a more specific participant base to five faculty who agreed to conduct video-taped interviews in which we discussed their expectations of students and how these expectations determined assignment design beyond the requirements established in course outcomes (see page 75 for elaboration on how I selected interview subjects). We also discussed assessment practices in greater detail. Each of these five participant’s programs/disciplines are housed in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, which offers Liberal Arts (A. A.) degrees and Social Sciences (A. S.) degrees. Students may also choose to pursue an A. A. or A. S. specializing in Teacher Education. The Early Childhood Development program offers the following degrees and certificates: Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) in Early Childhood Development, Certificate in Early Childhood Development, and Career Studies Certificates in Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood School-Age Childcare. With the exception of Early Childhood Education, participants teach on the college’s suburban campus. The Early Childhood Education participant teaches on the urban campus. I chose to interview these five faculty because they agreed to participate in video interviews and their responses indicated they ask students to compose using other modalities or they have a strong sense of academic writing. They also appeared to provide an effective means to gain further insight into the types of assignments they design, perceptions of how these assignments align with course learning outcomes, assignment practices, and perceptions of how students

become familiar with academic discourse. With the exception of the Sociology participant, each faculty member suggested use of digital technologies or other modalities in their course and assignment design, and I wanted to find out more about how they integrate other modalities into their pedagogy. The Sociology participant offered a view of course and assignment design from a more conventional perspective, offering an effective comparison with other participants. The use of one participant with a conventional pedagogy might suggest her responses could lead to generalizing to the larger population; however, it is important to keep in mind that the Sociology participant is one piece of data examined. My examination of her responses in subsequent chapters will clarify how she fits into the study and how I extrapolate to a wider community.

To schedule the interviews, I contacted each participant by electronic mail to ask if they wished to participate in video-taped interviews. Once they agreed, I sent them a Media Consent Form for their signature and to indicate that they agreed to the video-taped interviews (See Appendix E for a copy of the Media Consent Form). We held interviews at a mutually agreed upon time and in the participants' campus offices. I began each interview session with the following questions in mind:

- Why are you asking students to compose in the ways you are asking of them?
- How do students compose each assignment?
- How do you see these assignments meeting course learning outcomes?
- How do you assess these assignments?

Each question was open-ended and often led to responses beyond what I expected. Although I began with these four questions in mind, responses led me to ask follow-up questions for clarification purposes or to encourage greater depth of discussion.

I transcribed each video interview and examined transcripts for all five interview subjects. I used video interview responses to elaborate on and provide evidentiary support for the following survey sections: Types of Writing Assignments, Assignment Design, and Assessment of Assignments. A discussion and analysis of these responses appear in findings chapters five and six. Focusing on these three sections afforded me the opportunity to probe participants a little further to gain greater insight into how they address course learning outcomes based on the types of projects they assign and design. I was also able to gain insight into their specific assessment practices. An added benefit to video interviews was that participants provided detailed discussion about perceptions of instructing students on writing for the academic discourse community in a community college environment. I was often intrigued by participants' strong sense of not only community college missions for entering the workforce and transferring to a four-year college or university, but also of responsibilities to course outcomes and course content. I relied primarily on interviews from four of the five video participants: Early Childhood Development, English, History, and Sociology. Comments from the Teacher Preparation subject are minimal due to her responses often wandering and not specifically responding to the questions asked or not providing information relevant to the discussion at hand.

**Sample Documents.** At the completion of the survey, participants had the option to voluntarily share syllabi, assignment guidelines, and rubrics. Twelve study participants agreed to share sample documents: Early Childhood Education (1), English (5), Geography (1), History (2), Paralegal Studies (1), Sociology (1), Teacher Preparation (1). Participants sent documents as email attachments to my college Gmail account for two reasons: 1) Gmail easily accommodates large files, and 2) sending through the college-sanctioned Gmail service guarantees more privacy and confidentiality for participants. I primarily used sample documents to verify course

outcomes/objectives and compare with survey and video responses. I also used sample documents to review specific language used on both syllabi and assignments. While the survey responses and video interviews address assessment practices, participants did not supply a sufficient number of rubrics for the purposes of the study, so I reviewed these only minimally. Discussion about assessment practices primarily came from interview and survey responses. I reviewed syllabi to identify types of assignments and course learning outcomes. Syllabi language pertaining to course outcomes/objectives proved to be most useful when examining perceptions of meeting course learning outcomes because I was able to compare written or video responses with specific items on syllabi.

### **Data Analysis: Coding/Memo Writing**

The research design for this study includes a number of instruments to include survey responses, syllabi, assignment guidelines, rubrics, and video interview transcripts. Working from data collected from these instruments, I identified participants' perceptions and expectations of students' writing abilities, types of assignments designed, and assessment practices in place. Each of these artifacts afforded me the opportunity to review responses and sample documents for the purposes of analyzing study findings. Sample documents in most cases served to provide specific examples to support participant responses, particularly for interview responses. Survey response sections supplied categories from which I was able to organize responses and use headings for initial coding of data (See Figures 1 and 2 below for examples of coding). Specific codes and categories appear in findings chapters four, five, and six. For example, Figure 13 Conventional Assignment Expectations across Disciplines identifies codes representative of categories established for meeting course learning outcomes (MCO), explaining course content (ECC), applying the rhetorical situation (ARS), applying the rhetorical appeals (ARA),

development of arguments grounded in evidence (DAE), and research skills/information literacy practices (ILS). Chapter five includes several figures that represent codes evolving out of survey response. Figure 15 Types of Research Projects Assigned across Disciplines identifies the following codes in response to questions about types of assignments designed: Thesis Driven Project (TP), Visual Project (VP), Photo Project (PP), Audio Project (AP), Digital Project (DP), Collaborative Research Project (CRP), Oral Presentation (OP), Other (O). Chapter six also includes figures that represent data findings. Figure 23 Side-by-Side Comparison of Criteria Selection for Alphabetic and Non- Alphabetic Research Assignments in chapter six, page 157 illustrates codes I identified in response to questions pertaining to contemplation of criteria when designing both alphabetic and non-alphabetic assignments. These codes appear as follows: Course Learning Outcomes (CO), Clearly Stated Thesis (TH), Fully Developed Argument (AR), Use of Credible Sources (CS), Number of Pages/Words (PW), Documentation Style and Accuracy (DS), Design Elements (DE), and Other (O).

I relied on developing codes based on the survey instrument, abbreviating categories to identify in spreadsheets. While I was hopeful that the tools available in LimeServices would be useful because LimeService compiles data into spreadsheets and Word documents, I found that I needed to reorganize spreadsheets to fit my purposes. LimeService created tables in Word documents for each section of the survey and for individual participants, and I was able to use each participants' Word documents to track and code written responses. I printed out a copy of each Word document and then created spreadsheets to combine and record responses from which to code and create graphical images to report visually in the findings chapters (see Figure 1 below for a sample portion of a spreadsheet). First cycle, initial coding also involved reading through participants' written comments, which allowed me to apply In Vivo coding as language



emerged from participants' responses to survey questions (Saldaña, 2013, p. 4). According to Johnny Saldana (2013), when In Vivo coding occurs a "cod[e] is taken directly from what the participant says and is placed in quotation marks" (p. 4). For example, in response to the question, *are you comfortable teaching with digital technology?*, terms such as *wikis*, *blogs*, and *Blackboard* emerged to identify specific platforms in use. However, as I conducted second cycle coding, a more theoretical coding process occurred and terms such *consumers* and *producers* emerged as key concepts to identify how participants use digital technologies in the classroom. I applied theoretical coding based on Kathy Charmaz's (2006) definition, which claims that "theoretical codes specify possible relationships between categories you have developed in your focused coding" (p. 63). Although participants did not supply terms such as *consumers* and *producers* in their responses, as I read through comments, I identified these two concepts as identifying a relationship that might occur when distinguishing pedagogical goals for an assignment. Understanding the existence of students as consumers and producers is key to understanding how digital technologies and modalities are approached for pedagogical purposes (See Figure 2 below for a sample of first and second cycle coding).

**Figure 1. Sample Spreadsheet for Organizing Quantitative Data**

Faculty Background (Disciplines)				
Employment Status	Years Teaching	Writing Intensive	Discipline/Program	Courses Taught
FT	5	No	Science	BIO 101 General Biology I, BIO 102 General Biology II, BIO 256 General Genetics
PT	5	No	Social Sciences/ Psychology	200 level psych courses
FT	12	No	Math	MTE 1-9 (developmental courses), MTH 120 Introduction to Mathematics, MTH 173 Calculus with Analytical Geometry I, MTH 174, Calculus with Analytical Geometry II, MTH 240 Statistics
FT	6	Yes	Liberal Arts/ History	HIS 101 History of Western Civilization I, HIS102 History of Western Civilization II, HIS 121 United History I, HIS 122 United States History II
FT	15	Yes	English as a Second Language	ESL 52 Reding II, ESL 58 Writing Workshop II

**Figure 2. Sample of First and Second Cycle Coding**

Survey Question	Survey Response	First Cycle Code	Second Cycle Code/Memo
Are you comfortable teaching with digital technology (i.e. blogs, podcasting, videos, etc.)? Explain your response in the space provided below. – comment  Videos = consumer Blackboard/computer = producer Wiki = producer	I have not traditionally used a great deal of digital technology in my courses--no blogging or podcasting, though I do incorporate videos at times. This is mostly due to the fact that I have focused on other types of activities and college service, rather than seeking out training for these digital technologies. I do have students compose and submit assignments via computer/Blackboard, and I have had a class create a wiki in the past.	Tech as educational tool-consumers          Tech as educational tool- producers	Addressing what is a common deterrence to using technology in the classroom—her focus is more on service and professional development as opposed to attending workshops that might train her on using digital technologies. But what is interesting about her comments is that she does use technology as a teaching tool. What can be inferred based on her comments is that when she does use technology, her students are consumers of the digital tools/resources. However, Sawyer also suggests that her students compose assignments using word processing programs and submit these assignments via Blackboard, thus they are producers of primarily alphabetic texts via a digital medium. Additionally, she has had some experience with a class wiki, but not enough, apparently to expound on here.

I applied similar coding practices when examining video interview transcripts. However, much of the coding and examining of video transcripts occurred in the form of reflective/analytic

memos, which then appeared in findings chapters. I created Word documents in which I transcribed my questions and participants' responses. Word documents consisted of two columns one that included the questions I asked and another with my first cycle In Vivo codes to track my initial reactions. However, I found that I limited first cycle coding to minimal comments because I needed a bit more space to reflect on video responses because a theoretical coding process proved more relevant. Reflection occurred most effectively in individual Word documents in which I could write analytic memos and compose my thoughts, reflecting recurring themes or perceptions of alphabetic texts as privileged over other modalities of texts. These reflective thoughts proved useful when organizing chapters and providing researched evidence from which to generalize and make claims and which appear in my findings chapters.

### **Research Limitations**

Conducting a study that provides empirical results pertaining to twenty-first century literacy practices and multimodal pedagogy across disciplines in a community college setting proves challenging because the practice of composing in modes other than alphabetic is not readily apparent in the curriculum at CBK Community College. Additionally, and admittedly, this mixed methods study was large and cumbersome. Sorting through so much data proved to be quite daunting when applying qualitative methods. Basic demographic data is important for quantifying responses pertaining to types of assignments, number of years teaching, division of disciplines, and gathering foundational ideas about writing intensive courses per discipline. However, when delving further into perceptions, I think an approach that focuses primarily on qualitative data would prove more useful in identifying assessment practices and assignment and course design as they align with course learning outcomes. While participants were quite forthcoming with information in video interviews, I would have liked to have spent more time on

video interviews and perhaps held one group session to compare responses. Doing so might provide additional avenues for making generalizations about twenty-first century composing practices at CBK Community College.

## **Conclusion**

Although I faced limitations due to the sheer volume of data, the study provided data rich in details relevant to comparing perceptions about conventional and multimodal projects. I was able to apply participants' responses to current theories pertaining to twenty-first century literacy practices and to multimodal composing, especially as espoused by The New London Group to then identify pedagogical practices in a community college setting. The ability to fully examine responses per a mixed methods approach afforded me the opportunity to gain a sense of how multimodal pedagogy and composing practices might align with course learning outcomes. Specifically, a mixed-methods approach that employed grounded theory methods from which to reflect and examine data revealed that although interest exists in multimodal pedagogy and the integration of digital technologies in the classroom, much work remains in developing faculty awareness of how to more smoothly involve students in a multimodal composing process. Overall, a mixed methods approach, while daunting and cumbersome, allowed me to understand why a group of participants may or may not be comfortable with multimodal composing practices. It also allowed me to narrow my focus on a handful of participants to more deeply understand their pedagogical practices, regarding twenty-first century and multimodal composing practices.

## DATA ANALYSIS PART ONE: EXPECTATIONS

A focus of this study is to examine participants' perceptions and expectations of students' composing abilities for conventional and multimodal assignments. Assessing how widespread multimodal pedagogy is in a community college setting offers insight into whether participants are integrating digital technologies into their curriculum. Understanding participants' views also offers insight into participants' perceptions and expectations of students' composing abilities for the academic discourse community. To accomplish this, the study determines participants' disciplinary and individual expectations as well as whether the implementation of a multimodal pedagogy is occurring. Chapter three defined the division of survey sections. This chapter, specifically, examines survey responses for sections pertaining to faculty background, discipline/program writing expectations, and individual instructor expectations for the primary purposes of gathering background information about participants' perceptions and examining participants' comments about writing expectations for academic discourse and writing in general. The chapter is divided into four sections: 1) Faculty Background; 2) Academic Discourse: Discipline/Program Writing Expectations; 3) Academic Discourse: Instructor Expectations; and 4) Modifying Expectations: Conventional to Multimodal Assignments. Although not directly addressing multimodal pedagogy, the first three sections discuss and confirm the challenges participants face when designing courses and offering instruction for conventional projects and assignments in order to meet course outcomes and address course content. The fourth section addresses how participants might modify expectations when shifting from a conventional to a multimodal pedagogy.

To gain a clear understanding of survey and interview responses, I utilized a number of artifacts and methods. Artifacts included the survey instrument itself, video interview transcripts, course syllabi, assignment guidelines, and assignment rubrics. The specific methods used for tracking and analyzing data are identified in the Data Analysis Matrix in Table 3 below. Methods include content analysis of memo writing and coding of specific language used in written survey responses and video interview transcripts. Collecting of specific data sources and artifacts apply to the research questions I posed in chapter one and may be addressed as follows in Table 3 below. As noted in chapter three, survey section one, Faculty Background served to supply foundational demographic details; therefore, Faculty Background is not included in column two of Table 3. The two research questions that most readily apply to this chapter and to expectations across disciplines and for individual instructors include the following: 1) *what are instructors' expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines?* and 2) *how are these expectations modified when asking students to compose multimodal texts?* This chapter responds to these questions by examining participants' survey and video interview responses.

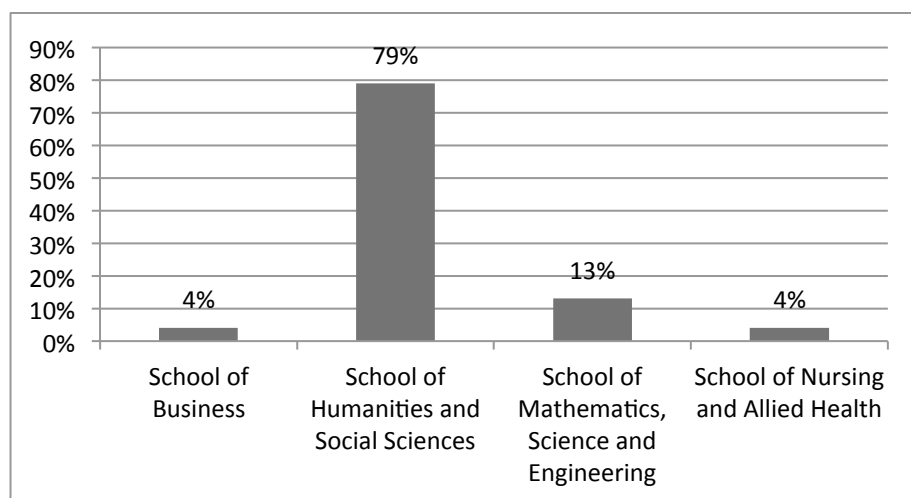
**Table 3. Chapter Four Data Analysis Matrix**

Research Questions	Relevant Survey Section	Data Sources	Analysis Method
What are instructors' expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines?	Discipline/Program Writing Expectations Instructor Expectations	Survey Responses	Content Analysis Analytic Memos Coding
How are these expectations modified when asking students to compose multimodal texts?	Instructor Expectations	Survey Responses	Content Analysis Analytic Memos Coding

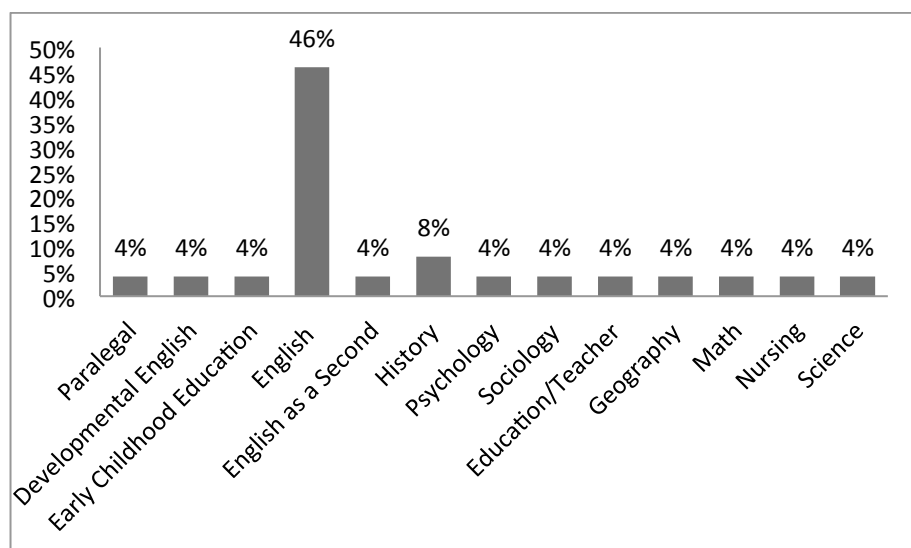
## Faculty Background

Participants responded to a number of survey questions,<sup>vii</sup> providing background information about disciplines and teaching experiences. Responses also identify writing intensive courses, types of classes taught, and comfort levels teaching with digital technology.<sup>viii</sup> Faculty from each school participated and may be broken down as per Figure 3 below, which identifies participants by school and percentage of participants for each school. Figure 4 identifies participants per disciplinary/program affiliation. The college itself is made up of four schools to include the School of Business (4%,  $n=1$ ); the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (79%,  $n=19$ ); and the School of Mathematics, Science, and Engineering (13%,  $n=3$ ); the School of Nursing and Allied Health (4%,  $n=1$ ). Although not factored into survey questions, I identified the division of schools within the college by examining the college Web site. Identifying the division of schools is pertinent to establishing context and focusing on schools and disciplines allows for further contextualizing in subsequent discussions.

**Figure 3. Break down of Study Participants by School**

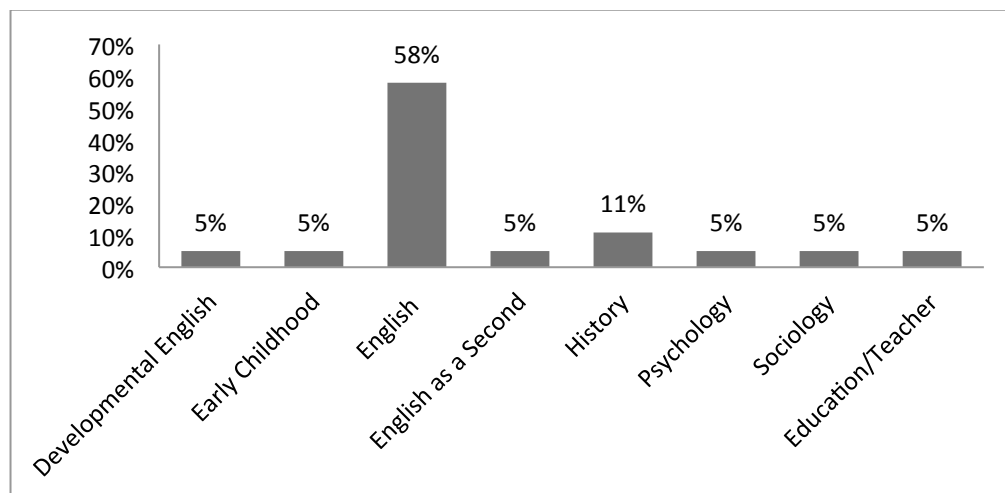


**Figure 4. Break down of Study Participants by Discipline/Program**





**Figure 5. Break down of Study Participants within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences**



Clearly, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences is well represented with a wide spread of disciplines within it. While not as well represented, participants from the additional three schools do provide data pertinent to this study. Of the 24 participants, seventy-one percent ( $n=17$ ) are full-time faculty and twenty-nine percent ( $n=7$ ) are part-time, with a combined total of 441 years of teaching experience. Seventy-nine percent ( $n=19$ ) represent the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, forty-six percent ( $n=11$ ) represent English faculty, and twenty-one percent ( $n=5$ ) represent other disciplines outside of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Of importance to note here is that eleven of the twenty participants within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences are English faculty (58%,  $n=11$ ), which provides for an interesting dynamic when examining responses. And because of the heavy reliance on English faculty, discussion and analysis often separates and compares responses between the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and other disciplines and English and other disciplines (to include those disciplines within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences).

Although this college does not officially recognize writing intensive (WI) courses outside of English, I wanted to determine whether faculty perceive their courses to be writing intensive. The survey identified WI programs per participant responses. Seventy-one percent ( $n=17$ ) of the participants identified their disciplines to be WI, while twenty-nine percent ( $n=7$ ) identified their disciplines as not WI (there is no correlation in these numbers to employment status numbers stated above). Of the 17 participants identified as WI, sixty-four percent ( $n=11$ ) are English, twenty-nine percent ( $n=5$ ) are School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and six percent ( $n=1$ ) are Paralegal. With the exception of Paralegal, which is located in the School of Business, WI courses are primarily located in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Disciplines identified as non-writing intensive include Early Childhood Education, Geography, Math, Nursing, Psychology, Science, and Teacher Preparation. While it is not surprising to see disciplines such as Geography, Math, Nursing and Science identified as non-writing intensive, it is surprising to see Early Childhood Education, Psychology, and Teacher Preparation because they are located in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences where the majority of WI courses are located. I do not think it is conducive to suggest that only humanities courses are WI, but the data here suggests this as the trend. It is also important to recognize that this particular college has not adopted Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) or Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs, and with the exception of English, all other programs are not officially slated as WI. This means that English courses include language in syllabi to address the specific elements of a WI course (i.e. syllabi are required to identify the course as WI and include language pertaining to composing multiple drafts, participating in peer review, stipulating page or word count, etc.). Based on survey responses, I can speculate that faculty other than English who have selected WI have done so based on their individual perceptions of their course content

and course design not on whether their school, program, or department have deemed their courses as WI or included writing as a course outcome. The existence of WI courses in the discipline of English at CBK Community College is based on the understanding of the scholarship pertaining to WAC/WID programs that grew out of the process movement of the 1970s and 1980s (Roberts, 2012, p. 353). However, the WAC/WID movement, “encourages faculty in all disciplines to integrate writing into courses in all content areas” (Roberts, 2012, p. 353). And community colleges are no exception to being involved in this movement, yet formal recognition of WI courses other than English does not exist at this institution.

**Table 4. Courses Taught by Study Participants and by Discipline**

<b>Course Prefix/Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>
BIO 101	General Biology I
BIO 102	General Biology II
BIO 256	General Genetics
CHD 120	Introduction to Early Childhood Education
CHD 166	Infant and Toddler Programs
CHD 205	Guiding the Behavior of Children
CHD 216	Early Childhood Programs, School, and Social Change
CHD 235	Health and Recreation for School-Age Childcare
CHD 270	Administration of Childcare Programs
EDU 200	Introduction to Teaching as a Profession
ENG 111	College Composition I
ENG 112	College Composition II
ENG 241	Survey of American Literature I
ENG 242	Survey of American Literature II
ENG 274	Women in Literature II
ENF 1	Preparing for College English I
ENF 2	Preparing for College English II
ENF 3	Preparing for College English III
ESL 52	Reading II
ESL 58	Writing Workshop II
GEO 210	Introduction to Cultural Geography
GEO 220	World Regional Geography
HIS 101	History of Western Civilization I

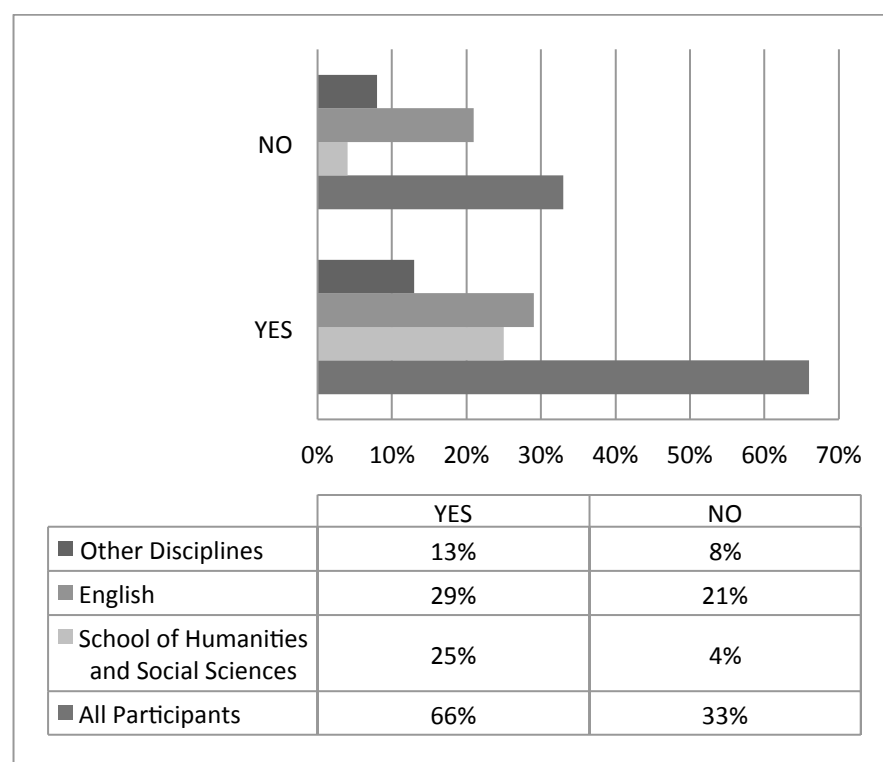
**Table 4. Continued**

<b>Course Prefix/Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>
HIS 102	History of Western Civilization II
HIS 111	History of World Civilization I
HIS 112	History of World Civilization II
HIS 121	United States History I
HIS 122	United States History II
NUR 111	Nursing Fundamentals
NUR 208	Acute Medical-Surgical Nursing
NUR 247	Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing
MTE 1-9	Developmental Math Courses
MTH 120	Introduction to Mathematics
MTH 173	Calculus with Analytical Geometry I
MTH 174	Calculus with Analytical Geometry II
MTH 240	Statistics
SOC 200	Principles of Sociology
SOC 210	Survey of Physical and Cultural Anthropology
SOC 215	Sociology of the Family
SOC 268	Social Problems
LGL 126	Legal Writing
LGL 117	Family Law

Table 4 above identifies courses taught by study participants, revealing that faculty are teaching a wide range of courses with a good mixture of developmental, freshman, and sophomore level courses. This distinction is significant to subsequent chapters when discussion turns to levels of courses in which assignment design, use of digital technologies, and integration of a multimodal pedagogy is often determined by course content. In addition to identifying WI courses and types of courses taught, the survey addressed use of digital technology. When asked about comfort level with using technology in the classroom sixty-six percent ( $n=16$ ) of the total participants responded yes. Thirty-three percent ( $n=8$ ) responded no. These data breakdown further to reveal that fifty percent ( $n=12$ ) are faculty from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences who are comfortable with using digital technologies, while twenty-five percent ( $n=6$ )

are not. Twenty-nine percent ( $n=7$ ) represent English faculty who are comfortable with using digital technology and twenty-one percent ( $n=5$ ) are not. Seventeen percent ( $n=4$ ) of other participants are comfortable with technology, while eight percent ( $n=2$ ) are not. The data suggests that a large factor in developing a multimodal pedagogy stems from comfort levels when using technology in the classroom. Figure 6 below graphically represents comfort levels across disciplines and compares comfort levels among School of Humanities and Social Sciences, English, and Other Disciplines participants.

**Figure 6. Comfort Levels with Digital Technologies**



My findings suggest that respondents who are comfortable with using technology in the classroom often have experience teaching hybrid or online courses. They also partake in

professional development offered by the institution at which they are teaching. Those who are comfortable with technology elaborated in written comments as follows:

**English.** I use Blackboard and digital media with my classes; [sic] and I also teach online courses.

**English.** I am comfortable in developing presentations with animation and audio, and in delivering podcasts.

**History.** I teach several online courses a semester, and I use a lot of tech in my face to face courses too.

**Science.** I have several sections of General Biology that are hybrid meaning that we meet once a week for laboratory exercises. All other course content is presented in the online environment.

These comments suggest that integrating technology into course content and pedagogical methods is not entirely foreign to participants. Familiarity and comfort with technology exists, yet some respondents indicated their discomfort as follows:

**English.** I have not traditionally used a great deal of digital technology in my courses--no blogging or podcasting, though I do incorporate videos at times. This is mostly due to the fact that I have focused on other types of activities and college service, rather than seeking out training for these digital technologies. I do have students compose and submit assignments via computer/Blackboard, and I have had a class create a wiki in the past.

**English.** I can do and am learning more through professional development courses, but I wouldn't call myself comfortable yet.

**Math.** I just have not warmed up to these practices, I feel like my time is much better spent elsewhere.

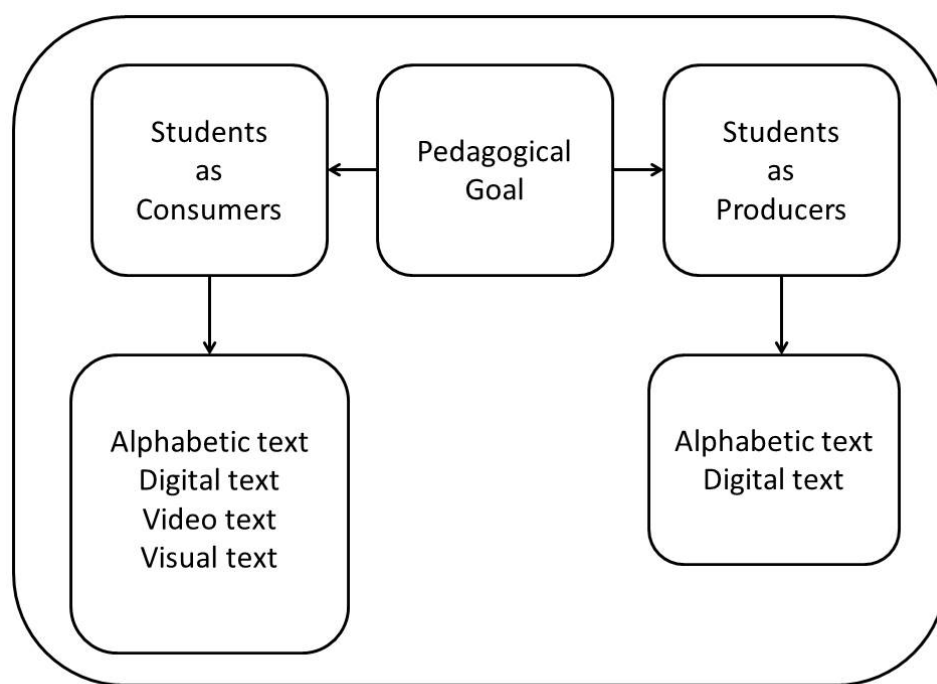
**Paralegal.** I am simply not computer literate.

These comments suggest that reasons for discomfort often stem from focusing on college service, professional development, lack of confidence, not being computer literate, or experiencing high frustration levels. Comments also confirm that another common deterrence to using digital technology in the classroom often is due to lack of time to develop new pedagogical skills. As one English participant suggests, faculty place more emphasis on college service (i.e.

serving on committees) and professional development (i.e. planning for publishing scholarly works or presenting at conferences) as opposed to attending workshops that might train faculty on using digital technologies. Or, as another English participant suggests, they might attend professional development courses (i.e. workshops), but do not implement use of digital technologies in their courses. But what is interesting about respondents' comments is that most do use digital technology or digital resources as teaching tools in some manner and what can be inferred is that when participants use digital technology or digital resources, students are consumers of digital tools and resources used for pedagogical purposes, meaning they use these resources to make meaning of texts. Students as consumers of texts is not surprising to see when considering the significant pedagogical goals of most community college professors, but it does suggest that realizing a pedagogy that promotes students "think[ing] of themselves as cultural producers and participants and not simply as consumers, critical or otherwise" is not a priority (Jenkins, 2006, p. 270). Today, it is common, and often required for students to compose assignments using the most rudimentary of digital technologies such as word processing programs and submitting assignments via the Course Management Platform (CMP) in use, thus they are producers of primarily alphabetic texts via a digital medium. Despite the increasing demand for students to submit assignments digitally, they are primarily consumers of technology when making meaning of digital texts (i.e. viewing found videos, watching professors lecture from PowerPoints, etc.) as opposed to producers of texts in other modalities. This is a common practice throughout disciplines, and because students are producing primarily alphabetic texts (albeit via a digital medium), responses suggest a privileging of production of alphabetic texts over other modalities. Figure 7 below illustrates the relationship between a pedagogical expectation/goal of/for students as consumers of multiple modes of texts as opposed to

producing texts in modalities other than print/written/ alphabetic. While scholars such as Cheryl Ball, Henry Jenkins, Jeff Rice, Cynthia Selfe, Gregory Ulmer, and Anne Wysocki demonstrate the positive impact of and argue for developing a multimodal pedagogy that promotes students as producers of multimodal texts and twenty-first century literacy skills, data here suggests students as producers of a wide variety of texts is not occurring across disciplines at CBK Community College.

**Figure 7. Pedagogical Relationship between Students As Consumers Or Producers of Texts**



### **Academic Discourse: Discipline/Program Writing Expectations**

One of the primary research questions addressed in this study asks, *what are instructors' expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines?* The survey asked participants to identify their expectations in response to the question, *what do you expect your students to know about academic writing before they enter your course?* After reading through responses, I



generated a word cloud by posting participants' written responses to this survey question. The word cloud in Figure 8 below visually places emphases on words such as expect, writing, students, grammar, basic, and skills, suggesting that most participants have high expectations of students' abilities to understand grammar and write well. Emphasis on the word "expect" occurs because it appears in the prompt itself; however, it is important that it remain in the word cloud because it is a true representation of participants' responses. The word cloud, then is an accurate representation of participants' perceptions, creating an argument that writing and understanding the basics of writing to include grammar are strong expectations across disciplines. However, survey responses provide a glimpse into participants' perceptions about writing expectations, revealing unique perspectives from individual faculty about their specific disciplines or programs. Responses also seem to suggest a strong desire to focus on course content and learning outcomes when designing assignments. Focusing on learning outcomes and course content became crucial to understanding faculty perceptions for this study and these concepts will be addressed more fully in chapter six, which focuses primarily on learning outcomes with respect to course content and design.



School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Math participant identified writing as *moderately important* to their disciplines. When asked how important writing is for learning and assessing of course content, no participants identified writing as *unimportant*, thirteen percent ( $n=3$ ) identified writing as *moderately important*, seventeen percent ( $n=4$ ) identified writing as *important*, and seventy-one percent ( $n=17$ ) identified writing as *very important*. Similar to writing as important to the discipline, eleven English participants and six School of Humanities and Social Sciences participants identified writing as *very important* to learning and assessing. Two School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Paralegal, and the Science participants identified writing as *important* to learning and assessing. And one School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Nursing, and the Math participants identified writing as *moderately important* to learning and assessing. Figure 9 below provides a graphical illustration, comparing responses, further emphasizing the importance of writing to programs/disciplines and to learning and assessing overall.

**Figure 9. Overall Importance of Writing to Programs/Disciplines and to Learning and Assessing**

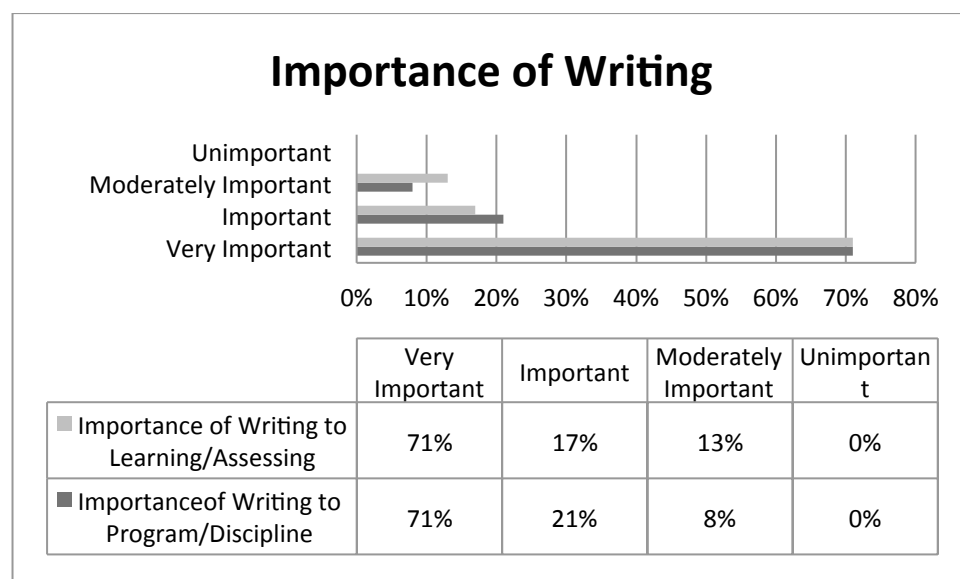
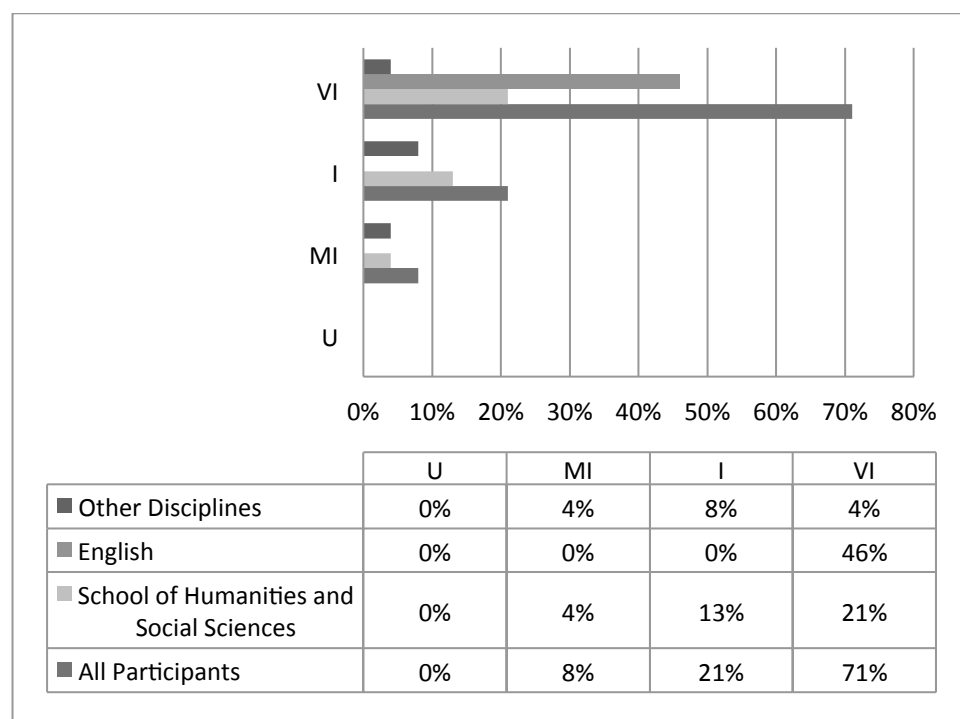
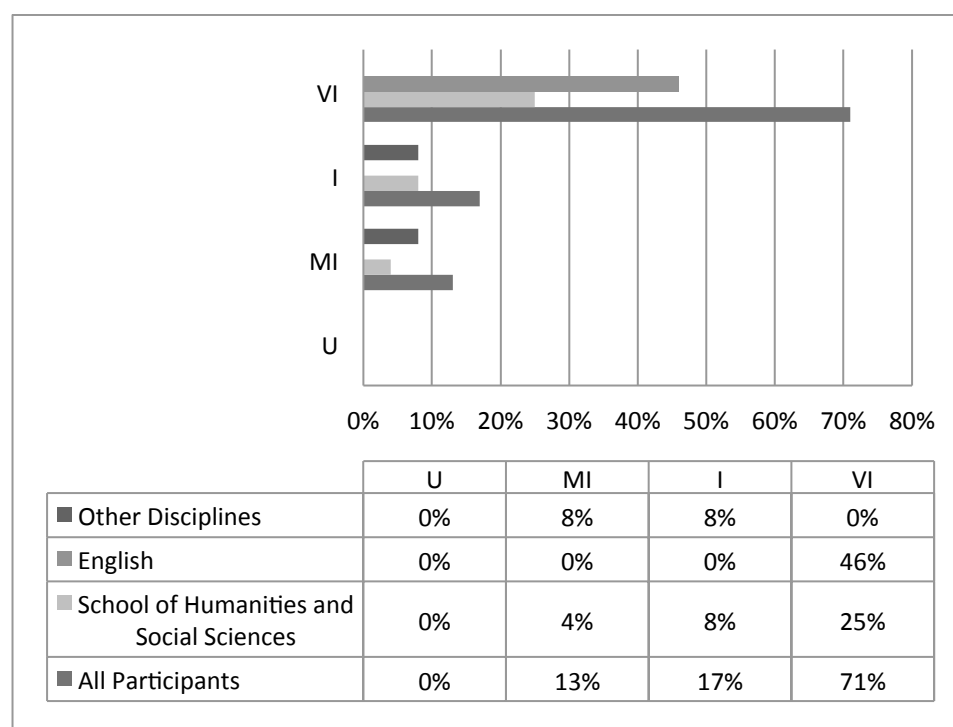


Figure 10 below illustrates disciplinary responses per Other Disciplines, English, and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, providing a comparison among disciplines and highlighting the fact that those disciplines identifying writing as very important to the program/discipline and to learning and assessing are primarily located in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Figure 10. Comparison of the Importance of Writing among Disciplines/Programs**



**Figure 11. Comparison of the Importance of Writing for Learning and Assessing**

As noted above, the fields of Early Childhood Education, Geography, Nursing, Math, and Teacher Preparation did not identify themselves as writing intensive, which suggests that writing instruction is not a key outcome for the programs or for learning and assessing of knowledge for these individual instructors. However, of these five participants, Early Childhood Education and Math identified that writing is *moderately important* to both the discipline and to learning and assessing. Geography identified writing as *important* to both the discipline and to learning and assessing. Teacher Preparation identified writing as *important* to the program and *very important* to learning and assessing of content. Nursing identified writing as *very important* to the program and *moderately important* to learning and assessing of content. While not directly correlated with a multimodal pedagogy, these results do confirm that based on an understanding of WAC/WID and WI scholarship, writing is an important element to learning and assessing of content for all

disciplines regardless of whether the college officially recognizes them as WI courses. Overall responses appear to support a desire to assess course content through writing, which is consistent with writing to learn activities that WAC/WID and WI programs recognize as an effective means for students to make meaning of texts and course content. Writing to learn pedagogy has been in place since the late 1960s, and as Susan McLeod (2012) confirms educators may use writing activities “as a tool for learning as well as a test for learning” (McLeod, pp. 53-55). Responses here confirm that most participants (71% overall selected *very important*) are employing writing activities to assess knowledge of course content. Further, and as is supported by WAC/WID scholarship, learning and assessing of knowledge through writing activities is an effective method for determining how students are applying and making meaning of course content.

In addition to identifying the importance of writing to programs/disciplines and to learning and assessing, participants responded to the following question: *What do you expect your students to know about academic writing before they enter your course?* The word cloud introduced above offered a visual representation of responses. What follows is an examination of written responses to this question. Responses appear to suggest that the range of expectations is quite broad, as some participants expect students to enter with basic knowledge of grammar and others have much greater expectations. This variation occurs often due to the course level and discipline. Most responses in some way suggest that students should enter courses with basic knowledge of grammar and at first glance, it appears that some instructors have not truly defined what academic writing is. Not defining academic writing may be a result of participants’ assuming the definition is widely known and, therefore, do not need to articulate a definition. In Chapter two I claimed that academic discourse involves “students *becom[ing]* involved with and *produc[ing]* disciplinary texts grounded in examples, evidence, and research and which results

*in expanding on ideas and thinking critically and productively by means of twenty-first century literacy skills (i.e. fully utilizing the broad spectrum of composing resources to produce written, visual, aural, and digital texts).*” On closer examination and as will be discussed below, responses do move away from expectations on grammar and toward higher level writing and analytical skills expected for college level writing. All participants elaborated on their responses, often providing support for moving away from grammar-based writing instruction and toward more critical and analytical skills. The following comment from one English professor reflects her expectations of both freshman and sophomore level students:

Before entering a College Composition [sic] course, I typically expect students to have a basic, working knowledge of grammar/mechanics (though I know that they often need to improve their editing skills), reading comprehension skills, and basic computing/word processing skills. We do spend more class time on practicing skills such as organizing paragraphs, structuring their paper, and creating intro paragraphs/thesis statements, even though I would expect that these are skills they've practiced before entering my class. In 200 level literature classes, I expect students to come in with a working knowledge of organizing and structuring a paper, working knowledge of MLA and basic research capabilities. I do provide them with a vartietiy [sic] of resources to help refresh their memory regarding these basic skills (organization, creating a thesis, paper structure, incorporating evience/quotations [sic], MLA format, etc. ) and I spend time at this level teaching methods for developing their literary analysis skills.

Another English professor responds that she

expect[s] them to know how to write in complete sentences and paragraphs; to have mastered basic grammar and usage; to be able to understand the conventions [and] differences among basic genres (fiction, non-fiction, business writing, research-based writing, analysis, editorial, and some others); to be able to read a college-level essay or article and summarize its main ideas; to respond to (analyze in some way) a text. Reading, writing, and thinking are inextricably connected; so students who have some basic deficit in their ability to read and comprehend are going to have a hard time writing well.

It is not clear whether this respondent is addressing both composition and literature courses, but her expectations move beyond basic grammar and mechanics and toward a deeper and perhaps more analytical approach to teaching writing. The previous respondent has a less ambitious view

of freshmen level writing abilities as her comments focus more on the mechanics of writing although she shifts focus to analytical skills in 200 level literature courses. Both are perhaps moving closer toward a view of academic writing that encourages students to “produce disciplinary texts grounded in examples, evidence, and research and which results in developing a student body of individuals who expand on ideas and think critically and productively by means of twenty-first century literacy skills.” Another English professor comments that her expectations

var[y] with the course. I expect ENG Comp I students to have basic skills in writing sentences and paragraphs. I expect ENG Comp II students to understand what a thesis is and how to compose a simple argument, i.e., to understand the connection between claims and evidence. I have a similar expectation of my lit students.

The majority of the work accomplished in both first- and second-semester composition courses focuses on developing writing, research, and argumentation skills, all of which prepare students for academic writing across the disciplines. These three responses are typical of what English faculty expectations might be in both composition and literature courses, and it is not surprising to see a focus on the mechanics of writing as well as higher level analytical skills due to the nature of teaching writing. The slight differences in responses are indicative of variations that might occur in pedagogical practices. Their responses confirm a natural expectation of the progression of skills from 100 level composition courses to 200 level literature courses.

Faculty in other disciplines responded with a variety of foci. In addition to expecting students to possess a fundamental grasp on writing, respondents appear to be addressing course content and learning outcomes specific to each discipline. A Geography professor expects

[t]he simplest basics. I understand that they are new students in a 200 level course. My expectation is that most have not had to complete a research paper previously. However, I do expect them to put the time and effort into learning how to do it.



Although this response does not specifically address academic writing, it does perhaps reflect college prerequisites (or lack of prerequisites). The prerequisite for 200 level Geography courses (and most other 200 level courses) at CBK Community College is as follows: “Placement in ENG 111 or placement in co-requisites ENG 111 and ENF 3” (“Course Descriptions,” 2014). ENF 3 is a developmental/English Fundamentals course in which some students place based on placement test scores. With the exception of a 200 level advanced composition course and 200 level literature courses, the prerequisite does not include ENG 112, the second-semester composition course, before students move on to 200 level courses at CBK Community College. Since the second-semester composition course at CBK focuses on argumentation and research, it is not surprising that students might enter a 200 level Geography course with little to no experience writing a research paper.

A Sociology professor who teaches primarily 200 level Sociology courses provides a slightly different perspective, as she

expect[s] that students can read and write on a college-level, since college-level reading and writing is required! I expect them to know how to properly cite and document sources and to understand what constitutes plagiarism. I expect students to understand the importance of not just what they say, but how they say it and to understand that one must write for a particular audience. ‘Textspeak’ and use of slang is not appropriate for academic writing.

This response is not typical of other responses, but it is suggestive of a commonly held view of academic writing in which students possess the ability to document with accuracy, avoid plagiarism, and avoid use of non-academic language. Overwhelmingly, participants in disciplines other than English commented on basic mechanics of writing. The following is a list of more typical responses:

### **School of Humanities and Social Sciences Responses**

**Early Childhood Education.** I would like for the students to turn in an assignment that does not include spelling and grammar mistakes. Proper formatting is also important because it makes the paper easier to read, understand and grade.

**History.** Basics of proper grammar. I used to expect more, but sadly I've learned to expect not much beyond that, and even that is starting to waver.

**Psychology.** The basic fundamentals of the APA writing format.

**Teacher Preparation.** I expect my students to know the mechanics of writing, especially the comma to punctuate.

### **Other Discipline Responses**

**Math.** They should know how to communicate effectively in writing, without blabbering. I expect grammar, spelling and punctuation rules to be followed at all times.

**Nursing.** How to use correct grammar in writing a sentence. How to concisely state a thought on paper. How to spell correctly.

**Science.** I expect students to know how to research a topic and the rules regarding citations as well as the tone and language involved in technical writing versus creative writing.

As these responses, suggest a good deal of variation in expectations occurs, but the one constant is that participants expect students to possess knowledge of the basic mechanics of writing prior to entering their courses. Of importance to the comments made here is how they might impact whether participants integrate digital technologies and multimodal pedagogies/projects into their course and assignment designs and impact decisions participants make about types of assignments they design (discussed further in chapter five).

### **Academic Discourse: Instructor Expectations**

Research is a primary element of academic writing, although it is not a requirement across disciplines. Participants responded to three questions to address their approach to not only academic writing in general, but also to research projects, specifically. The questions are as

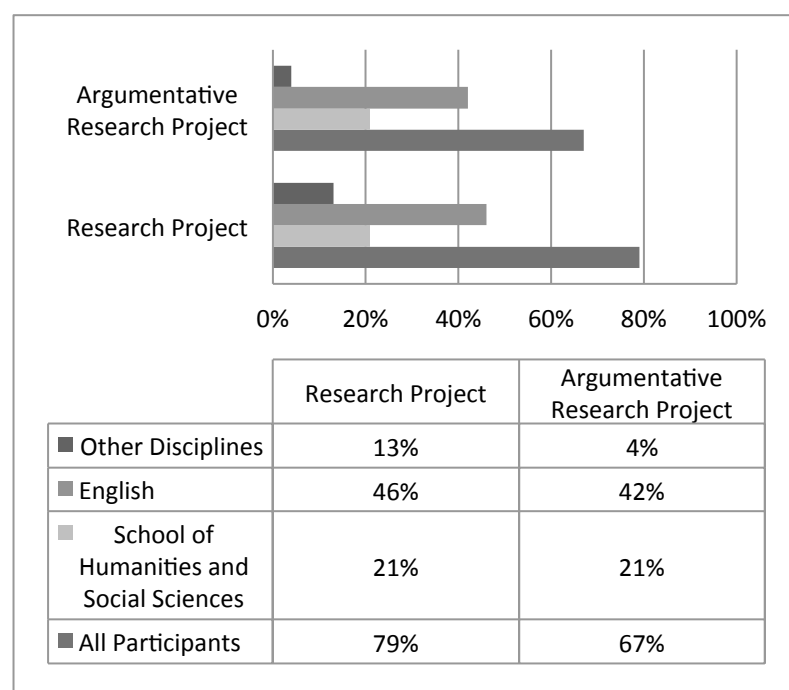
follows: 1) *Is a research project an expected assignment of the course(s) you teach?*; 2) *If you answered yes to question one, where is this project stated on the course syllabus?*; and 3) *Is an argumentative (i.e. thesis driven; claims supported with evidence) research project an expected assignment for the course(s) you teach?*

For the purposes of data analysis, I chose not to include a direct examination of responses to question two, as they do not reveal ideas significant to understanding how academic writing occurs in the classroom and in the context of integrating digital technologies and multimodal projects into the curriculum. However, upon completion of the questionnaire, participants had the option to share syllabi, and I was able to determine a better sense of language and placement of assignment descriptions based on specific syllabi. An examination of syllabi reveals an inconsistency in where and whether assignment descriptions appear. Some participants include a description of assignments and if they do not, syllabi and/or respondent comments suggest assignment descriptions and guidelines are available in the CMP in use at the college.

The variation and sometimes lack of assignment descriptions on syllabi did not provide a sufficient amount of data to examine further in relation to multimodal pedagogy. However, quantitative data in response to questions one and three confirm that most participants expect research and argumentative research projects. Seventy-nine percent ( $n=19$ ) of the respondents indicated that they do expect a research project in their courses while twenty-one ( $n=5$ ) do not. Sixty-seven percent ( $n=16$ ) of the respondents indicated they expect an argumentative research project while thirty-three percent ( $n=8$ ) do not. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences is again overwhelmingly represented, with eighty-four percent ( $n=16$ ) of the nineteen positive responses to question one indicating they do expect a research project, and ninety-four percent ( $n=15$ ) of the sixteen responses to question three indicating they do expect an argumentative

research project. To break this down further, eleven English, five School of Humanities and Social Sciences, one Paralegal, one Math, and one Science participant require a research project. Ten English, five School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and one Paralegal participant require an argumentative research project. Figure 12 below visually depicts overall expectations to further demonstrate an overwhelming expectation for both a research project and an argumentative research project. Figure 12 also provides a more detailed view of expectations among disciplines to confirm the use of a research project exists among most disciplines, while an argumentative research projects occurs with less frequency.

**Figure 12. Comparison between Research and Argumentative Research Project Expectations among Disciplines**



Disciplines that do not expect a research project include the following: History, Teacher Preparation, Early Childhood Education, Nursing, and English as a Second Language.

Disciplines that do not expect an argumentative research project include the following: Early Childhood Education, Geography, History, Math, Nursing, and Teacher Preparation. Although two History professors participated in the study, one of the two indicated he does not include a research requirement of any kind in his courses. An examination of a History 111 (History of World Civilization 1) syllabus provided by the History professor who does not require research confirms that course outcomes do not include a research requirement. The course does require the following elements: recounting a basic historical narrative, analyzing primary sources (provided by the instructor), and “present[ing] and support[ing] with evidence, historical arguments in a written format” (see Appendix F for a History 111 syllabus). Examination of History 102 (History of Western Civilization I), 121 (United States History I), and 122 (United States History II) syllabi provided by the History professor who does include a research requirement also reveal that a research requirement is not included in course outcomes for these courses (see Appendices C, D, E for History 102, 121, and 122 syllabi). Language from these syllabi pertains primarily to understanding and appreciating historical information, but not specifically to a research requirement. Per these syllabi, students will “[p]resent an historical argument in good written or oral form” and “[d]emonstrate in both oral and written exercises their ability to synthesize their knowledge of historical concepts and interpretation.”

Research is not a learning outcome but communicating in written and oral modes to demonstrate knowledge of content and how students are making meaning of it is a requirement that reinforces communication for the academic discourse community. The expectation of synthesizing not just knowledge but also others’ arguments is in many ways conducive to Joseph Harris’ (2006) arguments about rewriting. In chapter two, I identified that Harris encourages his student readers to come to terms with texts written by other authors and in doing so writers

should “define the project,” “note keywords or passages,” and “assess the uses and limits” of the text (2006, pp. 16-27). What Harris describes is the skill of summarizing texts, yet he moves his argument forward by asking writers to extend existing texts by making new statements and moving outward (pp. 34-52). This in many ways is a reflection of research writing (which is also a reflection of academic writing), although in the case of courses such as history at CBK Community College *research* is limited to texts supplied by the professor. Chapter two reflected on definitions of academic discourse, which claim that students move beyond summarizing and toward expanding on existing arguments to present ideas in their own voices. The two history examples appear to reflect a desire to encourage students to not only synthesize existing ideas but also present arguments with evidence from primary historical texts provided by the professors (as noted in the previous paragraph).

### **Modifying Expectations: Shifting from Conventional to Multimodal Assignments**

A primary focus to this project is to examine how participants modify expectations for producing academic texts when shifting from conventional print assignments to multimodal assignments. What follows next is a breakdown of participants’ expectations of both conventional and multimodal assignments, comparing how expectations change when shifting from a conventional pedagogy to a multimodal pedagogy. Participants first responded to the question, *what are your particular goals for students’ learning or understanding of conventional written, composition assignments?* When asked to identify specific goals for *conventional* assignments participants indicated the following:

- Meeting course learning outcomes (83%, *n*=20)
- Demonstrating development of arguments grounded in evidence (83%, *n*=20)
- Demonstrating research skills/information literacy practices (75%, *n*=18)

- Applying the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, genre, voice, media/design) (67%,  $n=16$ )
- Explaining course content (50%,  $n=12$ )
- Applying rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) (50%,  $n=12$ )
- Other (please specify) (21%,  $n=5$ )

Other criteria participants looked for include a developmental English instructor who expects “[l]earning MLA formats,” a Math instructor who expects “[h]ands on application of what was learned throughout the semester,” and an ESL instructor who identified “learning how to summarize outside sources using one's own words” as an expectation.

Participants also responded to the question, *what are your particular goals for students' learning or understanding of multimodal composition (i.e. combination of written, visual, aural, or digital assignments)?* When asked to identify specific goals for *multimodal* assignments participants indicated the following:

- Meeting course learning outcomes (71%,  $n=17$ )
- Applying the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, genre, voice, media/design) (63%,  $n=15$ )
- Demonstrating development of arguments grounded in evidence (54%,  $n=13$ )
- Applying rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) (50%,  $n=12$ )
- Explaining course content (46%,  $n=11$ )
- Demonstrating research skills/information literacy practices (46%,  $n=11$ )
- Other (please specify) (21%,  $n=5$ )

Five participants provided more detailed comments in the other category for multimodal assignments. Other criteria include one Paralegal professor admitting, “I have no idea what [multimodal] means”; one English professor expecting, “[d]emonstrating oral presentation skills, or digital multimedia presentations (for online learners)”; a developmental English professor expecting, “[l]earning to blend graphics and text physically and by constraining how readers view the graphics”; another English professor’s expectations include “[d]emonstrating appropriate/learned visual rhetoric techniques and visual rhetorical strategies”; and one ESL professor expecting “[r]ecognizing the value of paraphrasing and of being able to discuss a topic intelligently before we ever attempt to write about it.” Perhaps worth making note of is the Paralegal professor’s response. Her admission that she does not know what multimodal means confirms the work that Claire Lauer did in 2009 and 2012 in which she differentiated between the terms multimodal and multimedia. She also presented interview responses to how Rhetoric and Composition professors who are familiar with and comfortable with twenty-first century composing practices use these terms in their pedagogy (See Chapter Two “Multimodal Literacy: (Re)Mixing And (Re)Defining Pedagogy” for more discussion of Lauer’s work). However, the problem presented here is not of how to differentiate between terms or how to address them in the classroom; rather, the problem suggested here is that the Paralegal professor does not recognize the term enough to address how she might implement it in her own pedagogy.

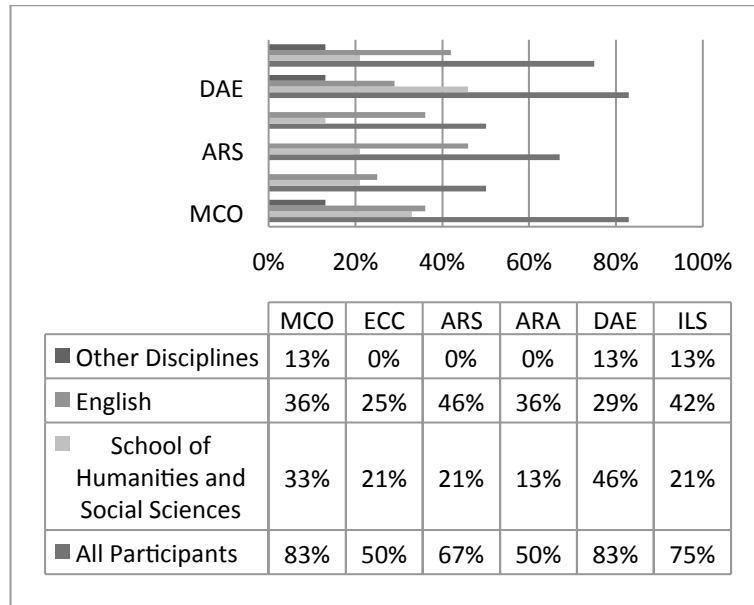
The bulleted items discussed above provide an overall comparison among all twenty-four participants. However, it is worthwhile to note how expectations shift for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences participants, English participants, and participants in Other Disciplines in relation to total participants. Figures 13 and 14 provide a comparison among all disciplines. Of note is the importance of Meeting Course Learning Outcomes (MCO) when



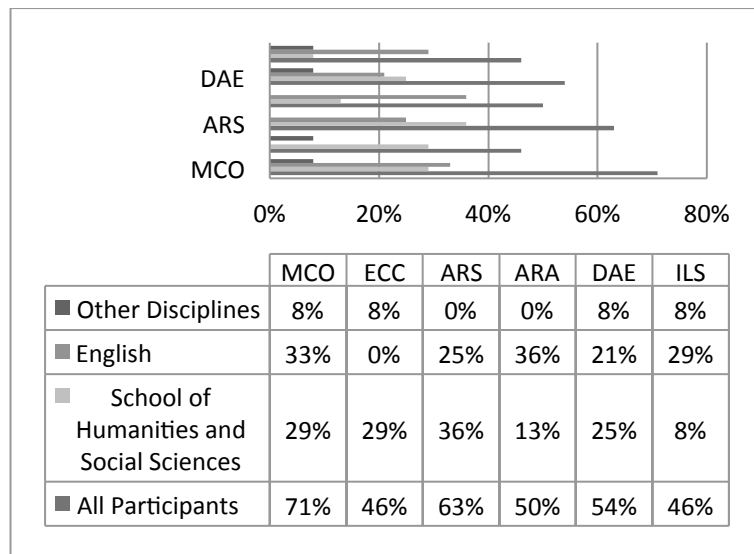
shifting from conventional to multimodal assignments. The importance diminishes by three points for English, four points for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and five points for other disciplines. Expectations for Explaining Course Content (ECC) is not quite as clear cut. ECC becomes more significant for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Other Disciplines when shifting to multimodal assignments. English participants do not have any expectations for ECC when shifting to multimodal assignments. Applying the Rhetorical Situation (ARS) is also not quite so clear because the School of Humanities and Social Sciences increases expectations by fifteen points, while English drops significantly by twenty-one points. Other disciplines remain at no expectations for ARS for both conventional and multimodal assignments. No significant shift in numbers occurs in expectations for Applying the Rhetorical Appeals (ARA) for all disciplines. However, when considering expectations for demonstrating Development of Arguments Grounded in Evidence (DAE) all disciplines demonstrate some diminishing in expectations. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences drops by twenty-one points, English drops by eight points, and other disciplines drops by five points. And finally, when considering demonstrating Research Skills/Information Literacy Practices (ILS) expectations diminish significantly. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences demonstrated a thirteen point drop, English also demonstrated a thirteen point drop, and other disciplines demonstrated a five point drop. With the exception of ARA, participant responses suggest a leaning toward placing more value on conventional assignments, which is not surprising given the community college mission<sup>x</sup>. These numbers, although demonstrating less value on multimodal assignments, do suggest that participants have put some thought into other modalities even if they are not a prominent element in their pedagogical practices. This is evidence by the fact that, and based on respondents' overall selections, MCO is a primary

expectation across disciplines for both conventional written assignments, with 83% ( $n=20$ ) identifying MCO as a primary goal for multimodal assignments and 71% ( $n=17$ ) identifying MCO as a primary goal for conventional assignments.

**Figure 13. Conventional Assignment Expectations across Disciplines**



**Figure 14. Multimodal Assignment Expectations across Disciplines**



Regardless of the specific expectation (MCO, ECC, ARS, ARA, DAE, or ILS), the data confirm that conventional written assignments appear to have the most weight when composing for the academic discourse community and across disciplines, especially pertaining to DAE (83%,  $n=20$ ) and demonstrating ILS (75%,  $n=17$ ). Both of these categories indicate elements of the writing/composing and research processes that are valued by participants across disciplines. Of less value is ECC. Fifty-eight percent ( $n=7$ ) of the twelve respondents who selected no for ECC for conventional assignments are English faculty. Sixty-two percent ( $n=8$ ) of the thirteen respondents who selected no for ECC for multimodal assignments are also English faculty. Explaining course content does not appear to be a primary goal for English faculty, which is indicative of the importance of purpose and how it shifts across disciplines. The high percentage of English faculty who do not place as much value on ECC is perhaps because English courses are process oriented and writing instructors assess how well students apply the process to developing and organizing ideas; whereas, participants in other disciplines assess how well students apply and comprehend content specific to their disciplines.

These foundational ideas pertaining to faculty background, discipline/program writing expectations, individual instructor expectations, and modification of expectations when shifting from conventional to multimodal assignments provides demographic details to establish the disciplinary context of the study. The sample size is admittedly small, but representation from each of the four schools occurs and participants come from disciplines that might not be viewed as writing intensive but have some valuable input for a study that examines perceptions and expectations. This initial findings chapter answered two research questions: 1) *what are instructors' expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines?* and 2) *how are these expectations modified when asking students to compose multimodal texts?* Chapter four

establishes the conception that participants are not generally assigning projects in modalities other than print, but they place great emphasis on meeting course learning outcomes. Subsequent findings chapters, chapters five and six, confirm this conception. Further, despite some misgivings and discomfort with using digital technology in the classroom, participants are using technology for students to consume course content. Chapter five moves on to examine types of writing projects participants assign and continues the discussion of modifying expectations when shifting from a conventional to multimodal pedagogy.

## DATA ANALYSIS PART TWO: ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

The previous chapter identified participants' perceptions and expectations about students' academic discourse and writing in general by examining faculty backgrounds, discipline/program writing expectations, instructor expectations, and modifications to expectations when considering multimodal projects. However, another focus to this study is to examine participants' assessment practices when considering student-produced conventional and/or multimodal projects for the academic discourse community. In "Inventing the University" David Bartholomae (2002) examined student writing for syntactical strengths and ability when communicating for the academic discourse community. His arguments apply when discussing assessment practices because in order to identify whether students are becoming familiar with academic discourse, instructors must find a way to measure how students make meaning of content and retain knowledge regardless of mode of communication—this means understanding students' strengths when communicating for the academy. What differs in my study from Bartholomae's claims about production of alphabetic texts is a focus on measuring how students make meaning of content when it shifts from conventional alphabetic texts to texts in other modalities. Thus, this chapter attempts to answer the question, *how do instructors assess multimodal projects with respect to learning outcomes and expectations of the academic discourse community?* The question is twofold, asking about both learning outcomes and academic discourse. While I will discuss learning outcomes briefly in this chapter, perceptions about assignment design that address learning outcomes will be more fully discussed in chapter six. For now, the focus is primarily on types of writing projects participants assign and assess and on how participants modify assessment practices when shifting from conventional to

multimodal assignments. The chapter is divided into two sections: 1) Assessment Practices: Types of Writing Assignments and 2) Assessment Practices: Conventional to Multimodal. Table 5 below is a representation of the Chapter Five Data Analysis Matrix, which identifies the research question addressed here with respect to the applicable survey section, data sources, and analysis method to clarify how data fit into a discussion about assessment practices.

**Table 5. Chapter Five Data Analysis Matrix**

Research Questions	Relevant Survey Section	Data Sources	Analysis Method
How do instructors assess multimodal projects with respect to learning outcomes and expectations of the academic discourse community?	Types of Assignments  Assessment of Assignments	Survey Responses Video Interviews Assignment Guidelines	Content Analysis Analytic Memos Coding

### **Assessment Practices: Types of Writing Assignments**

Chapter two established that The New London Group (2000) contributed to rethinking definitions of pedagogy and literacy to encourage a more focused integration of “modes of representation much broader than language alone” (p. 5). The importance of identifying types of writing assignments relates to the specific literacy practices participants integrate into their courses. I asked participants to identify types of research projects they assign, including multimodal texts to more fully address “modes of representation” for the twenty-first century in a community college setting. Participants responded to the question, *what types of research assignments/projects do you assign your students?* and selected from a number of categories pertaining to conventional/written projects, multimodal projects and assessment of these projects.

These categories include the following (with abbreviated codes as they appear in figures below): Thesis Driven Project (TP), Visual Project (VP), Photo Project (PP), Audio Project (AP), Digital Project (DP), Collaborative Research Project (CRP), Oral Presentation (OP), Other (O). When asked to identify the projects, participants responded as follows:

- Thesis driven project (67%,  $n=16$ )
- Oral presentation (54%,  $n=13$ )
- Visual project (38%,  $n=9$ )
- Collaborative research project (29%,  $n=7$ )
- Other (21%,  $n=5$ )
- Digital project (17%,  $n=4$ )
- Photo project (13%,  $n=3$ )
- Audio project (8%,  $n=2$ )

Responses indicate that a significant number of participants rely on conventional projects in the forms of thesis driven projects (67%) and oral presentations (54%), with visual projects (38%) and collaborative research projects (29%) also in use, but to a lesser degree. Participants appear to place greater value on thesis driven projects, which suggests an understanding of producing researched assignments with focused arguments. These responses show less dependence on other modalities, as participants responded with less frequency to digital (17%), photo (13%) and audio (8%) projects, which is consistent with chapter four's analysis of participants' expectations for academic discourse and students' writing abilities. "Chapter Four: Data Analysis Part One" identified that participants continue to privilege conventional alphabetic texts/projects over other modalities. Additionally, five participants selected the Other category; however, they primarily

used this category not to identify other types of assignments. Instead, they included explanatory comments to offer more in-depth clarification of types of assignments/projects they assign.

**Figure 15. Types of Research Projects Assigned across Disciplines**

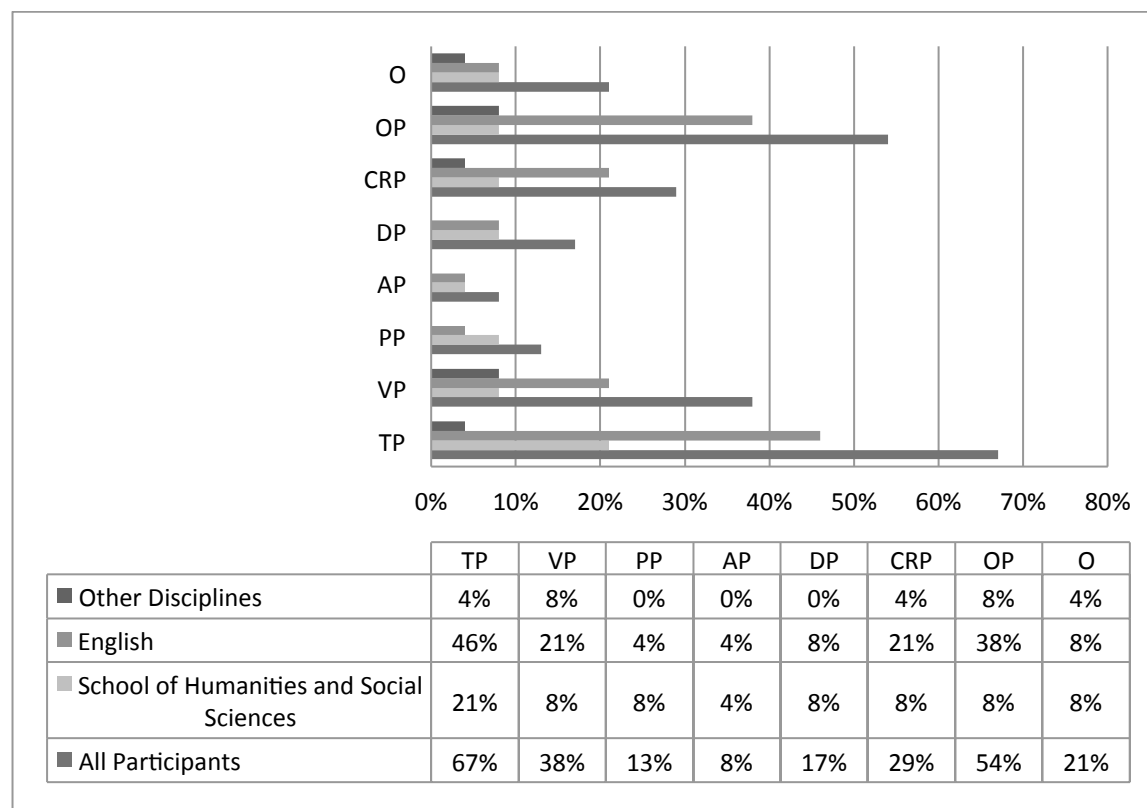


Figure 15 above compares responses among participants and disciplines. These numbers reveal that English faculty dominate a focus on thesis driven protects (46%,  $n=11$ ). They also confirm less reliance on other modalities, especially in Other Disciplines who do not assign photo, audio, and digital projects. Other Disciplines also appear not to focus on thesis driven projects (4%,  $n=1$ ), collaborative research projects (4%,  $n=1$ ), and visual projects (8%,  $n=2$ ). However, it is important to keep in mind that Other Disciplines represent only seventeen percent ( $n=4$ ) of the total participants. Participants also included written elaboration on the types of



projects they assign. Below are a number of responses from first English participants and then participants in both the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Other Disciplines.

### **English Responses**

I use differing versions of these research projects in different classes. For example, my college composition classes focus on completing thesis driven projects and oral presentations. My literature classes do both individual, thesis-driven research projects and collaborative [sic] projects that involve visual components and oral presentation skills.

The course level and medium (lecture vs. online) are to some extent determiners of the degree of ‘multi-modality.’ For example, in Composition I, most of the assignments require students to produce text; however, students can and do use visuals for portfolios and oral presentations. The more advanced students in American Lit do more collaborative research. These students sign up for a group to demonstrate expertise in a certain aspect of a work (e.g. in the role of historians, oral interpreters or performers, or literary critics’). For distance courses, I incorporate more audio and video elements in an attempt to keep students engaged.

The final presentation in ENG 112 is a multimodal oral presentation of the assigned research project. One assignment I often assign includes analysis of photographs.

Often the ‘thesis driven project’ is the basis for all other projects (Visual, Digital, and Oral). The students start with their writing and break the assignment down using other modes. This forces the students to reexamine their written text as well as readdress the rhetorical situation.

### **School of Humanities and Social Sciences Responses**

**Sociology.** I give students options for how to fulfill what I call their ‘Research Project’ and those options take different forms. Some are more ‘traditional’ research-type papers, others are content analysis or involve doing some original research. The Reflective Essays require discussion and application of course material using original examples and observations.

**Teacher Preparation.** a group project [that] includes designing a school of the future. It can be a combination of the above.

**Early Childhood Education.** In CHD 120, Students do a PowerPoint presentation on a theorist. In CHD 116, students turn in various documents that are created in order to give information to the parents of the children in their care.

**Psychology.** The projects are developed through various design softwares [sic] such as PowerPoint, Google, Prezi, and more.

**History.** An extra credit project that could include any of the above types of projects, but it is not ‘required’ and so isn’t included in my answers above.

### **Other Disciplines Responses**

**Geography.** I'm not sure how you classify it but I utilize Mind Mapping software for an assignment. Google Maps is used for an assignment. And, [sic] personal photos are utilized in a discussion (they post a picture of folk or pop culture they took with their phone).

**Nursing.** Video[s] of patient teaching situation[s] with accompanying documentation.

The breakdown of written responses among English, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Other Disciplines surprisingly seems to indicate that English participants are including a combination of modalities to include visual, audio, video, oral, and digital texts. However, Other Disciplines do not appear to include other modalities with the same consistency as the English responses indicate. Yet, they are turning to digital media to include PowerPoint and various online resources/software such as Google Maps or Prezi. When asked whether participants accept a combination of modes, sixty-seven percent ( $n=16$ ) indicated they do accept a combination of modes, twenty-five percent ( $n=6$ ) indicated they do not, and four percent ( $n=1$ ) indicated they are not sure. These responses appear to confirm the use of a combination of modes as addressed in written responses (i.e. the Teacher Preparation participant suggests that she accepts a combination of modes and the History participant discusses an extra credit project that includes a combination of modes, but it is not a required assignment).

To more directly address assessment practices, participants responded to the following question: *what types of projects do you accept for assessment purposes?* Participants identified the following types of research projects accepted for assessment purposes:

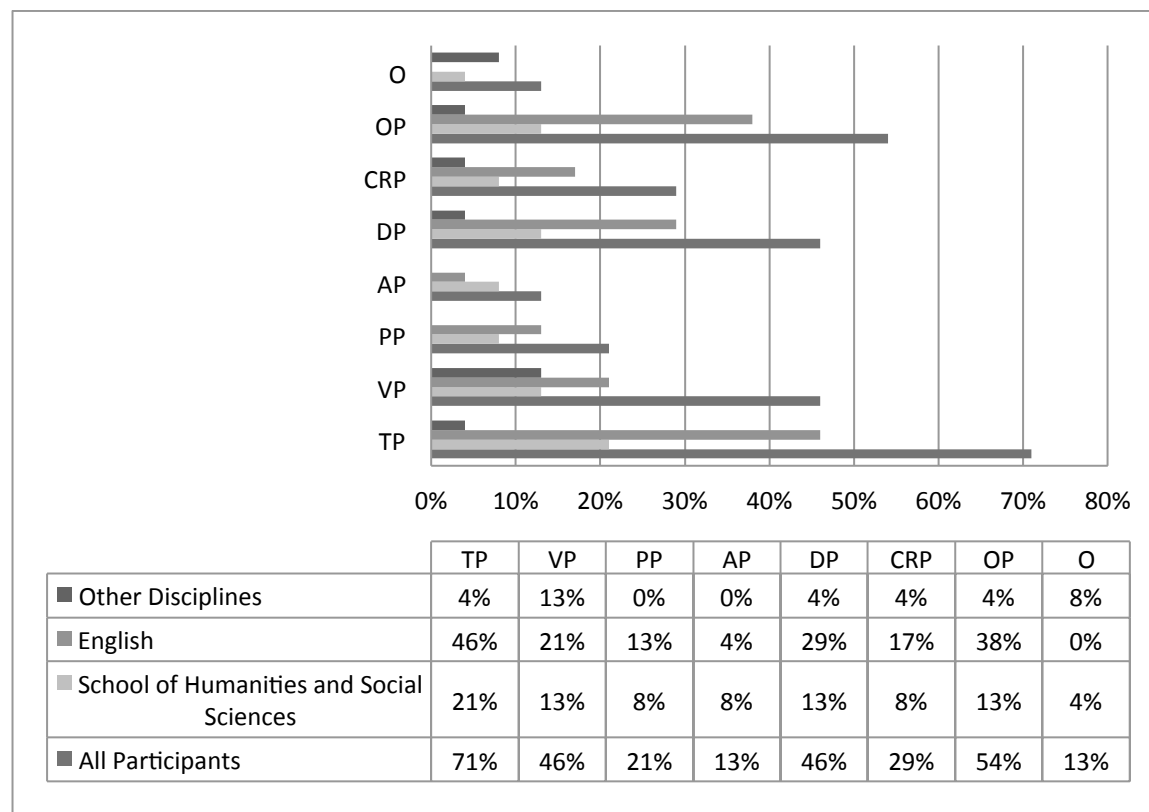
- Thesis driven project (71%,  $n=17$ )
- Oral presentation (54%,  $n=13$ )

- Visual project ( 46%,  $n=11$ )
- Digital project (46%,  $n=11$ )
- Collaborative research project (29%,  $n=7$ )
- Photo project (21%,  $n=5$ )
- Audio project (13%,  $n=3$ )
- Other (13%,  $n=3$ )

Thesis driven projects again dominate participants' selections and continue to support reliance on production of conventional texts. Of interest here is that when shifting to identifying projects accepted for assessment purposes as opposed to assigning, acceptance of digital projects increases from seventeen percent ( $n=4$ ) for assigning to forty-six percent ( $n=11$ ) for assessment. This is in large part due to the fact that eight percent ( $n=2$ ) of English participants selected digital projects for assigning, which is not a significant number. However, this number jumped to twenty-nine percent ( $n=7$ ) for English when considering assessment of digital projects, which suggests a significant number of English participants contemplate assessment of digital projects. Similar occurrences appear for English participants when selecting photo projects with a nine percentage point increase from assigning to assessing. Written comments do not offer a conclusive reason for this, but this jump in numbers does suggest that English participants are contemplating assessing of projects in other modalities with greater frequency than other disciplines. Figure 16 below is a representation of this data and when compared with Figure 15 above the differences in numbers offer a striking picture of faculty perceptions of types of projects assigned versus assessed because, with the exception of oral presentations, participants appear to contemplate assessment of projects in all categories (TP, VP, PP, AP, DP, CRP) with greater frequency than assigning. This further suggests that participants are more willing to

consider assessing projects in other modalities than they are to actually assigning them, presenting an inconsistency because if projects are not truly assigned then they cannot be assessed. But what is important to note is that contemplation of assigning and assessing of visual, photo, aural, and digital projects does exist although they are not a priority.

**Figure 16. Types of Research Projects Assessed across Disciplines**



Although reliance on conventional alphabetic projects is quite strong, respondents do suggest they are including visual, photo, digital, and aural projects, but often these projects appear to supplement conventional assignments as opposed to being designed as stand-alone projects (i.e. the History professor's extra credit project is a strong indicator of accepting other modalities as supplemental to alphabetic texts). The key point to keep in mind is that students are

producing projects in modes other than alphabetic thus using twenty-first century literacies. And although participants rely heavily on thesis projects, greater use of visual and digital projects for assessment purposes moves closer to The New London Group's focus on multiliteracies as well as Carolyn Handa's (2001) and Colin Lankshear and Michelle Knobel's (2006) arguments pertaining to digital literacy. Handa claims that with the increased production of multimedia projects in the classroom, integration of "digital elements" has become critical to developing twenty-first century literacy skills (p. 2). Similarly, Lankshear and Knobel assert that digital literacy is at the forefront of establishing educational goals (p. 21). However, it is equally apparent that per this study conventional, print projects are still primarily in use to meet course learning outcomes and assess how students are applying knowledge and course content (chapter six provides greater discussion of participants' expectations of course learning outcomes). Additionally, although written comments from survey participants were minimal with regard to assessment of projects, the few comments that do appear serve to clarify genres of projects assessed. For example, Science accepts tri-fold posters or pamphlets in addition to the modes categorized for this study. Nursing clarified that this discipline requires nursing care plans and weekly documentation of patient assessments. Of interest about these responses is that they are reflective of the types of composing—primarily in written form—that represent each discipline and in some cases (i.e. tri-fold posters and pamphlets that integrate both visual and verbal texts) can involve composing in a number of modes.

### **Assessment Practices: Video Interviews**

As noted above, survey responses suggest that participants are in minimal ways assigning non-written projects; however, alphabetic texts are in primary use and video interviews reinforce this tendency. I elected to separate video interviews from survey responses to provide a clear

picture of how each video interview participant responded to questions and to supplement survey responses. Video interviews provide a close view of the cognitive processes of participants beyond their written comments, often moving beyond my expectations for survey comments. In an interview with Ruth Sloan,<sup>xi</sup> a Sociology professor who has been teaching for 25 years, we discussed the types of projects she assigns and the purposes for them. The primary mode she assigns is conventional written texts in the forms of chapter reflections, chapter quizzes, two fifty point research projects, a new world project, and a final reflection paper. As we discussed the projects, I was struck by how carefully she thought about the purpose to each. She identifies motivation, critical thinking, comprehension, and application as the purposes for these projects, but they also apply to assessment which will be discussed further below. In response to my query about clarifying assignments, Ruth states,

I have them do just basic multiple choice, true/false chapter quizzes and that's really to *motivate* them to read the chapters to make sure they are doing that and keeping up with the reading. I have them do a chapter reflection for each chapter that they submit before we start talking about the chapter in class and again to *motivate* them to do the reading. But I want them to *think about* what they are reading so I started doing the chapter reflections a couple of semesters ago. [ . . . ] I ask them to relate something from that chapter to their life or to something current going on because I want to see how they can *apply* some of the terms and concepts and theories; how are they relevant to their life? I ask them what their favorite image, graphic, insert from the chapter was because I think students tend to skip over those when they do reading and there's a lot of interesting stuff in there, and I then ask them what questions they still have after having done the reading and if they have no questions to tell me what they found most surprising or disturbing from the chapter. So I have them do those for each chapter that we cover. And again turning them in before we start talking about the chapter has been very beneficial to me because I can look at those and see what questions they have that I can address during class. And the class discussion has been better because I feel like they are doing the reading, so we're coming with a common foundation. Because I don't want to spend time reading the chapter to them; I want to spend time using class time linking to current issues *where I can use the terms and theories and concepts that they have all read already*.

Italicized language emphasizes where Ruth addresses the purpose for the assignments and her comments overall are strongly indicative of viewing alphabetic texts as privileged over other modes because 1) she does not regularly include other modes in her pedagogy, and 2) from her perspective the conventional assignments she offers generate critical thinking skills and are an efficient way for her to assess what students have gleaned from chapter readings and how they are applying sociological themes, terms, and concepts to their projects. She does, however, encourage students to examine and identify their favorite textbook image or graphic, which is a common method of reinforcing key chapter concepts, but also suggests some reliance on modes other than written or alphabetic. She is in many ways supporting students as consumers of visual texts as opposed to asking them to produce similar texts of their own design. Ruth herself is not making an argument for or against multimodal or conventional projects; she is addressing the assignments she designs and how they work for her. However, her pedagogy does not promote students as producers of texts other than alphabetic thus suggesting other modalities do not serve a primary purpose for her courses.

I also spoke with Ryan Dalmead, a History professor who has been teaching for six years and teaches primarily American History and Western Civilization. Ryan designs typical assignments in the forms of quizzes, tests, and papers, but what caught my attention for his courses, is that he designed an extra credit assignment that encourages students' submitting projects in a variety of genres and modes of their own design/choice. I examined Ryan's History 102 (Western Civilization II), History 121 (U.S. History I), and History 122 (U. S. History II) syllabi (See Appendices G, H, and I for copies of syllabi). Language among the three is very similar and for the purposes of simplifying discussion here, I focused on the History 121 syllabus

(See Appendix H for a copy of the syllabus and Appendix J for the extra credit assignment.). The syllabus states that

[s]tudents will have the opportunity to complete a major extra credit project that will require a substantial amount of work and may even incur a monetary cost. The project is worth up to 40 points – that’s half a letter grade. Specific details can be found on BB [Blackboard].

When I asked Ryan to discuss the differences between the extra credit project and the more conventional, written projects he stated,

The extra credit [assignment] I tried to design it because I know a lot of students—all the students in my class—usually are not there by choice; they have to take a history class and history is usually not their strong subject. [. . .] So what I asked the students to do is to take something of their own interests and find a way to link that to history specifically.

Ryan recognizes that most history courses, especially at the 100 freshman level are general education courses and for him the extra credit project is a way to encourage student engagement by focusing on a historical concept in relation to something of true interest to students.

Students submit a wide variety of projects. For example, one Art student sketched a portrait of Chief Joseph; another student created a quilt; another student created a scrapbook of her class notes as a way to review the entire semester. In addition to what appears to be primarily use of visual modes, students submit a 500-750 word report in which they discuss the basis for their project. What I found intriguing about the project is that although Ryan’s purpose was to engage students with history, he appeared to be equally as interested in the results of their efforts. He proudly displays students’ projects in his office and on a table outside his office at the end of the semester—the project encourages his own engagement in students’ work (see Assessment Practices: Conventional to Multimodal on page 129 below for more details on how Ryan assesses these projects).



In another interview with Carolyn Childs, an Early Childhood Development/ Education professor who has been teaching for ten years and has extensive experience teaching distance education courses, we discussed a number of projects she assigns. Carolyn teaches CHD 120 (Introduction to Early Childhood Education), CHD 166 (Infant and Toddler Programs), CHD 205 (Guiding the Behavior of Children), CHD 216 (Early Childhood Programs, School, and Social Change), and CHD 270 (Administration of Childcare Programs). For interview purposes, we focused primarily on the assignments she offers in CHD 120 and I was able to examine the CHD 120 syllabus (See Appendix K for a copy of the CHD 120 syllabus). Assignments completed in CHD 120 include direct observations, self-reflection, online discussion responses, lesson plans, and newsletters. The syllabus does not clearly delineate types of assignments, but Carolyn elaborated on the types of assignments she designs during the interview:

CHD 120 is our introductory class; there's a long list of objectives because we have to cover a lot of material in that class. It's a hard class for our students. And there are a lot of assignments. [ . . . ] They do some observations which are anecdotal observations. It's a type of writing they have never ever done before. It takes a little bit of practice in order to learn how to write facts, not their opinion or what they assume is happening or what they think is happening, but just what they can see and what they can hear. There's a couple of [other] writing assignments that they have; it's just a one-page paper, but we ask them to take a topic like health in the classroom or parent communication and write a page explaining how they do that really well. So they have to give concrete examples of what they do or what they would do in a classroom if they are not already working in a classroom for meeting the objectives of the topic. So if the topic is health and safety in the classroom then they would explain exactly how they make sure that the children in their class stay healthy [with] specific examples of how they do that like teaching the children hand washing techniques and what times of the day they wash hands. So it's very specific, as far as college writing goes. It's probably very easy college writing; it's 350 -500 words, so basically a page and in their own words and real specific as to how they are going to meet those objectives in their own classroom.

And they write their autobiography; and in their autobiography I ask them to use the first paragraph to tell me about themselves but then to use the second paragraph to tell me why they are here; why do they want to work with young children what in their lives brought them to this point so it's sort of self-reflection and thinking about what it is they want to do and why they want to do it.

Most of my discussion boards are open-ended questions that are opinion, but then they have to support their opinion.

Again, these assignments reflect composing of conventional, alphabetic documents, with the online discussion responses submitted in a digital environment (i.e. online CMP). Although Carolyn discusses conventional projects, she clarifies that another delivery format is in group presentations in which students prepare a mandatory PowerPoint accompanied by another mode such as role playing to demonstrate a situation or topic related to childcare, visual aids in the form of posters or other visual images, or a handout of some kind. Carolyn's narrative explains what some students have produced:

Actually one of my classes yesterday did their group projects. Having a PowerPoint presentation was a mandatory part of it. But they also had to have some other form to distribute the information. And I left it really open-ended so they could do whatever they wanted to. They could do role playing, they could do a demonstration, they could make a poster, [or] they could show pictures. One of the groups did prevention of child abuse. Their PowerPoint was wonderful but they also talked about personal experiences. They had to have something to handout; a take-away to give to all of the students. That particular group actually made blue ribbons for everybody, which I thought was wonderful. So they got to talk a little bit and what I found was once they got away from worrying about their notes or looking at what was on the PowerPoint and they just started talking they did a much better job. They knew the information; they just had to get the confidence, I guess, once they got up in front of the class to do it, to talk about it.

Although not directly stated above, Carolyn's comments suggest that one of her goals is to ensure students are comfortable presenting in front of classmates. A group project/presentation is often one way to minimize students' inhibitions about presenting orally and inclusion of visual aids or other forms of communicating also help to ease the pressures associated with oral presentations. The Early Childhood Program offers a great venue for students to produce nonconventional projects due to the hands-on activities often involved; however, as Carolyn explains, CHD 120 covers a large amount of content, which does not afford much time or room for other modes. The assignments she does include are alphabetic with the exception of the group

project that allows for perhaps some experimentation on the students' part and encourages creative use of modalities other than written and in addition to the ever-present use of PowerPoint. Both Carolyn and Ryan are not averse to including assignments beyond the conventional alphabetic project, but they also recognize the responsibilities they have to course learning outcomes and covering large amounts of course content, causing them to place more emphasis on conventional assignments with which they are more comfortable and familiar.<sup>xii</sup>

### **Assessment Practices: Conventional to Multimodal**

In "Who Will Be the Inventors? Why Not Us?": Multimodal Compositions in the Two-Year College Classroom," Lisa Bickmore and Ron Christiansen (2014) provide examples of multimodal compositions at the community college level. Of significance here is that Bickmore and Christiansen claim that evaluating assignments

means developing assignments and assessment sequences that actively engage students' existing familiar practices, encourage them to develop new ones, and invite them to consider how the multimodal documents that emerge from their work and play might function in their lives and in the social settings in which they themselves circulate. (p. 158)

Because data collected for this project does not suggest participants have Bickmore and Christiansen's goals in mind, it is difficult to determine whether participants are thinking about multimodal texts to the degree suggested above. However, survey responses for evaluation and assessment practices for both alphabetic and multimodal texts reveal that study participants place value on similar criteria, with faculty placing most emphasis on Organization and Ability to Follow Assignment Guidelines for all modalities (these two categories are discussed in greater detail below). Given Ryan's interest in student engagement and Ruth's focus on connecting sociological concepts to students' individual lives, claims that point to making connections to

students' lives when producing multimodal texts are a strong suggestion for development of a multimodal pedagogy.

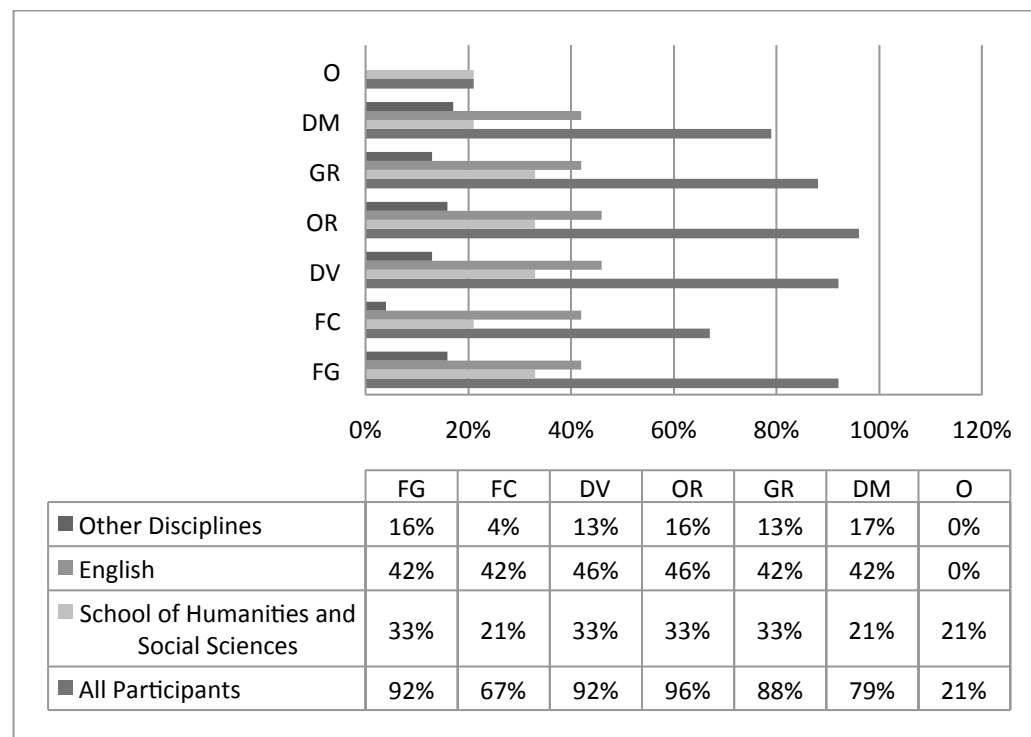
However, survey results pertaining to assessment practices continue to privilege alphabetic texts over multimodal texts. Participants responded to the question, *what criteria do you use to evaluate the writing students do in your courses?* They selected from a number of categories from which I was able to determine specific criteria used for evaluation. These categories include the following (with abbreviations as they appear in figures below): Organization (OR), Ability to Follow Guidelines (FG), Development (DV), Grammatical Issues (GI), Documentation (DM), Focus (FC), Other (O). When evaluating *written* assignments, respondents identified the following as part of their assessment practices:

- Organization (96%,  $n=23$ )
- Ability to follow assignment guidelines (92%,  $n=22$ )
- Development (92%,  $n=22$ )
- Grammatical issues (88%,  $n=21$ )
- Documentation (79%,  $n=19$ )
- Focus (67%,  $n=16$ )
- Other (please specify) (21%,  $n=5$ )

Figure 17 below compares evaluation criteria among Other Disciplines, English, and School of Humanities and Social Sciences participants. Based on the data here, English participants dominate in all categories, placing value on the processes specific to writing instruction. Other Disciplines' participants and participants in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences also place value on each category, but with less frequency. Comments in the Other criteria clarify the selections that Other Disciplines made. They recognized Other criteria based on their specific

disciplines to include “correct use and application of sociological material,” “depth of critical thought and expression,” “correctly done and applicable mathematics,” and “evidence of critical thinking.” Additionally, the Nursing participant clarified that faculty cannot count poor grammar against students when evaluating their written work. In an electronic mail communication, the Nursing faculty further clarified that assessment and evaluation of student work focuses primarily on content as opposed to grammatical correctness. However, her responses indicate a professional requirement to move students toward awareness of clear communication skills. Overall, and with the exception of English participants, a comparison among all participants’ responses demonstrates that with regard to written assignments, participants value Ability to Follow Guidelines (FG) above all other criteria.

**Figure 17. Evaluation of Writing Criteria**



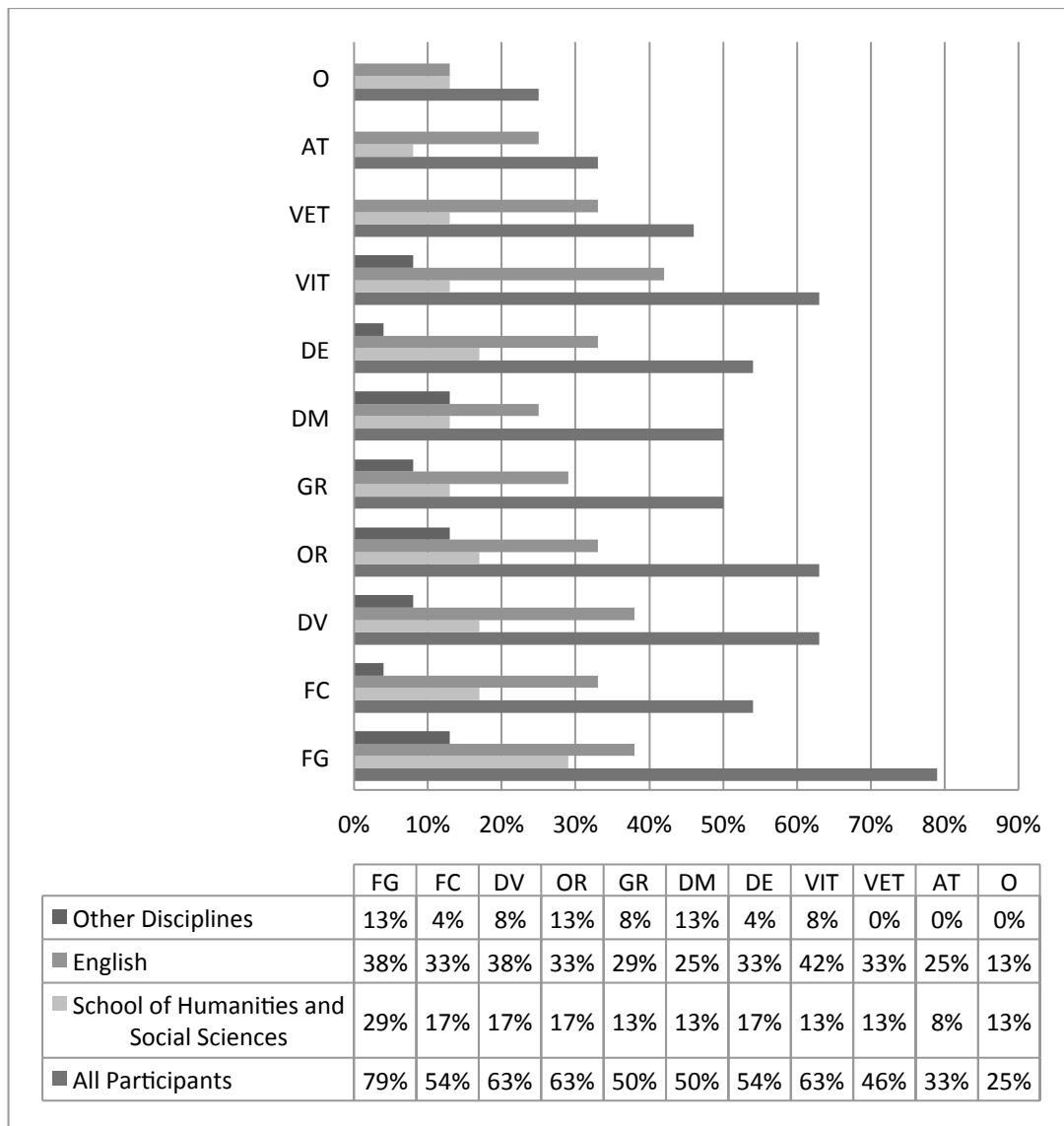
Participants also responded to the question, *what do you focus on when assessing multimodal projects?* The survey accounted for categories related to multimodal composing by adding the following selection choices in addition to those noted above for written assignments: Design (DE), Visual text (VIT), Verbal text (VET), and Audio text (AT). When assessing *multimodal* projects, all twenty-four respondents identified the following items as part of their evaluation criteria:

- Ability to follow assignment guidelines (79%,  $n=19$ )
- Organization (63%,  $n=15$ )
- Development (63%,  $n=15$ )
- Visual text (63%,  $n=15$ )
- Focus (54%,  $n=13$ )
- Design (54%,  $n=13$ )
- Grammatical issues (50%,  $n=12$ )
- Documentation (50%,  $n=12$ )
- Verbal text (46%,  $n=11$ )
- Audio text (33%,  $n=8$ )
- Other (please specify) (25%,  $n=6$ )

Although a slight difference occurs in emphasis between Organization and Ability to Follow Assignment Guidelines, participants selected both of these criteria with the most frequency. However, overall, the numbers drop significantly in response to multimodal projects, which suggests fewer participants are designing and assessing non-alphabetic projects. And although the previous discussion above suggests that participants are willing to consider assessing non-alphabetic projects, the numbers here confirm that this is not the case. Also of interest is that

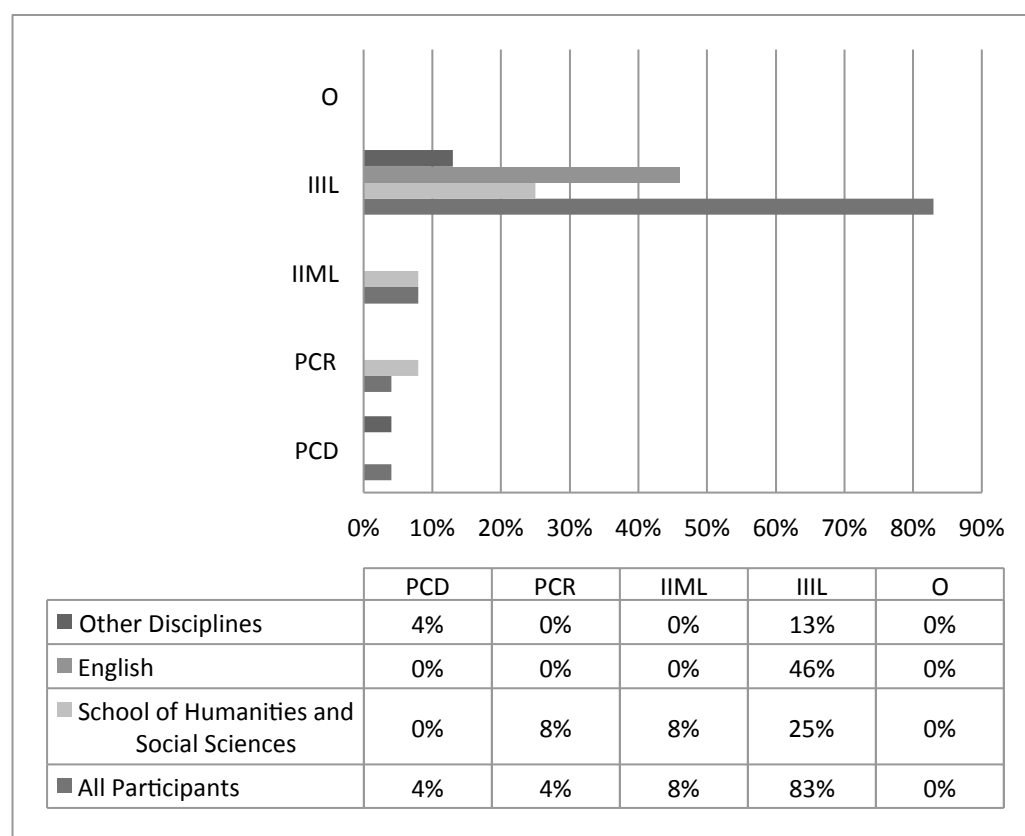
grammatical issues drop from eighty-eight percent when evaluating alphabetic projects to fifty percent when assessing multimodal projects and other criteria such as visual text and design become more prominent. But what is also clear is that visual texts appear to be assessed with greater frequency, while other modalities such as alphabetic and audio do not receive as much attention. Also of note is that English participants again respond with the most frequency in all categories.

**Figure 18. Assessment Practices with a Multimodal Focus**



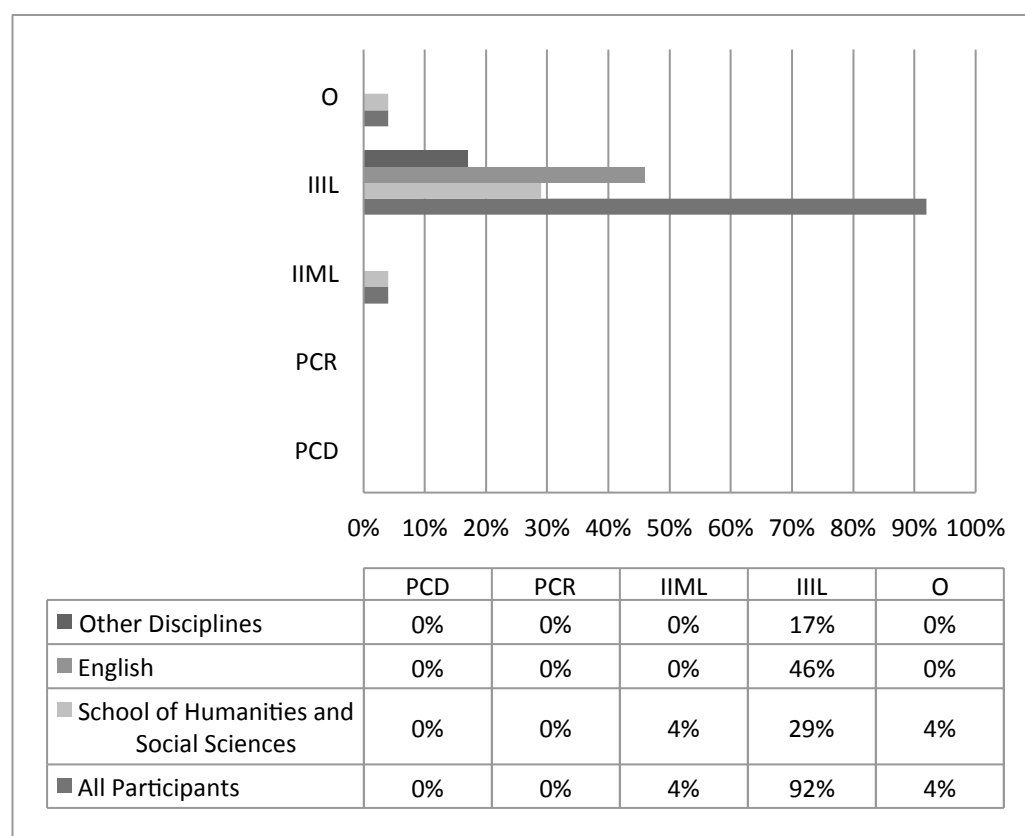
The study also addressed development and implementation of assessment practices across disciplines for both alphabetic and multimodal texts. Participants selected from the following items: Program Committee Designs Assessment and Requires Use by Department Instructors (PCD), Program Committee Recommends Assessment Design But Individual Instructors Determine Use (PCR), Individual Instructors Independently Design Assessment That Can Be Used With Multiple Lessons (IIML), Individual Instructors Independently Design Assessment For Each Individual Lesson (IIIL), and Other (O). When identifying participant involvement with development and implementation of assessment practices for *alphabetic* assignments of the twenty-four participants, eighty-three percent ( $n=20$ ) identified that individual instructors independently design assessment for each individual lesson, eight percent ( $n=2$ ) identified that individual instructors independently design assessment that can be used with multiple lessons, four percent ( $n=1$ ) identified that a program committee designs assessment and requires use by department instructors, and four percent ( $n=1$ ) identified that a program committee recommends assessment design but individual instructors determine use. Figure 19 below breaks down responses by Other Disciplines, English, and the School of Humanities and Social Science. Figure 19 clarifies that at CBK Community College, assessment practices for alphabetic texts are for the most part not determined by program committee and that individual instructors have a good deal of freedom to design assessment practices aligned with their individual pedagogy.



**Figure 19. Development and Implementation of Assessment Practices for Alphabetic Texts**

Additionally, one English participant clarified in her comments that although she selected “Independently Design Assessment for Each Individual Lesson,” her specific assessment practices apply to multiple projects. But the key point to keep in mind is that as a department, English faculty have the individual choice to apply assessment practices to individual lessons. A History participant clarified that “[i]nstructors pretty much have carte blanche for how they want to design course projects and assessments; though it is unstated, it is expected that there be some kind of writing assignment.” His comment confirms what I discovered in my review of History syllabi that do not include writing as an outcome and as will be discussed further in Chapter six. Of importance to note from these responses is that faculty participants for the most part have individual freedom to develop and implement assessment practices that fit their individual needs.

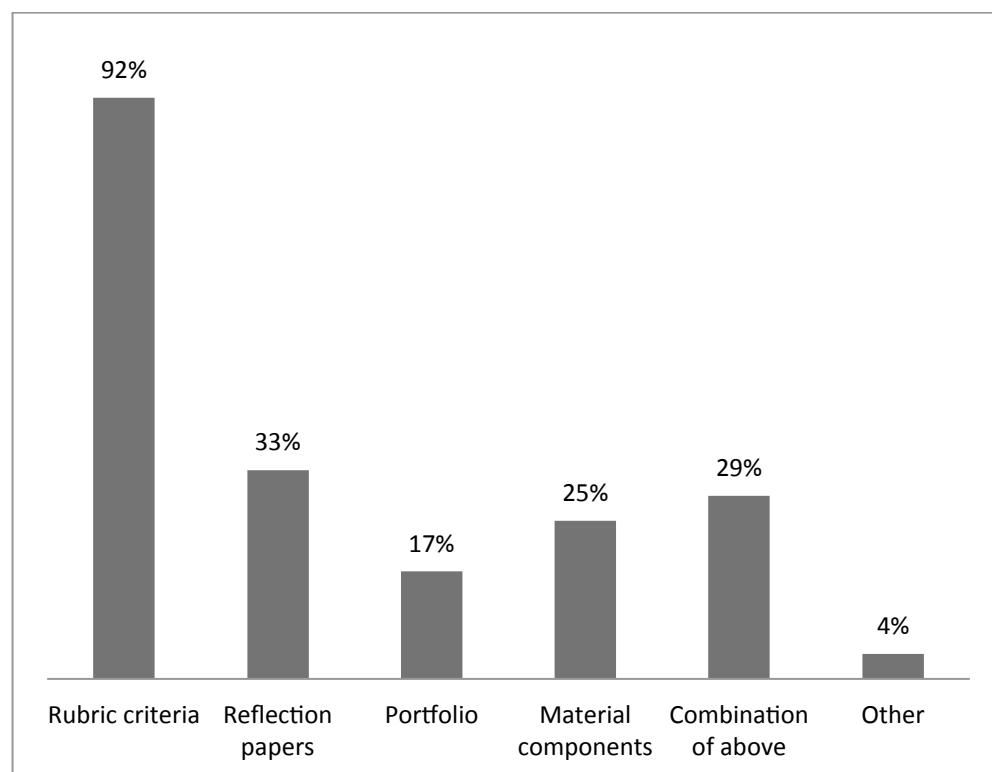
In comparison with assessment of alphabetic projects when identifying participant involvement with development and implementation of assessment practices for *multimodal* compositions, ninety-two percent of participants ( $n=22$ ) identified that Individual Instructors Independently Design Assessment for Each Individual Lesson, four percent ( $n=1$ ) identified that Individual Instructors Independently Design Assessment That Can Be Used with Multiple Lessons, four percent ( $n=1$ ) identified Other criteria, no participants identified that a Program Committee Designs Assessment And Requires Use by Department Instructors, and no participants identified that a Program Committee Recommends Assessment Design But Individual Instructors Determine Use. The Other criteria was identified as not applicable for the English as a Second Language participant. One English participant notes in her comments that “[m]aterials/practice guidelines are sometimes shared and offered for instructor enrichment, but nothing formal is in place for implementation.” Her comment as well as the lack of program committee involvement is typical of a conventional curriculum that does not include multimodal compositions. The college and individual departments/programs have not formally adopted a multimodal pedagogy, although the English department has gone as far as including digital technologies in their course outcomes for first-year composition courses. These responses do suggest a reliance on more conventional projects and assessment practices that apply more readily to them.

**Figure 20. Development and Implementation of Assessment Practices for Multimodal Texts**

Development and implementation of assessment practices for both alphabetic and multimodal texts are key to understanding participant involvement with their individual practices and also with how they might integrate other modalities in their pedagogy. Equally as important is knowing what instruments are in use for assessment purposes. To determine assessment instruments, participants selected from the following items: Rubric Criteria, Reflection Papers, Portfolio, Material Components of the Composition, Combination of These, and Other. When asked, *what do you use to assess students' projects*, survey responses indicate ninety-two percent ( $n=22$ ) of all twenty-four participants use rubric criteria, thirty-three percent ( $n=8$ ) use reflection papers, seventeen percent ( $n=4$ ) use portfolios, twenty-five percent ( $n=6$ ) use material components of the composition, twenty-nine percent ( $n=7$ ) use a combination of these, and four

percent ( $n=1$ ) use other. Figure 21 illustrates the instruments used for assessment practices indicating an overwhelming reliance on rubrics.

**Figure 21. Items Used for Assessment Practices**



As noted above, survey responses revealed that ninety-two percent ( $n=22$ ) of participants use a rubric of some kind to assess student projects. Of the thirteen participants who supplied copies of syllabi, assignment guidelines, and rubrics, four provided copies of rubrics, which admittedly does not provide a significant number to examine for the study. With this in mind, I focused a portion of the video interviews on assessment. It is perhaps not surprising to see such reliance on rubrics; however, it is also worthwhile to gain a sense of how participants are measuring the ways students are making meaning of assigned texts and content learned. Video interviews served to clarify use of rubrics and whether faculty are using them for both alphabetic and

multimodal compositions. What follows are the narratives that transpired in interviews with Ruth, Ryan, and Carolyn who offer three differing perspectives on rubrics depending on their use of conventional and/or multimodal compositions.

Ruth and I discussed her assessment practices. She does not appear to use a rubric for all assignments, but did supply me with one for the Final Reflection essay for Sociology 200 (see Appendix L for a copy of the Final Reflection guidelines and Appendix M for the Final Reflection rubric). When I asked her how she assesses projects, she replied

I have a guide sheet that I give them, a little description of the option. And I have things bulleted or numbered to kind of give them a progression. [. . .] And then what I do is I assign a point value to each part of that. And so when I am looking at their paper I try to do it as objectively as possible. Did they cover this aspect of what was required? Was what they wrote correct? Did they correctly use and integrate terms? Did they correctly apply theory? Whatever it might be. So I try to, again, make it as objective as possible with regard to how I am assessing.

I also asked Ruth whether she uses the same type of rubric for each assignment. She responded as follows:

It varies for each one, although I try to do the same thing. [For] the chapter reflections there's four basic questions I am asking them to think about for every chapter that we read and I have a point value assigned to each one. I give them a copy of that with what points are assigned for each. I also provide examples a lot of times. I wrote a chapter reflection for a chapter that we are not covering so they can't duplicate it just to give them an idea of this is what I want you to do. And I have specifics. If you just summarize text material that's not what I want. I don't want you to regurgitate what the text says. I want you to tell me in your own words. But I do provide rubrics. When I do the discussion exercises, same kind of thing. And for the online classes they get more intense rubrics since they don't have the classroom discussion.

Although Ruth provided me with one copy of a rubric for the Reflection Essay, she does use rubrics for her other assignments and uses the rubric function in the CMP in use at CBK Community College for online assignments. Interestingly, when I asked Ruth about the rubric she uses for research projects, she admitted that she does not use a rubric for this project because

of the multiple options available to students. She relies on assignment guidelines that she makes available to students early in the semester. She explains that

[f]or the research projects since each project option is different, I don't have a blanket rubric for all of the research projects. But students know beforehand these are the things [as stated on the assignment guidelines] they need to address for each project option and these are the point values assigned for each section.

Depending on the class, students have three to four project options from which to choose. An examination of the research project guidelines shows that these guidelines include step-by-step instructions (see Table 6 below for step-by-step instructions for one project and Appendix N for detailed Research Project assignment guidelines handout). Students collect data from a number of sources including personal observation of real-world behavior, observation of behavior on television programs, observation of behavior in movies, or analysis of published media images. The research project confirms my earlier findings of students as consumers of a variety of digital resources (see a discussion of comfort levels with using technology in the classroom in chapter four in the section titled Faculty Background). For Ruth's research projects students are *consuming* various types of media to apply, exemplify, and explain sociological concepts, with the finished product an alphabetic text.

**Table 6. Example of Step-by-Step Instructions for One Research Project Option in Ruth Sloan's Sociology 200 Course<sup>xiii</sup>**

Step One: Deciding Which \*Minor Norm(s) to Violate—Figure out what you want to do, where you want to do it, when, etc. Usually violating one norm is sufficient, but if you don't get enough data, you may need to repeat or choose more than one norm. **In your write up, tell me what you did and why you chose that norm/those norms to violate.**

Step Two: Conducting Your Research/Collecting Data—Violate the minor norm(s) you decided on, and observe as carefully as you can if and how people react. Jot down your observations as soon as possible after completing your "violation," and **note any differences in how people of different social statuses** (age, sex, race/ethnicity, social class, strangers versus people who know you, etc.) react. **In your write-up you need to describe reactions in as detailed a way as possible, remember that as you gather your data!**

Step Three: Analysis of your Data—**Write-up your findings (include information from Step 1 and Step 2), analyzing what happened and why you think it happened.** For example, why do you think you got the reactions that you did, and why might there have been differences in the reactions based on social factors (age, sex, social class, etc.)? If you didn't get the kind of reaction that you anticipated, how would you explain that? Can "no reaction" be a reaction?

Step Four: Personal Commentary and Conclusions—**Share your thoughts regarding how you felt doing this exercise and what you learned about "shared reality" and pressure to conform. Can you see value in the subfield of ethnomethodology?** Some people experience "culture shock" when they are confronted with things out of the ordinary. Please **describe a situation where you have experienced culture shock.** Finally, please **comment on anything else relevant that you learned from doing this exercise.**

Ruth provides an effective foundation based on the varied types of assessments she uses in her courses (chapter reflections, chapter quizzes, two fifty point research projects, a new world project, and a final reflection paper). For these projects students review various types of media to gather data. Although they are consuming a variety of modes to include visual, digital, video, and aural, Ruth's students are producing conventional alphabetic texts. I asked her to clarify what she expects for submission for the research projects:

They are turning in a paper that, again, is a write up of the data that they've gathered, essentially. And a write up of their findings. Most of them with the content analysis it's an essay that they do, a consolidated essay. There are a couple of the project options that do require them to submit actual data. There's one project option where they are going out and actually doing a little research project and interviewing ten to fifteen people. So they submit their interview questions and they submit their data and such with that. But most of them it's a two- to four-page paper with any supplemental kind of data that goes along with that.

The research project reflects a conventional pedagogy grounded in sociological concepts and the texts produced are a means for Ruth to assess how students apply and comprehend the concepts and terms they have learned throughout the semester. It is not my desire to suggest that a conventional pedagogy is inferior to a multimodal pedagogy, but I do see a strong preponderance in teaching methods where students are primarily consumers of a variety of modes to then produce conventional texts. Such a pedagogy does not reinforce the wide range of twenty-first century literacy practices, but does effectively reinforce course learning outcomes. I am not suggesting that faculty focus primarily on students as producers of multimodal texts because it is important to provide an equal balance of modes of composing. Responses suggest that participants are making small strides toward including other modes, but not to the extent I would like to see. The WPA Outcomes Statement in its current form encourages faculty in all disciplines to reinforce the skills their students developed in first-year writing courses. It is clear that Ruth and other study participants are encouraging students to produce alphabetic texts often submitted through digital means; however, the missing element is that of "using a variety of technologies to address a wide range of audiences" (WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (v3.0), 2014). Clearly, it is important for participants to meet their disciplinary needs, but as the WPA Outcomes Statements suggests, students will move on to produce texts in their professional lives often in a variety of forms and integrating multimodal pedagogy into



course designs will more readily prepare students for not only transfer, but also entering the workforce, both of which are primary goals for a community college curriculum.

Ryan Dalmead's extra credit project in his history classes provided a good opportunity to discuss assessment for an optional, low-stakes assignment that has the potential to highly motivate and engage students with a variety of modes. Although he does not use a rubric for these projects, the assignment sheet provides clear guidelines for students to follow, which aligns with Ruth's use of guidelines for assessment purposes for her research project. He makes the assignment sheet available to students at the beginning of the semester and they are aware of the basic criteria. These criteria appear as in Table 7 below (See Appendix J for a copy of the entire extra credit assignment guidelines).

**Table 7. Basic Guidelines for Ryan Dalmead's Extra Credit History Project**

<p>Regardless of what kind of project you choose, at the end of the semester you must hand in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The project itself (obviously)</li> <li>2) A short project report (500-750 words) that does the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Gives a brief historical description, based on primary and reputable secondary sources, of the event/object/person that is the focus of your project. Wikipedia does not count as a citable source. You can use it for information, but may not cite it as an authority. The paper must include a works cited page or bibliography.</li> <li>b. Explains why you chose the topic and project type that you did.</li> <li>c. Describes anything relevant that you learned while completing the project.</li> <li>d. Follow either MLA or Chicago format. Either one is fine, but you must use one and only one.</li> <li>e. The paper, of course, must have your name AND class (HIS 121, 122, etc.) on it.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) Receipts of materials used for the project to prove that they were purchased and used in the semester (no handing in last year's art project as this year's history project).</li> <li>4) Supporting documentation as specified in the respective project descriptions below (if any).</li> </ol>
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The criteria are extensive and suggest that some thought must be put into the project and asking students to provide receipts for the materials used is Ryan's way of ensuring students do not wait until a few days before the project is due to complete it. He also includes in his grading criteria the minimum elements to include the project itself and documentation for the alphabetic portion. Although Ryan does not perceive the extra credit project to be a means for meeting course learning outcomes, based on the assignment criteria, it has the potential to become a more extensive required project that reinforces and meets course learning outcomes. Ryan elaborates on how he assesses the projects:

[for] the written portion I do expect them to do a little bit of research, so if they are going to sketch a portrait or [ . . . ] paint this giant picture and each section of the painting was some event from history, I do want to see what did you use as your foundation for it so when you painted that portrait where did you get the original picture of it? Is it a legitimate picture or where are you getting your information that you're using to produce this final craft of yours? So it does somehow have to be tied into some kind of legitimate history source.

His comments here further support that the project has the potential to reinforce course learning outcomes and it does require a good deal of thought on the students' part, providing him with a detailed project to evaluate per his own and course expectations. Although Ryan knows what he is looking for based on the minimum criteria on the assignment sheet, he struggles with how to grade projects that are produced in modes with which he is neither familiar nor an expert. He states,

I do struggle with how to grade; like you said is there a rubric and as of now there isn't, so I have to be very generous in how I give the grades. [ . . . ] I'm not an art historian and I'm not a professor of art. So the other challenge is trying to find out how to give them a grade when art is not my forte, it's theirs. So if a student performs, I guess if he plays the guitar, I can't tell if he did it right or wrong. I can go based on what it sounded like. Or like that painting up there if you get close, the characters look kind of like stick figures but if you ever painted something yourself it's not easy to make it look good. So that's the other struggle: assessing quality. I mean it's easy to see the ones that didn't have a whole lot of effort put in; I actually had one painting that was stick figures and I knew right there well this is not gonna get full points. But separating the B from the A that's a

little more difficult, so for now I have to err on the side of generosity and hopefully as the semesters go by and projects roll in I will see which ones are high quality and which ones are good but could be better.

Although Ryan has doubts about his abilities, he does have a strong sense of what the criteria asks and what he expects of students. But I was also curious about the frustrations he might face when grading these projects. His response,

Besides getting them to turn them in on time? The most frustrating part of grading them? I guess it's once you realize they have met all the basic criteria how do you decide what makes it a B project versus what makes it an A project. I do a little painting myself so I can tell this is really good versus this one isn't quite as much. I'd say that is the most frustrating. Trying to be fair but not make this an easy 5 percent.

Ryan has put a lot of thought into designing the extra credit project and although he does not use a rubric, the minimum criteria established on his assignment sheet could essentially serve as a rubric for his students. As an added note and interestingly enough, Ryan's survey responses focused on grammar as a frustration for him; however, grammatical issues do not appear to be at the forefront of our discussion about the written portion of the extra credit project. Challenges arise more from assessment and whether students have put forth the effort he expects.

Assessment was a large part of my discussion with Carolyn Childs as well. As Carolyn and I talked, she began to reveal more about how 200 level courses are open-ended enough to give her some leeway in the types of assignments she designs. For example in CHD 215 (Models of Early Childhood Education Programs) students compose an audio assignment with Smilebox or Photostory, programs that allow users to add images and text to create a narrative. She describes how students complete this project:

[They] pull pictures in and they can put text on the bottom of the pictures and be able to present that and visually get their point across as to what's important. Whatever the topic is [they can use these programs to talk] about different types of centers or [talk about] their own commercial [and] their educational philosophy to use pictures instead of words or pictures in addition to words.

As we talked more about these visual assignments, I was curious about her assessment practices and asked her which assignments excite her more to grade. Her response:

When I grade the written assignments if I get to one that's not all that good I put it at the bottom, and when I get to the bottom I am just a screaming banshee. So it's a lot of fun to grade the visual assignments. And that's my learning style, too.

Carolyn uses rubrics when grading non-alphabetic projects and she explains how important it is for students to know what is expected of them, but she also recognizes the multiple benefits of using rubrics: "I think the students need to know exactly what the expectation is. Ten years ago you could leave it more open and you got, or I got good stuff back. Now I wonder if our students are overscheduled almost; they think they can do everything." Her response is telling of a common occurrence in a community college setting where many students work full time and have families, so the rubric for Carolyn and many others serves to help keep students *and* faculty on track. And also for Carolyn the rubric is a mechanism that clarifies expectations regardless of mode of composing.

Understanding assessment practices based on mode of composing is a key concept for this study. Also of importance is knowing what resources and support are available to participants and of which of these resources they take advantage. The survey asked, *what kind of support or resources do you rely upon for assessment practices of media compositions?*

Participants selected from the following categories (with abbreviations as noted in figures below): Program Committee Recommendations (PCR), Individual Research (IR), Academic Support Center Help (ASC), Technology Consultant (TC), Instructor in Same Department (ID), Instructors in Other Fields (IF), Colleagues at Different Institutions (CDI), Online Information within Home Institution (OWHI), Online Information Outside of Home Institution (OOHI),

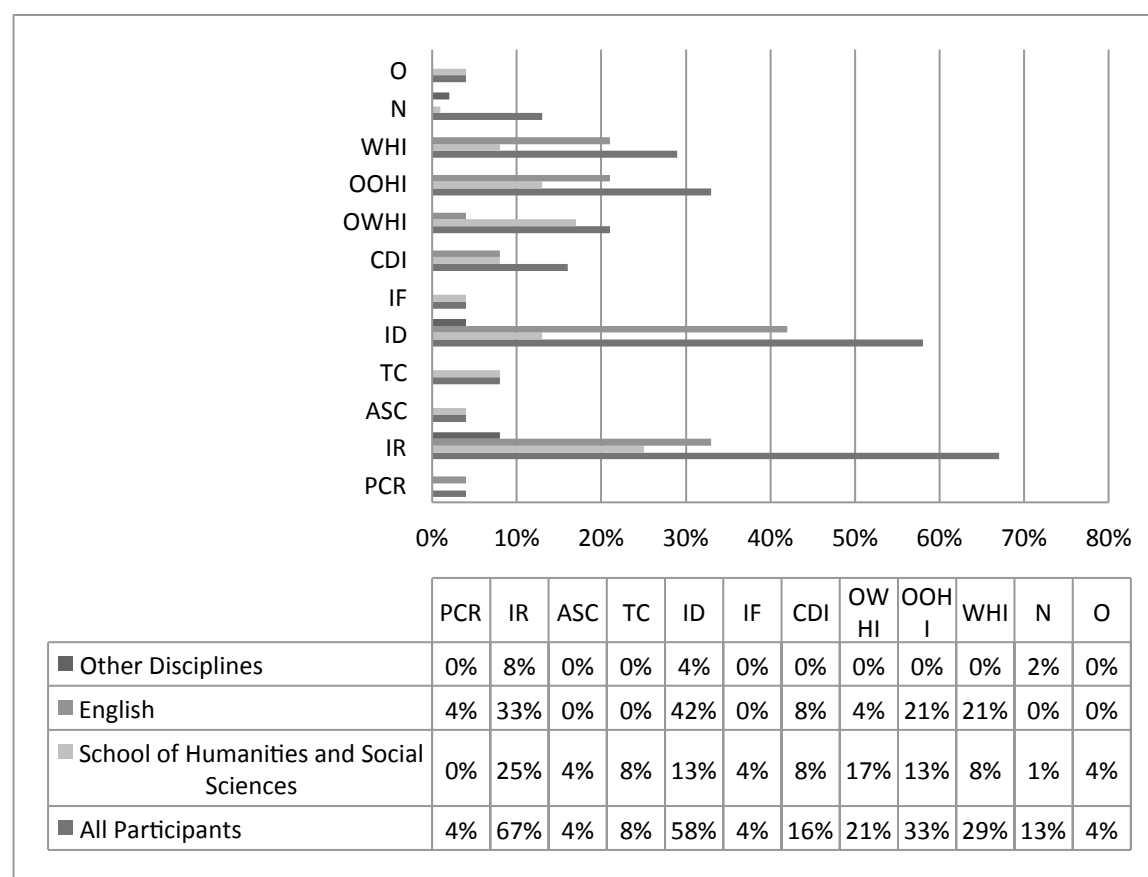
Workshops Offered by Home Institution (WHI), None (N), Other (O). Respondents selected options as follows:

- Individual research (67%,  $n=16$ )
- Instructors in same department (58%,  $n=14$ )
- Online information outside of home institution (33%,  $n=8$ )
- Workshops offered by home institution (29%,  $n=7$ )
- Online information within home institution (21%,  $n=5$ )
- Colleagues at different institutions (16%,  $n=4$ )
- None (13%,  $n=3$ )
- Technology consultant (8%,  $n=2$ )
- Program committee recommendations (4%,  $n=1$ )
- Academic Support Center help (4%,  $n=1$ )
- Instructors in other fields (4%,  $n=1$ )
- Other (please specify) (4%,  $n=1$ )

Respondents selected Individual Research with the most frequency (67%,  $n=16$ ), suggesting they do not choose to rely on resources made available at their institution. Additionally, fifty-eight percent suggest that they rely on colleagues within their own departments/disciplines, which is encouraging to see. What is perhaps not so encouraging to note is the lack of reliance on the institution itself to promote widespread use of technology in the classroom. Professional development/workshop opportunities are offered regularly; however, as one part-time faculty noted, workshops are often offered at inopportune times and I suspect that as soon as the semester begins both full-time and part-time faculty become overwhelmed with the normal rigors of teaching. Of importance to note here is that responses support findings in

previous sections that suggest participants have a strong sense of one of the primary community college missions which is to prepare students for either immediately entering the workforce or transferring to a four-year college or university. Figure 22 below breaks down data further to identify selections per Other Disciplines, English, and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. What these data confirm is that each discipline leans toward individual research as opposed to seeking out support and resources from other sources.

**Figure 22. Assessment Practices: Support and Resources Used by Participants**



Chapter five provides a close view of types of projects participants assign and assess and how their practices shift from conventional to multimodal projects, attempting to answer the

question, *how do instructors assess multimodal projects with respect to learning outcomes and expectations of the academic discourse community?* Findings suggest that participants are willing to consider assigning and assessing non-alphabetic projects; however, data confirm that alphabetic texts continue to pervade pedagogical practices. Understanding participants' perceptions about types of assignments establishes foundational ideas related to assessment practices for conventional and multimodal projects in the academy. Additionally, understanding how participants address assignments designed to align with course learning outcomes is equally important. The following chapter shifts to analyzing assignment design in relation to digital academic literacy and course learning outcomes.

## DATA ANALYSIS PART THREE: ASSIGNMENT DESIGN

“Chapter Four: Data Analysis Part One” examines study results of participants’ perceptions and expectations pertaining to academic discourse and writing in general. “Chapter Five: Data Analysis Part Two” examines the types of projects participants assign and how assessment practices change when shifting from conventional to multimodal texts. Additional concepts to emerge from analysis of survey responses focus on how participants design research assignments with respect to twenty-first century composing practices and how participants target learning outcomes when designing assignments. Learning outcomes have emerged in previous findings chapters as relevant to types of projects assigned and the pedagogical choices participants make. “Chapter Two: Multimodal Literacy: (Re)mixing and (Re)defining Pedagogy” identified the relevance the current version of the WPA Outcomes Statement (2014) has toward writing instruction. And while the primary audience for the WPA Outcomes Statement is FYC instructors, it is important to note that it was written with other disciplines in mind. The statement claims that “[a]s students move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, their abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines as these writers move into new settings where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge.” With the WPA’s view of expanding writing abilities in mind, this chapter focuses on assignment design with respect to digital academic literacy and course learning outcomes by answering two of the six research questions posed for this study: 1) *how does an instructor design a research assignment that reconciles instructors’ expectations of multimodal academic writing with conventionally accepted composing/literacy practices?* and 2) *how do instructors target learning outcomes that involve integration of information across modalities?* Table 8



below is the Chapter Six Data Analysis Matrix, which identifies the research questions addressed here with respect to the applicable survey section, data sources, and analysis method to clarify how data fit into a discussion about literacy practices and course learning outcomes. More specifically, the current chapter will focus primarily on assignment design with regard to learning outcomes and digital academic literacies.

**Table 8. Chapter Six Data Analysis Matrix**

Research Questions	Relevant Survey Section	Data Sources	Analysis Method
How does an instructor design a research assignment that reconciles instructors' expectations of multimodal academic writing with conventionally accepted composing/literacy practices?	Types of Writing Assignments  Assignment Design	Survey Responses Video Interviews Syllabi Assignment Guidelines	Content Analysis Analytic Memos Coding
How do instructors target learning outcomes that involve integration of information across modalities?	Assignment Design	Survey Responses Video Interviews Syllabi Assignment Guidelines	Content Analysis Analytic Memos Coding

### **Assignment Design: Digital Academic Literacy**

In chapter two I defined digital academic literacy as *recognize[ing] the inclusion of aural, digital, visual, and written texts as ways to make meaning of texts across disciplines*. I also discussed the WPA Outcomes Statement (2014) which makes a strong comment about digital

technologies in relation to current composing processes that are increasingly reliant on digital resources. Participants responded to a number of survey questions pertaining to assignment design and course learning outcomes. The results of these responses suggest that participants do not regularly include digital academic literacies in their course and assignment designs, as they do not generally ask students to produce texts in other modalities unless they are producing extra credit documents or submitting texts through a digital medium such as the CMP in use.

However, the connection between assignment design and digital academic literacy (and multimodal pedagogy in the long run) is important to make here because it establishes whether participants are considering composing practices specific to designing academic research assignments as they develop their courses and assignments. This ties into previous discussions about digital academic literacy because careful consideration of assignment design plays a significant role in promoting digital academic literacies; however, and as previous findings chapters have established, ensuring courses and assignments target learning outcomes often complicates a direct approach that includes other modalities.

### **Assignment Design: Alphabetic versus Non-Alphabetic Modes**

Establishing a connection among assignment design, course learning outcomes, and digital academic literacies clarifies whether participants consider modalities other than print in their curriculum. Studies such as Anderson et al's (2006) provide important data pertaining to how educators integrate other modalities into their professional practices when designing writing assignments; however, Anderson et al's study does not specifically address connections to learning outcomes and digital academic literacy. Carolyn Handa (2001; 2004) recognizes the value that mediated classrooms might have on emerging literacies and composing practices for the twenty-first century in her work toward defining digital literacy for the twenty-first century.

The New London Group also recognizes this value by encouraging a multiliterate view of literacy. Literacy, then, becomes a primary element when understanding assignment design. In order to identify how faculty are designing assignments that ask students to compose, using twenty-first century literacy practices and that target course learning outcomes, the survey for this study includes a section that addresses assignment design for conventional written assignments and for multimodal assignments. Participants responded to three questions: 1) *what do you consider when designing a research assignment in written form?*; 2) *what do you consider when designing a research assignment in other modes (i.e. visual, audio, digital, etc.)?*; and 3) *if you consider learning outcomes/objectives, how do you target them in research assignments?* The first two questions asked participants to select from the following items: Course Learning Outcomes (CO), Clearly Stated Thesis (TH), Fully Developed Argument (AR), Use of Credible Sources (CS), Number of Pages/Words (PW), Documentation Style and Accuracy (DS), Design Elements (DE), and Other (O). The abbreviations used here appear in graphical data in subsequent sections of the chapter.

Responses to the first two questions indicate an overwhelming consideration of course learning outcomes when designing research assignments in either alphabetic or other than alphabetic forms. Similarities in responses with regard to alphabetic and non-alphabetic assignments are most closely aligned with course learning outcomes and use of credible sources. Ninety-two percent ( $n=22$ ) of the participants indicated they do consider learning outcomes when designing alphabetic assignments and seventy-one percent ( $n=17$ ) indicate they consider learning outcomes when designing assignments in other modalities. Eighty-eight percent ( $n=21$ ) of the participants indicated they consider use of credible sources when designing alphabetic assignments and seventy-one percent ( $n=17$ ) indicate they consider use of credible sources when

designing assignments in other modalities. The numbers confirm a strong desire to meet departmental and college requirements as delineated in course outcomes. This is an important distinction to make because the study is asking how instructors target learning outcomes across modalities and how they align specific assignments with each outcome. Based on responses here, learning outcomes are indeed important when contemplating assignment design across modalities. Table 9 below provides a side-by-side comparison of total responses based on the order in which respondents selected criteria with the most frequency. The highlighted items emphasize the similarities in criteria selection for both written and non-written assignments, identifying “course learning outcomes” and “use of credible sources” as most important for both written and non-written assignments.

**Table 9. Responses to Designing Assignments in both Alphabetic and Other Than Alphabetic Forms**

Designing Assignments in Alphabetic Form	Designing Assignments in Other Than Alphabetic Form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course learning outcomes/objectives (92%, n=22)</li> <li>• Use of credible sources (88%, n=21)</li> <li>• Clearly stated thesis (75%, n=18)</li> <li>• Documentation style and accuracy (75%, n=18)</li> <li>• Fully developed argument (63%, n=15)</li> <li>• Number of pages/words (54%, n=13)</li> <li>• Design elements (38%, n=9)</li> <li>• Other (please specify) (8%, n=2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course learning outcomes/objectives (71%, n=17)</li> <li>• Use of credible sources (71%, n=17)</li> <li>• Design elements (63%, n=15)</li> <li>• Clearly stated thesis (54%, n=13)</li> <li>• Fully developed argument (54%, n=13)</li> <li>• Documentation style and accuracy (46%, n=11)</li> <li>• Number of pages/words (13%, n=3)</li> <li>• Other (please specify) (17%, n=4)</li> </ul>

Equally as important is that participants place greater value on use of credible sources than they do on a clearly stated thesis, fully developed arguments, number of pages/words, documentation style and accuracy, and design elements across modalities. Although percentages vary among these, a significant change in value occurs with design elements which rises from thirty-eight percent ( $n=9$ ) for alphabetic assignments to sixty-three percent ( $n=15$ ) for non-alphabetic assignments, suggesting that although formatting and design elements inherently apply to alphabetic assignments, design elements are not recognized as important for alphabetic assignments for survey participants. The expectation based on these responses and for academic discourse is that participants consider learning outcomes and use of credible sources as integral components to assignment design. Although they place less value on other categories, the focus on thesis statements as a strong component to alphabetic assignments suggests they do consider the processes students follow to produce projects that make clear arguments and that meet course learning outcomes.

**Figure 23. Side-by-Side Comparison of Criteria Selection for Alphabetic and Non-Alphabetic Research Assignments**

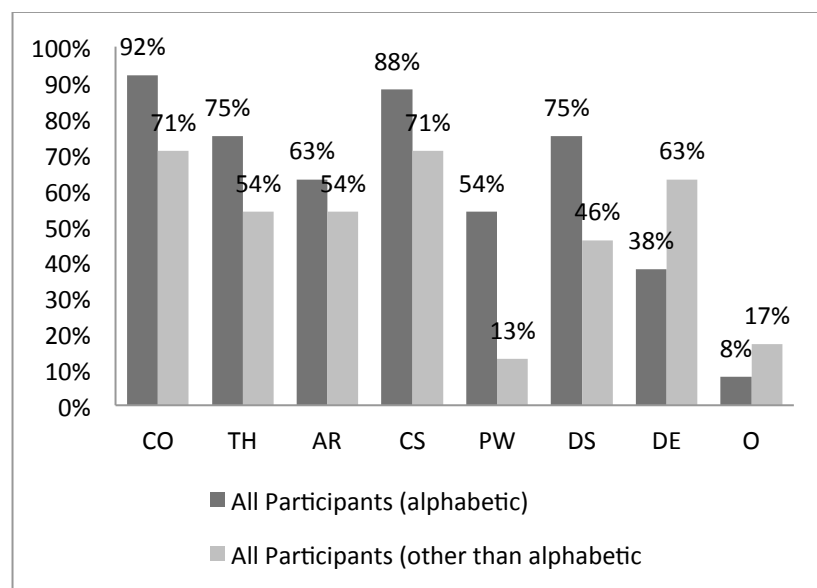
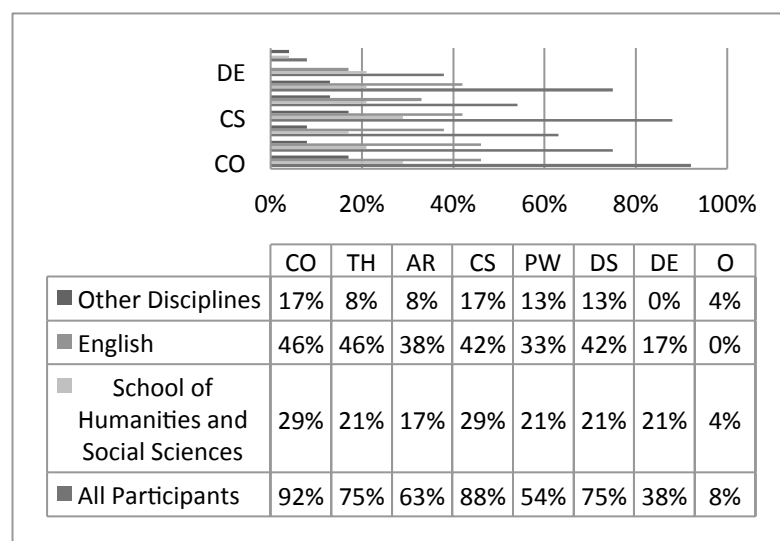


Figure 23 above further illustrates the differences in selection of criteria between designing alphabetic and non-alphabetic research projects. The visual is a representation of the fact that consideration of each of these criteria is of more importance for alphabetic assignments, which in turn confirms that alphabetic assignments are occurring with greater frequency, aligning with a culture that prioritizes written communication over other modes of communication. Such reliance on written texts is perhaps indicative of Jason Palmeri's (2012) arguments that although he recognizes the existence of a shifting toward remixing of the academic discourse community to include other modalities, he also recognizes the value of alphabetic texts. This remixing involves inclusion of other modalities in such a way that students are producing multimodal texts that enhance and extend views of the traditional alphabetic text to include visuals. Alphabetic texts are, as Palmeri suggests, multimodal as they are inherently visual and written (p. 8). However, when considering assignment design, participants for this study appear to be placing greater value on alphabetic assignments for aligning with course outcomes, covering course content, and assessing student learning and with little regard to their visual appeal.

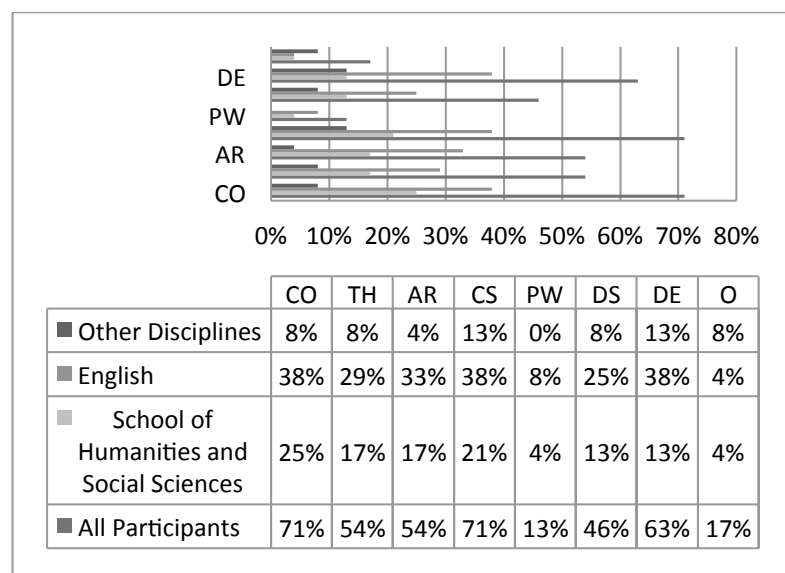
Comparing how participants selected criteria for both alphabetic and non-alphabetic research assignments, as in Figure 23 above, provides a view of which elements are most important to assignment design for study participants. Figures 24 and 25 below identify criteria as selected by Other Disciplines, English, and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. When breaking out responses by discipline and school, it becomes clear that English participants place similar value on all criteria. Whereas Other Disciplines and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences participants appear to focus more attention on the criteria for selection for alphabetic research assignments. These responses, again, confirm findings in chapters four and

five that point to a culture that promotes a more conventional pedagogy, privileging the alphabetic mode over other modalities.

**Figure 24. Criteria Considered When Designing Research Assignments in *Alphabetic* Form across Disciplines**



**Figure 25. Criteria Considered When Designing Research Assignments in *Other Than Alphabetic* Form**



### **Assignment Design: Aligning Course Learning Outcomes**

The survey also asked participants to discuss how they target learning outcomes/objectives in research assignments. As discussed above, course learning outcomes are an important element when designing either alphabetic or non-alphabetic research assignments. A deliberate awareness of learning outcomes suggests that participants are aware of alignment of assignments with outcomes; however, most responses do not directly address alignment as a specific element of assignment design. Rather, participants are aware that they should attempt to meet course outcomes. Seventy-nine percent ( $n=19$ ) responded to the question, *if you consider learning outcomes/objectives, how do you target them in research assignments?*; twenty percent ( $n=5$ ) did not supply a response. I was looking for fairly direct responses to this question; however, responses varied greatly and in some cases were a bit vague. An example of a definitive response comes from an English participant: “Learning outcomes and objectives are clearly identified in the departmental course outline; these outcomes are targeted within the research assignment.” Responses listed below are typical of how some participants target course learning outcomes.

#### **English Responses**

I incorporate the learning outcomes that pertain to research projects by explicitly requiring use of credible sources, research to support claims, and proper documentation format in the assignment design (and outlining those expectations on the assignment sheet).

Since the course is rooted in these outcomes, this must be the basis upon which any assignments are made.

All assignments are outcome/objective based. For example, documentation methods are dictated by the objectives so that is clearly targeted by the research assignment.

Argument-based research allows for the deepest coverage of the greatest number of course outcomes: rhetorical knowledge, documentation, information literacy, argument, analysis, summary, paraphrase, attribution, etc.



I make sure that students will use the learning outcomes in completion of the assigned project.

I specifically design certain assignments for certain learning outcomes/objectives. Often there is overlap (with multiple assignments incidentally covering the same outcomes/objectives) but I try to use a different mode in each instance for variety and challenge.

I target information literacy objectives via explicit instruction on finding sources, evaluating quality of sources, summarizing, and documentation. I target composition objectives via explicit instruction in rhetorical analysis and peer group work.

### **School of Humanities and Social Sciences Responses**

**Early Childhood Development.** Survey the major theories and issues of child development and the development of early childhood education as a professional. This is an objective that comes from the VCCS. Since this objective is not measurable, I have students develop and present a presentation on one of the theorists we discuss in class.

**History.** For reasons I have explained, I do not assign research assignments. I do assign non-research essays based on a limited number of selected primary sources. These essays fulfill my course objective -- to teach students to write an academic essay that analyzes primary sources. My rubric for those essays is in the email I sent you: but basically, I use all the criteria in your check boxes except design elements.

**History.** Some course object[ives] are to gain a basic knowledge of people, events and ideas of history, and be able to thinking critically and argue persuasively.

**Sociology.** All written work requires students to understand and apply course material/sociological concepts and theories. They also promote development of a 'sociological perspective.' These are all tied to course and chapter-level learning outcomes. The projects/work also address larger goals of information literacy, effective communication, and critical thinking.

**Teacher Preparation.** I follow the objectives of the course outline, and the mandates of the Commonwealth of Virginia for highly qualified teachers.

### **Other Discipline Responses**

**Geography.** I specify my expectations in a grading rubric and in the description of the topic choice.

**Nursing.** I usually have an outcome that addresses evidenced based practice so that would be an important part of the research project. I would also expect that the student would take what he/she found in conducting the research and use it to design nursing care for the patient and/or family.

**Math.** The questions the students research must directly tie into learning outcomes for the courses.

**Paralegal.** Students must analyze facts to rules of law. They are given a research problem and must research the law and then write multiple brief/memorandums.

Overall, it appears that faculty in all disciplines are aware of course learning outcomes and target them through assignment design; in some cases responses suggest participants assume they are meeting course outcomes because their courses are designed to do so; however, without more fully articulated responses, I am not able to determine specific alignment practices. What is good to note, though, is that The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (especially those within the Social Sciences program) and Other Disciplines participants are aware of the large amount of content they need to cover and of course outcomes. They are aware that the types of assignments and projects they design must align with course outcomes and be designed in such a way that they can assess whether students are comprehending and applying course content. This means that limiting assignment design to alphabetic texts gives them more time to cover course content and meet outcomes. Data examined in chapter four revealed that seventy-one percent of participants identified writing as *very important* to their discipline. Chapter four also provided a close look at participants' responses about assignment expectations for both alphabetic and non-alphabetic modes, revealing that course content is a strong consideration for participants in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Other Disciplines; whereas, English participants do not consider course content in any form. This is important to note when addressing course learning outcomes because although English participants may appear not to be considering course content, the assumption is that if they are aligning assignments with course outcomes, then it follows that they are addressing course content as well.

### Assignment Design: Video Interviews

Video interviews provided greater insight into participants' perspectives on learning outcomes. Ruth and I discussed how she sees her assignments aligning with course learning outcomes, and her responses in many ways reflect a strong desire to design assignments and class activities with course outcomes in mind. She shared a Sociology 200 (Principles of Sociology) syllabus with me and I connected her interview responses with her general course objectives as identified on her syllabus (See Appendix O for copy of the SOC 200 syllabus). The Sociology 200 syllabus addresses course outcomes with the following language:

Attention will be focused on the ability to meaningfully use sociological concepts and theories in oral and written communications; to abstractly conceptualize social and cultural phenomena; to derive tentative conclusions based upon interrelated facts, rather than opinions; and to apply sociological concepts to one's own self and life. All of these skills are a part of the development of critical thinking—very valuable!!

Ruth commented in chapter five's discussion about assessment and types of writing assignments that she, "want[s] to spend time using class time linking to current issues *where I can use the terms and theories and concepts that they have all read already*," which is a strong indication of her desire to meet the learning outcomes of applying sociological concepts not just in physical products the students produce, but also in less concrete ways during class discussion. Her interview responses reinforce that she is attempting to meet these objectives in multiple ways, although not necessarily with multimodal pedagogy in mind. She states,

[T]he projects and the chapter reflections and even the discussion activities require them to use the terms and concepts and theories. And I can tell by what they are writing and the context in which they use the terms and things whether they understand the meaning of it.

Ruth notes that oftentimes students will rely on textbook definitions instead of applying concepts and terms in their own words. She encourages them to move away from textbook definitions to

think more critically about how sociological terms and concepts apply to the current social issues. In doing this, she considers that projects such as chapter reflections

[g]et them thinking about the material. [. . .] And I love it when students do chapter reflections and they pull something and they say, well, the textbook says this and the author says this, but that's kind of subjective. Where they detect bias in something that they are reading. Or they'll say, you know the chapter on poverty they're using a table in there that has statistics from five years [ago] and is that really current enough. So I like to see them thinking like that.

Ruth is keenly aware of her approach to instructing students on course content and reinforcing readings. Clearly, her comfort level is with alphabetic print texts. Of interest here is that her classroom activities and assignments in many ways parallel learning outcomes and activities in both first- and second-semester composition courses. Students are often confronted with thinking critically about data and statistical evidence for the first time in FYC and as they develop information literacy skills they begin to understand how to apply this information to the arguments they are making. She is reinforcing not only information literacy skills but also critical thinking as it applies to sociological concepts with a primary focus on a monomodal pedagogy. Although her primary mode of use is alphabetic/print, she does approach another modality with the introduction of a collaborative presentation. Ruth confirms that in a small group project she moves students toward thinking critically about social issues in such a way that

they realize people can have wildly different views about the same thing and it's not necessarily that one view is right or one view is wrong. But it gets them exposed to different ways of thinking and I think challenges some preconceived notions that maybe they had about things and I think that's beneficial.

The final product is a group presentation in which students share the results of their work to the class. The primary mode here is oral; however, the delivery is not suggestive of anything other than a traditional oral presentation. The point is that she is again meeting a course outcome in which students apply sociological concepts in a conventional mode (i.e. she does not suggest oral

presentations encourage use of media). An added outcome is that the project reflects concepts taught to students primarily in a second-semester composition course that teaches argumentation as a way to understand that a person might have a specific stance on a subject but also recognize that others might think differently or see the topic in a different shade from their own stance.

In addition to critical thinking as a course outcome, Sociology 200 focuses on applying “sociological concepts to one’s own self and life.” Ruth reinforces this objective:

I was thinking also one of the big goals is to foster development of what I’ll just [say is] their sociological perspective, sociological imagination [and] realizing how their individual life, our individual lives are impacted by so many different forces. All the different groups that they’re a part of; all the different parts of larger social forces out there. I look for that. And I think a lot of the assignments are geared to fostering that kind of understanding as well.

With regard to learning outcomes, Ruth addresses meeting Sociology 200 outcomes not just with alphabetic assignments, but also in class discussion and in group presentations, using oral communication. So while the majority of the projects students produce are conventional alphabetic assignments, Ruth is also considering oral delivery as part of her design of assignments. Clearly, though, Ruth is not employing a multimodal pedagogy to achieve outcomes, but she is consciously aware of how both out-of-class projects and in-class discussion promote and align with course learning outcomes, specifically to make connections to students’ individual lives. Ruth is also not promoting use of twenty-first century literacy practices, but she is developing skills relevant to making meaning of sociological concepts.

Ryan Dalmead and I also discussed learning outcomes as they pertain to his extra credit project. The course objectives for History 121 include a number of outcomes that promote historical concepts and comprehension of them. These objectives appear in Table 10 below.

**Table 10. Course Objectives from Ryan Dalmead's History 121 Syllabus**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Demonstrate an ability to select from the materials offered in this course, the relevant information needed to explain their own interpretation of a particular historical question.
- Develop an appreciation of the fact that their values are not necessarily the values of other peoples, and that their values are not necessarily better or worse than those held by other peoples in other places and times.
- Integrate the study of ethnic groups that have contributed to the development of a unique American civilization.
- Understand that the history in their textbook is not an infallible or comprehensive account of the past, but merely the selected arguments and interpretations of certain authors. There are no infallible interpretations of the past!
- Present an historical argument in good written or oral form.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the chronological development of the significant political, economic, social, military, religious, cultural and intellectual changes experienced by Americans during the times 1865 to the present.
- Demonstrate in both oral and written exercises their ability to synthesize their knowledge of historical concepts and interpretation.
- Determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided

The first objective for History 121 asks students to interpret a “particular historical question” as a way to *do history*. Ryan points out that the extra credit project is

a way to make them find some kind of enjoyment out of it, and so I made that the extra credit because *it's not exactly doing history*; they're not necessarily reading texts, studying primary sources. And so that's why I made it an extra assignment, but it's fairly substantial; the amount of points by the end of the semester it's a half letter grade on their final grade so it can be big.

I pressed Ryan a little further about alignment with course outcomes because on the surface the extra credit project has great potential for students to understand and appreciate history—to do history as the outcomes require; however, his primary objective for the extra credit projects is *engagement*. Ryan clarifies the project's purpose:

The project for this is just to try and generate an interest in it; that's why I make it extra credit. So it's not the only thing you can point to the specific outcome it achieves. My

whole goal is to get them to stop thinking with this project about history as boring and uninteresting. And so that's why it's completely extra. If the student doesn't want to do it they don't have to; they can still get an A in the class. So that's the primary goal with it.

The purpose is not to align the extra credit project with outcomes, but based on the assignment guidelines and Ryan's expectations of finished projects, an underlying goal (or perhaps unstated or unrealized goal) is that these projects do encourage students to meet outcomes, with the added bonus of more fully engaging them. I am not trying to undermine Ryan's perceptions of the purpose of his project, but I do find it intriguing that an added benefit is that students are "doing history" producing multimodal projects. Additionally, these projects encourage composing using a variety of not only other modalities (aural, digital, written, etc.), but also genres of communicating, thus promoting multiliterate ways of making meaning of historical texts. These literacy skills are not necessarily digital, but students are making meaning in a variety of ways. Students are producing quilts and images; they are performing musically or baking a cake using a recipe found on the Colonial Williamsburg Web site. Students are designing *texts* using a wide range of materialities. The idea of materialities might be a bit cliché today; however Anne Wysocki's (2004) oft-quoted statement about the materialities of texts suggests that composers of a wide range of texts in other modalities will make as "overtly visible as possible the values they embody" (p. 115). "They" refers to the texts themselves; however, the significance of this connection here is that as Ryan's history students become more engaged with historical texts, they produce texts that overtly relate to their individual perspectives and interests, promoting greater opportunities for learning and making meaning of course content. Although Ryan is not designing the extra credit project with a multimodal pedagogy in mind, he is encouraging students to produce texts beyond the written word with the purpose of engaging them in

historical discussions; additionally, he is not specifically aligning the extra credit project with course outcomes.

Perhaps one of the more poignant interviews I experienced regarding course learning outcomes occurred when I spoke with Sheryl Miller an English professor of twenty-five years. Sheryl is not intimidated by using technology in the classroom and has experimented with using other modes of composing. However, she has a strong sense of what it means to compose for the academic discourse community in a community college setting. We primarily discussed her experiences in English 112, a second-semester composition course where she assigns the following projects: summary and response essay, rhetorical analysis essay, position paper, mixed-media presentation, annotated bibliography, researched essay, discussion boards, library research guides, and self-reflection essay. These assignments are typical of a second-semester composition course, suggesting a strong leaning toward conventional, written projects. What drew me to her projects is that in addition to the many conventional projects in her course, she also asks students to produce a mixed-media presentation. Sheryl designed the multimodal project for use in an online course and although she had not fully thought out the project, she was hopeful the class would respond well. This particular section proved to be weaker than most, and Sheryl found that “the students were [ . . . ] struggling just with basic technologies at the start of the class and [she] thought adding on too complex a layer was going to be distracting.” The lack of skills these students possess suggests minimal use of digital technologies on their part despite the environment of an online course. And although Sheryl’s focus might not have been to promote twenty-first century literacy practices to include the digital, her attempt at assigning a multimodal project does lean toward encouraging students to produce texts in other modalities. We also discussed the issues she encountered such as how to grade without a common rubric and



how she might have approached the project in a face-to-face class as opposed to online. In the end, she simplified the project by focusing only on PowerPoint and asking students to add in voiceovers, but she still faced issues with minimal access to technology and lack of skill.

Regardless of mode involved, we discussed how she felt her assignments align with course learning outcomes. Below is her detailed response to how she sees assignments meeting course learning outcomes:

Well, I think, all of the papers are driven towards meeting fundamental academic outcomes and meeting the outcomes that we've [the English Department] identified for argumentation for developing rhetorical strategies. I have a fundamental philosophical issue. Our students are so needy on basic writing skills that if I distract them with the production of other kinds of materials—it would be lovely to write blogs; it would be lovely to do all these other things—but then they get to more advanced academic classes and they are not writing blogs necessarily; they are asked to write an analytical paper or they are asked to develop and demonstrate critical thinking and to use proper grammar and good writing skills. If I don't focus on that I feel like I am doing them a disservice to show them the fun aspects of writing. And I understand all of that. But then I am frustrated if I am teaching a two hundred level course and they don't know how to submit an academic paper. And that's my fundamental job, I feel, to do that.

[I]t is a struggle. Maybe I'm out of sync with the new times. Maybe I'm still old fashioned even though I don't want to think of myself as old. But I just, there is, there is something thoughtful that has to go into place when you write an academic paper. It takes time; it takes precision. It requires that you develop skills not just to writing well but being well, being a good observer and participant in this larger discussion. And I think sometimes, I don't want to use the word trivialize, but good writing and good thinking gets trivialized in the public discourse in a lot of ways and we see a lot of blogs, you know, we're exposed to a lot of this kind of easy writing. But that's not the kind of writing I think that's going to serve many of our students, if they are transfer students. I guess that's the audience I really try to reach. Because if they are already able to write at this level—most of the American public is at this level—they will be able to get by, but I think our job is to move them to that next level.

Sheryl is struggling with a strong sense of her responsibility to prepare students for the types of composing practices occurring in upper level courses across disciplines, and as data suggests for this study, producing products in other than alphabetic modes is not a common occurrence in this community college. Her comments suggest that non-alphabetic/non-print modes do not meet

course outcomes or prepare students for 200 level courses in the community college or upper level courses at transfer institutions—at CBK Community College fifty percent of the student population transfers to local four-year colleges and universities—so her focus on conventional modes of composing makes sense. She also makes a strong argument in support of alphabetic texts to promote critical thinking, which aligns with Ruth Sloan’s reasoning as well; clearly the entire spectrum of twenty-first century literacies is not a focus in her pedagogy, but she also does not neglect the importance of encouraging other modes of composing as is evidenced by her desire to introduce a multi-media project. Her concern is whether composing in other modes will prepare students for communicating throughout and for the academic discourse community at the community college level and beyond.

In a related discussion, I asked Ryan Dalmead what might happen if instead of offering open-ended extra credit projects, he required students to submit projects in multiple modes, but with a more academic slant. When the interview occurred, Ryan admitted that this semester was the first time he offered the extra credit assignment. Since this was his first experience with multimodal composing, I was curious to know what might happen if he required students to produce texts outside of conventional, written texts. His response suggests that if something is considered academic, it has to be a traditional paper:

It would probably turn more into a traditional history paper. Right now all they are writing is a journey in creating their project. It would turn more into ‘If you want to sketch a picture of Chief Joseph I want you to write your paper then of why is Chief Joseph significant to history,’ and then they would have to do a little bit more research, they would have to do a little bit more analysis and actually situate him in the narrative rather than just say, ‘I’ve always thought it was a cool picture.’ So for now I was looking to see if the students would go for it. I was worried some would say, ‘it’s too much; I don’t want to do it.’

I am not convinced that Ryan is privileging the conventional, print mode over other modes of composing; rather, like Sheryl, he has a strong sense of his responsibility for preparing students

for composing for the academy. What this means is that the academy (at least at the community college level) is nudging educators toward conventional pedagogy to meet course learning outcomes and cover a large amount of content. But Ryan is also a product of a discipline that primarily produces print texts and since his pedagogy aligns with his disciplinary expectations, his own expectations reflect this. But regardless of a purpose for engagement or academic research, Ryan admits that he does not want students to consider the project as “a side order. [ . . . ] I still have to find some way to make sure this is something they have done some research in and it’s not just a willynilly, ‘oh, I did this over the weekend.’”

I also spoke with Carolyn Childs about types of assignments she designs in relation to course learning outcomes. Although the Early Childhood Development program does not offer associate degrees, designing assignments that align with outcomes is equally as important for Carolyn. What I found to be most intriguing is the difference in purpose from other disciplines. As Carolyn clarified types of assignments she offers, I was struck by how the purpose for her assignments is not only to align with course learning outcomes, but also to prepare students for entering the workforce as opposed to composing only for the academic discourse community or transferring to a four-year college or university. This suggests a significant difference between degree programs and certificate programs and because students are completing assignments to directly prepare them for the field and due to the nature of the work involved, CHD courses appear to be an effective environment for developing a multimodal pedagogy. Although Carolyn is not conscious of her focus on modalities, she is consciously aware that her students are either currently working in the field or will be immediately after completing their certificate program. She clarifies writing for the field:

They also have to write observations. That type of writing is important. That anecdotal writing; that’s how you write accident reports; that’s how you write reports for children’s

records. That's the kind of stuff that other people will read and it's important that they learn how to write that way. It's okay to have your opinion, but you need to learn how to write just the facts; write down what you see.

The other writing they do in their work is creating newsletters, writing letters to parents and we do that as well in the classroom situation. I give them different topics and pretty much leave it out there. You can use Publisher; you can use Word. You can use any kind of software that you're comfortable with. But here's the rubric; you have to have three segments and a picture, and [it has to] be positive and you have to tell parents these things.

Direct observations and newsletters are assignments that align with CHD 120 course learning outcomes such as “[e]xplaining the importance of observing and recording children’s behavior, as the basis for planning developmentally appropriate activities” or “describe the need for and benefit of parental involvement and list ways to involve families in the early childhood program.” These outcomes are stated on the CHD 120 syllabus (see Appendix K and Table Eleven below for a detailed list of course outcomes from CHD 120).

**Table 11. CHD 120 Course Learning Outcomes****COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the semester, the Early Childhood Student will:

1. Survey the major theories and issues of child development and the development of early childhood education as a professional.
2. Identify and describe general principles and major milestones of children from infancy through age eight in these areas: physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development.
3. Explain the importance of observing and recording children's behavior, as the basis for planning developmentally appropriate activities.\_
4. Develop skills with at least two methods of observing children.\_
5. Display knowledge about developmentally appropriate practice in arranging, equipping, and supervising children's total environment. This will include such areas as the use of resource people, field trips, and parents.\_
6. Gain knowledge of the importance and necessity of developing appropriate program planning including the child's daily schedule, routines, transitions, and activities.\_
7. Define health and safety and demonstrate knowledge of what constitutes healthy safe environments for young children.\_
8. Demonstrate and understand that the adult's role in promoting children's learning is mainly to facilitate and guide.\_
9. Demonstrate the ability to plan experiences and create an environment, which supports children's learning through play.\_
10. Describe how social environment impacts language development.\_
11. Identify and discuss at least five ways adults can facilitate children's emotional development, particularly the development of self-esteem.\_
12. Identify ways that adults can support the process of socialization by helping children adjust, giving them a sense of belonging, and teaching them social skills.\_
13. Identify diverse cultural and special needs of children and their families and to plan developmentally appropriate activities that reflect this diversity.\_
14. Describe the need for and benefit of parental involvement and list ways to involve families in the early childhood program.\_

A major difference from other study participants is Carolyn's awareness of her shift in thinking about course outcomes and her comfort with discussing course outcomes directly with her students. She identifies that

the textbook typically covers most of the course objectives but maybe not all of them and one of the things I do with my students is about midterm, we go over the course objectives to teach them to look at them for one thing because I think they need to learn what a syllabus is: what it means; that it's a contract between the instructor and the student. And what is an objective? You have to, it's like you have to teach them what a rubric is, you have to teach them what an objective is, too. And they should be able to look at the objectives and know what they are [going to] learn in the class. And so we go over the objectives and we talk about, well, did we meet this objective? How did we meet this objective?

This strong focus on objectives and direct conversation with her students is perhaps due to the nature of an education program, but clearly Carolyn is aware of outcomes and she is comfortable encouraging a variety of modes to design assignments that meet these outcomes.

We also discussed CHD 270 (Administration of Child Care Centers) a course which culminates with students producing a video commercial to advertise their own centers. Carolyn noted that in recent years access to technology and the skills her students possess are not as problematic as they have been in previous years. But of importance here is that she does not have the same expectation of her students in lower level courses because of the difference in volume of content she needs to cover. CHD 270 has a specific purpose of promoting knowledge about how to advertise and market centers, so a televised or video commercial is a good fit for the course. Carolyn's willingness to integrate other modalities with more regularity in a 200 level course confirms that while production of alphabetic texts is still the primary mode of communication, small pockets of multimodal production are occurring across disciplines. She also confirms that acceptance of other modalities is a more effective fit for 200 level courses for this particular non-degreed program.

Chapter six responded to the following research questions: 1) *how does an instructor design a research assignment that reconciles instructors' expectations of multimodal academic writing with conventionally accepted composing/literacy practices?* and 2) *how do instructors*

*target learning outcomes that involve integration of information across modalities?* Based on survey responses and video interviews, it is perhaps self-evident that course learning outcomes play a key role in how participants design assignments, although specific alignment practices are not clearly identified as part of this study. In addition to understanding how participants meet course learning outcomes, the study examined composing practices encouraged by assignments and how students make meaning of course content. Promoting twenty-first century literacy practices to encourage a multiliterate student body involves integrating modalities other than print and while participants such as Carolyn Childs and Ryan Dalmead demonstrate some use of and comfort with other modalities, the more common occurrence is to focus primarily on alphabetic texts. Survey responses overall confirm a strong desire to align course content and assignments with disciplinary learning outcomes regardless of mode of composing. Video interviews shed additional light on participant perceptions of not only aligning assignments with course learning outcomes, but also of the mission of a community college to prepare students for immediately entering the workforce after completing a program or transferring to a four-year college or university.

## MULTIMODAL CONCLUSIONS: AURAL, DIGITAL, VIDEO, VISUAL, WRITTEN

Meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal—in which written-linguistic modes of meaning are part and parcel of visual, audio and spatial patterns of meaning.

(Cope and Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5)

Throughout the process of this study, I have investigated participant perceptions of twenty-first century literacy practices. I examined survey responses, video interview transcripts, and sample documents (i.e. syllabi, assignment guidelines, and rubrics) to understand how study participants perceive students participate in the composing process for academic discourse in a community college setting. Attempting to connect the study to current paradigms pertaining to multimodal pedagogy and digital/multiliteracies, I examined the possible existence of a community college curriculum that integrates a combination of academic modalities. I also attempted to extend definitions of academic discourse, academic literacies, and multimodal literacy to be more inclusive of modalities other than print or alphabetic. A twenty-first century definition of academic discourse suggests that students *make meaning of and produce disciplinary texts grounded in examples, evidence, and research, which results in expanding on ideas and thinking critically and productively by means of twenty-first century literacy skills*. Twenty-first century academic literacies *recognize the inclusion of aural, digital, visual, and written texts as ways to make meaning of and produce texts across disciplines*. Multimodal literacy *acknowledges the use of aural, digital, video, visual, and written texts in such a way that students are making meaning in and producing a variety of texts, thus promoting twenty-first century literacy skills*. Although my definitions promote the existence of a multimodal pedagogy in which students produce academic texts in a variety of modes and in a manner similar to that of Henry Jenkins' (2006) claims that promote students as producers of multimedia texts, my



findings suggest that students at CBK Community College are primarily *consuming* texts in a variety of modes as opposed to *producing* texts in a variety of modes. While I would like to suggest that a good balance occurs between both consuming and producing texts in a variety of modes, it is clear that there is much work to be done to encourage a curriculum that welcomes students as producers of academic multimodal texts at CBK Community College.

Chapters four, five, and six (the findings chapters) report the results of my study with these definitions in mind. In the findings chapters, I examined participant expectations and perceptions of how students consume and produce texts for the academic discourse community. They also address types of projects assigned, design of assignments and how participants perceive these assignments meet course learning outcomes and cover course content. This concluding chapter summarizes the results of my study and my analysis of survey and interview responses to answer the research questions posed. These questions include the following:

- What are instructors' expectations for academic discourse across their disciplines?  
How are these expectations modified when asking students to compose multimodal texts?
- How does an instructor design a research assignment that reconciles instructors' expectations of multimodal academic writing with conventionally accepted composing/literacy practices?
- How do instructors target learning outcomes that involve integration of information across modalities?
- How do instructors assess multimodal projects with respect to learning outcomes and expectations of the academic discourse community?

In addition to discussing the significance of the study findings, I will address study limitations and make recommendations for future study.

### **Study Findings: Overall Significance of Data**

Based on the data collected for this study, it appears that faculty at CBK Community College have access to sufficient resources for implementing a multimodal pedagogy. However, my findings suggest that because participants cover large amounts of course content to meet course learning outcomes, most of them are not integrating multimodal assignments into their course curriculum. “Chapter Four: Data Analysis Part One: Expectations” identified that sixty-six percent (n=16) of respondents appear to be comfortable integrating digital technologies into their curriculum with students primarily consuming digital texts, yet integration of a multimodal pedagogy is not prominent. “Chapter Six: Data Analysis Part Three: Assignment Design” reported that the primary existence of a conventional pedagogy is largely due to a strong desire to meet course content and learning outcomes. Sheryl Miller an English professor confirms this occurs because she recognizes her responsibility to focus on academic writing produced as alphabetic texts. She states,

I feel like I am doing [students] a disservice to show them the fun aspects of writing. And I understand all of that. But then I am frustrated if I am teaching a two hundred level course and they don't know how to submit an academic paper. And that's my fundamental job, I feel, to do that.

Sheryl suggests that composing in modes other than written are fun and not academic; however, if designed well and for academic purposes, composing in other modes can garner critically thinking students who understand production of texts that meet a variety of disciplinary and pedagogical goals. Historically, community college professors have focused the majority of their attention on instructional methods, but in today's fast-paced educational environments, it is often challenging to keep up with advancing technology and contemporary methods. According to

Arthur M. Cohen, Florence B. Brawer, and Carrie B. Kisker (2014) in community colleges, “[a] technology of instruction in which goals are specified and a variety of learning paths designed so that most students may reach those goals has made some inroads, but progress has been slow” (p. 180). Slow progress is perhaps a direct reflection of the increasing demands of professors to instruct underdeveloped students in larger class sizes. Indeed, study responses appear to reinforce the generally held opinion that although interest exists, participants resist integrating digital technologies and modalities other than print/written/alphabetic into their instructional methods and into their course and assignment designs. I use the term *interest* loosely because in some cases participants might be interested, but do not have the time to pursue work in other than a conventional pedagogy.

Keeping in mind the multiple and sometimes conflicting missions of community colleges that include preparing students for the workforce and providing support for transfer education (Dougherty and Townsend, 2006, pp. 5-6), it is not surprising to find that faculty focus on their immediate instructional needs within familiar and conventional technological territories. Further based on both survey and interview responses, I can draw a number of conclusions based on participants’ combined responses. These conclusions appear as identified below.

**Existence of Writing Intensive Courses.** WAC/WID scholarship promotes the existence of writing intensive (WI) courses across disciplines; however, my study findings suggest that WI courses are not widespread at CBK Community College. Although English courses—to include composition and literature—are WI, they are deemed WI based on an understanding of WAC/WID scholarship that began in the 1970s and 1980s and continues today. “Chapter Four: Data Analysis Part One: Expectations” identified that writing as a learning tool is important across disciplines. Writing intensive courses exist at CBK Community College, but those

deemed writing intensive by the college exist within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and primarily in the discipline of English. Faculty who perceive their courses to be WI, do so based on course content and their personal pedagogical preferences, not based on established course learning outcomes. While this study did not directly approach an analysis based on WAC/WID scholarship, discussing WI courses became an integral element to understanding the significance of the data. If I were to approach a similar study in the future, I would first establish the significance of participant responses within the context of WAC/WID scholarship. However, my intent at the outset of this study was to discover how participants across disciplines might be approaching a multimodal pedagogy if at all not address WAC/WID specifically.

**Discipline/Program Writing Expectations: Importance of Writing.** Across disciplines, understanding the fundamentals of writing and possessing strong grammatical skills are highly valued regardless of course level (developmental, freshman, or sophomore). Delores Perin (2013) claims that in addition to higher-order skills such as analyzing complex arguments, a basic understanding of grammar is a valid expectation for community college students (p. 89). Writing is important to all disciplines, including those that are not considered writing intensive, although the importance of writing bears less significance to programs such as Early Childhood Education and Math. As expected, writing bears the most importance for English faculty. When considering the importance of writing for learning and assessing (seventy-one percent ( $n=17$ ) of the participants place value here) it bears less importance for Early Childhood Education, Nursing, and Math. As above, English places the most importance on writing for learning and assessing over other disciplines. Clearly, English participants are heavily represented in this study, possibly skewing the results. Although I cannot change the demographic imbalance now, I

do think a more finely tuned question would have asked about the pedagogical use or purpose for workforce tasks outside of the university to address the different disciplines and gain a sense of how instructors train students for writing in their disciplines outside of the academy. If I were to do this survey again, I would have differentiated between writing as an assessment tool or writing to learn.

### **Discipline/Program Writing Expectations: Knowledge of Academic Writing.**

Responses to expectations of student knowledge of academic writing vary across disciplines, although most respondents have a sense that students should enter their courses with a basic knowledge of grammar. However, understanding grammar does not truly address knowledge of academic writing. As noted in “Chapter 2: Multimodal Literacy: (Re)Mixing And (Re)Defining Pedagogy,” definitions of academic discourse have evolved since the 1980s. Definitions of academic discourse today are more inclusive of a variety of modes used to produce and consume academic texts. If I am defining academic writing as the *production of texts grounded in examples, evidence, and research, which results in developing a student body of individuals who expand on ideas and think critically and productively by means of twenty-first century literacy skills*, then focusing primarily on grammar is not a reflection of this definition. However, responses indicate that although there is heavy reliance on grammatical issues across disciplines, English respondents appear to have a stronger sense of what academic writing is from a conventional perspective and are able to focus on providing instruction geared toward college-level writing. Digital literacy is not a prominent expectation when contemplating what constitutes academic writing. But to place my study findings in the context of twenty-first century literacy skills, it should be noted that academic writing should include promoting digital literacy skills. Carolyn Handa (2001) argues for the inclusion of “digital elements into writing”

(p. 2). Yet the core concept to surface and claim to be made based on my study findings is that respondents have a strong sense of course learning outcomes, course content, and the community college mission, thus influencing the manner with which they design assignments and approach instruction in course content, which often does not consciously include the digital as an element of academic writing.

**Instructor Expectations.** The majority of respondents expect both a research project and an argumentative research project in their courses. I differentiated between the two types of projects on the survey instrument by clarifying that an argumentative research project is thesis driven and includes making claims supported with evidence. While I could have offer greater clarification on the survey, I did not want to lead participants to select options based on my own interpretations. But because I differentiated, I think it was clear that a non-argumentative research project could involve an informative researched paper or other type of report without a clear argument being made. Whether they stipulate the specific type of research project on their course syllabi appears to be less relevant to this study, but in most cases participants offer some description on their syllabi, on assignment sheets, and/or in the CMP in use. Meeting course learning outcomes is an instructor expectation for both conventional and multimodal assignments across disciplines. Explaining course content does not appear to be an expectation when applied to the study as a whole; however, due to the large number of English participants (eleven of twenty-four participants are English), who responded *no* to explaining course content, I can infer that course content is of less importance to English and of greater importance to other disciplines due to the specific purpose and goal for each course. I am not making a universal generalization that all English faculty are not aware of course content, but in the interest of writing instruction, FYC courses primarily focus on the writing process as opposed to, for example, historical data or

sociological themes/concepts/terms. In FYC, the writing process is course content; however, it is possible that English participants do not view the process as content. A future study might specifically focus on how faculty address course content through writing or other projects to pinpoint what English faculty perceive to be course content.

**Types of Writing Assignments.** Recent scholarship confirms that twenty-first century literacy demands the inclusion of a variety of modes. Scholars such as The New London Group and Carolyn Handa argue for promoting multiliteracies not only in the writing classroom, but also across disciplines. They also recognize existing limits when focusing on a more conventional pedagogy that focuses primarily on alphabetic texts. “Chapter Five: Data Analysis Part Two: Assignment Design” examined responses to questions about types of assignments assigned and assessed. My study findings suggest an overwhelming reliance on conventional thesis projects exists across disciplines when assigning and assessing student work because of previously mentioned constraints (i.e. strong focus on covering course content and meeting course learning outcomes). However, some interest in and practice of multimodal assignments occurs, primarily in English (again, this could be due to the large number of English faculty who participated in the study). Based on written responses some faculty are assigning visual projects yet most are not including digital, audio, or photo projects. I can also infer that PowerPoint continues to be the favored medium when producing an oral presentation. Interestingly, when assessing projects, respondents indicate greater interest in and use of visual and digital projects, supporting claims for inclusion of digital literacy as put forth by The New London Group, Carolyn Handa, and Colin Lankshear and Michelle Knobel all of whom support a movement toward and recognition of multiliteracies that are inclusive of digital literacy. Video interviews clarify types of assignments for Sociology, History, and Early Childhood Development/

Education. An examination of video transcripts suggests that Early Childhood Development/Education provides more opportunity for students to produce multimodal projects in 200 level courses, but Sociology and History do not. And if they do, multimodal projects appear to supplement print/written/alphabetic texts. The Sociology and History participants appear to place greater emphasis on more conventional assignments due to time constraints and familiarity and comfort level with a more traditional pedagogy.

**Assignment Design.** Responses indicate that course learning outcomes play a large role when designing both conventional and multimodal assignments. And some connection can be made to the Writing Program Administration's (WPA) current version of the WPA Outcomes Statement (2014), which acknowledges the integration of digital technologies and writing instruction across disciplines. However, "Chapter Six: Data Analysis Part Three: Assignment Design" identified that participants place greater value on learning outcomes when designing conventional assignments, which further supports a culture that relies more heavily on written communication as opposed to communicating in other modalities. In most cases written survey responses indicate that targeting occurs within assignment expectations themselves and because most participants design assignments with learning outcomes in mind, these assignments are inherently meeting course learning outcomes. Written survey responses and video interview responses also clarify a strong awareness of designing assignments that address a large amount of content. In chapter five Carolyn Childs an Early Childhood Development professor who is perhaps the closest to promoting a multimodal pedagogy, explains that she offers opportunities for her sophomore level students to produce multimodal projects, but she acknowledges that her freshman level courses cover a large amount of content and she is not able to promote projects other than conventional alphabetic. This is not unique to a community college environment;



however, this awareness coupled with an awareness of the community college mission does present challenges unique to community college professors who prepare students for entering the workforce and for transferring to four-year colleges and universities. The video interview with Sheryl Miller (English) clarifies her strong sense of course content and preparing students for not only other courses, but also for transfer. Her responses are relevant and relate to interview responses from both Ruth Sloan (Sociology) and Ryan Dalmead (History). Understanding the community college mission is tantamount to a study of this kind and if I had anticipated how important it would become to my analysis, I think a question asking to define the community college mission at the outset of the survey might have changed the dynamic and approach to responses.

**Assessment of Assignments.** Assessment practices are in place regardless of discipline, which is reassuring to find. However, with regard to written and multimodal projects, responses continue to privilege conventional written assignments over non-conventional assignments in other modalities. Multimodal projects are in use, but with much less frequency. Respondents indicate an overwhelming reliance on individual instructors to independently design assessments for both written and multimodal projects. In video interviews I addressed use of rubrics for assessment practices and while rubrics are in use, they are not used consistently for multimodal projects, perhaps due to not understanding how to assess anything other than print/written/alphabetic projects. Ryan Dalmead's interview responses discussed in chapter five indicate that he does not use a rubric for his extra credit projects due to not fully understanding how to assess multimodal projects. However, his assignment guidelines provide a clear list of objectives for students to follow and could be considered a rubric. What does occur with

consistency is a sense of using either rubrics or assignment guidelines to meet course learning outcomes and ensure students are aware of assignment expectations.

My study findings overwhelmingly support the fact that although community college faculty might possess a desire or interest in developing a curriculum that supports a multimodal pedagogy, an equally strong desire to promote the community college mission overrides a possible change in curriculum. Faculty are also keenly aware of designing assignments to meet course outcomes and fully cover course content. Results do not inherently expand on the current discussion about developing a multimodal pedagogy, but this particular study does provide an insightful reminder of the challenges community college faculty address in an ever-changing educational environment.

### **Limitations of Study and Implications for Further Study**

Admittedly and despite sending multiple email invitations, the study is limited due to the small sample size, involving only twenty-four participants out of a possible 600-plus faculty. Of these twenty-four, only four represent Other Disciplines outside of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. I would have liked to have seen a greater number of participants across disciplines outside of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, but within this school participation is widespread, representing Early Childhood Education, English, History, Psychology, Sociology, and Teacher Preparation. For future studies, I might also generate interest by promoting my call to participate in face-to-face environments in addition to email. However, I was reluctant to push instructors to participate or make them feel as though they were required to participate. I realize now that I need to push myself to promote my research with more confidence. The study is also limited to one community college and it is likely that results might have broadened responses from across disciplines if the sample had reached out to include

additional community colleges. Future research could involve implementing a survey across community colleges perhaps within one college system or across systems in other states and could include a more even spread of participants across disciplines.

In an effort to understand what professors in another college within the same system as CBK Community College contemplate when asked about digital technologies and multimodal pedagogy, I asked an English professor at a large community college with greater than 75,000 students to complete the questionnaire. Her responses indicate that she integrates digital media into her courses for students to both consume and produce. In response to the question, *are you comfortable teaching with digital technologies?*, she replied yes and she added that “[she]use[s] a variety of videos and blogs in [her] assignments and ha[s] often had students compose in digital media.” She also displays signs of understanding what multimodal composing is in response to the question, *what types of research assignments/projects do you assign your students?* In addition to a thesis project, she assigns a visual and digital project and added that she assigns “[m]ultimodal projects wherein students select the appropriate mode.” She additionally states that

[a] majority of my class is currently centered around the composition of traditional essay assignments, but at least one project asks that students select a new audience and purpose for their assignment and thus rethink the appropriate mode(s) of delivery.

I am hopeful that if one faculty member from another other college within the same system encourage composing in other modalities, more professors will integrate digital technologies into their course and assignment designs with the intent to move students toward composing and producing academic texts for the twenty-first century. However, without conducting a more widespread study within one community college system or across the nation, I cannot comfortably suggest this would be the case across disciplines in a community college setting.

This study also examined how participants design research assignments and one of the findings revealed that faculty in disciplines other than English do not take into consideration documentation styles when designing a research assignment in other modes. This suggests that should students produce texts in other modalities, research is not figured into assessment. Chapter five identified that documentation is an important consideration when assessing writing assignments. Seventy-nine percent of participants selected documentation as one of the more important criteria to consider when assessing written assignments. This percentage drops to fifty-nine when assessing multimodal projects. Because documentation is an important element in research, I can infer that participants do not include research in their assessment practices of multimodal projects. However, regardless of mode of production, students should be aware of academic and documentation conventions. A future study outside of one that compares perceptions about conventional and multimodal texts might examine documentation methods in place and as required across modes.

Chapter six examined assignment design with respect to course learning outcomes, attempting to answer the research questions, *how do instructors target learning outcomes that involve integration of information across modalities?* and *how do instructors assess multimodal projects with respect to learning outcomes and expectations of the academic discourse community?* A future recommendation for this project is to isolate a study around only learning outcomes and address how faculty modify assignment design and assessment practices when targeting specific outcomes. This would require informing participants at the start of the semester to design multimodal assignments with specific outcomes in mind and from which a research study could measure whether assignments or which parts of assignments align with specific outcomes. The research questions do not specifically address alignment of assignments with

course outcomes and I think a more effective way to approach this would be to focus on how participants align specific assignments with course outcomes and how alignment might alter when assignments shift from production of conventional print texts to texts in other modalities. Focusing on outcomes-based assessment would also require careful consideration of the assessment tools in place to adequately address whether alignment is truly occurring. Additionally, a study of this kind could only include those participants who truly adopt a multimodal pedagogy.

### **Final Thoughts**

Although faculty are making use of and producing aural, digital, and visual resources and while small pockets of composing in multiple modes occurs, the focus at CBK Community College continues to be on conventional written texts. Participants often use texts in modes other than print in their pedagogy but primarily for students to be consumers. And when students produce texts in a digital medium (i.e. posting to blog sites, in CMP discussion boards, etc.) they are producing primarily alphabetic texts. Additionally, designing assignments that welcome multiple modes of composing appears to be of less significance to faculty because analysis of data suggests that the primary goal for most faculty is to adequately cover course content to meet course outcomes. Faculty are not able to bridge the gap between conventional and digital literacy even in an institution that has ample access to technology.

I am a strong proponent of multimodal pedagogy, yet this study has reminded me that my colleagues are hesitant to more fully integrate twenty-first century literacies into their curricular and course designs. Some tension exists when faculty begin contemplating updating their teaching methods to be more inclusive of all forms of literacy because their methods are strongly tied to more conventional means of meeting course content and learning outcomes. While I

realize that adopting a multimodal pedagogy alone will not ensure students are becoming fully literate in twenty-first century literacy practices, I also realize that at the community college level we cannot ignore the significance of preparing a student body capable of adapting to quickly changing literacies. It is perhaps worthwhile to be reminded of Denis Barron's claim that "writing itself was once an innovation strongly resisted by traditionalists because it was unnatural and untrustworthy" (p. 73). Multimodal composing may appear to be unnatural and against the grain of more commonly accepted practices; however, moving toward integrating more digital technologies across disciplines so that students are not merely consuming multimodal texts but also producing them, will more adequately prepare them for the workforce and for transfer opportunities. While it is a challenge to overcome the often conflicting missions of a community college, the extended benefits to encouraging students to develop a more critical stance on their individual literacy practices will then promote a well-balanced curriculum that promotes student awareness of what it means to be producers and consumers of texts in today's digitally-charged and media-rich world.

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<sup>i</sup> In *Multiliteracies for A Digital Age*, Stuart Selber (2004), with respect to computer literacy and interface design, argues that the rhetorically literate student will understand the rhetorical moves of persuasion, deliberation, reflection and social action (pp. 146-166). For the purposes of this project rhetorical literacy recognizes Selber's definition in addition to understanding the rhetorical moves required for all modes of composing.

<sup>ii</sup> In the 2001 issue visual rhetoric played a prominent role; however, subsequent issues include arguments concerning rhetoric and literacy, pertaining to FYC, ESL, and graduate students. These conversations expand to include digital rhetoric/literacy, media literacy, digital aurality, critical media literacy, video composing, and new media all of which address and confirm expanding scholarship about and questioning of how technology has impacted and will impact meaning making in the composition classroom.

<sup>iii</sup> Lauer's Web text and interviews clarify how scholars are defining terms in the classroom and in their scholarship. Interview responses expand on ideas of how establishing commonly accepted definitions of terms both shape and determine practices inside the classroom, as well as in professional/corporate settings.

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<sup>iv</sup> Although not defining multimodal literacy, Anderson et al's work helps to clarify definitions of multimodal composing and how educators might address literacy practices when clarifying terms.

<sup>v</sup> See Chapter One, pages 10-11 for research questions designed for my study.

<sup>vi</sup> CBK Community College is a pseudonym. All subsequent references to the college itself will refer to CBK Community College.

<sup>vii</sup> See Appendix D for Survey Questions.

<sup>viii</sup> Question six in Faculty Background asked respondents to assess strengths and weaknesses in their students' writing. Because the focus of this study is on instructor expectations of student writing and what happens when instructors integrate multimodal assignments into their pedagogy and curriculum and upon further reflection, I found responses to this question do not apply here. Of note, though, is that participants overwhelmingly responded to weaknesses, and I was concerned that so many bypassed strengths to focus only on weaknesses. Most commonly, participants identified the following weaknesses: poor grammar, incorrect use of punctuation, lack of development and support, misuse or no use of sources, and poor organization

<sup>ix</sup> The parenthetical abbreviations also appear in Figure 9 below.

<sup>x</sup> Because English focus on the rhetorical appeals when teaching composition courses, it is not surprising that Other Disciplines did not select ARA. It is possible that a beta test of this study might have given me the opportunity to revise the study to accommodate differences among disciplines; however, responses to the current study reflect participants' current understanding of terms without adding my bias to their responses.

<sup>xi</sup> Ruth Sloan is a pseudonym; all subsequent participant names mentioned are also pseudonyms.

<sup>xii</sup> Chapter six addresses course learning outcomes in greater detail, but it is worth noting that video interviews often confirmed participants' awareness of the outcomes or objectives for each of their courses and they each have developed pedagogies applicable to their individual style of teaching and disciplines.

<sup>xiii</sup> Note that boldface font is original to the document.

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## APPENDIX A

### ENG 111 COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Prerequisites:** To register for this course, students must have a placement recommendation for ENG 111 or placement recommendation for co-requisites ENG 111 and ENF 3. ENG 111 is a prerequisite for ENG 112.

ENG 111 develops the skills students possess prior to entering college-level writing courses and prepares students for academic and professional communication. Students will produce texts that reflect critical thinking and knowledge of writing processes, rhetoric, and digital technologies. English 111 will also introduce students to research processes.

ENG 111 has been designated as a "writing intensive" course according to standards developed by the English department.

#### **General Course Goals**

By the end of ENG 111, students shall

- ▶ Adapt the writing process to a variety of tasks, formats, genres, and rhetorical situations.
- ▶ Produce texts that are grounded in evidence and formally documented.
- ▶ Model and apply academic integrity and appropriate use of others' ideas and feedback in producing effective communication.
- ▶ Demonstrate improved written and oral communication skills.
- ▶ Use digital and print technologies to compose, to research, and to disseminate texts.

#### **Rhetorical Knowledge**

By the end of ENG 111, students shall

- ▶ Demonstrate a clear understanding of the rhetorical situation, including purpose, context, audience, and genre.
- ▶ Adapt voice, tone, and level of formality to a variety of rhetorical situations.
- ▶ Use conventions of format, structure, design, and documentation appropriate to the rhetorical situation.
- ▶ Analyze texts to describe how and why writers use rhetorical devices.

#### **Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing**

By the end of ENG 111, students shall

- ▶ Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating.
- ▶ Integrate their own ideas with those of others in appropriately documented texts.
- ▶ Produce reflective texts, including but not limited to memos, letters, journals, blogs, lists, and threaded discussions.
- ▶ Read, summarize, and respond to a variety of non-fiction texts.

**Process**

By the end of ENG 111, students shall

- Employ effective writing processes to include pre-writing, peer-reviewing drafts, and revising.
- Demonstrate reflection on individual communication processes.
- Produce at least 4500 words (approximately 15 pages) of informal and 3600 words (approximately 12 pages) of formal writing.
- Edit their writing with consideration to surface features such as syntax, usage, punctuation, and spelling that are appropriate for the rhetorical situation.

**Oral Communication Skills**

By the end of ENG 111, students shall

- Participate in interactive discussions, peer reviews, and oral presentations.
- Use non-verbal cues as an essential aspect of self-presentation.
- Demonstrate use of active listening skills.

**Digital Technologies**

By the end of ENG 111, students shall

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts.
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from a variety of modes to include print, digital, aural, and visual sources, including scholarly library databases and informal digital networks.
- Disseminate texts in both print and digital forms (may include written, aural, and visual modes).

## APPENDIX B

### ENG 112 COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Prerequisites:** ENG 111 or its equivalent. A grade of “C” or better in ENG 111 is recommended.

ENG 112 has been designated as a "writing intensive" course according to standards developed by the English department.

#### **ENG 112 Statement of Purpose**

ENG 112 will strengthen the academic writing and reading skills learned in ENG 111. Students will further develop strategies to become active, critical, analytical readers of texts. Students will write papers and compose other texts that analyze, interpret, evaluate and respond to a variety of print and non-print texts. A major focus of ENG 112 will be techniques of academic research and argumentation.

#### **General Course Goals**

- Continue to adapt the writing process to a variety of tasks, formats, and genres, with a primary focus on the research process and argumentation
- Demonstrate academic integrity and intellectual inquiry
- Produce researched essays that are based on the readings of a variety of credible texts, grounded in evidence, and appropriately documented
- Recognize when the rhetorical situation requires integration of credible sources; effectively locate and evaluate researched source materials
- Continue to demonstrate oral communication skills to include producing and delivering, either individually or collaboratively, at least one prepared oral report
- Use digital technologies for several purposes, such as composing, editing, collaborating, researching, and publishing
- Continue to edit texts with consideration to surface features such as syntax, usage, punctuation, and spelling that are appropriate for the rhetorical situation

The following are **course outcomes** specific to ENG 112.

#### **Rhetorical Knowledge**

By the end of ENG 112, students shall

- Recognize and employ elements of argumentation and the rhetorical situation in academic texts; produce argumentative texts appropriate for academic audiences
- Analyze the rhetorical expectations of a variety of audiences
- Use appropriate documentation styles
- Use research effectively to accomplish specific rhetorical purposes



- Deliver academic texts in print, digital, visual, or oral modes

**Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing Processes**

By the end of ENG 112, students shall

- Distinguish between popular and scholarly sources
- Determine the extent of information needed when constructing academic arguments or researched papers
- Read effectively based on the reading task; use credible resources to produce accurately documented essays
- Evaluate, integrate, and synthesize information from primary and secondary sources
- Analyze the ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of and access to information

**Oral Communication**

By the end of ENG 112, students shall

- Participate in interactive discussions, peer reviews, and one or more formal individual and/or group oral presentations
- Use non-verbal cues as an essential aspect of self-presentation
- Demonstrate use of listening skills

**Digital Technologies**

By the end of ENG 112, students shall

- Use available electronic environments for drafting, revising, reviewing, editing and submitting texts
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from a variety of modes to include print, digital, aural, and/or visual sources, including scholarly library databases and informal digital networks
- Disseminate texts in both print and electronic forms

## APPENDIX C

## EMAIL INVITATION FOR FACULTY SURVEY

**Subject Line:** Survey about writing assignment practices in your classes

Dear JSRCC Colleagues:

I am a PhD candidate at Old Dominion University and Associate Professor of English at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC). I am interested in looking at writing assignments and have received approval from Old Dominion University's College of Arts and Letters Human Subjects Research Review Committee.

If your discipline/program does not include practices of assigning writing projects, this survey does not apply to you.

If your discipline/program does assign writing projects, please consider participating in a study/survey pertaining to twenty-first century writing practices within your courses.

The purpose of this survey is to determine faculty expectations of writing skills in community college students. The survey will also determine how expectations might differ among disciplines and types of writing projects assigned.

Should you agree to participate in this study, all individually-identifiable data and records will be kept **strictly confidential** and will not be released to or discussed with any JSRCC or Virginia Community College System (VCCS) representative.

Voluntary participation will consist of participating in the following:

1. Completing a survey that will take approximately forty-five minutes to complete
2. Supplying copies of syllabi, assignment guidelines, and grading rubrics
3. Possible participation in a video-taped interview in the event the researcher requires clarification about survey responses, syllabi, guidelines, and/or rubrics

The results of the study will be published in a completed PhD dissertation, may be presented at scholarly conferences, published in scholarly journals, and/or published on a public Web site. Should you decide to participate in the study or have questions, please contact me at [ebensen-barber@reynolds.edu](mailto:ebensen-barber@reynolds.edu) or by replying to this email. Upon receipt of your email, I will answer any questions you might have, and I will send you a participant consent form, which will include how confidentiality will be managed. After receipt of your signed consent form, I will send you a link to a survey and instructions on how to deliver syllabi, assignment guidelines, and rubrics to me. Sincerely, Beth Bensen-Barber

## APPENDIX D

## COMPLETE VERSION OF SURVEY

**Welcome Message**

Thank you for participating in this study!

The following questionnaire consists of a series of questions pertaining to faculty expectations of students' writing practices.

Please complete the survey by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Faculty Background**

1. What is the primary discipline or program in which you teach? (Please select the item that most closely matches yours or select Other and identify your discipline.)

<input type="checkbox"/> American Sign Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Systems Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Automotive Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Liberal Arts
<input type="checkbox"/> Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Math
<input type="checkbox"/> Culinary Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing
<input type="checkbox"/> Dental	<input type="checkbox"/> Opticianary
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Development/Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Paralegal
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Preparation
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

2. How many years have you been teaching?

3. Do you teach writing intensive courses?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. What classes do you regularly teach? Of those classes, which ones have a higher writing requirement?

5. Are you comfortable teaching with digital technology? Explain your response in the space provided below.

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. What is your overall assessment of students' writing strengths and weaknesses? Please explain in the space provided below.

### Discipline/Program Writing Expectations

1. How important is writing to the discipline/program in which you teach?

☐ Unimportant

☐ Moderately Important

☐ Important

☐ Very Important

2. How important is writing for the learning and assessing of the content of the classes you teach?

☐ Unimportant

☐ Moderately Important

☐ Important

☐ Very Important

3. What do you expect your students to know about academic writing before they enter your course? Please explain your response in the space provided below.

### Instructor Expectations

1. Is a research project an expected assignment of the course(s) you teach?

2. If you answered yes to question one, where is this project stated on the course syllabus?

3. Is an argumentative (i.e. thesis driven; claims supported with evidence) research project an expected assignment for the course(s) you teach?
4. What are your particular goals for students' learning or understanding of conventional, written composition assignments? Choose all that apply:
  - ☐ Meeting course learning outcomes
  - ☐ Explaining course content
  - ☐ Applying the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, genre, voice, media/design)
  - ☐ Applying rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos)
  - ☐ Demonstrating development of arguments grounded in evidence
  - ☐ Demonstrating research skills/information literacy practices
  - ☐ Other (please specify)
5. What are your particular goals for students' learning or understanding of multimodal composition (i.e. combination of written, visual, aural, or digital) assignments? Choose all that apply:
  - ☐ Meeting course learning outcomes
  - ☐ Explaining course content
  - ☐ Applying the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, genre, voice, media/design)
  - ☐ Applying rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos)
  - ☐ Demonstrating development of arguments grounded in evidence
  - ☐ Demonstrating research skills/information literacy practices
  - ☐ Other (please specify)

### Types of Writing Assignments

1. What types of research assignments/projects do you assign your students? (Check all that apply)
  - ☐ Thesis driven project
  - ☐ Visual project
  - ☐ Photo project
  - ☐ Audio project
  - ☐ Digital project
  - ☐ Collaborative research project
  - ☐ Oral presentation
  - ☐ Other
2. The previous question assumes that students might submit projects outside of the conventional written/printed text, meaning students might submit completed projects in

written, visual, aural, and/or digital modes. Do you accept a combination of modes?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not sure

3. What type of projects do you accept for assessment purposes? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Thesis driven project  
☐ Visual project  
☐ Photo project  
☐ Audio project  
☐ Digital project  
☐ Collaborative research project  
☐ Oral presentation  
☐ Other (please specify)

4. What else would you like to add about the types of projects you assign your students that is not addressed above?

### Assignment Design

1. What do you consider when designing a research assignment in written form? Choose all that apply

- ☐ Course learning outcomes/objectives  
☐ Clearly stated thesis  
☐ Fully developed argument  
☐ Use of credible sources  
☐ Number of pages/words  
☐ Documentation style and accuracy  
☐ Design elements  
☐ Other (please specify)

2. What do you consider when designing a research assignment in other modes (i.e. visual, audio, digital, etc.)? Choose all that apply

- ☐ Course learning outcomes/objectives  
☐ Clearly stated thesis  
☐ Fully developed argument  
☐ Use of credible sources  
☐ Number of pages/words  
☐ Documentation style and accuracy  
☐ Design elements  
☐ Other (please specify)

3. If you consider learning outcomes/objectives, how do you target them in research assignments? Please explain in the space provided below.

### Assessment of Assignments

1. What do you use to assess students' projects? Choose all that apply:

- ☐ Rubric criteria
- ☐ Reflection papers
- ☐ Portfolio
- ☐ Material components of the composition
- ☐ Combination of these
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. What criteria do you use to evaluate the writing students do in your courses?

- ☐ Ability to follow assignment guidelines
- ☐ Focus
- ☐ Development
- ☐ Organization
- ☐ Grammatical issues
- ☐ Documentation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. How are assessment practices of written texts currently developed and implemented in your discipline?

- ☐ Program committee designs assessment and requires use by department instructors
- ☐ Program committee recommends assessment design but individual instructors determine use
- ☐ Individual instructors independently design assessment that can be used with multiple lessons
- ☐ Individual instructors independently design assessment for each individual lesson
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. What do you focus on when assessing multimodal projects?

- ☐ Ability to follow assignment guidelines
- ☐ Focus
- ☐ Development

- ☐ Organization
- ☐ Grammatical issues
- ☐ Documentation
- ☐ Design
- ☐ Visual text
- ☐ Verbal text
- ☐ Audio text
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. How are assessment practices of multimodal compositions currently developed and implemented in your courses?

- ☐ Program committee designs assessment and requires use by department instructors
- ☐ Program committee recommends assessment design but individual instructors determine use
- ☐ Individual instructors independently design assessment that can be used with multiple lessons
- ☐ Individual instructors independently design assessment for each individual lesson
- ☐ Other (please specify)

6. What kind of support or resources do you rely upon for assessment practices of media compositions? Choose all that apply:

- ☐ Program committee recommendations
- ☐ Individual research
- ☐ Academic Support Center help
- ☐ Technology consultant
- ☐ Instructors in same department
- ☐ Instructors in other fields
- ☐ Colleagues at different institutions
- ☐ Online information within home institution
- ☐ Online information outside of home institution
- ☐ Workshops offered by home institution
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Would you be willing to participate in a video-taped interview should the researcher require additional details/clarification about your responses? If so, please include your name and contact information in the space provided below.

Name:

Email:



### End Message

To further assist with this study, please click the following link to upload the following documents:

- Syllabus
- Assignment Guidelines
- Assignment Rubrics

It is voluntary for you to submit these documents; however, submission will provide valuable data for the study.

Thank you for participating in this study; the researcher will contact you should she require further information or details from you.

This questionnaire is partially based on “Survey of Multimodal Pedagogies in Writing Programs” found at the following URL:

<http://www.compositionstudies.tcu.edu/archives/342/cccc-data/index.html>

The questions are adapted for a disciplinary study of multimodal composing practices.

### References (consulted)

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APPENDIX E  
MEDIA CONSENT FORM

I hereby grant to Beth Bensen-Barber, the project researcher, the right to use my voice, likeness, image, appearance and interview responses—whether recorded on or transferred to videotape, film, slides, photographs, and/or digital files—for presenting or publishing this work. I understand that my image may be edited, copied, exhibited, published or distributed, and I may request to inspect or approve the finished product wherein my likeness appears.

I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of my image or recording.

By signing this release I understand this permission signifies that photographic or video recordings of me may be electronically displayed via the Internet or in the public educational/academic/scholarly setting.

There is no time limit on the validity of this release nor is there any geographic limitation on where these materials may be distributed.

By signing below, I am indicating that I have read and understand this Media Consent Form and am 18 years of age or older.

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**Participant's Signature**

---

**Participant's Printed Name**

---

**Date**

---

**Street Address**

---

**City, State, Zip**

---

**Phone**

---

**Email**

## APPENDIX F

## HIS 111 SYLLABUS

Fall 2013

Office Hours

M 10-12

T/Th 12:15-1,2:25-5

W 12-2 Virtual

Or email me any time and by appointment

Email:

### What This Course is About

World History 111 and 112 survey Asian, African, Latin American, and European civilizations from the ancient period to the present. They do not need to be taken in sequence. World History 111 (this course) will cover the period from pre-history until about 1450.

### Primary Vs. Secondary

In this course we will distinguish between **Primary sources** and **Secondary sources**.

- **Primary sources** are sources from the time being studied. Any kind of evidence that survives from the period being studied is a primary source. Thus, a primary source can be written evidence, like laws, chronicles, literature, or diaries; or it can consist of physical remains like art, buildings, burial sites, or garbage dumps. Our course reader contains primary sources in translation.
- **Secondary sources** are written by historians. They represent a synthesis of the available data into some larger picture. Our textbook is a secondary source. The task of historians is to analyze primary sources and share their findings in secondary sources.

Learn this distinction! It is the most important concept we will use this semester.

### Course Objectives

#### The Historical Narrative

*Students will learn and be able to recount the basic historical narrative for World History from Pre-History through approximately 1450. Students must know the major events covered and express in writing an understanding of them, their causality, interconnection and significance.* Part of the course will be learning the basic outline of history. Which event followed which? Who killed who? What are the major time periods, civilizations, and cause and effect? My lectures and the textbook will guide you through this information. (Yes, memorization is boring. But sometimes, it is necessary.) At first, the various names and places may be confusing, but the more times you encounter them, the more familiar they will become, and the more easily visible

their interconnection. It is important that you learn this framework, because it is part of the story of humanity, and people will refer to that story in the news, writing and conversation for the rest of your life.

### **Analyzing Primary Sources**

*Students will analyze in writing selected primary sources from World History and use them as evidence for historical conclusions.*

This course will also teach you to read and analyze primary sources (evidence from the past). The sources that survive express from a variety of viewpoints, and may be biased, incomplete or written in unfamiliar styles. This course will provide you with techniques of close reading and critical thinking, to help you analyze these sources. (Or any other difficult writing you may encounter anywhere.) Each week, we will read several primary sources.

### **Historical Writing**

*Students will present and support with evidence, historical arguments in a written format according to the norms of the historical profession.*

The counterpart to reading is writing. A person cannot really claim that they understand a subject, if they cannot express it to others clearly. During this course we will practice techniques for writing and argument. Historians have a particular style of writing, which they use to assemble and explain the primary source evidence. It is similar enough to other formal writing styles to be useful practice for any sort of writing you may eventually pursue in your career. There will be small writing assignments throughout the semester and two 3-5 page papers.

### **What to Expect**

#### **Textbooks**

In this course we will be using two textbooks. One contains the general narrative of our course. The other contains primary sources. We **will** be using both books; you must have them **both** in order to pass the course.

- Bentley, et al. *Traditions and Encounters*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill, 2011. ISBN 978-0073385648.
- Kevin Reilly, ed. *Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2013 Volume One. ISBN 978-1-4576-1782-9

In addition the book, **Traditions and Encounters**, has an associated web-site. You will need to purchase a code-card (which costs about 30\$) to access the **McGraw Hill Connect** site. The card may have been bundled with your book. If not, you can purchase a code online.

#### **Blackboard**

This course will use the school's Blackboard site. Yes, you **MUST** use the website. I will post announcements, assignments, grades and comments there first. We will have several types of assignments there.

JSR maintains a helpdesk for Blackboard. They should be your first resort.

<http://www.xxxxxxx.edu/computing/Support.htm> It is important to bear in mind that I cannot provide full-service tech support. I do not control the web sites' software. I cannot diagnose

your personal computer's connection or software problems. My ability to fix problems, or even to see what's going on from the perspective of your computer is limited.

If your computer is seriously broken, then you should use one of the many computer labs on our campus. Computer problems on your home computer are not a valid excuse for missing work.

### Files

All of our course files, such as Power Points, and such will be posted to Blackboard under Course Documents. Hopefully, before we use them, so that you can download and print them. If you don't see something I've used in class, ask.

### Discussion Boards

When we do online discussions, or share paper drafts, we will use Blackboard's Discussion Board. About once a week, there will be an assignment involving writing about the Primary Sources. You will write and submit it through Blackboard.

These assignments may vary from week to week, but a typical assignment will have two parts. Your initial post, usually due Saturday night, will require you to analyze, select evidence from, and present an argument about the week's primary sources. The second part will require you to respond to two other students' posts, critiquing their analysis and use of evidence. Each part will typically be worth 5 points, graded as follows:

- **Missing [0 points]:** You didn't do this assignment or part of the assignment or what you did doesn't match the assignment.
- **Incomplete [2 points]:** You're missing some major part of the assignment.
- **Competent [3 points]:** You have fulfilled the assignment in a minimal way, usually at less than the required word count. Your analysis is present but perfunctory.
- **Good [4 points]:** You have fulfilled the assignment in a thorough way, usually with the required length. Your analysis is complete, but perhaps lacking a bit.
- **Excellent [5 points]:** You have fulfilled the assignment in an exceptional way, putting in extra effort. Your analysis shows better than typical insight or depth.

*These assignments are primarily designed to improve your analytic, critical thinking, and writing skills. They may also help you remember the historical narrative.*

### Papers

There will be two papers, each of about 3-5 pages. You will have the opportunity to write, give feedback and revise. Papers are usually graded according to the following rubric:

	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Does the essay demonstrate stylistic excellence?</b>	Essay is largely incomprehensible.	The essay contains grammatical and spelling errors so significant that they impede understanding.	The essay contains significant grammatical and spelling errors, but they do not significantly impede	The essay is largely grammatically correct, and shows some adroitness in phrasing, but has awkward patches.	The essay is largely grammatically correct, and shows significant adroitness in phrasing.

		g of the author's intent.	understandin g of the author's intent.		
<b>How clear, correct and succinct is the thesis?</b>	There is no introduction.	There is an introduction, but the thesis either does not exist or does not present an argument.	The thesis presents some points of comparison, but generalizes excessively.	The thesis names sources, presents specific points of comparison, but still seems vague.	The thesis is clear, it is condensed into a single sentence, and presents a clear argument indicating its sources and axes of comparison.
<b>Does the essay make good use of evidence?</b>	The essay does not use any of our assigned sources.	The essay uses ONLY secondary source evidence.  OR  The essay presents only one example when it should present two.	The essay presents some primary source evidence  BUT  the evidence seems irrelevant  OR  Much better evidence exists, but is not used.  OR  Some significant and obvious piece is missing.	The essay presents primary source evidence, but it misses something significant.	The essay presents primary source evidence, including obscure or interesting evidence that lies beyond the usual student selection.
<b>How well does the essay</b>	The essay's analysis is incoherent or	The essay is largely correct but	The essay is largely correct but	The essay is correct but uninspired.	The essay is correct but shows depth

<b>analyze the evidence?</b>	missing.	significantly misinterprets critical pieces of evidence.	significantly misinterprets significant pieces of evidence.		that lies beyond the usual student reflection.
<b>How well-organized and structured is the essay?</b>	The essay lacks almost any clear structure.	The essay is a largely incoherent collection of insights.	The essay shows a coherent division into paragraphs or section, but it lapses at times.	The essay demonstrates clear division into paragraphs or sections, with clear topic sentences.	The essay demonstrates clear division into paragraphs and/or sections, with clear topic sentences, and shows an insight that lies beyond the usual student insight.
	<b>0</b>			<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Does the essay represent a sincere attempt to fulfill the assignment?</b>	The essay is plagiarized. (May also result in 0% for entire paper.)			The essay is significantly shorter than the required length.	The essay represents a real attempt to do the assignment.

### Tests

We will have two tests, one around the middle of the semester, and one at the end. (They are really a midterm and a final exam, but people freak out at the word exam. So I call them tests.) These will be submitted online through Blackboard. It is a significant violation of the academic honesty agreement to submit other's work as your own on a test or any other assignment.

*The tests are designed to help you understand and explain the historical narrative, historical interconnections, and causation.*

### McGraw Hill Connect

Mc Graw Hill Connect is our secondary site. It has a couple of nifty features that we will use each week. They should generally be accessible through Blackboard, under Assignments.

### LearnSmart

LearnSmart is an adaptive flash-card quiz keyed to our textbook, Traditions and Encounters. It is meant as a study aid, not a test. It is adaptive, so if you get questions correct on a subject, it will move on to another. Eventually, it will either tell you that you have passed or that you need

to read the material again. All I care about is that you do the activity and eventually pass, not whether you get everything right the first time. If you pass, then it doesn't matter how many questions you missed, you will receive a 100%.

### **Other Activities**

There are some other graphical materials on Connect that I may ask you to do. For example, geography and map quizzes, which are much easier to do on the computer than with paper.

*The Connect Activities are designed to reinforce your understandings of the weekly readings and to help keep you on schedule. They will help you learn and be able to recount the historical narrative, historical interconnections, and causation.*

### **In Class**

#### **Attendance and Absences**

Attendance is required. We do a lot of work online, but mostly to save paper. This is not a distance learn and be able to recounting class. You must show up for class.

There will be an attendance sheet to sign each day. If you don't sign it, you are not present.

Absences can be excused for documented medical reasons, school trips, etc, at my discretion.

My rule: If you don't sign the roll, you aren't here. Don't write to me about how you forgot to sign it. If I had a photographic memory, I wouldn't need a roll sheet.

#### **Lectures**

Each week, we will have one or more lectures. (Usually on Thursdays.) I will cover the same material, more or less, as our textbook chapters for the week. By reading the textbook and listening to the lectures, you should learn and be able to recount the secondary narrative for that week.

*The lectures and Power Point slides complement the textbook and are designed to convey major facts of the historical narrative.*

#### **Small Group Activities**

On Thursdays (usually) we will have small group activities. These will typically focus on our primary source readings for the week. Therefore, it is important to have our primary source material read before Thursdays.

*The small group activities are designed to promote your critical thinking and reading skills, and to assist you in analyzing and selecting evidence from the primary sources.*

### **Rules, Paperwork, and other Boring Stuff**

#### **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to follow XXXXXXXX academic honesty policies. (See the student handbook, catalogue and school web site.) Violations, particularly plagiarism, will result in sanctions possibly including failure for the course.

<http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/studentaffairs/judicial.htm> In an online course especially, I expect you to be who you say you are and to submit your own work.



### **Accommodations**

If you require accommodations for a physical or learning disability, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can make appropriate arrangements. In particular, we can provide transcripts of spoken online material. <http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/studentaffairs/accom.htm>

### **Assistance**

If you are having trouble with the course, there are several places you can go for help. First of all, there's me: I am willing to look at drafts, review material, and so forth, provided I have sufficient notice and time. Ancillary material for the textbook is online through Connect. You can also use JSR's many services: <http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/studentaffairs/default.htm>

### **Behavior**

Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards each other and towards the instructor. Please conduct all discussions civilly and as directed by the instructor.

- We will discuss sensitive topics such as religion, race and politics in the course. If something about the course or discussion makes you uncomfortable, you may invoke the "ouch rule." We will then back away from the topic and cool down the discussion.
- Please turn off or silence phones and other beepy devices. If you must answer a call, please do so in the hall.
- Disruptive or violent behavior will not be tolerated and may result in ejection from the classroom or the course.
- You must write assignments using standard English. No N3tsp33k, D00d!

### **Course Corequisites**

You must have taken or be taking English 111 to take this course.

### **Evacuation**

In the event of a fire or other emergency, we will exit the building together via the stairs *not the elevator*. We will then gather in a safe spot outside. Please remain there, so that we can determine if any class members are missing.

### **Extra Credit**

YES THERE IS EXTRA CREDIT. Extra credit is available by arrangement with the instructor. This may be a presentation, a paper, a documented field trip, etc. Extra credit is usually 0-3 points per project, added to your final grade, based on the complexity and learn and be able to recounting involved in the project. All projects together cannot be worth more than a maximum of 1 letter grade.

### **Late Work**

Weekly assignments will not be accepted late (determined by the time stamp on the submission.) If you must miss a weekly assignment, then they may be excused at my discretion. The two papers, and the two tests may be taken as makeup work until exam week, with my permission, although I may assess a grade penalty for unexcused late work.

### **Learning Environment**

XXXXXXXX Community College is committed to providing a positive learning environment in which all faculty, staff, and students can learn together in a setting that encourages the free exchange of ideas and information. To accomplish this goal, the members of the college have established the following principles for learning :

- **Punctuality** – Respect schedules, arrive/depart on time, and notify others when changes are necessary.
- **Courtesy** - Assist others, acknowledge the presence of others, and be considerate of others while they work, study or speak.
- **Distractions** – Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices in class, labs, libraries, and meetings.
- **Consideration** – Keep your college areas clean, orderly, and ready for use by others.
- **Accountability** – Take credit only for work that is yours. Make yourself accountable for the information you release.
- **Participation** – Help everyone feel welcome to participate and freely exchange ideas without interruption.
- **Preparation** – Come prepared and focus solely on the business at hand. Privacy – Keep confidential discussions in private spaces.
- **Professionalism** – Model and develop behavior that will foster success in the workplace.
- **Privacy** - Keep confidential discussions in private places.
- **Respect** – Respect all backgrounds, cultures, and contributions.
- **Responsibility** – Acknowledge errors and express willingness to correct them.

See <http://www.xxx.vccs.edu/learning/default.htm>

### **Percentage Weights**

Grades normally will be determined based on the following percentage weights (not on the total score in Blackboard):

- 10% Attendance
- 20% Weekly Blackboard Discussion Board Assignments
- 10% Weekly Connect Assignments
- 15% Paper One
- 15% Paper Two
- 15% Test One
- 15% Test Two

### **Midterm Assessment**

Your grades will all be available on Blackboard, so you should be able to tell how you are doing at any given time (such as for midterm) just as well as I can.

### **Minimum Requirements**

Students who have more than 33% unexcused absences, or who have not completed at least one papers and the final test, will fail the course automatically unless they make arrangements with the instructor to make up such work or its equivalent.

### **The Bottom Line**

Your final grade in this course is based entirely on whether you convince me (through the course assignments) that you have achieved mastery of the material (as expressed in the course objectives). If you cannot convince me, you do not get the grade, regardless of any excuses, arguments or scores on the assignments.

### **Response time**

Email me any time; I will try to answer as soon as possible. Usually, I will answer email within 24 hours, except on the weekend or during breaks, when I sometimes must wait until the next business day. (My responses for email are not instantaneous. I have to work, eat, sleep and stuff too.) I am rarely near my phone, so it is a terrible way to try to reach me. Email me instead. I will try to answer voice mails within a week. I try to grade all material submitted within two weeks. Large batches of tests and papers may delay me, however.

### **Student Help**

The Student Help tab on our Blackboard site contains lots of links to helpful resources around campus.: including Academic Honesty, Netiquette Rules, Library materials, tech support and tutoring. Check it out.

### **Withdrawals**

Instructors inform college administration about students who have unofficially withdrawn. Unofficially-withdrawn students are those who have stopped performing academically-related activities such as attending their classes, completing class assignments, taking exams, or participating in tutorials or computer-assisted instruction. If the instructor does not know of the student completing any academically-related activities for a consecutive period of 20% (or three weeks of a full semester course) between the census date (15% mark) and the withdrawal deadline (60% mark); and, if the instructor does not have any contact with the student indicating that the student plans to return to class activities, the instructor must report the student as unofficially withdrawn from his or her class.

### **Disclaimer**

This syllabus is subject to change at my discretion.

### **Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

You must read the material assigned below for each week, before the week starts. This list includes the dates of the major papers and tests, but not the required weekly assignments, which will be ... well, weekly.

<b>Week of M Aug 19</b>	<b>Early Humans</b> <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will familiarize themselves with the course and software, and introduce themselves. Students will learn and be able</i>
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	<p><i>to recount the major facts about the Paleolithic, Neolithic, and Agricultural revolution (to be able to express them in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments). Students will learn and be able to recount the difference between primary and secondary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History</i>  Paleolithic and Neolithic Art from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, 9-12.</p> <p><b>Secondary Sources</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>. Chapter One: Before History.</p>
<b>Week of M Aug 26</b>	<p><b>Week Two: Primary Agriculture: Mesopotamia, Egypt</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about Mesopotamia and Egypt and be able to express them in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  From <i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i>, 44-53.  From <i>Hammurabi's Code</i>, 53-57.  The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant, 57-66.  Images from Hunefer's Book of the Dead, 66-69.</p> <p><b>Secondary Source:</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>. Chapter Two: Early Societies in SW Asia.  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>. Chapter Three: Early African Societies</p>
<b>Week of M Sept 2</b>	<p><b>Week Three: Asia</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about early South and East Asia, including the Harappan Civilization, the Indo-Aryan migrations, and early agriculture in China, and be able to express them in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  From the <i>Rig Veda</i>, 88-90  From the <i>Upanishads</i>, 91-93</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>: Chapter Four: South Asia  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>: Chapter Five: South-East Asia</p>
<b>Week of M Sept 9</b>	<p><b>Week Four: Americas</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the Pre-Columbian Americas including the Andean region, Meso-America, and North America, and be able to express them in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments.</i></p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>: Chapter Six: Early Societies in America and Oceania</p>

<p><b>Week of M Sept 16</b></p>	<p><b>Week Five: Persia, The Hebrews</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the ancient Near East, the Persians, the ancient Hebrews, and their religions and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i>  <b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>              "An Assyrian Law and a Palace Decree," 212-22              The Bible; History, Law and Psalms, 212-222              The Bible: Prophecy and Apocalypse, 222-227  <b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters: Chapter Seven: The Empires of Persia</i></p>
<p><b>Week of M Sept 23</b></p>	<p><b>Week Six: Greece</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about Archaic Classical and Hellenistic Greece and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i>  <b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>              Aristotle, "The Athenian Constitution," 99              Thucydides, "The Funeral Oration of Pericles," 102              Plato, "The Republic," 107              Plato, "The Symposium," 182-186  <b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Chapter Ten: Mediterranean Society: The Greek Phase.</i>  <b>PAPER ONE</b></p>
<p><b>Week of M Sept 30</b></p>	<p><b>India, Hinduism, Buddhism</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount about early Indian empires and states and the development of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the spread of Buddhism and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i>  <b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>World History:</i>              Hinduism: <i>Svetasvatara Upanishad</i>, 200-202              From the <i>Bhagavad Gita</i>, 93-99              Buddhism: Gotama's Discovery, 202-207              Buddhism and Caste, 207-209              Mahayana Buddhism: The Lotus Sutra, 209-212  <b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters: Chapter Nine: State, Society and the Quest for Salvation in India.</i>  <b>REVISED PAPER ONE</b></p>
<p><b>Week of M Oct 7</b></p>	<p><b>Imperial China</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major</i></p>

	<p><i>facts about early imperial China and major Chinese philosophies, and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>          Sima Qian, Biographies of Harsh Officials, 131-136          Confucius, From the <i>Analects</i>, 136-138          Han Fei, Legalism, 138-142          A Record of the Debate on Salt and Iron, 142-145          Buddhism in China, 252-256.</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Eight. The Unification of China  <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Fourteen: The Resurgence of Empire in China          [Optional] <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Fifteen: India and the Indian Ocean Basin</p> <p><b>TEST ONE</b></p>
Week of M Oct 14	<p><b>Rome</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the Roman Republic and early Empire and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>          Cicero, "Letter to His Brother Quintus," 151          Depictions of Gender in Classical Societies, 192-196          Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 158-162</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Eleven: Mediterranean Society: The Roman Phase.</p>
Week of M Oct 21	<p><b>Roman Transformations</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about Roman Religions, Christianity and the Roman Empire and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>          The Christian Bible, 227-230          Paul, Letters, 230-233          Correspondence between Pliny and Trajan, 156-158          Eusebius, From <i>The Life of Constantine</i>, 243-247</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Twelve: Cross-Cultural Exchanges on the Silk-Roads</p>
Week of M Oct 28	<b>Byzantium</b>

	<p><i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the breakup of the Roman Empire and the continuance of its eastern half (the Byzantine Empire) and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  Procopius, the Secret history, 340-345  Christianity in China, 247-251</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Sixteen: The Two Worlds of Christendom</p>
<b>Week of M Nov 4</b>	<p><b>Early Islam</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the rise of Islam, the Umayyad and early Abbasid Caliphates and the religion of Islam and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  From the Qu'ran, 256-265  "Peace Terms with Jerusalem," 270-272</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Thirteen: The Expansive Realm of Islam</p> <p><b>PAPER TWO</b></p>
<b>Week of M Nov 11</b>	<p><b>Early Medieval Christendom</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the Migration Age, the successor kingdoms in Western Europe, the Carolingian Empire, its collapse, and the Vikings and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  Ibn Fadlan, <i>the Viking Rus</i>, 409-414  <i>Eirik's Saga</i>, 421-424</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters:</i> Chapter Sixteen: The Two Worlds of Christendom</p>
<b>Week of M Nov 18</b>	<p><b>Europe, the Mediterranean, and India</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the Crusades and Islamic Empires in India and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  Fulcher, Pope Urban's Speech, 363-369</p>

	<p>Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson, 369-372  Raymond of St. Giles, Capture of Jerusalem, 387-391  Ibn Al-Athir, The Conquest of Jerusalem, 391-393  <b>REVISED PAPER TWO</b></p>
<b>Week of M Nov 26</b>	<b>No class, Nov 26-Dec 1</b>
<b>Week of M Dec 2</b>	<p><b>Mongol Empire, Trade</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about the Mongol Empires and their effect and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  Faxiam, Tavel on the Silk Raods, 299-307  Ibn Battuta, Travels, 307-313  Pegolotti, Merchant's Handbook, 313-317  <i>Secret history of the Mongols</i>, 429-436  From the Epic of Sundiata 272-275</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>: Chapter Seventeen: Nomadic Empires and Eurasian Integration  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>: Chapter Eighteen: States and Societies of Sub-Saharan Africa</p>
<b>Week of M Dec 9</b>	<p><b>High &amp; Late Medieval Europe</b>  <i>Weekly Objectives: Students will learn and be able to recount the major facts about Medieval Europe and its culture and be able to express these in the weekly assignments and/or major assignments. Students will read and analyze selected primary sources.</i></p> <p><b>Primary Sources</b>  <i>Worlds of History:</i>  Andreas Capellanus, <i>The Art of Courtly Love</i>, 335  Organizing Self-Government in Ipswich, 489-491  Dati, Corporations and Community in Florence, 491-493  Images of the Black Dead, 467-471  Al-Maqrizi, The Plague in Cairo, 471</p> <p><b>Secondary Source</b>  <i>Traditions and Encounters</i>: Chapter Nineteen: The Increasing Influence of Europe</p>
<b>Dec 12-18</b>	<b>EXAM WEEK TEST TWO</b>



## APPENDIX G

## HIS 102 SYLLABUS

**Western Civ II, Spring 2014**

Professor:

Office:

Email:

Phone:

Office Hours: TTH 8:00 – 9:30, 12:30-1:30  
Or by appointment

**THE BASICS****COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES:**

Other than dropping by during office hours, email is the preferred method of contact outside of class. Emails sent M-Th will be answered within 24hrs. Emails sent Friday afternoon, over the weekend, or during holidays, will be answered the next business day. I am only near the phone during the office hours listed above. Phone messages will be responded to within 48 hrs of my having received the message.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

HIS 102 examines the development of western civilization (including political, social, economic, diplomatic, and military subjects) from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to the present. HIS 101 and 102 do NOT need to be taken in sequence.

**PREREQUISITES:**

Students must have taken, or be currently placed in ENG 111 or ENF3-ENG 111.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to select from the materials offered in this course, the relevant information needed to explain their own interpretation of a particular historical question.
- Develop an appreciation of the fact that their values are not necessarily the values of other peoples, and that their values are not necessarily better or worse than those held by other peoples in other places and times.
- Understand that the history in their textbook is not an infallible or comprehensive account of the past, but merely the selected arguments and interpretations of certain authors. There are no infallible interpretations of the past!
- Present an historical argument in good written or oral form.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the chronological development of the significant political, economic, social, military, religious, cultural and intellectual changes experienced by the

west.

- Demonstrate in both oral and written exercises their ability to synthesize their knowledge of historical concepts and interpretation.
- Determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided
- Evaluate the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue.

### **TEXTBOOKS:**

- Dutton et. al. *Many Europes: Choice and Chance in Western Civilization*.
  - Students can either purchase just vol. II, or they can purchase the combined volume if they are also going to take 101.

\*Additional reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard (BB) under “Course Documents.”

## **THE COURSE**

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Tests** – There are **four** scheduled exams during the semester, including the final. All exams will be multiple choice and will test the material covered in lectures and in the textbook. There will also be questions about maps and historic geographical locations. **Students must provide their own scantron answer sheets.** Points will be taken off for failing to bring an answer sheet or filling the answer sheet out in pen. Late students will be allowed to take the exam provided no student has already turned in the exam and left the room. If such is the case, late students will have to arrange to take the makeup exam. Additionally, students will not be allowed to leave class during the exam (not even for bathroom use) without turning in the exam. Once turned in the exam will not be given back.

**Papers** – There are **two** paper assignments throughout the course. The first paper is mandatory and the second paper is optional. If students do both papers the higher of the two will be calculated in the final grade. Papers will be submitted through a SafeAssign dropbox on BB located under “Assignments.” Specific details for each paper will be also posted on BB under “Assignments.”

**Extra Credit** – Students will have the opportunity to complete a major extra credit project that will require a substantial amount of work and may even incur a monetary cost. The project is worth up to 25 points – that’s half a letter grade. Specific details can be found on BB.

**Late Work** – Late papers will accepted but at a penalty of 5 points *per day* that the assignment is late (including weekends). All papers are due by 11:59pm on the due date. At 12:00am the penalties begin accruing. Exceptions are permitted only in extreme cases and with my approval.

**Make up policy** - Students who miss an exam must inform me within **48hrs** in order to schedule a makeup exam. Makeup exams will be a different format than the exam given in class. Makeup exam will only be given in cases of emergencies or college-excused absences and require proper documentation.

**Attendance** – The bulk of exam material will come from class lectures, thus class attendance is strongly encouraged to ensure full understanding of subject material, to foster a sense of community with other students in the class, and to participate in group discussions. The instructor will take attendance roll each class day (except for exam days), but this is only for record-keeping purposes. **Attendance does not count towards any grade**, though it may be taken into consideration when computing final grades at the end of the semester.

### **GRADING:**

All weekly assignments will be graded within one week of the due date. Tests and papers will be graded within two weeks of the due date. Late submission will be graded within two weeks of submission.

**Final Grades** - Final grades will be computed as follows:

Tests (4x100)	400	450 - 500 = A
Papers (1x100)	100	400 - 449 = B
Total	500	350 - 399 = C
		300 - 349 = D
		000 - 299 = F

Final grades might be rounded up based on three conditions: 1) The grade is NO MORE than 1% from the next letter grade. 2) The student has exemplary attendance and/or shown improvement throughout the semester. 3) The student has completed ALL required assignments.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE: \*subject to change\***

Week 1 – Intro & Syllabus, Tour of Europe  
Reading: Chapter 15

Week 2 – Scientific Revolution  
Reading – Chapter 15

Week 3 – The Enlightenment  
Readings: Chapter 16

Week 4 – French Revolution and Napoleonic Era  
Readings: Chapter 17

### **Exam 1**

Week 5 – Industrial Revolution  
Readings: Chapter 18

Week 6 – Between Napoleon and 1848  
Readings: Chapter 18

Week 7 – Age of Revolutions and Nation Building  
Readings: Chapter 18 & 19

Week 8 – Imperialism and Colonialism

Readings: Chapter 20

Week 9 – *Fin de Siècle* Europe

Readings: Chapter 21

### **Exam 2 and Paper 1**

Week 10 – SPRING BREAK

Week 11 – The Great War

Readings: Chapter 22

Week 12 – Interwar Europe

Readings: Chapter 23

Week 13 – World War II

Readings: Chapter 24

### **Exam 3 and Paper 2**

Week 14 – The Cold War

Readings: Chapter 25

Week 15 – End of the Cold War and Decolonization

Readings: Chapter 25

Week 16 – Globalization

Readings: Chapter 26

### **Extra Credit Project due**

### **Final Exam Schedule:**

Class	Exam Date	Exam Time	Exam Room
HIS 102 (TTh 9:30)	Tues, April 29th	8:00-10:40am	B 206
HIS 102 (TTh 11:00)	Thurs. May 1st	11:00-1:40am	B 261

### **THE BUREAUCRATIC STUFF**

### **CIVILITY STATEMENT:**

Members of the xxxxxxxx community, which includes faculty, staff and students, are expected to act honestly and responsibly in all aspects of campus life. Xxxxxxxx College holds all members accountable for their actions and words. Therefore, all members should commit themselves to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect, and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every member of the College community, including respect for College property and the physical and intellectual property of others. In an online course this is known as netiquette. A good rule of thumb is: if you wouldn't do/say this in a normal class you probably shouldn't in an online discussion. See the Netiquette link on Blackboard under "Student Help" for more details. Repeated violation of the rules of netiquette can result in points being deducted from assignments. In extreme cases students can be removed from the course.

**ADA COMPLIANCE:**

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**ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

Students are expected to follow xxxxxxxx academic honesty policies. (See the student handbook, catalogue and school web site - <http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/studentaffairs/judicial.htm>) Violations, particularly plagiarism, will result in sanctions possibly including failure for the course. In an online course especially, I expect you to be who you say you are and to submit your own work.

**DISCLAIMER:**

Any part of this syllabus may be changed at my discretion, subject to school policy, and state and federal law.

APPENDIX H  
HIS 121 SYLLABUS

**US History I, Fall 2013**

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Professor:  
Office:  
Email:  
Phone:

Office Hours: MW 11:00 – 1:00,  
TTH 9:00 – 11:00,  
Or by appointment

**THE BASICS**

**COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES:**

With the exception of dropping in during office hours, email is the preferred method of contact. Emails sent M-Th will be answered within 24hrs. Emails sent Friday afternoon, over the weekend, or during holidays, will be answered the next business day. I am only near the phone during the office hours listed above. Phone messages will be responded to within one week of my having received the message. Students are also welcome to drop by for face-to-face interaction during my office hours.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**The Subject** – History 121 is a survey of United States History from Pre-Columbus to Reconstruction. The course covers the industrial, social, economic and political issues. Material presented covers a wide variety of topics including discovery and colonization, independence, expansion, wars and conflict, secession, slavery, and foreign policy.

**PREREQUISITES:**

Students must have taken, or be currently placed in ENG 111 or ENF3-ENG 111.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Demonstrate an ability to select from the materials offered in this course, the relevant information needed to explain their own interpretation of a particular historical question.
- Develop an appreciation of the fact that their values are not necessarily the values of other peoples, and that their values are not necessarily better or worse than those held by other peoples in other places and times.
- Integrate the study of ethnic groups that have contributed to the development of a unique American civilization.
- Understand that the history in their textbook is not an infallible or comprehensive account

of the past, but merely the selected arguments and interpretations of certain authors. There are no infallible interpretations of the past!

- Present an historical argument in good written or oral form.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the chronological development of the significant political, economic, social, military, religious, cultural and intellectual changes experienced by Americans during the times 1865 to the present.
- Demonstrate in both oral and written exercises their ability to synthesize their knowledge of historical concepts and interpretation.
- Determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided
- Evaluate the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue.

### **TEXTBOOKS:**

- Eric Foner, *Give me Liberty!*, vol. I, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.
  - This book is **recommended**. You should have an American History textbook to use as reference for exam, paper, and discussion preparation. You don't have to have *this* particular textbook, but it's the only one that will be available at the bookstore.
- Eric Foner, *Voices of Freedom*, vol. I, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.
  - This book is **required**.

Additional reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard (BB) throughout the semester.

## **THE COURSE**

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Tests** – There are **four** scheduled exams during the semester, including the final. All exams will be multiple choice and will test the material covered in lectures and in the textbook. Students must provide their own answer sheets. Late students will be allowed to take the exam provided no student has already turned in the exam and left the room. If such is the case, late students will have to arrange to take the makeup exam. Additionally, students will not be allowed to leave class during the exam (not even for bathroom use) without turning in the exam. Once turned in the exam will not be given back.

**Quizzes** – Each week will (on average) have one quiz over the assigned documents in *Voices of Freedom*. Quiz questions will be taken from the questions that appear at the bottom of each document in *Voices*. Students will read the documents and answer the questions **before** taking the quiz online. Students will only have enough time to transfer their answers to Blackboard. Some weeks will cover two chapters (and thus there will be two quizzes), while other weeks will not have a quiz. Quizzes are **due by 11:59pm the Sunday night** of the week they are assigned. **There is no makeup for missed quizzes, instead the five lowest quiz grades will be dropped.**

**Papers** – There are **three** paper assignments throughout the course. Papers will be submitted through a SafeAssign dropbox on BB located under “Assignments.” Specific details for each paper will be also posted on BB under “Assignments.”

**Extra Credit** – Students will have the opportunity to complete a major extra credit project that will require a substantial amount of work and may even incur a monetary cost. The project is worth up to 40 points – that’s half a letter grade. Specific details can be found on BB.

**Late Work** – As mentioned above, late quiz assignments will not be accepted. Late papers and tests will accepted but at a penalty of 5 points *per day* that the assignment is late. All papers are due by 11:59pm on the due date. At 12:00am the penalties begin accruing. Because the course is entirely on your time there will be no makeup work – just the deduction for late submissions. Exceptions are permitted only in extreme cases and with my approval.

**Make up policy** - Students who miss an exam must inform me within **48hrs** in order to schedule a makeup exam. Makeup exams will be a different format than the exam given in class. Makeup exam will only be given in cases of emergencies or college-excused absences and require proper documentation.

**Attendance** – The bulk of exam material will come from class lectures, thus class attendance is strongly encouraged to ensure full understanding of subject material, to foster a sense of community with other students in the class, and to participate in group discussions. The instructor will take attendance roll each class day (except for exam days), but this is only for record-keeping purposes. **Attendance does not count towards any grade**, though it may be taken into consideration when computing final grades at the end of the semester.

### **GRADING:**

All weekly assignments will be graded within one week of the due date. Tests and papers will be graded within two weeks of the due date. Late submission will be graded within one week of submission.

**Final Grades** - Final grades will be computed as follows:

Tests (4x100)	400	675 - 750 = A
Papers (50, 100, 100)	250	600 - 674 = B
Quizzes (10x10)	100	525 - 599 = C
Total	750	450 - 524 = D
		000 - 449 = F

Final Grades may be rounded up based on three conditions: 1) The grade is NO MORE than 1% (8 points) from the next letter grade. 2) The student has exemplary attendance and/or shown improvement throughout the semester. 3) The student has completed ALL required assignments (ie. There are no blank grades *after* dropping the two lowest quiz scores).

### **COURSE SCHEDULE: \*subject to change\***

Week 1 – Course Intro, A New World  
Quiz: Chapter 1



Week 2 - England's Colonies, Colonial America

Quiz: Chapters 2 and 3

Week 3 – Imperial Perspective

Quiz: Chapter 4

Week 4 – **Exam 1**, Independence

Quiz: Chapter 5

**Paper 1 Due**

Week 5 – American Revolution

Quiz: Chapter 6

Week 6 – Shaping the Union

Quiz: Chapter 7

Week 7 – Federalist Era

Quiz: Chapter 8

Week 8 – **Exam 2**, Nationalism and Sectionalism

**Paper 2 Due**

Week 9 – Jacksonian Era

Quiz: Chapter 10

Week 10 – Industrial Revolution

Quiz: Chapter 9

Week 11 – American Renaissance

Quiz: Chapter 12

Week 12 – **Exam 3**, Manifest Destiny

Week 13 – The Antebellum South

Quiz: Chapter 11

**Paper 3 Due**

Week 14 – Crisis and Secession

Quiz: Chapter 13

Week 15 – Thanksgiving Break (though Monday classes meet on Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>)

Week 16 – Civil War & Reconstruction

Quiz: Chapters 14 & 15

**Extra Credit Due**

**Final Exam Schedule:**

<u>Class</u>	<u>Exam Date</u>	<u>Exam Time</u>	<u>Exam Room</u>
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HIS 121 (TTh 11:00) 2A&B	Thurs. Dec 12 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 – 1:40pm	R22
HIS 121 (MWF 10:00) B 257	Weds. Dec 18 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 10:50am	
HIS 121 (MW 1:00) 1A&B	Weds. Dec 18 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 – 1:40pm	R21
HIS 122 (MWF 8:00)	Fri. Dec 13 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 10:50am	G 369

## **THE BUREAUCRATIC STUFF**

### **CIVILITY STATEMENT:**

Members of the XXXXXXXX community, which includes faculty, staff and students, are expected to act honestly and responsibly in all aspects of campus life. XXXXXXXX College holds all members accountable for their actions and words. Therefore, all members should commit themselves to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect, and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every member of the College community, including respect for College property and the physical and intellectual property of others. In an online course this is known as netiquette. A good rule of thumb is: if you wouldn't do/say this in a normal class you probably shouldn't in an online discussion. See the Netiquette link on Blackboard under "Student Help" for more details. Repeated violation of the rules of netiquette can result in points being deducted from assignments. In extreme cases students can be removed from the course.

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### **DISCLAIMER:**

Any part of this syllabus may be changed at my discretion, subject to school policy, and state and federal law.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

Students are expected to follow XXXXXXXX academic honesty policies. (See the student handbook, catalogue and school web site – [link to Web site removed](#)) Violations, particularly plagiarism, will result in sanctions possibly including failure for the course. In an online course especially, I expect you to be who you say you are and to submit your own work.

## APPENDIX I

## HIS 122 SYLLABUS

**US History II, Fall 2013**

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Professor:

Office:

Email:

Phone:

Office Hours: MW 11:00 – 1:00,  
TTH 9:00 – 11:00,  
Or by appointment

**THE BASICS****COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES:**

Other than dropping by during office hours, email is the preferred method of contact outside of class. Emails sent M-Th will be answered within 24hrs. Emails sent Friday afternoon, over the weekend, or during holidays, will be answered the next business day. I am only near the phone during the office hours listed above. Phone messages will be responded to within one week of my having received the message.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**The Subject** – History 122 is a survey of United States History from 1877 to the present. The course covers the industrial, social, and political problems from 1877 to the emergence of the United States as a world power in the twentieth century. Material presented covers a wide variety of topics including the Gilded Age, the Progressive Period, World War I, the Depression and the New Deal, World War II, the Cold War, and contemporary events.

**PREREQUISITES:**

Students must have taken, or be currently placed in ENG 111 or ENF3-ENG 111.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Demonstrate an ability to select from the materials offered in this course, the relevant information needed to explain their own interpretation of a particular historical question.
- Develop an appreciation of the fact that their values are not necessarily the values of other peoples, and that their values are not necessarily better or worse than those held by other peoples in other places and times.
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of the past, but merely the selected arguments and interpretations of certain authors. There are no infallible interpretations of the past!

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- Demonstrate in both oral and written exercises their ability to synthesize their knowledge of historical concepts and interpretation.
- Determine whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided
- Evaluate the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue.

### **TEXTBOOKS:**

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  - This book is **recommended**. You should have an American History textbook to use as reference for exam, paper, and discussion preparation. You don't have to have *this* particular textbook, but it's the only one that will be available at the bookstore.
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Additional reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard (BB) throughout the semester.

## **THE COURSE**

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Tests** – There are **four** scheduled exams during the semester, including the final. All exams will be multiple choice and will test the material covered in lectures and in the textbook. Students must provide their own answer sheets. Late students will be allowed to take the exam provided no student has already turned in the exam and left the room. If such is the case, late students will have to arrange to take the makeup exam. Additionally, students will not be allowed to leave class during the exam (not even for bathroom use) without turning in the exam. Once turned in the exam will not be given back.

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**Extra Credit** – Students will have the opportunity to complete a major extra credit project that will require a substantial amount of work and may even incur a monetary cost. The project is worth up to 40 points – that’s half a letter grade. Specific details can be found on BB.

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**Make up policy** - Students who miss an exam must inform me within **48hrs** in order to schedule a makeup exam. Makeup exams will be a different format than the exam given in class. Makeup exam will only be given in cases of emergencies or college-excused absences and require proper documentation.

**Attendance** – The bulk of exam material will come from class lectures, thus class attendance is strongly encouraged to ensure full understanding of subject material, to foster a sense of community with other students in the class, and to participate in group discussions. The instructor will take attendance roll each class day (except for exam days), but this is only for record-keeping purposes. **Attendance does not count towards any grade**, though it may be taken into consideration when computing final grades at the end of the semester.

### **GRADING:**

All weekly assignments will be graded within one week of the due date. Tests and papers will be graded within two weeks of the due date. Late submission will be graded within one week of submission.

**Final Grades** - Final grades will be computed as follows:

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Final Grades may be rounded up based on three conditions: 1) The grade is NO MORE than 1% (8 points) from the next letter grade. 2) The student has exemplary attendance and/or shown improvement throughout the semester. 3) The student has completed ALL required assignments (ie. There are no blank grades *after* dropping the two lowest quiz scores).

### **COURSE SCHEDULE: \*subject to change\***

Week 1 – Course Intro, Reconstruction  
Quiz: Chap 15

Week 2 - South & West, Big Business

Quiz: Chapter 16

Week 3 – Urban America, The Gilded Age

Quiz: Chapter 16

Week 4 – **Exam 1**, American Empire

**Paper 1 Due**

Quiz: Chapter 17

Week 5 – Progressivism

Quiz: Chapter 18

Week 6 – World War I

Quiz: Chapter 19

Week 7 – The “Roaring” Twenties

Quiz: Chapter 20

Week 8 – **Exam 2**, New Deal

**Paper 2 Due**

Quiz: Chapter 21

Week 9 – Road to WWII

Quiz: Chapter 22

Week 10 – WWII

Quiz: Chapter 22

Week 11 – Origins of the Cold War, Cold War Culture

Quiz: Chapter 23

Week 12 – **Exam 3**, Eisenhower

**Paper 3 Due**

Quiz: Chapters 24

Week 13 – JFK and LBJ, The Sixties and Seventies

Quiz: Chapter 25

Week 14 – The Sixties, Seventies, and Nixon

Quiz: Chapter 25

Week 15 – Thanksgiving Break (Though classes meet Mon. Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>)

Week 16 – Reagan and the 1980s

**Extra Credit Due**

Quiz: Chapters 26 & 27

### **Final Exam Schedule:**

<u>Class</u>	<u>Exam Date</u>	<u>Exam Time</u>	<u>Exam Room</u>
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HIS 121 (TTh 11:00) 2A&B	Thurs. Dec 12 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 – 1:40pm	R22
HIS 121 (MWF 10:00) B 257	Weds. Dec 18 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 10:50am	
HIS 121 (MW 1:00) 1A&B	Weds. Dec 18 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 – 1:40pm	R21
HIS 122 (MWF 8:00)	Fri. Dec 13 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 – 10:50am	G 369

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## APPENDIX J

### HISTORY EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT

I often hear my students tell me that “they’ve never been good at history” or that “history isn’t their thing.” Here is an opportunity for you to take something that is more your cup of tea, link it to history, and make some extra credit points.<sup>xiv</sup>

Before you read any further, please note, **this is a big project**. I have high expectations and will not award many points for simply “doing” it. It will take a considerable amount of time. It will involve writing a short essay in addition to the project itself, and it will most likely have a financial cost as well (for purchasing the materials to complete the project).

### MAJOR PROJECT GENERAL GUIDELINES

The topic or theme must fall within the chronological *and* thematic scope of the class (ie. no WWII stuff in HIS 121, no Roman stuff in HIS 102, no samurai stuff in Western Civ, etc.).

Regardless of what kind of project you choose, at the end of the semester you must hand in:

- 5) The project itself (obviously)
- 6) A short project report (500-750 words) that does the following:
  - a. Gives a brief historical description, based on primary and reputable secondary sources, of the event/object/person that is the focus of your project. Wikipedia does not count as a citable source. You can use it for information, but may not cite it as an authority. The paper must include a works cited page or bibliography.
  - b. Explains why you chose the topic and project type that you did.
  - c. Describes anything relevant that you learned while completing the project.
  - d. Follow either MLA or Chicago format. Either one is fine, but you must use one and only one.
  - e. The paper, of course, must have your name AND class (HIS 121, 122, etc.) on it.
- 7) Receipts of materials used for the project to prove that they were purchased and used in the semester (no handing in last year’s art project as this year’s history project).
- 8) Supporting documentation as specified in the respective project descriptions below (if any).

### PROJECT-SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

#### Model Project (expense: moderate to high)

Build a model, diorama, or similar physical representation of a historical event, location, or object. Be creative! One student built a 2’x2’ display of the landing beaches at Normandy, complete with landscape, tank models, bunkers and barbed wire, and used plastic army men for soldiers. Another student, I kid you not, built a 3 sq. ft. replica of the Alamo, but completely out



of edible items – like a gingerbread house. The walls were made of Rice Krispies covered with icing to give it an appearance of adobe architecture.

1. The model must be completely assembled and painted, i.e., from head to toe, nose to tail, bow to stern; all exterior parts must be painted in a proper color scheme. Sailing ships must be properly rigged.

2. Skill of the work and attention to detail will be factors in assigning a grade to the project. If making a model from scratch, do not use non-historical figures or anything out of scale.

3. An aircraft or land vehicle must be LARGER than 1/72 scale (tanks must be 1/35 scale or larger), unless it is part of a diorama. No “mini-models”, “snap-together kits”, or pre-painted models are permitted.

4. If you assemble a model kit you must attach the sales receipt for the model to your final paper as proof that the model was purchased and built during the semester.

### Art Project (expense: moderate)

Create a piece of art centering on an historical theme, event or person. Suggestions—a painting, drawing, sculpture, replica of a machine or weapon. Be creative and use your imagination. One student built a scale model “doll house” of the Oval Office under President Roosevelt, complete with furniture, pictures and plants; all built by hand and based on photographs of the Oval Office from that time period. Another student in an American history class took a blank 3’x 5’ canvas and after every lecture painted a section with something from that day’s class. By the end of the semester she had a beautiful painting that was a literal collage of 20<sup>th</sup> century American history.

1. Paintings or drawings MUST be framed (unless size prohibits) and must be larger than 8 ½ by 11 inches. No abstract art (unless painting a replica of a famous abstract piece).

2. Your piece must have a name/title.

3. In addition to the essay requirements above you must also describe the materials you used and why you chose them.

4. Skill of the work and its historical validity will be factors in assigning a grade to the project.

5. You must submit a receipt for materials to prove that the project was completed during the semester.

### Sewing Project (expense: moderate)

Like the art project, use needle, thread, and cloth to create a piece that is tied to history. Some suggestions include uniforms of clothing, quilts, or flags.

1. Flags must be at least 3’ x 5’. For more points you will want to detail the flag (eg. Civil War units embroidered battles on their unit flags, or burn/weather your flag to give it the look and feel of an historic piece.

- a. Don’t think this is an “easy” choice. If you just glue a red dot on a white sheet and hand it in as Japan’s flag you will get minimal points. Only choose a flag project if you are going to do something really spectacular (like make a life-sized replica of the flag on display at the American History Museum in D.C.)

2. In addition to the essay requirements above you must also describe the materials you used and why you chose them.

3. Skill of the work and its historical validity will be factors in assigning a grade to the project.

### Music Project

Create some kind of history project that uses music as the medium. Students can write original pieces, can produce covers of famous songs, or can create adaptations (take a famous song and write new lyrics that somehow relate to something in the course – take a song from one style and rewrite it in a new style). For example – one student took “Best I Ever Had” by Vertical Horizon and rewrote the lyrics as a tribute to the Okies of the Dust Bowl based on John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*.

1. Regardless of what the project is, in addition to the paper, students must submit a video recording of themselves performing the piece. This is to prove that at the very least you are performing and not handing in a recording of someone else.
2. If an original piece, you must also hand in a copy of the sheet music.
3. Originality and creativity will weigh heavily on this; a cover will have to be *really* good to earn the same points as an original piece.
4. You may NOT simply make a “dance mix.” It’s not hard to just throw in a heavy beat and call it good.

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Projects are due by the last day of class, but can be submitted earlier.
- All projects are retained and become property of the instructor unless prior arrangements are made with the student. If you want your project back, let me know and arrange a time to pick it up after the semester ends.
- Failure to follow guidelines will lead to deduction in points from your project grade.
- All papers must have a cover page containing a title for your project, your name, your class and section, the date, and your file number.

APPENDIX K  
CHD 120 SYLLABUS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
INTRODUCTION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
(CHD 120)  
FALL 2015

Instructor:

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-3:00  
Wednesday 10:00-3:00 Thursday 1:00-4:00

Office:  
Office Phone #

E-Mail:  
Email is the best way to reach me and Emails will be answered within 24 hours during the work week.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to early childhood development through activities and experiences in nursery, preschool, and primary programs. Investigates classroom organization for young children, professionalism, and curricular procedures.  
3 credit hours

COURSE RATIONALE:

The rationale of this course is to approach (preschool) early childhood development education from a holistic point of view rather than content.

TEXTBOOK:

Introduction to Early Childhood Education 7<sup>th</sup> Edition by: Eva L. Essa  
ISBN # 9781133589846

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the semester, the Early Childhood Student will:

15. Survey the major theories and issues of child development and the development of early childhood education as a professional.

16. Identify and describe general principles and major milestones of children from infancy through age eight in these areas: physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development.
17. Explain the importance of observing and recording children's behavior, as the basis for planning developmentally appropriate activities.\_
18. Develop skills with at least two methods of observing children.\_
19. Display knowledge about developmentally appropriate practice in arranging, equipping, and supervising children's total environment. This will include such areas as the use of resource people, field trips, and parents.\_
20. Gain knowledge of the importance and necessity of developing appropriate program planning including the child's daily schedule, routines, transitions, and activities.\_
21. Define health and safety and demonstrate knowledge of what constitutes healthy safe environments for young children.\_
22. Demonstrate and understand that the adult's role in promoting children's learning is mainly to facilitate and guide.\_
23. Demonstrate the ability to plan experiences and create an environment, which supports children's learning through play.\_
24. Describe how social environment impacts language development.\_
25. Identify and discuss at least five ways adults can facilitate children's emotional development, particularly the development of self-esteem.\_
26. Identify ways that adults can support the process of socialization by helping children adjust, giving them a sense of belonging, and teaching them social skills.\_
27. Identify diverse cultural and special needs of children and their families and to plan developmentally appropriate activities that reflect this diversity.\_
28. Describe the need for and benefit of parental involvement and list ways to involve families in the early childhood program.\_

### OBSERVATIONS:

Students will be exposed to at least two different methods for recording their observation of children. The common observational techniques include:

1. Daily records
2. Frequency counts
3. Checklist or rate scale
4. Event Sampling; description of an episode
5. Time sampling
6. Anecdotal Records
7. Descriptive narrative

### METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

This class is Internet based and will be taught using Blackboard Technology. You should have experience with sending emails, attaching files, using word processing software and access to the Internet. All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard. Check Blackboard and your XXXXXXXX email at least once a week. I will periodically post links and information on

Blackboard. I will also send emails to you through your XXXXXXXX account. It is Virginia Community College policy that any email communication be through your student email account.

Please note there are computer labs at each of the three campuses for your use. See this site for details [http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/jsr\\_acs/open\\_computer\\_labs\\_hours.htm](http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/jsr_acs/open_computer_labs_hours.htm)

Posting on Blackboard: Posting on the discussion board and commenting on what other people have posted is a requirement of this course. It is a learning opportunity to share other's discoveries. A resource is <http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/computing/Blackboard/Default.htm>

#### EXIT CRITERIA:

To receive college credit, all students must complete the Standards for Exit described below. Failure to do so will prohibit the student from advancing further into the core curriculum. This course may be taken under the scholarship program established by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

#### STANDARDS FOR EXIT:

1. Distance Learning attendance is defined as weekly participation on the Discussion Board as well as submitting assignments. You must have regular access to a working computer and the Internet. Any student who has not participated in the class by September 5th will be dropped from the class.
2. In accordance with VCCS policy, any student who has not participated in the class by the 15% mark will be dropped from the class. In addition, any student who has stopped participating in class by the 60% mark may be involuntarily dropped.
3. In accordance with XXXXXXXX Student Attendance (1-3) and Return to Title IV (1-36) policies, it is required that student attendance in class is monitored. If you plan to miss any day(s) in this class it is recommended that you contact the instructor so that he/she is aware of your continued participation in this course. If you decide that you do not intend to complete this course, it is recommended that you complete a formal drop or withdrawal form by the published deadline. Failure to do so may result in a potential drop, withdrawal, or F in this course, which may affect your academic progress, and / or financial aid status.

Assignments: Please adhere to the due dates. All assignments are due by midnight on the due date. Any changes in the syllabus schedule will be announced. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED UP TO ONE WEEK LATE WITH A PENALTY OF MINUS 20 POINTS PER WEEK. HOWEVER, NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE FINAL DUE DATE. A grade of 0 will be recorded after the one-week period AND THE ASSIGNMENT BUTTON IN BLACKBOARD WILL BE TURNED OFF. Assignments will be graded before the next assignment is due.

Academic Success: It is recommended that students who earn lower than a C repeat this course to ensure academic success in this profession.

## FINAL GRADE

It is possible to earn a total of 1500 points in this course. The assignments due each week add up to 100. In the Blackboard grade book column that shows your total points, it also shows points possible and a %. In points possible and the %, it only shows assignments that are graded. If you did not turn in an assignment, it does not add those points to the “points possible”. So, that number may be wrong. Remember, there are 1500 points possible in this course. Final grades will be calculated as follows.

1500-1350 A  
 1349-1200 B  
 1199-1050 C  
 1049-900 D  
 <900 F

## ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

The Academic Honesty Policy of XXXXXXXX (Policy 1-34) asserts that students are held to the highest standard with regard to academic integrity. As such, each student is responsible for 1) upholding the highest standards of academic integrity; 2) refusing to tolerate violations of the academic honesty policy in the college; and 3) fostering a sense of integrity and social responsibility at the college. Any allegations of violations of the academic honesty policy will be pursued. Students found responsible for academic dishonesty may be subject to a grade of “F” for the course.

## STUDENT CONDUCT:

In order to achieve the best learning environment possible for this class, students are expected to adhere to the highest behavioral standards. All forms of disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in this course. Disruptive Behavior can be defined as behavior that interferes with the teaching and learning process. As such, any disruptive behavior will be addressed by the instructor and / or reported to the Associated Vice President for Student Affairs for judicial processing.

*Types of Behavior Viewed as Disruptive in this Class...*

- Talking During Lectures
- Cell Phones Ringing in the Middle of Lecture
- Arriving to Class Late
- Arguing with Other Students in the Class
- Speaking Rudely to Instructor or Classmates
- Sleeping in Class

In this Distance Learning course, disruptive behavior would include rude or disrespectful comments on the discussion board or Email. It would also include not maintaining confidentiality while on-line or while talking about a discussion at a later date.

In addition, please note that more than three (3) incidents of disruptive behavior will result in a zero for participation in your overall grade. Single incidents that are severe will result in the loss of participation credit for the course, at the discretion of the instructor.

If you have any questions regarding the Student Conduct Policy (#1-35), please refer to the Student Handbook online, or contact the Student Affairs Office at 523-5296.

#### AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Xxxxxxxx provides high quality services to students with disabilities and we encourage you to take advantage of them. Students with disabilities needing academic or physical accommodations should register with the Office of Student Accommodations. You will need to provide documentation of your disability. Please contact me if you need any assistance.

#### CHD 120 DL Checklist      FALL 2013

8/27 Last day to add/drop

9/2 College Closed Labor Day

9/6 Last day to drop with a refund

\*LC are assignments that coordinate with CHD 205 for those students who are in the Learning Community. You only have to do these assignments one time.

Your initial post on the discussion board is due on Thursday. Comments to others are due on Saturday. All other assignments are due on Saturday by midnight.

#### Week # 1 Due 8/22 and 8/24

1-Introduce yourself to the class on the Discussion Board Site provided Due 8/22– 20 points

2-Comment to at least three other people on the discussion board Due 8/24 -30 points

4-Take the VARK Learning Style Survey and write about a page explaining how this information will help you be successful in the course. Submit your Plan for Success to the instructor through Bb Due 8/24 -30 points. \*LC

5-After reading the Syllabus, watching the Introduction, and exploring this Blackboard site, take the Syllabus Quiz- 20 points. Due 8/24 \*LC

#### Week #2 Due 8/29 and 8/31

1-Read Chapter 1- The Scope and Need for Early Childhood Education

2- Post to the discussion board Due 8/29 (30 points)- What are three specific things you can do in your classroom to make it a child-oriented environment that conveys to the children that this place was meant for them?

3-Comment on what at least two other people have posted Due 8/31(20 points).

4-Write a Competency Statement To Maintain a Commitment to Professionalism and submit it through Bb Due 8/31 (50 points)

#### Week #3 Due 9/5 and 9/7

- 1- Read Chapter 2- The Children and the Power point about Milestones
- 2- Discussion board (30 points)-A parent asks you why you encourage so much play in your class. How will you explain the importance of play? Due 9/5
- 3-Reply to what at least two other people have posted (20 points). Due 9/7
- 4-Submit the Milestones activity through Bb (50points) Due 9/7

Week #4 Due 9/12 and 9/14

- 1- Read Chapter 3- The Families and the Parent Communication Power Point
- 2-Discussion Board- Messages you receive as a Child -30 points. Due 9/12
- 3- Comment to at least two other people on the discussion board -20 points Due 9/14
- 4- Write a Competency Statement- To Establish a Positive and Productive Relationship with Families and submit it through Bb -50 points Due 9/14

Week #5 Due 9/21

- 1-Read Chapter 4- The Teachers/Caregivers
- 2-Read the Introduction of Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals and Area VIII: Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development.
- 4-Write your autobiography and submit it through Bb-50 points.
- 5-Do the Competencies assignment and submit it through Bb-50 points.

9/30 deadline for Fall Graduation Applications

Week #6 Due 9/26 and 9/28

- 1-Read Chapter 5 Rational Supporting Early Childhood Education
- 2-Create a Power Point about a theorist or practitioner and post it on the discussion board- 30 points. Due 9/26
- 3-Comment on what at least two other people have posted- 20 points. Due 9/28
- 4-Take the Chapter 5 Quiz- 50 points Due 9/28

Week #7 Due 10/3 and 10/5

- 1-Read Chapter 6 Accountability, Standards and Assessment
- 2-Conduct the Anecdotal Observation and submit it through Bb-50 points \*LC Due 10/5
- 3- Read Chapter 7- The Physical Environment
- 4-Do the Discussion Board activity on Diversity-30 points Due 10/3
- 3- Comment on what at least two other people have posted- 20 points. Due 10/5

Week #8 Due 10/10 and 10/12

- 1-Read Chapter 8-Scheduling and Curriculum Planning
- 2-Do the Discussion Board activity on Transitions- 30 points Due 10/10
- 3- Comment on what at least two other people have posted – 20 points Due 10/12
- 4-Create a full day schedule and submit it through Bb (50 points) Due 10/12

October 29 Last Day to withdraw with a W

Week #9 Due 10/17 and 10/19

- 1- Read the Resources on creating developmentally appropriate activities



- 2- Choose a children's book and create a Web. Submit your web on the discussion board- 30 points. Due 10/17
- 3- Comment on what at least two other people have posted. -20 points Due 10/19
- 4- Do your Curriculum Integration Plan and submit it through Bb-50 points. Due 10/19

Week #10 Due 10/24 and 10/26

- 1-Read Chapters 9 Creative Development through the Curriculum, the PowerPoint on Creativity and the lesson on writing lesson plans
- 2- Discussion Board (30 points) What games or activities did you enjoy as a child? Due 10/24
3. Comment on what at least two other people have posted (20 points) Due 10/26
- 3-Write a Lesson Plan using the format provided and submit it through Bb- 50 points Due 10/26

Week #11 Due 10/31 and 11/2

- 1-Read Chapter 10 Physical Development through the Curriculum
- 2-Discussion Board (30 points) What are two noncompetitive activities that promote gross motor development and two that promote fine motor development? Due 10/31
- 3-Comment on what at least two other people have posted (20 points) Due 11/2
- 3-Read *Teacher Health, Safety and Nutritional Practices* in Virginia's Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals and do the activity. Submit it through Bb. (50 points) Due 11/2

Week # 12 Due 11/7 and 11/9

- 1-Read Chapter 11 Cognitive Development through the Curriculum and Chapter 12 Language Development through the Curriculum
- 2- Discussion Board (30 points) Observe a teacher engaged in spontaneous conversation with young children. What techniques does he or she use? Does she ask open-ended questions? How are the children encouraged to interact with each other as well as with the teacher? Did you hear examples of language play or humor? Due 11/7
- 3-Comment on what at least two other people have posted (20 points) Due 11/9
- 4- -Write a Lesson Plan using the format provided and submit it through Bb- 50 points Due 11/9

Week 13 Due 11/16

- 1-Read Chapter 13 Social Development through the Curriculum
- 2-Create a lesson plan for Social or Emotional Development (50 points) \*LC and submit it through Bb
- 3-Do the Reflecting feelings activity and submit it through Bb (50 points) \*LC

Week #14 Due 11/21 and 11/23

- 1- Read Chapters 14 Guiding Routines and Group Activities
- 2- Create a Teacher Survival File and submit it through Bb (50 points) Due 11/23 \*LC
- 3- Discussion Board (30 points) Choose one of the "Key Questions" on page 390 to answer. Due 10/21

4- Comment on what at least two other people have posted (20 points) Due 11/23

No Assignment Due 11/30

11/28-12/1 Fall Break College closes at noon 11/27

Assignments due for Week 14 will be graded before 12/7

Week #15 Due 12/7 and 12/12 (Note the change in days)

- 1- Review the resources for creating documentation boards
- 2- Use one of your lesson plans and do the activity with children
- 3- Create a documentation board, take a picture of it and post the picture on the discussion board- 100 points. Due 12/7
- 5- Comment on what at least three other people have posted (20 points extra credit) Due 12/12

## APPENDIX L

## SOC 200 FINAL REFLECTION PAPER

For your “Final Exam” in this class, you will write a reflection paper that will be worth 50 possible points. **This paper is REQUIRED regardless of your other points in class. Failure to submit a paper will result in the lowering of your semester grade by one full letter grade.** While there is no specific length requirement, it should be evident that a “good” or “excellent” paper will provide comprehensive coverage of the areas below! As a guideline, consider that the 20-point reflective essays have needed to be at least 450 words. Comparably, “good to excellent” final papers will probably average around 1000 words.

When I grade your paper, I will look to see that you have addressed the areas outlined below. The grading rubric (in a separate file/handout) will help you to understand more specifically how points will be awarded for each of these areas. When writing this paper, you should consider and reflect on all of the work and assignments you have done during the semester, and all of the readings and class resources. You CANNOT just copy/paste or duplicate what you wrote in the Reflective Essays, but those should be helpful to look over as you consider how you were impacted by the material during the semester.

**Description of your Growth and Learning during the semester (15 pts possible)**--In this first part of your paper, I want to hear about the development of your sociological imagination during the semester. What did you come in knowing or thinking about sociology and how has that/has that changed during the semester? You should provide examples of how you understand yourself, your relationships, social interactions, our society, social issues (local, national, or global) differently as a result of taking sociology. To go beyond “average,” I am looking for inclusion of ORIGINAL examples of learning and understanding beyond just a restatement of textbook or class material “facts” and information.

**Discussion of your Favorite Chapter(s) of the semester (15 pts possible)**—Out of all the chapters covered this semester, which were your favorites and why? Which did you feel were most beneficial, educational, enlightening, interesting, etc. I want to hear what kinds of things you learned from that chapter/those chapters (not just listed facts from the chapters!) and how they have been beneficial to you or impacted your thinking and understanding. Again, original examples are always a wonderful way to show that you have developed a sociological perspective—and will get you more points!

**Most and Least Beneficial Aspects of Class Work (10 pts possible)**-- I would like to hear what you felt were the most useful, educational, interesting, and/or beneficial aspects of class work, and which ones you feel did not add much to your understanding or to the experience of learning sociology. Please consider everything...the Chapter Quizzes, the Reflective Essays, the Research Projects, the Discussion Exercises, and this Final Reflection. Don’t just list them, but tell me WHY. I would also appreciate any feedback regarding how a “not-so-great” assignment or exercise might be improved and made more useful for future students. Finally, please provide

feedback about our class text, and let me know if you used any of the chapter resources in Blackboard—the practice quizzes, flashcards, interactive exercises, chapter outlines, PowerPoints, etc. If you didn't use any of these resources, please tell me why.

**Most significant “ah-ha” moment you experienced during the semester (5 pts possible)**--If you had to single out one major thing that you learned or realized that was most important or relevant to you during the semester, what would that be and why?

**Grammar/Mechanics (5 pts possible\*)**--This is pretty self-explanatory! College-level writing is ALWAYS expected and required. You should proofread and spellcheck. As always, if you quote or paraphrase source material (that INCLUDES our textbook), you MUST properly document and credit your source. If you don't, it's PLAGIARISM\*, which will result in a zero on the paper. Let me know if you have questions about that.

## APPENDIX M

## SOC 200 FINAL REFLECTION PAPER RUBRIC

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Description of your growth and learning during the semester (15 pts possible)	Very brief and vague discussion of learning. (0-9 pts.)	A very basic description of learning throughout the semester with a few specific examples, but also a number of vague, general statements. (10-11 pts.)	A more thorough discussion of learning with several specific, original examples. (12-13 pts.)	A thorough, thoughtful discussion of learning throughout the semester with specific original examples throughout. (14-15 pts.)
Favorite Chapter(s) and Why (15 pts possible)	Minimal discussion with no real original thoughts or observations regarding why the chapter(s) was/were the most significant. (0-9 pts.)	More comprehensive, but still fairly general discussion. "Facts" are presented instead of discussion of why the chapters were selected as favorite/beneficial. (10-11 pts.)	Good discussion with specific reasons presented regarding why and how the chapters selected were most meaningful. (12-13 pts.)	Excellent discussion with specific reasons presented, along with original examples of why the chapters were the most beneficial/favorite. (14-15 pts.)
Most and Least Beneficial Aspects of Class Work (10 pts possible)	No real discussion, just listing. (0-5 pts.)	Listing of the assignments/aspects of class work with some discussion regarding why they were selected. (6-7 pts.)	More comprehensive discussion of why the chosen assignments/types of class work were beneficial or not. (8 pts.)	Excellent discussion with specific examples of how/why that assignment or aspect of class work either did or did not facilitate learning. (9-10 pts.)
Most significant "ah-ha" you experienced during	Just a vague sentence or two! (0-1 pts.)	Average description of something general learned—more a presentation of a	Nice description of how something from the semester sparked	Excellent, concise description of how something from the

the semester. (5 pts possible)		“fact” or two learned during the semester. (2-3 pts.)	learning and understanding. (4 pts.)	semester provided a new sense of understanding or awareness. (5 pts.)
Grammar/Mechanics (5 pts possible) *	Numerous errors throughout that detract from ability to understand the content. (0-1 pts.)	Several errors throughout the paper that negatively affect readability and understanding. (2-3pts.)	A few errors throughout the paper, but minimal effect on appreciation of the work. (4 pts.)	Virtually error- free (5 pts.)

\*As always, plagiarism will result in a zero on the paper!

## APPENDIX N

## SOCIOLOGY 200 RESEARCH PROJECT GUIDELINES

**Research Project #1: Choose one of the four projects outlined below:**

**Research Project Choice #1: An Exercise in Ethnomethodology** (This assignment links most to material from Chapters 1 and 2)

Chapter one describes the field of ethnomethodology—a subfield of Interactionism—and how ethnomethodologists often study the “reality” that we are assumed to share by violating minor norms to see if and how others respond. For this assignment you will be doing your own exercise in ethnomethodology! Keep in mind rules and ethics for conducting research (Ch.2) and that being an ethnomethodologist means violating only MINOR social norms (folkways—not mores or laws. You will not be doing anything that endangers you or anyone else, or results in you or anyone else getting in trouble or getting arrested. So...if you call me from jail asking me to come bail you out because you got arrested for doing this assignment, I will not come and get you. If you are in jail, you did the assignment WRONG!!

OK, on to the assignment specifics:

Step One: Deciding Which \*Minor Norm(s) to Violate—Figure out what you want to do, where you want to do it, when, etc. Usually violating one norm is sufficient, but if you don’t get enough data, you may need to repeat or choose more than one norm. **In your write up, tell me what you did and why you chose that norm/those norms to violate.**

Step Two: Conducting Your Research/Collecting Data—Violate the minor norm(s) you decided on, and observe as carefully as you can if and how people react. Jot down your observations as soon as possible after completing your “violation,” and **note any differences in how people of different social statuses** (age, sex, race/ethnicity, social class, strangers versus people who know you, etc.) react. **In your write-up you need to describe reactions in as detailed a way as possible, remember that as you gather your data!**

Step Three: Analysis of your Data—**Write-up your findings (include information from Step 1 and Step 2), analyzing what happened and why you think it happened.** For example, why do you think you got the reactions that you did, and why might there have been differences in the reactions based on social factors (age, sex, social class, etc.)? If you didn’t get the kind of reaction that you anticipated, how would you explain that? Can “no reaction” be a reaction?

Step Four: Personal Commentary and Conclusions—**Share your thoughts regarding how you felt doing this exercise and what you learned about “shared reality” and pressure to conform. Can you see value in the subfield of ethnomethodology?** Some people experience “culture shock” when they are confronted with things out of the ordinary. Please **describe a**

**situation where you have experienced culture shock.** Finally, please **comment on anything else relevant that you learned from doing this exercise.**

*\*Some examples of minor norm violations include: “doing nothing” in a public place (see the article in the “Ch.1 folder” in the “Chapter Resources” area of Blackboard); violating space/distance-zone norms, violating eye contact norms; violating elevator-behavior norms; answering the normally auto-response, “How are you?” question with a lengthy explanation; wearing something inappropriate (be VERY careful with this one if you choose it); doing a “random act of kindness;” there are lots of other possibilities. If you are unsure whether your norm violation is just a folkway/is appropriate, please talk to me beforehand and I’ll let you know!*

**Research Project Choice #2: Analyzing mass media and popular culture: “comparative media usage patterns”** (This assignment links most to material from Chapters 2 and 3.)

This assignment requires you to do original sociological research, using methods and concepts covered in the course. Please refer to **Chapter 2** of the textbook and your class notes for instructions on how to conduct social research. For this assignment, you will be conducting your own research about media usage in everyday life. Your task is twofold: first you will get some practice in constructing and administering surveys as a method of data collection. Then you will do a preliminary analysis of your data and discover something for yourself about the patterns of media usage among those who participate in your pilot study.

Step 1: Deciding which Aspects of Media Use you want to study--Beyond acknowledging the increasing number of hours that Americans spend using media (books, magazines, TV, cell phones, video games, CDs, DVDs, iPods, the Internet, Kindles, etc.), we want to understand more about the role that the media plays in these people’s lives. What do you consider an interesting or important aspect of media usage to study? I would doing a preliminary search of research (journal or research database search) that has been done regarding media usage to get some ideas and see what has already been examined (literature review!).

Step 2: Selecting a Sample of the Population—Do you wish to study teenagers? college students? certain groups? women? For a small project like this a sample of 15-20 is sufficient.

Step 3: Writing and formatting your questionnaire or interview questions—When writing your survey questions, consider things like:

1. What kind of media devices are people using? For example, do they use books, television, radio, iPods, CDs, DVDs, the Internet, video games, Kindles, MMORPGS?
2. Do different groups prefer different types of media?
3. How many different kinds of devices do people have access to or own?
4. How much money do individuals spend on media-related activities?
5. How do age, education, gender, ethnicity, or religion influence media usage?
6. What else do people do while using media devices? Do they work, eat, clean, drive, exercise, study, or even sleep? Based on what it is that you specifically want to know/understand, come up with some questions of your own too.



Step 4: Administering the Survey to the Individuals in Your Sample—You won’t have to record anything in this step because you will have the actual questionnaires or interview notes to refer to.

Step 5: Analyzing the data Collected in the Survey—For each question, tally the results so that you can see the trends in the responses.

Step 6: Presenting Your Findings—In your write up, go through each step—**tell me what you chose to focus on and why** (and if you had a specific hypothesis), **tell me how you chose your sample, how many were included in the sample, and how representative your sample is or isn’t, report your findings. Tell me if your data supported your research assumptions/hypothesis? Do an online search** (journal articles or research databases) and **comment on whether your results were consistent with other research that may exist with regard to this topic.** Finally, **comment on your experience being a researcher** (For example: What did you learn about doing research/the research process? What did you find most challenging?, etc.). **With your write-up, be sure to provide me with a copy of your survey and your data tally sheet.**

**Research Project Choice #3—Analyzing Mass Media and Popular Culture: “Norm-Breaking on TV”** (This assignment ties most to material from Chapters 5 and 6.)

It’s clear that deviance is a fascinating subject not only for sociologists, but for television viewers as well. In recent years, shows have begun to feature people breaking every kind of social norm from folkways to taboos.

Consider the following: Why is there so much deviance on television? Are these shows merely entertainment? Or is something more going on here? When we watch them, do we feel morally superior? Do we get some kind of vicarious thrill? Does the experience reinforce our social norms or break them down? This Assignment asks you to do a content analysis of a particular TV show, and to document and analyze the ways in which deviant behavior is portrayed.

Step 1: Collecting Data--Choose a show that is on DVD or online, or simply record an episode off TV so that you can watch it multiple times.

Step 2: Analyzing Data—In your analysis essay, address the following questions:

1. What program did you select, and who is the intended audience for this program? Why did you choose it?
2. What kinds of deviance are featured? Give specific examples of situations, scenes, dialogue, or characters, and **explain why they are examples of deviance and how they would be classified** according to the types of deviance recognized by sociologists (i.e., folkway violations, status offenses, white-collar crimes, index crimes, vice crimes, etc.).
3. Is the deviance celebrated or condemned, or both? **Explain.**
4. With regard to WHY the person or people are deviant, select one example of deviance from the program and **explain how you think it ties to theories from Chapter 5 or Chapter 6** regarding why people may choose to conform to or deviate from norms. In

other words, how does that theory help us understand why the person or people were deviant/did not conform.

5. How does it make you feel to watch the program?
6. What effect do you think the show has on other viewers (younger versus older, males versus females, racial/ethnic groups?).
7. Do you think the program reinforces or challenges prevailing social norms? **Explain.**

#### **Research Project Choice #4—Mini-Research Paper**

If you don't like any of the three suggested choices for the 1<sup>st</sup> Research Project, you can choose to do a mini-research paper, sociologically examining an issue that interests you.

You MUST get topic approval from me in advance, and must choose a topic/issue that relates to information from Chapters 1 through 6.

You must consult and incorporate information from at least three sources besides our textbook (Wikipedia CANNOT be used as a source!), and at least one of those sources must be a professional, peer-reviewed journal.

Your paper must include incorporation of relevant sociological terms and concepts. In your paper, tell me why you choose the topic/issue that you did, what your source information revealed about the issue—noting any similarities or differences between what each source reported, and how your findings tie to text/class information.

## APPENDIX O

### SOCIOLOGY 200 SYLLABUS

*“Education is not filling a pail, but a lighting of a fire.” -- William Butler Yeats, Irish poet and dramatist*

#### Welcome to

#### PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY (SOC.200.02PR or SOC.200.03PR)

Fall 2013 Semester

Meeting in room xxx xxxx Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

#### INSTRUCTOR:

**WHERE AND HOW TO CONTACT ME:** My office on the Parham Road campus is in room 318 of Georgiadis Hall. My office hours are MWF 7:30--8:45 a.m., and 11:00 a.m.-1:00, and Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m., and Thursdays, 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Feel free to come by if you have questions or concerns. Other days/times may be available by appointment. The best way to reach me is by e-mail (xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx), as I am on the computer a lot during the day, or phone at (804) 523-5497. You can leave a voice message if you call when I am out of the office. E-mail and phone messages will be returned within 48 hours—usually sooner.

**TEXT REQUIRED:** Ferris & Stein, *The Real World*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Norton: 2011.  
ISBN: 978-0-393-91217-3

**PREREQUISITES/CO-REQUISITE:** Any developmental reading/writing courses required by placement testing need to be completed before taking SOC.200, or concurrently according to policy. Ideally, you should be ENG.111 ready (you do not have to have taken ENG.111 prior to taking this class). Please let me know if you have questions.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is an examination of concepts and themes central to the study of sociology. I see my primary task as one of facilitator and motivator. I want you to be or become an enthusiastic learner! I want you to see and understand the relevance and importance of the material you are reading/learning in class. I want to assist you in becoming an independent learner and a critical thinker (while imparting knowledge about sociology, of course!). I have worked to devise class activities and assignments that you will find sufficiently challenging, useful, and educational (also interesting, and hopefully enjoyable)!

**GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Attention will be focused on the ability to meaningfully use sociological concepts and theories in oral and written communications; to abstractly conceptualize social and cultural phenomena; to derive tentative conclusions based upon interrelated facts, rather than opinions; and to apply sociological concepts to one's own self and life. All of these skills are a part of the development of critical thinking—very valuable!!

Resources for each chapter are provided in Blackboard to help you build your sociological imagination and complete the course requirements. A copy of the XXXXXXXX SOC.200 Course Outline can be found in the “Syllabus & Class Policies” area of Blackboard.

### COURSE FEATURES:

- A. **Attendance/Participation (50 points possible)**—Attendance is REALLY important, and research shows that one of the best things you can do with regard to your semester grade is to go to class and pay attention during class...besides, we'll miss you if you aren't in class. Per college policy, I am required to submit Attendance Certification forms twice a semester. Students who have never attended class by the first submission date will be administratively dropped. Students who have stopped attending prior to the second submission date will be administratively withdrawn. As you can see, fifty of your semester points are tied to attendance/participation (days aside from the Discussion Exercise days which have points tied to those). Best advice is to come to class every day! If you miss class it is YOUR responsibility to talk with me about the absence. Missing class does not excuse you from class work or due dates unless you have been granted an extension (rare) that has been discussed with and approved by me. Fifty of your semester points are tied to attendance—missing class, coming late, leaving early, or being disruptive in class (i.e. carrying on private conversations, having your cell phone out, etc.) will result in a loss of attendance/participation points.
  
- B. **Chapter Reflections (100 points possible)**-- For each chapter that we cover this semester, you will complete a brief “Chapter Reflection.” These are intended to motivate you to READ the chapter BEFORE we discuss that chapter in class so that we can all have common ground information, which will facilitate better understanding and better class discussion. To that end, these CANNOT be submitted more than 10 minutes late on the day due (and points will be deducted if submitted late within that 10 minutes) and cannot be submitted via e-mail or Blackboard—that's an attendance incentive! **They are due, and will be taken up at the beginning of class on the day that we are scheduled to start discussion of each new chapter.** We are covering 12 chapters this semester. Each chapter reflection is worth 10 possible points, and your “best 10” reflections will officially count at the end of the semester for a total of 100 possible semester points. Doing extras can get you extra credit points (see “Late Work/Extra Credit” section in this Syllabus and/or in Blackboard).
  
- C. **Chapter Quizzes (100 points possible)**—For each chapter covered this semester, you will do a 20-question chapter quiz, each worth 10 points. All of the chapter quizzes are loaded into Blackboard already and can be found in the “Chapter Quizzes” folder in the “Assignments/Class Work” area. The quizzes are multiple choice and True/False. There is a **45-minute time limit** to complete the quiz, and it must be completed once it has been begun. You may use your book/resources to complete the quizzes, but can't navigate away from the quiz once you begin. They **MUST BE TAKEN BY THE POSTED DEADLINES** or the score becomes a zero. **There are NO MAKE-UPS for these quizzes and they cannot be done late.** The quizzes are an incentive to read the chapter each week, so the deadlines will be adhered to without exception. We are covering twelve chapters, but there are only ten “officially” required quizzes. That means that you can miss doing two and it won't hurt you!

If you do all twelve, I'll drop your two lowest quiz scores at the end of the semester. Since **I don't reset quizzes** for "computer problems" or user errors, these "extras" can help in those instances. There is a Practice Quiz in each chapter folder that can be completed before taking the graded quiz. It should give you a good indication as to whether you are ready to take the graded quiz! After each quiz deadline has passed, each quiz will be made "available" again so that you can review your answers, the correct answers, and any feedback.

- D. **Assignments (100 points possible)**—For some of our class topics this semester, you'll do a 20-point take-home assignment that involves thinking about and applying class material. You'll notice that there's an "extra" assignment. That means you can "opt out" of one and it won't hurt you. If you do all six, the extra assignment can count as extra credit (EITHER an extra Assignment, or extra Chapter Reflections will count for up to 20 points of extra credit—whichever results in the most points. See "Late Work/Extra Credit section). These assignments may be submitted late, but no more than a week past the due date. Two points will be deducted for each day the assignment late within that week, with one point lost if turned in after the assignment is taken up at the beginning of class on the due date.
- E. **Discussion Exercises (100 points possible)**— For other course topics we'll do a structured Discussion Exercise (5 @ 20 pts. each). You must attend class and participate to get points AND must bring brief answers to questions assigned in advance of each discussion. If you come in late on a Discussion Exercise day, points will be deducted. There are two "extra" scheduled Discussion Exercises, so that means missing a few won't hurt your grade—this helps in the event of unavoidable, excused absences. Discussion Exercises cannot be made up. Your "best 5" Discussion Exercise scores will count at the end of the semester..
- F. **Final Reflection Paper (50 points possible)**— At the end of the semester, you'll write a paper reflecting on your learning during the course of the semester. This will serve as your "final exam." Information about the Final Reflection, along with a submission area can be found in the "Final Reflection Paper" folder in the "Assignments/Class Work" area of Blackboard. The Final Reflection Papers will be due on our exam day for the semester and will NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE.
- G. **Evaluating Your Progress/Performance**—The Chapter Reflections, Quizzes, Assignments, Discussion Exercises, Attendance/Participation, and the Final Reflection Paper total **500 possible points**. You can always monitor your points/grade in class by checking "Your Grades" in Blackboard (click on the "Your Grades" menu button in Blackboard—you will only be able to see YOUR points). I will strive to post grades for class work within a week, and no more than two weeks, after the due date. Quiz scores will be immediately posted to Blackboard and visible in "Your Grades" once submitted. I will provide you with an estimate of your grade at midterm that will be posted in Blackboard. **Your final grade will be calculated using the standard grading scale: 90-100% of the total possible points = A, 80-89% = B, and so on. IT IS MY POLICY NOT TO GIVE INDIVIDUAL EXTRA CREDIT WORK**, but everyone has opportunity to get up to 40 extra credit points in the ways specified in Blackboard (see the "Late Work and Extra Credit" information in the CLASS POLICIES area) and on this Syllabus. Feel free to talk with me at any point in the semester if you're feeling confused, overwhelmed, or concerned about your grade.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Academic Honesty**--Please be aware that, per college policy (see College Catalog/Student Handbook), instances of **Academic Dishonesty** (cheating, collusion, plagiarism) will result in, AT MINIMUM, a zero on the work in question, and could result in an F in the class. Students who violate the Academic Honesty policy will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs. Students who commit multiple violations (in the same class or different classes) are likely to suffer more serious sanctions from the college. If you have any questions about the Academic Honesty policy, talk to me! There are some wonderful resources in the “Class Policies” area of Blackboard about avoiding plagiarism and how to properly cite source material.

**Electronic Devices in the Classroom**—Per college policy, electronic devices (laptops, cell-phones of any kind, gaming devices, iPods, iPads, etc.) are **PROHIBITED** in the classroom. **Your cell phone should NOT be out on the desk next to you or in your lap.** If you have it with you, have it put away. In a technologically-advanced society, it is important to be technologically literate, but it’s also important to know how and when to DISCONNECT from technology. I will be using our classroom computer so we will be “connected” and will use technology during class. Violation of class policy with regard to use of electronic devices during class will result in loss of points and/or dismissal from the class. If I see your cell phone out, I will take it and return it to you at the end of class, or I will ask you to leave class. For repeat offenses, will be asked to leave class and an incident report will be filed with the Office of Student Affairs. It is likely that you will be required to meet with the Dean of Student Affairs before being allowed back in class. Multiple offenses result in loss of opportunity to receive any extra credit points in the class and may result in you having your own “special” seat at the front of class for the remainder of the semester.

**Student Accommodations**—It is the policy of XXXXXXXX to comply with Section 504 of the National Rehabilitation Acts of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, (physical, learning, or any other kind of disability), please call, e-mail, or make an appointment during my office hours to discuss this, and be sure to submit your Accommodation Notification Form to me. If you are not familiar with how to acquire this form, please visit the Office of Student Accommodations in Bldg. B, room 209. Students are required to go through the Office of Student Accommodations first to request service. You can click the link below to access XXXXXXXX information about Student Accommodations and Services. This link is also found in the CLASS POLICIES area, and in the STUDEN HELP area of Blackboard: <http://www.xxxxxxxx.edu/studentaffairs/accom.htm>.

**Late Work and Extra Credit**—In most cases, late work is not accepted. The Chapter Quizzes, Chapter Reflections, and Final Reflection cannot be submitted after the deadlines, nor can answers for the Discussion Exercises. The 20-point Assignments may be submitted late, within a week of the due date, with two points deducted per day, and one points deducted if submitted late on the due date. I don't give individual extra credit work, but all students have opportunity to get up to 40 total extra credit points in the following ways: 1. Do the “bonus” introductory assignments the first week (**15 points** possible), 2. Do all six of the 20-pt. Assignments and the extra will count as extra credit, **OR** the two extra Chapter Reflections can be used as extra credit

(20 points possible) and 3. Do the evaluation survey at the end of the semester (5 points possible).

**My Expectations for Your Work**—I expect college-level writing on all of your work. You are strongly encouraged to run Spellcheck and should be proofreading all work before submission. College-level writing means that you can't submit work in all capital or all lowercase letters, you must use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. I expect you to submit work on time. I expect you to ask me questions or contact me if you have concerns about the course. I expect you to develop your sociological imagination, and hopefully have some fun in the process!

**Additional Class Information**—Check the Blackboard site for additional information and course resources! I regularly post reminder announcements and send “nag” e-mails! The CLASS POLICIES in Blackboard includes information about attendance, academic honesty, student accommodations, extra credit/late work, etc. Need assistance? If you start feeling overwhelmed, confused, or concerned, always feel free to call, e-mail, or come and talk with me. You can also utilize my “online” office in Blackboard to ask a question at any time. Calls or e-mails that require a response will receive one within 48 hours (usually much quicker than that!). I will work to grade your assignments and post grades as quickly as possible. You can expect that grades will be posted within a week of the due date for submitted class work. Remember also that the Academic Support Center is available for tutoring assistance, assistance with coursework, study skills, reading comprehension, note-taking skills, etc.

***SPECIAL NOTE:*** *I would like our class to be informal, relaxed, fun, and educational. Anytime you have a question, please ask—in class, or contact me by e-mail, or phone, or post a question or comment to my online office in the DISCUSSION BOARD area of Blackboard. Don't ever be afraid to contribute to class discussions. I may call on you if I feel like your voice is “missing” in our discussions, but I think you'll find that I am not a scary person to respond to. You may have information or life experiences that will enhance the class for everyone. We will discuss some controversial issues this semester. It is not my business or my intent to tell you WHAT to think; rather it is my goal to make sure you have the skills that will allow you to critically evaluate information and form your own opinions based on objective information. As your instructor, I will make every effort to grade and post assignment scores as quickly as possible and to provide you with feedback about your work during the semester.*

“Education is hanging around until you've caught on.” Robert Frost, American poet

**\*\*Syllabus and Schedule are subject to change if necessary. Any change will be explained in advance.**

## VITA

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**Education**

Ph.D. in English (New Media), Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia

M. A. in English (English and American Literature), Southern Illinois University Edwardsville,  
 August 2005

B. S. in English (English Education), Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, English,  
 December 2002

**Current Administrative Appointments**

*Assistant Program Head*, English Department, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, J.  
 Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Fall 2011 – Present.

*Editor for Inquiry: The Journal of the Virginia Community Colleges*. Summer 2014 – present.

**Current Teaching Appointment**

*Associate Professor*, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Richmond, Virginia, School of  
 Humanities and Social Sciences, August 2013-Present

**Recent Presentations**

Presenter. “Digital Technologies in the Classroom: Examining Professors’ Perspectives of  
 Multimodal Pedagogy.” VCCS New Horizons 2015. Roanoke, Virginia. April 2015.

With Rochelle Rodrigo, et al. “Multimodal Composing on Mobile Devices.” 65<sup>th</sup> Annual  
 Convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication.  
 Indianapolis, Indiana, March 2014.

With Ghazala Hashmi, Hong Wu, and Denise Woetzel. “Teaching Research Skills: A  
 Collaboration Among Peers for Student Success.” VCCS New Horizons 2013. Roanoke,  
 Virginia, April 2013.

**Recent Publications**

Beth Bensen-Barber, Ghazala Hashmi, Hong Wu, and Denise Woetzel. “Aligning Course  
 Outcomes, Instructional Resources, and Assessment: Cross-Disciplinary Efforts to  
 Impact and Evaluate Information Literacy.” *Information Literacy—Not Just for  
 Librarians: Issues in Assessment, Teaching, and Application*. (publication forthcoming).

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