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Stuck in the Last Ice Age: Tracing the Role of Document Design in the Teaching Materials of Writing Courses

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STUCK IN THE LAST ICE AGE: TRACING THE ROLE OF DOCUMENT DESIGN IN THE TEACHING MATERIALS OF WRITING COURSES

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ABSTRACT

STUCK IN THE LAST ICE AGE: TRACING THE ROLE OF DOCUMENT DESIGN IN THE TEACHING MATERIALS OF WRITING COURSES

Erin Duffy Pastore
Old Dominion University, 2014
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Teaching materials play vital roles in writing classrooms, yet they are understudied genres in English Studies. Teaching materials are inherently visual genres; the document design choices made by teachers illuminate values held about writing and writing classrooms. They are understudied genres, in part, because of the feminized position of composition. A professional writing investigation of the document design of teaching materials offers opportunities to rectify this. I developed a technofeminine genre tracing methodology focused on exploring the visual convention choices made by teachers and how these visual conventions are interpreted by students across the three levels of activity: the activity-driven macroscopic level, the action-based mesoscopic level, and the operation-embedded microscopic level.

Two case studies were conducted with two composition teachers and one section of composition students each. Teachers were interviewed, observed, and their documents for this section were collected. Students were observed and surveyed twice during the semester. By considering how external practical, discourse community, and rhetorical factors influence teaching material design at the macroscopic and mesoscopic levels, I found that this resulted in a deep grip of print based, microscopic choices. One external practical factor, technology, is changing the evolutionary path of teaching materials. It is a messy

evolution during which teachers are trying to blend traditional teaching material design with new exigencies and technologies. Conclusions indicate that we cab address the feminized and understudied position of teaching materials and their design by making use of the principles of deconstruction by asymmetries as articulated by Louise Wetherbee Phelps. This schema of conditions, structures, and exemplification considers what paths forward exist. Institutional critique of the materiality of teaching materials in local contexts is a means to promote the conditions for critical collaboration within writing programs. Pedagogical applications of usability and rhetorical design to teaching materials, as Susan Miller-Cochran and Rochelle Rodrigo advocate for online writing instruction, can create structures that nurture and sustain teachers and students in writing programs. Finally, ethical leadership and community initiatives are intrinsically necessary to establish and maintain the kind of relationship building necessary to promote active and evolving design work.

This dissertation is dedicated to my best friend and husband,
Christopher Pastore.

I could not have done this without your love and support.

"Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom."
-Shakespeare

"And looking to the Heaven, that bends above you,
How oft! I bless the Lot, that made me love you."
-Coleridge

"In my life,
I love you more"
-Lennon-McCartney

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and the design work they do can fit in the bigger picture of professional writing scholarship and pedagogy.

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CHAPTER ONE

BUT, DID YOU READ THE SYLLABUS?

A RHETORICAL INVESTIGATION OF TEACHING MATERIALS

Teacher humor has long been the bedrock of faculty meetings and teachers' lounges of all kinds; these jokes are commonplaces that provide easy routes to collegial chuckles. And in the current age of social media, there is now a predictable wave of such humor across Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and others around the times that grades are due, intended to buoy the spirits of thousands of teachers wading through a backlog of papers and tests. In figure 1.1, below, I present an example that appeared in my Facebook newsfeed recently.

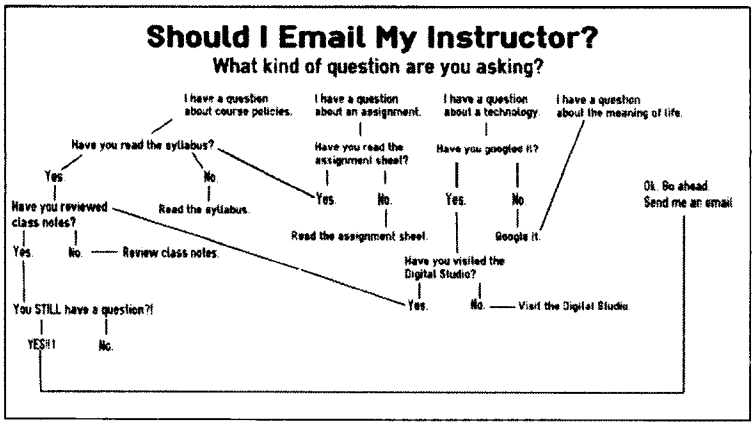

Figure 1.1. Flowchart about when to email an instructor

When I read it, I did not know the author, where s/he teaches, or what subject(s) s/he teaches, but still, I laughed. After, I started to scroll on, then stopped. Re-read.

At the risk of belaboring the humor, I will try to explicate the moves that caught my eye that evening. The flowchart starts with a presumed central question, "Should I Email My Instructor?," imagining a student sitting at a computer or with smartphone in hand. The chart is then developed as a hypothetical exchange between instructor and student. The instructor voice in the flowchart poses four scenarios in response to the student, with "I have a question about..." and the options: "course policies," "an assignment," "a technology," or "the meaning of life." While the fourth only points to the answer, "Google it," the other three lead the imagined student through a series of possibilities. It is in the first two scenarios that I am most interested; in both cases, the first move is to ask if the student has "read the syllabus?," or "read the assignment sheet?" If the imagined student answers "No," they are directed to read the document in question first. In the "I have a question about course policies" scenario, the imagined student is then asked, "Have you reviewed the class notes?" If "No," they are directed to do so, but if they answer "Yes," they are greeted with the almost exasperated response, "You STILL have a question?!" The student does have her own exasperated option, "YES!![1]," but only at this point is granted permission, "Ok. Go ahead. Send me an email." In the "I have a question about an assignment" scenario, they are then directed to the "Have you read the syllabus?" branch if they answer "Yes," and face the same choices described above. My own teaching experiences prompt me to laugh at this exchange because I too have been deluged with student emails, particularly when due dates near, that contain many questions that I perceive could have

[1] It is a common World Wide Web trope to deliberately place typos in online discussions as a tonal move, implying that the writer was too frustrated, or another extreme psychological state,

been answered if the students had more closely examined the provided teaching materials, syllabi and assignment sheets.

But, my experiences as a student receiving teaching materials and as a writing tutor helping students navigate others' teaching materials prompt me to question assumptions I make about my own: are my teaching materials as good as I think they are? Is it reasonable to assume that by using my syllabus or my assignment sheets a student could locate and apply the pedagogical content? I try to design materials that are visually functional and present a professional teaching ethos, but I know I have made mistakes in the past and will likely make new mistakes in the future. The flowchart writer above acknowledges this by providing that exasperated student response; this is because most teachers have extensive experience in the student position and many are empathetic to the struggles students face. I believe that careful, reflective, and evolving approaches to designing our teaching materials could help us, as teachers, ensure that the tools students take home with them are scaffolded not only in their pedagogical content, but that the design of the documents itself scaffolds the students' learning experiences.

This chapter lays out the exigency of this research project and articulates the theoretical frames that were used to describe and analyze the results of the investigation. I approach this by first considering the role that teaching materials, as professional genres, play in classroom activity systems by drawing on literature from across English studies. I introduce the role that visual design plays in all texts, particularly those used for professional purposes, and consider why the document design of teaching materials has not been more thoroughly studied. While many aspects of teaching materials could be considered as

starting points for exploring how they function within a writing course genre ecology, the document design, with its attendant choices of visual conventions, serves as an excellent one because it is these markings that are among the first to define a text as belonging to a particular genre. I develop an argument for understanding the important and illuminating roles that visual rhetoric and document design play in how genres function. Then, I try to complicate this picture by exploring feminist composition scholarship on the "feminization" of the field for what assumptions about teaching materials are exposed. Finally, I offer what activity theory and genres tracing schemas can do to help question these assumptions. Together, this literature comes together to establish the premise that teaching materials play vital pedagogical and rhetorical roles in our writing classrooms and that a deeper consideration of their document design could illuminate many assumptions writing scholars, teachers, and students make about writing classroom activity systems.

Teaching Materials as Evolving Genres

Teaching materials, such as syllabi, assignment sheets, rubrics, and other related handouts and resources, are texts that exist primarily to scaffold students as they work towards course objectives. Despite how these materials are traditionally described, they are not single-authored repositories of everything a student needs to create acceptable (i.e. passing) outcomes within the activity system. Rather, they are ever-evolving tools that have been influenced in a myriad of ways, and will be interpreted differently by collaborators, such as teachers and students, with different epistemologies, histories, and relationships both within and without the activity system of that particular writing course.

Therefore, because these documents are tools, it is important to investigate them as related genres that both shape and are shaped by the larger activity system.

Genre theory, as a starting point for this consideration, identifies genres as types of artifacts developed for achieving particular common purposes. Teaching materials are genres that have been evolving for many centuries, and may vary depending on cultural, geographic, and political factors. Charles Bazerman, in "Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems: How Texts Organize Activity and People "outlines the development of genres and their corresponding features as a means of "coordinat[ing] our speech acts;" this is critically important in written communication because often there is a distance and delay between writer and audience (311). Genres are typified over time in an oscillating by-people-for-people-with-people communal writing process (Bazerman 316). At the center of genre production and use, Bazerman argues, are

> . . . psycho-social recognition phenomena that are parts of processes of socially organized activities . . . Genres arise in social processes of people trying to understand each other well enough to coordinate activities and share meanings for their practical purposes. (317)

Teaching materials, such as syllabi and assignment sheets, "coordinate activities" by serving as records and road maps to help students understand the academic objectives they must achieve through the production of course outcomes, such as essays, presentations, and research projects. Thus, it is critical to understand the evolution of the syllabus and other teaching materials as genres influenced by a range of psycho-social recognition phenomena. In particular, Bazerman defines genre systems by illustrating the genre sets of instructors and students and notes how the two sets in turn establish how "a genre system captures the regular sequences of how one genre follows on another in the typical communication

flows of a group of people" (318). It is worth noting that teaching materials are created to support and enhance student activities when there is distance and delay between the instructor and students.

Amy Devitt, in *Writing Genres*, recounts an extensive history of genre theory in writing. She draws from the work of Carolyn Miller, John Swales, M. Bakhtin, among others, and has a clear goal of understanding how people and writing genres influence each other. Devitt extends the discussion, while drawing from Burke's nexus of contexts, to create a flexible definition of genre that conceptualizes genre as a nexus of the "context of situation, context of culture, and context of genre" (29). For Devitt, a primary weakness of Swales and others' theories of genre is, "the concept of discourse community privileges discourse above group activities, motives, and purposes; and it disguises the social collectivity that shapes the very nature of the groups and of its discourse" (39). Most importantly for the consideration of writing classroom genre ecologies, the genre as nexus concept allows us to move beyond considering the instructors and students as simply existing in the same discourse community by acknowledging the different situational, cultural, and contextual purposes which bind them to the genre. This nexus will also extend to include other people, such as former instructors, former students, writing program directors, as well as a wide variety and level of supervisors, colleagues, peers, et cetera.

Teaching materials are perceived, often mistakenly, as being wholly authored by the teacher or being wholly authored at the institutional level, but a careful consideration of writing course activity systems reveals a much more pastiched process. Paul Prior, in "How Texts Come into Being," argues that the individual writing practices and processes of collaborators in an activity system

must be examined carefully in order to understand why a particular text exists in its current form. Prior is pushing back on the traditional notion of the autonomous writer and his unique inventions of text, stating instead that even the "[w]riters themselves are only partially aware of the many debts they owe to these intertextual and intercontextual influences" (171). Potentially, teachers write and re-write syllabi and related materials at all points in this genre ecology: before the particular writing course section meets; during the semester; and after the course has been completed (and often repeated with the next course section). If an instructor is teaching multiple sections of the same course, it is possible s/he will modify syllabi and other materials differently based on particular student needs or other circumstances. These documents, "may be drafted and written in less than a minute . . . or may represent the work of an entire lifetime" (Prior 168). The reasons and motivations for developing many iterations of a syllabus will be conscious and unconscious, but all will be a part of the larger genre ecology and reflect values and practices therein. Prior's argument asks us to include Bazerman's discussions of genre systems and intertextuality within an investigation of particular instructors' writing practices and processes. Instructors, as professional writers frequently, "draw on other texts . . . as models (direct and indirect) and dialogic partners" (Prior 168). In addition, the documents' audiences, primarily students, will interpret them both consciously and unconsciously based on their own contextual experiences with similar texts. Prior describes writing as an activity which contains both the acts of "composing and inscripting," but claims that we can examine each separately (168); composing is the act of inventing textual content, while inscripting is the act of arranging content into textual form (Prior 168-9). Teaching materials, in

particular syllabi, are deeply indebted to institutional exemplars and past examples that the teacher has seen and used before, either as a teacher or a student.

The nature of the classroom activity system means that teachers rely on past experience to navigate both the composing and inscripting practices when creating teaching materials. The typification of teaching materials both can expedite the communication and work occurring within a writing course activity system and can entrench certain kinds of relationships, values, and assumptions, depending on the positioning of the person approaching them. Both of these possibilities will deeply influence the kind and quality of work done by students producing documents (outcomes) that meet the course objectives. Objectives fulfilled as outcomes are the controlling motivation for instructors and students to participate in a given writing course, and teaching materials serve as mediating artifacts in this activity. In activity theory, genres can be employed as artifacts to support activity or assessed as manifestations of the activity's outcomes. One available construct for considering how genres move in connection with other forces is to consider these genres as part of larger genre ecologies.

Clay Spinuzzi and Mark Zachry, in their article "Genre Ecologies: An Open System Approach to Understanding and Constructing Documentation," define a genre ecology as "an interrelated group of genres (artifact types and the interpretive habits that have developed around them) used to jointly mediate the activities that allow people to accomplish complex objectives" (172). Examining teaching materials as they exist within a complex writing course activity system may provide opportunities to consider how they explicitly do (and do not)

construct activity and for how they particularly call for movement between the different genres and discourse communities. Teachers, because of their often deeply embedded labor position, have a limited-but-crucial effect on the design of their teaching materials. External factors of institutional and material conditions will limit the range of design possibilities, but it is often still up to the teacher to coordinate these conditions with her pedagogy through the design of her teaching materials. Genre ecologies suggest the organic nature of how teaching materials evolve, whether over a teacher's career or over the course of the semester, demonstrating how the transition from one activity to another is made possible. There is a "dynamism and interconnectedness of genres... [they] are animated by and connected through contingency" (Spinuzzi and Zachry 173).

An illustration of how teaching materials, as rhetorical genres, evolve in the face of changing contingencies can be found in Cheri Lemieux Spiegel's article, "Representing Clarity: Using Universal Design Principles to Create Effective Hybrid Course Learning Materials." Spiegel presents a common challenge faced by teachers in an evolving digital age, how do teaching materials need to be adapted for the exigencies of hybrid, a combination of face to face and online, and distance learning classrooms? She is first alerted to the critical shifts that need to occur in her pedagogical practice when she noted the success rate, as determined by students earning a grade of a "C" or better, was more than 20% higher for her on campus students as compared to her hybrid students, making her deeply "uncomfortable" with the situation (Spiegel 248). By first considering theories of how reading differs in online environments from the practices of printed reading, as discussed by scholars such as James Sosnoski and Geoffrey Sirc, Spiegel analyzes her teaching materials for ways she can apply Universal

Principles of Design, as described by William Lidwell, Kritina Holden, and Jill Butler, to produce more user friendly teaching materials that "exploit" to the ways students already read in online environments (249- 250). This is an important realization on Spiegel's part in that she took note of a pedagogical problem and considered how best to adapt her tools, her teaching materials, as a means of improving student performance and sought out best practices in professional design to find a workable solution to this problem.

I am particularly struck by Spiegel's early comment, "I revised, even *re-envisioned,* materials to successfully move them online" (my emphasis 247). The use of "even" to set up the compound, "re-envisioned" suggest she is somewhat surprised by the importance of inscription to teaching materials. Just because the information is posted somewhere in the course management software system does not ensure its usability, and so she must adapt to changing contingencies to make the system work in an equitable manner to her face-to-face courses. Spiegel uses a staircase metaphor, i.e. a staircase that is constructed with predictable intervals and with familiar features is much easier to climb than one that changes with every step, to illustrate her approach to adapting universal principles of consistency, color and iconography for the benefit of her students (251). She reports that her success rate rose by more than 15%, bringing it about 5% below on campus rates, over the course of two additional semesters using the re-envisioned teaching materials (Spiegel 255). While some of the increase could be attributed to other improvements and adaptations in Spiegel's hybrid teaching performance, certainly her pedagogical analysis of her own changing genre contingencies expedited and supported this process. Yet this also illustrates the ecological nature of teaching materials in another way; the variety of types and

uses of teaching materials. The syllabus, assignment sheets, lecture slides, handouts, external links, all these genres exist together in a nexus. Further, considering all genres within the ecology is critical because the work they do does not exist without the others.

As evidenced in Spiegel's work above, teaching materials have received some scholarly attention as important genres within English Studies. Elena Afros and Catherine F. Schryer, in "The Genre of Syllabus in Higher Education," focus on to how the syllabus specifically seeks to address a range of discourse communities and genres. Afros and Schryer employed student centered pedagogical theories, such as Judith Grunert's in The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach, as well as rhetorical theories such as Charles Bazerman's intertextuality and Ken Hyland's interdiscursivity (224) to describe both the syllabi's content and their potential for interaction between student and text, by collecting and analyzing introductory linguistics syllabi to study their level of interactivity, as a demonstration of how well the document creates connections between discourse communities and genres.

In particular, Afros and Schryer seek to identify the common features in both print-based and online syllabi, anticipating that the online syllabi could be significantly different from their "predecessor[s]" (224). One of the first differentiations they made was to organize the syllabi into three groups-- "paper type," "quasi-paper type," (online in a word processing and pdf formats), and "online type" (Afros and Schryer 226). Using Grunert's identified syllabus "components," Afros and Schryer found that while most of the recommended elements were found in most of the documents, where they were located and how they were grouped varied significantly (227). They identified that the paper

type syllabus was typically shorter than both the quasi-paper and online versions (Afros and Schryer 227). They also found that across the syllabi examined, the "type"-- paper, quasi-paper, or online-- was not a strong indicator of the level of interactivity found in the document, either through intertextual or interdiscursive features, "reflect[ing] the flexibility and plasticity of the genre of syllabus, " but that the online types demonstrated that there were, "more tools to individualize [teachers'] course and syllabus" (Afros and Schryer 230- 231). Finally, Afros and Schryer conclude by stating that the high level of interactivity of all syllabi types with other genres and discourse communities indicates that the syllabus, "cannot be studied in isolation," and should be more strongly investigated for its interconnectivity on multiple levels (231). This call establishes a need for examining the syllabus, and arguably other teaching materials, as genres in motion.

Teaching Materials as Visual Genres

Rhetorical investigations into the interactivity of syllabi certainly point to possible pathways for critically adapting syllabi to meet the needs of students. Yet, discursive features are not the only way students approach and use teaching materials. In Anne Wysocki's chapter, "The Multiple Media of Texts: How Onscreen and Paper Texts Incorporate Words, Images, and Other Media," she argues that the modality a work is presented in necessarily defines what rhetorical and generic devices are available to the authors. And because, "visual arrangements do some of the work of the genre . . . [the] visual arrangements can be analyzed in terms of the genre work they do" (Wysocki 124), revealing underlying assumptions and values implicit in the activity system.

I will provide an illustration of this kind of visual investigation. Karen A. Schriver and her colleagues, as described in Schriver's *Dynamics in Document Design*, sought to assess how the typography affected their participants' view of the content. Each document was printed with both serif faced type and sans serif faced type, and the documents used represented four different genres from differing contexts, including a short story (reading to enjoy), a manual for a microwave oven (reading to do), a business letter about the recipient's credit score (reading to assess), and a tax form (reading to learn to do) (Schriver 289-292). Schriver and her colleagues invited a local community group, comprised of parents and other boosters for a public high school music program, to come in, read the texts, and offer their feedback on how the typography functioned in the different genres. The most significant result from their study was that, "when reading continuous prose, people preferred serif faces, but when reading the more telegraphic prose found in instruction manuals, they preferred sans serif" (Schriver 298). This seems to generally support the oft-heard rule that serif faces are for print, while sans serif faces are for the screen, reflecting an idea that readers scan texts on screen, while they read printed materials more closely.

Schriver's study does not specifically address the differences between onscreen and printed reading, likely because when this study was conducted in the mid 1990s, the world wide web, email, and other online technologies were not yet as embedded in American culture as they are now. Desktop publishing, however, was; Schriver's participants from a nearby high school band booster club likely encountered these genres in print form on a near daily basis. Further, a certain number of the participants, given their ages between thirty five and sixty (Schriver 293), were probably at least familiar with desktop publishing and

MS Word themselves, given the growing ubiquity of computers in middle class homes and offices at the time. These documents represent a moment in time before many of these genres became hybridized through online advances. Interestingly, the participants preferences for serif and sans serif type in particular contexts is likely relevant across platforms. It was not the medium that determined the reader's preferences, as all the documents in this study were produced using the same printing conditions (Schriver, 289); the rhetorical task at hand was more influential. Another discovery was,

> readers were often generous in making favorable attributions about what they were reading when they felt the design of the document was helpful... [t]his study suggests... that [the design of the document] may have a positive 'halo effect' on their attitudes... [and] there may be some psychological reality to readers' expectations for genre. (Schriver 302)

Participants were most negative about the tax form when they disliked the design choices; Schriver describes the original document, set tightly in Helvetica with bolding used for titles and emphasis, as being "dense looking" (292). While some participants likely have a negative view of these forms due to their connection with paying taxes, the remarks about the forms being "too dark, small, and squashed" and "They need more space between the paragraphs and little sections. I can't find the right parts" (quoted in Schriver 301) also point to frustration with trying to use a poorly designed genre to accomplish a task as important as preparing one's taxes correctly. Teaching materials, as genres that also ask the reader to learn to do something, may also benefit or suffer with students as these tax forms do with these participants.

What this study also illustrates is that readers and users see difference but they do not necessarily notice difference. Wysocki is concerned about this dual nature,

> ...when we see but do not notice, over and over, what our texts-- as parts of the material structures in which we live and work-- embody and how they articulate to other practices that we are most likely to learn, without noticing, what to value and how to behave. (13)

The visual design of teaching materials plays a role in constructing and embodying the knowledge and practices of a composition classroom. Students glean values and behaviors based on the teaching materials we give them. Further, Cynthia Selfe, in the chapter, "Towards New Media Texts: Taking Up the Challenges of Visual Literacy," argues that if we are answering the call of the digital revolution and are searching for ways to critically include issues of multimodality in the composition classroom, then, "a good first step may involve focusing on visual literacy and on texts, both online and in print, that depend primarily on visual elements and materials" (68). Therefore, if users's perceptions of genres is impacted by visual design choices such as typography, and those choices communicate values and behavioral rules about the genre systems, and we wish to raise up visual rhetoric as an important means to aid our students in understanding multimodal composing, it seems a first analysis of the visual nature of the teaching materials *themselves* is a logical enough place to start.

Charles Kostelnick and Michael Hassett argue in *Shaping Information: The Rhetoric of Visual Conventions* that visual conventions develop organically in response to available tools, technologies, and audiences. While they do not argue against the importance of the content of a given document for conveying meaning to readers, they state that visual conventions, "evolve symbiotically," with the genre in order to aid, "a genre's instrumental purpose within a given design community" (Kostelnick and Hassett 99). Kostelnick and Hassett insist

that visual conventions are readily used by document designers because without them designers would be faced with the task of reinventing the wheel each time they need to create a document, a particular problem for teachers who must develop and deploy documents quickly in a writing classroom activity system (72). There is no particular motivation for teachers to seek out new visual conventions when designing their syllabi and teaching materials because they know their students are likely to be familiar with these forms, and the teachers themselves are deeply entrenched in the existing system. This is because "... conventions become so ingrained that users can take them for granted as direct conduits of information, rather than as social constructs that mediate it" (Kostelnick and Hassett 34). It is particularly because of this idea- visual conventions traditionally used in a genre are frequently presumed to be the de facto best manner to deliver particular kinds of information- that this research project is focused on document design as an entry point for investigating teaching materials within pedagogical genre ecologies. The ingrained nature of these conventions may limit our ability to make the kind of changes to our pedagogy advocated by Selfe and Wysocki. Wysocki, among others, reminds us that new technologies are not intrinsically better than older ones, in her chapter "Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications." Rather, they evolve from the embedded conditions[2], "designed out of existing technologies and out of existing material economies, patterns, and habits" (Wysocki 8). Further, as digital modalities for delivering teaching materials, such as the course management system used by Spiegel above, become more prevalent and more prominent in writing courses, we cannot assume that this remediation will

[2] A more detailed discussion of this topic appears in Chapter 4.

naturally raise up the best practices for pedagogical design if our perception of what these teaching genres are remains rooted in print-based visual conventions.

In Patricia Sullivan's "Practicing Safe Visual Rhetoric on the World Wide Web," she highlights how reliant some writing teachers and scholars are on "safe" visual rhetoric guidelines when they are composing professional materials for digital and distributed spaces. She is alerted to this problem as she attempts to offer professional development help to graduate students preparing professional materials such as curricula vitas and other supporting materials for job applications, and how the visual rhetoric of these professional websites create "esthetic and rhetorical portrayals" (Sullivan 106). She states that generally we, "believe that the visual conventions of the book culture we have been raised in will hold sway in the online frames provided by the Web," and that this belief drives much of the "safe visual rhetoric on the Web" (104). She also took note of how those job seekers with the least training in graphic design, visual rhetoric, and digital composing were the writers who made the most conservative design choices out of a fear of making an amateur mistake which would turn off prospective employers (Sullivan 107-110). There is an ethical concern here for Sullivan in that this will have a homogenizing effect on how visual rhetoric is approached in digital spaces, pointing out that even in print based visual rhetorics are "undertheorized" (117). Finally, she concludes with a warning that, "if we teach writing for the Web without an awareness of the visual dimensions of the meaning we risk a great deal" (Sullivan 118).

The safe, "ready-made forms," that teachers and students are deeply familiar with, "supply interpretive short-cuts to making meaning" (Kostelnick and Hassett 24) and may speed up the process of developing and using teaching

materials, but they also are very likely to be the things that create the most blind spots because they operate in such a realm of assumption. Likewise, those students who are comfortably familiar with the natural-seeming structure of teaching materials can be, "highly invested in the status quo" (Kostelnick and Hassett 171); if asked directly, these students would be unlikely to be able to articulate off-the-cuff what structural changes would improve a syllabus. Even teachers who do not like the standard template design for teaching materials, unless they are educated in document design theory, have little motivation to reconsider them because the work of the writing course takes place within such conscripted timeframe. This could also be due to a felt sense that a redesign of such a known document will likely "unsettle" students so familiar with the standard template (Kostelnick and Hassett 170). Kostelnick and Hassett frequently assert that visual conventions play a key role in asserting the "fragile social contract" (226) that teachers and students assume when using teaching materials; a breakdown in this social contract that occurs at this level may be difficult to pinpoint and remediate, so a dogmatic approach to applying visual conventions feels like the safe route to travel for many teachers looking to help their students be successful in the writing course. Further, teachers are frequently expected to turn in copies of their teaching materials to writing program administrators who may evaluate them both for programmatic consistency and as exemplars of the teacher's quality of pedagogy.

Kostelnick and Hassett are concerned with how visual conventions, "serve as in-group identity markers"(26), essentially making them self-perpetuating. This may feel innocuous to those of us well indoctrinated into the writing classroom genre ecology, but it means that we are likely mistaking the forest for

the trees when we wonder about students' ability to use syllabi and teaching materials to complete the work for the course as in figure 1.1. The very look of the writing syllabus may be already self-defeating for students who are not "in-group" members, as most first-year students in writing courses are. Some teachers and most students, as novice or low ranking members of the genre ecology, do not have the experience or the status to push back against teaching materials that do not function well for them. Even those of us who are "in-group" members have likely reached a point where we "easily mistake the artificial for the natural [creating] a distorted view of reality... retard[ing] the representation of new knowledge, [and] limiting or completely depriving readers' access knowledge" (Kostelnick and Hassett 182). Exploring the visual conventions of teaching materials within genre ecologies allows us to question what role teachers and students see these documents playing in achieving the goals of the writing course activity system from a perspective which questions their very normalcy.

This normalcy begets a certain kind of neutral attitude towards teaching materials. They are necessary, if not particularly interesting, genres in many people's minds. Robin Kinross explores how the normal and the neutral interact in his article, "The Rhetoric of Neutrality." The exigency of this text is a reaction to the visual rhetoric scholarship of Gui Bonsiepe; Kinross is troubled by the "contradiction," that on one hand Bonsiepe, "assert[s] that information without rhetoric cannot exist in the real world," yet, "exclud[es] the possibility that [train] timetables could be rhetorical" (21). In Bonsiepe's work, train timetables are used synecdochically for utilitarian genres that seem to display a kind transparent

information (Kinross 18-19), but for Kinross it is an invitation to rhetorically pursue train timetables,

> For there is an element of persuasion here, which can be brought out by just asking, why do transport organizations go to the trouble of having their timetables designed and, even more significantly, *redesigned*? (my emphasis 21)

Spiegel above re-envisions her teaching materials because her experiences expose the assumed neutrality of her design approach. Kinross goes on to illustrate how a change in typeface in the train timetables for the London North-Eastern Region from a serifed nineteenth century one to Gill Sans in the late 1920s reflects a deeply ideological moment for modernism in Europe, while a further update to the typeface Univers in the 1960s demonstrates another underlying cultural shift in attitudes about good design(20-24). While Kinross does not address directly how these type changes affect readers' ability to use the train timetables, he argues strongly that it is disingenuous to dismiss their design as arhetorical and therefore devoid of ideological and cultural influences (27). Kinross concludes,

> So one arrives again at the rhetoric of neutrality. If nothing can be free of rhetoric, what can be done to seem free of rhetoric? ... Therefore, we need to keep awake, applying our critical intelligences outside, as well as inside the black box: questioning and resisting. (30)

If we apply this call to the design of teaching materials, it asks us to consider how what we assume is normal, generic design may be under the sway of a rhetoric of neutrality. This project's rhetorical investigation of the document design of teaching materials seeks to actively and critically de-neutralizes how we view these genres, both in form and practice.

Teaching Materials as Occluded Genres

In addition to their normal, neutral design, it is sometimes articulated that teaching materials, such as the syllabus, are "ignored" (Baecker 61), "under-

theorized... [and] occluded" (Alexander 16). In conducting research for this project, there is very little critical scholarship published in the wider discipline of English Studies examining syllabi and other teaching material genres such as assignment sheets and handouts. This omission seems surprising within the composition and professional writing fields because both have historically championed critical approaches to pedagogical practices and professional genre systems. Kostelnick and Hassett articulate many pedagogical implications for teaching their work, but they offer no suggestions for applying their work to a teacher's own professional texts, i.e. teaching materials. Diann Baecker, in her article, "Uncovering the Rhetoric of the Syllabus: The Case of the Missing I," begins her investigation by providing a story about a novice composition teaching assistant (TA) who was deeply disappointed to realize that, despite everything she had learned thus far in her graduate studies, the departmental syllabus she was given to work with bore a strong resemblance to the traditionally "neutral" composition pedagogical documents she herself had received as an undergraduate some years earlier. Baecker identified with the woman's frustration and describes the syllabus as a "site of... collision" between her theory and her practice, a kind of manifestation of praxis (58). Using Muhlhaüsler and Harré's work on pronouns as means of "establishing moral responsibility in the speech act," Baecker collects and analyzes syllabi from TAs and composition teachers at her institution for how the pronouns I, we, and you are employed to establish community, responsibility, and authority (58). One finding, that "we" was far more often used than "I," lead her to consider this not as a unifying move on the part of the instructor, but rather as one that communicates an implied compliance with what is being stated (Baecker 59). She

then turns to a very common "controlling metaphor" for the syllabus, the contract, and describes the moment as a "litigious age," positing one reason that the syllabus is important is because it is perceived as "binding" to both parties (Baecker 59). She concludes her piece by arguing that, if a syllabus does the work of a contract, it is one that often, "is drafted with little attention paid to the language" and works poorly to communicate how authority and responsibility will actually play out (Baecker, 61). Referencing Elbow's "honest exercise of authority" (qtd in Baecker 61), Baecker asks instructors to reflect on their syllabi for how they attempt to create false community through the use of "we" and to be explicit about the roles of "you" and "I" in the classroom as means of achieving a more forthright praxis (61).

In his dissertation, *Subject to Change: The Composition Course Syllabus and the Intersections of Authority, Genre, and Community*, Christopher Alexander argues that as recently as the early 1990s, and despite work such as Jane Tompkins, "Pedagogy of the Distressed," the syllabus was articulated as an almost purely functional document, one that only needed to be persuasive so far as it was, "designed to reduce student anxiety" (Erickson and Strommer qtd in Alexander 19). Alexander then describes his own first syllabus and identifies several ways his document assumes the same transparent functionality that Bette Erickson and Diane Strommer described in their book, *Teaching College Freshman*. First, Alexander explains that almost all of his choices in designing his syllabus were constrained by his commitment to producing a document that could be printed on a double sided, single sheet of paper because he believed that the best syllabus is concise (20). Thus one consequence is that many explanations about the course, its policies, and its assignments were extremely brief, to the point

where some may have appeared abrupt or disjointed to a reader (Alexander 20). Second, Alexander describes "fairly typical pronoun shifts," as identified by other linguistic studies of syllabi, such as Afros and Schryer and Baecker, where the language of the syllabus moves back and forth between "'we will learn' to 'you will produce' to 'we will be focusing'" (Alexander 21). Third, he illustrates the various moves he makes in his tone, from self-effacing, to humorous, to authoritarian, as moves he believed would both reduce anxiety and build rapport with his students, but he has now identified that when taken as a whole, they create a "neutraliz[ed]" or "essentializ[ed]" document (Alexander 23). Alexander's willingness to examine his own first syllabus at the beginning of his investigation makes a bold statement that the syllabus as a genre needs not only to be de-neutralized, especially given extensive work in radical and emancipatory pedagogy in our field, but one that needs to be dragged out into the full light of day, starting with our own first.

Like Alexander, I also wonder about our assumptions regarding syllabi and other teaching materials and would like to see the field of English studies address these genres more directly. I will now offer a memoir, a narrative that entwines both my student and novice teacher experiences with teaching materials, so I can tease out why teaching materials are so important to me and why I want to see them critically studied.

> The May air is warm and just a bit humid, yet I settle in at a round table in a musty academic building, eagerly awaiting the course syllabus. I need this syllabus,several stapled together pieces of paper, to impress me- with topics and assignments that would be meaningful and ultimately reassuring that I had not made an error trading in a career as an IT consultant for one as an English teacher. It reaches me; I flip and scan- jumping from one point to the next. I feel better, resolute, even purposeful as class begins. The professor introduces himself and begins walking us

> through the syllabus, indicating when and in what form we could expect more supporting materials for various assignments…
>
> It is a sweltering mid-July day, and I only have a few hours before my shift folding two for $10 T-shirts at the mall starts. Opening my laptop, I grab the current assignment sheet and put down my coffee. I am developing my own assignment sheet for a multi-modal project: comic strips of *Beowulf*. I have extensive notes on the project, yet I struggle with how to lay it out. Giving the (imagined) students numbered steps seems to make for clear assessment, but it feels rhetorically rigid for a project with a defined objective asking students to synthesize the themes of *Beowulf* creatively. Throughout, I re-read the graduate course assignment sheet for direction, but it says nothing about the look of the document. I rearrange and reformat chunks of text until I land on a solution that is bulkier than I'd like- a model comic strip, bulleted "suggested" steps, and a holistic rubric…
>
> It's a crisp late September day now, and I am four weeks into my first teaching job. I hand out the assignment sheet for *Beowulf: The Comic Strip* a day later than planned. I had tried to photocopy them on Friday, but all three machines had been engaged. Same again Monday morning. Rookie mistake. I waffled a bit on updating the due date and reprinting the master, but I wasn't sure if I could find a terminal and printer before a photocopier became available. So, I hand out each page of the packet individually and have the students collate and staple themselves (operator error), then ask them to cross out the due date and write in a new one for a day later. Despite this, I'm proud of the assignment as I go over it with my no-longer-imaginary students.

This memoir represents a very short, very critical time in my life as a professional woman. As someone who would have been horrified to walk into a client meeting with imperfect documents, it was unnerving to pass out an assignment sheet to my new students in such a messy manner. In April I had a BA in English (Literature) from a Seven Sister school and a career that required tailored suits, expense reports and bestowed a certain image of material success. In October I was three courses into a Masters of Education at a comprehensive state university and a job that required comfortable shoes, assignment sheets and bestowed a certain image of ... psychic success? ... maybe ...

This was not my own perception of my career change, but it was an oft-present undercurrent when I spoke with friends, co-workers, and family. And this undercurrent informs much of how I define myself as an English teacher and to continue to define myself as a professional woman despite that undercurrent. But more directly for this research, there are two particular themes I would like to take from this narrative. The first is that teaching materials are vitally important to students. The woman who sat in that musty May classroom had no idea that she would be a full time English teacher in the fall, nor did she know that she would be expected to teach *Beowulf*. Yet, in those moments of incredible change, the professor's teaching materials, for a course on *Classroom Assessment*, were incredibly important to her. I have a profound interest in raising up teaching materials as critical genres for study for the sake of that woman. She is not unique; many students enter classrooms needing the teaching materials to be carefully prepared and to describe clearly the objectives, policies, and projects because the course is, in some way, vital to their lives. And so while teachers of all levels and subjects will continue, understandably, to make jokes about students who do not read the syllabus thoroughly, we cannot allow these jokes to imply that spending time on our teaching materials is somehow a waste because "no one reads them." That is simply not true. Further, as Spiegel's research indicates, being able to reliably and easily use the design of the teaching materials can mean the difference between success and failure for a student.

The second theme is centered on what is explicitly taught to new teachers and what we expect new teachers to infer on their own. Both composition and professional writing produce an impressive amount of pedagogical scholarship that explores many of our critical needs as writing teachers to compose

pedagogical content. But, if writing texts within activity systems is a two pronged process, as articulated by Prior above, involving both composing and inscripting, then it seems the lack of investigation into the teaching materials themselves leaves writing teachers to learn how to inscript these pedagogical concepts into texts by some other means. When I had worked on consulting teams for clients we had style guides and handbooks for every known genre we would have to produce, and, if we needed to significantly modify a genre, we had resources for that as well, such as in-house design experts. We were expected to reflect the best possible practices in communication at all times because our client relationship was vital to us. When I was sitting at home, designing my assignment sheet alone and without my professor's guidance, I was struck by how clear my objectives for the assignment were and how difficult it was to translate those objectives into practical and usable directions that could adequately scaffold students to create successful, assessable work. And it was the act of inscribing this content in a visual presentation that literally caused me to stop for a moment in my process. I further realized I was not even being assessed on the design of the sample assignment sheet for *Beowulf*, only that I had the proper components. Ultimately, I leaned on my corporate experiences to appease my inner need for "professional" looking design, but this narrative clearly speaks to the earliest moments I understood that there was a distinct difference in the textual design expectations in my two careers.

Teaching Materials as Feminized Genres

The above indicates that teaching materials are understudied and "under-theorized," despite the important pedagogical work they do to mediate the objectives the teacher expects the student to meet. In a discipline such as English

Studies, containing a rich body of scholarship on technical and professional writing, I remain somewhat surprised to realize that so little attention has been paid to the professional documents of our own practitioners. I assume that some of my surprise comes from my own professional path, while Alexander argues that the "ordinar[iness]" of the syllabus can largely explain this gap. Further, above discussions articulate that normalcy breeds a kind of rhetoric of neutrality that obscures the histories and ideologies of certain kinds of genres. But, I would like to posit that teaching materials are a particular kind of normal, neutral, and ordinary- they are a kind of chore. Or, as Sue Ellen Holbrook might call them, women's work. In this section, I will develop a brief history of writing pedagogy in American universities, concluding by highlighting how feminist composition scholars came to view the "feminization" of the field, and how that feminization may affect the way that teaching materials are viewed within the discipline.

Pedagogy has a central-but-fraught position within the disciplinary history of English studies. Though there are many histories of composition within English studies, each claiming a particular exigency and trajectory, I am interested in the American composition narrative that begins with Harvard's Adams Sherman Hill designing writing courses with a focus on the works of Blair, Whatley and Campbell and the writing of daily themes to address grammatical issues to combat the perceived crisis of sub-literate young men entering the university (Miller 526- 530; Brereton 10- 11; Horner 329). This "birth" of composition results in a schism within English departments between Literature, the belletristic and elevated discussion of theory, and Composition, the rigorous, but unreflective application of others' theories (Berlin 19- 34). This complex moment highlights both the egalitarian impulse within our field to

democratize access to higher education and the elitist impulse to maintain some gatekeeping over what is and is not deemed acceptable language; it is an early version of the "Janus-faced" composition described by some feminist scholars.

Yet, this narrative about writing instruction is not uncontested. Robert J. Connor complicates this story by connecting the rise of women college students and women teachers at this same time with the move away from teaching agonistic oral rhetorics in favor of personal writing and rhetorical modes of expression in his chapter, "Women's Reclamation of Rhetoric in Nineteenth Century America" (86-88). Further, Lisa Mastrangelo's book, *Writing a Progressive Past: Women Teaching and Writing in the Progressive Era,* traces the work of two women's college writing teachers, Clara Stevens at Mount Holyoke and Sophie Chantal Hart at Wellesley side by side with the work of John Dewey and Fred Scott Newton, developing an argument through archival work, including departmental documents, letters and journals, published articles and some teaching materials, that women were actively involved in shaping the field in these early days, yet through a conflagration of social-historic forces, their work and the work of other women has largely been erased.

Despite these nineteenth century advances, the narrative bends; in the early twentieth century, current-traditional pedagogies dominated the landscape, a tradition that continues for the decades that followed. A key shift occurs in the mid 1960s with the founding of the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) creating a much clearer sense of disciplinarity for composition as a field and making way for an explosion of inquiry within the field across a multiplicity of sites and perspectives (Lauer 109- 11). Writing pedagogy, including composition, writing

across the curriculum (WAC), and writing in the disciplines (WID), still plays an important role, but this also makes room for a diversity of scholarship into writing research methodologies, technical and professional writing, and multimodal and digital writing (Lauer 111-113).

A related narrative to this rise of composition in the American university is one that suggests that the schism that occurs between the high study of literary theory and the practical work of teaching writing, combined with the significant number of women writing teachers throughout composition's history, results in the "feminization" of composition, an ambiguous phenomenon with complex implications for how composition is read both within and without the field. Holbrook, in "Women's Work: The Feminization of Composition," explores this topic extensively in this landmark essay, published in 1991, but resulting from a multitude of conversations happening at that time about where the field was heading as it approached the twenty-first century. Holbrook articulates that women's work is marked by four features: it is predominantly done by women, it is work done in service to other; it carries little to no significant compensation; and it is generally considered to be work of low or menial value (201). She depicts the rise of women writing teachers in the nineteenth century as occurring as part of the evolution of "feminine professions... social work, nursing, library work, and secondary school teaching" (203). Holbrook argues that the gendered nature of work at this time proscribes certain qualities and values,

> [i]n our two types of teaching professions, these characteristics are evident: for the university professor, research-that is, the development of knowledge in the discipline- is a necessary and emphasized activity, and advanced degrees and contribution to specialized knowledge by way of publication have become requisites; for the school teacher, classroom instruction has been the principal activity and the teacher is expected to apply knowledge developed by the experts in the university. (203)

This division reflects that, in the nineteenth century, the intellectual work was the province of the male literary and belletristic rhetoric scholars and the low practice was the province of the female writing teachers.

Holbrook cites contemporary statistics to demonstrate the clear preponderance of women in the field of composition since the mid 1970s, identifying four events that marked the greatest rise,

> a decrease in the number of men receiving PhDs in English, a decline in the number of literature positions available to new PhDs, the availability of women junior faculty revolved out of tenure track jobs when enrollment drops in literature courses caused administrators to worry about an expanding faculty, and a rise in enrollments in composition courses. (211)

It should be noted as well that these developments also occur in the immediate years following the turn Lauer identifies in the 1960s as the moment when the field began to professionalize itself and raise university consciousness about the potential for writing scholarship. Holbrook contends that despite an ever increasing presence of women in higher and higher positions in the field, her data suggests that men still dominated the elite ranks of highly published, tenured intellectuals (210-211). In one of her final moves, Holbrook issues a rallying cry, asking the field to engage in a feminist agenda that includes, "raising the status of teaching itself... [and] breaking down the sexual division of labor" (212). Holbrook opens and closes her essay with the image of future suffragette Lucy Stone sewing a man's shirt while listening to Mary Lyon raise money for women's higher education, highlighting the portentous moment when she tosses the shirt aside, unfinished.

Susan Miller, in "The Feminization of Composition," first develops her essay in conversation with Holbrook's; early in her piece, she articulates

Holbrook's findings about women in the field of composition succinctly and empathetically. Miller sees the concerns that Holbrook has about the potential for a self-perpetuating system which subordinates and devalues the labor of teaching writing to undergraduates, still predominantly done by low ranked and/or women faculty, while it valorizes and rewards the labor of theorizing, researching, and teaching graduate students, increasingly done by women, but, disproportionate to the field's demographics, still done by a large number of men (41). But Miller expresses resistance to the underlying tone of Holbrook's piece, in that she rejects the idea that the "feminization" of the composition field is a de facto negative state. Miller has her own calls to the field, among them: to reframe the feminized field as an always/ already political space (50- 51); to, "consolidat[e] the field's resistances to the cultural superstructure that first defined it" (52); and to "redefine," composition, "as a site culturally designated to teach all students" (original emphasis 53). Miller's essay, along with Holbrook's "Women's Work," and Elizabeth Flynn's "Composing as a Woman," serve as starting points to a more public conversation about the position of women and feminism within the field; one that grows to include many scholars over time and continues to have a presence in discussions about the future of composition.

Teaching materials, particularly composition syllabi and assignment sheets, are predominantly created by women, as a menial, low paying task, in service of their students. Yet, I wonder that Holbrook wants us to toss aside our syllabi like Stone's sewing? And because teaching materials are women's work, they are always already politicized and feminized artifacts that have tremendous potential to both resist "superstructures" and teach "all students." But... that

returns me to my original question, do they teach all students? And what would this resistance look like in teaching material form?

Like Holbrook and Miller, Louise Wetherbee Phelps does not directly discuss teaching materials, but, in "Becoming a Warrior: Lessons of the Feminist Workplace," offers an alternative, pragmatically rooted perspective on what the feminization of composition can mean to the female and male workers who labor in this space. Published a few years after the Holbrook and Miller pieces, Phelps believes in the inherent value of understanding this historic narrative, "especially since descriptions of the negative impact of feminization are still true, most of the time, most places" (294). While she appreciates the work Miller does to locate and frame up the positive and negative potentials of a feminized position, she finds that her own experiences as a writing program administrator pushes her, problematically, both within and without the "superstructures" that Miller wishes resisted, likening herself to an "animal of the tidal zone" (Phelps 290-291). Of importance to this discussion, Phelps articulates that,

> Feminists have shown that sexism... extends to [women's] contributions as a group... to the point that women themselves, and society have no names for some of their activities and do not recognize and define them as work...most university faculty see the teaching of writing as service, not 'work'-- that is, not intellectual work (the only kind that counts in the academy). (297)

Creating teaching materials is a part of the service of teaching; creating teaching materials is not intellectual work and does not count as real work. The absence of sustained critique of our own texts, our teaching materials, may be a tangible manifestation of, "the circuit of devaluation," in that they are not considered a worthy enough topic to merit scholarship (Phelps 297- 298). Phelps also considers composition an always/already feminist space, but shifts the emphasis

by arguing that the composition workplace is an always/already feminist space. Choosing to focus on the workplace is both necessary for Phelps's professional work and critical for seeing this problem of "feminization" differently;

> [i]n the first place, to understand composition as a workplace is to see it more prosaically, more materially, and less academically than we normally do in calling composition a feminized discipline...In the second place to call this workplace always already 'feminist' argues that women already have some degree of power within it. (Phelps 302)

Embedded in these two sense of a feminized workplace is dual-edged potential for considering teaching materials, both as artifacts of real labor from a population of workers and as sites for exploring feminist power in the composition workplace. Phelps is quite blunt when she states,

> It just seemed common sense that if you want to implement something like writing instruction that is very complicated, requiring intelligence and improvisation, people doing the work need to be treated as agents, not automatons. (308)

Of course, it is often not common sense to others, as she herself documents from her own experiences. I believe that just as a feminist writing program administrator should view her instructors as agents in the system, we should extend this idea to consider the texts they produce as critical artifacts. To return to my own narrative of trying to adapt my experiences as professional woman from one career to another, I think the time has come to study teaching materials as professional writing artifacts. Further, because information and document design has long been the research province of professional writing scholars, it would seem that these two exigencies both could be addressed with a professional writing research methodology.

Teaching Materials as Professional Genres

This investigation is not the first to consider teaching materials as part of a workplace or to apply professional writing methodologies to pedagogical exigencies. For example, in David Franke's dissertation, *The Practice of Genre: Composing (in) a Reflective Community*, he identifies syllabi and assignment sheets, along with reflective teaching essays, a required part of teaching portfolios at his institution, as professional workplace genres. Franke analyzes these genres, along with interview participation from the teachers who wrote the texts, for how they demonstrate the formation of an expert, reflective teaching community. The syllabus-as-genre is the focus of Franke's second chapter, which considers and describes how identity, community and knowledge are being conveyed in these texts. He begins, "[f]or me, writing a syllabus is a serious act of composing..." (Franke 34); this is noteworthy because it both acknowledges a bias against seeing syllabi as "serious" genres and counteracts that by asking us to consider the process of creating syllabi to be acts of composing, ripe for study. In Franke's institutional context, teachers are encouraged to create teaching materials which are highly specific to the teacher, her pedagogical approaches to writing, and individualized course content. In his analyses of the syllabi and his findings from speaking the expert teachers, Franke determines that syllabi are texts which function simultaneously at many different levels, from the minutia of how grades will be calculated at the end of the term to philosophical statements about how the teacher sees the relationships between writing, learning, and knowledge, "... the syllabus is a collaboration between the teacher and his communities"(64).

In another investigation that approaches teaching materials as professional genres, "Determining Effective Distance Learning Design Through Usability Testing," Susan Miller-Cochran and Rochelle Rodrigo apply theories of usability testing to their own teaching materials. At the conclusion of their article, they articulate that, "by conducting usability testing, we were able to reflect on our own teaching, not only online but also in face-to-face classrooms" (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo 104). By critically exploring how students used their online teaching materials, Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo were able to strip away some of their assumptions about teaching more broadly and apply their findings for greater benefit to all of their students. Their findings reflect Wysocki's and Selfe's various assertions that paying close attention to the modalities and materialities of genres can prove rich for rhetorical analyses,

> [w]e found that we were considering the clarity of our instructions in multiple environments as well as the impact of hypertext and the nonlinearity of the Internet on our students and how they construct their own learning experiences. (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo 105)

It is further notable that it was a shift in modality and materiality that inspired Spiegel, Miller-Cochran, and Rodrigo to investigate their own teaching materials. This instructs us that changes are taking place rapidly within the genre ecologies of teaching materials, and we need to take notice presently.

Activity theory, as a lens for considering how genres interact with different people using them for different-but-related purposes, has often proved useful for understanding the big picture, particularly in professional writing research. David Russell has considerable concern for how perceptions of genres affect writing classroom activity systems. In his chapter, "Texts in Contexts: Theorizing Learning by Looking at Genre and Activity," Russell continues his

critique of earlier, "conduit/ container approaches" to literacy, arguing instead that a "network/ activity" model will create productive, active learning situations. At the center of the problem for Russell is the artificial nature of school genre systems and the contradictions and tensions that are produced within the activity system from this artifice. The chapter focuses on the potential for breaking down boundaries between workplace genre systems and educational ones, in part because, "the genres of workplace practices are intertextually linked to the genres of formal schooling . . .The rhetorical life of information is one of continual textual transformation as it moves through various contexts in systems of genres" (25). Russell's argument is that students will benefit from removing the artificial boundaries between school and workplace writing because they will be empowered with an active understanding of how genre systems work in non-academic situations. This argument could be extended to consider how removing these boundaries might affect instructors, by reshaping the writing classroom activity system to include workplace genre systems and by creating critical opportunities to explore feminized labor conditions in the teaching of writing. The genre sets produced by a teacher are already examples of workplace writing, insofar as teachers are workers within an educational institution. The very real boundary that Russell describes often separates the workplace documents produced by instructors from those produced by professional communicators outside of education.

Spinuzzi, in *Tracing Genres Through Organizations: A Sociocultural Approach to Information Design,* calls for an integrated research scope and draws genre ecologies in relation to Russell's articulation of activity systems which live and change as peoples and contexts live and change, and therefore are susceptible to

various kinds of destabilizations (66). Drawing from the work of Lev Vygotsky, Yrjö Engeström, and others, Spinuzzi draws a thorough picture of the potential for activity theory as a schema that looks at how people (collaborators) manipulate data, materials, and or ideas (objects), using particular tools (artifacts), to achieve a variety of purposes (outcomes) (37). Collaborators work together within an activity system to transform objectives into outcomes, using the available "mediating artifacts" (Spinuzzi 37). And, yet those artifacts do not and cannot "simply serve as bridge[s] between the workers and the object of their work," and each collaborator's place within the activity system will inform how they approach both genres and objectives (Spinuzzi 37- 38). An activity system encapsulates how people, artifacts, and objectives interact given a backdrop of personal and institutional epistemologies, histories, and relationships. This lens works well for considering how the generic structure of teaching materials is designed and how it functions because this lens focuses the attention on the objectives and outcomes which inherently control the system; meeting objectives with outcomes is the key definition of how someone completes the activity of a writing course. In figure 1.2 below, which highlights the Collaborators' perspectives within the hypothesized activity system, both teachers and students are recognized as collaborators in the activity system.

It seems particularly compelling to use the lens of activity theory as a way to highlight both the academic and vocational nature of the work done in a writing course because activity systems look at how people and artifacts come together to create outcomes that meet academic and professional objectives. If this labor is feminized, and that position is reinforced by deeply embedded

visual rhetorics of neutrality, then this approach creates an opportunity to study how these forces may be self-referential and self-perpetuating.

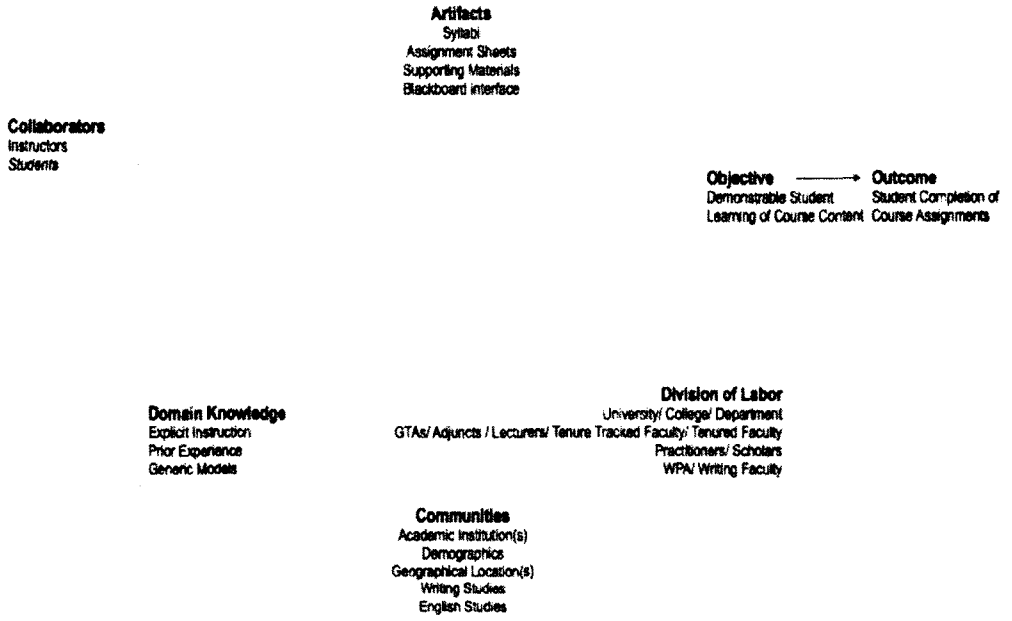

Figure 1.2. Writing classroom activity system

Prior's framework for considering genres as being comprised of both composing and inscripting practices investigates how individual writers negotiate their relationships with prior experiences writing and reading texts in activity systems.

This also provides an extensive platform on which to discuss with teachers what they know about their document design process, while also allowing for questions which may direct teachers to consider how their teaching materials are the act of, "recalling, anticipating, presupposing, or actually sounding out others" (Prior 170-1). This approach is built on activity theory and can examine how teachers' positioning including genre knowledge in other

activity systems, particular labor divisions and institutional histories, contributes to the manifestation of power in the teaching materials within the composition course activity system. And, as identified by Afros and Schryer, teaching materials demonstrate an opportunity not only to introduce students to academic discourse, but also to communicate ethos to students and other professional academics within the academic discourse communit(ies). It is critical to consider these documents as not only teaching materials existing within academic discourse(s) but also that they are texts which functionally interact as professional documents and make up a part of the instructor's professional pedagogical portfolio.

Implicit in activity theory is that we consider how systems are historically situated and how this drives many of the changes that occur, "and it involves tracing genres as they are introduced into these activities, develop merge, and sometimes disappear" (Spinuzzi, 61). Spinuzzi argues that tracing genres through their ecologies means that we reflect on what role genre plays within the activity system as an, "an interrelated, changing group of genres that comediate work in a shifting variety of ways" (62). Teaching material genres, as identified by Afros and Schryer, are being developed more and more in online formats and yet are largely functioning at the same level of interactivity-- a more reflexive approach may be able to help instructors consider their assumptions when making the turn from designing for print to designing for the screen. Teaching materials already represent hybrid genres, though many (but certainly not all) are produced in word processing programs designed to be read in print copy. Many students are accessing them through web portals on a wide variety of hardware and reading them in web browsers, PDF readers, word processing

programs, et cetera. Particularly, a genre undergoing digital evolution is identified as a,

> *hybrid genre:* a genre that involves the history, addressivity, and distinctiveness of its parents; that retains the interrelationships with other genres it's parents enjoyed; and that workers perceive as being more-or-less the "same" genre as its parents, so that they can apply habits to it they have developed for dealing with its parents. (original emphasis, Spinuzzi, 66)

This is developed to build on Bazerman's definition of genre systems to account for changes in genres with the introduction of digital technologies and to acknowledge the reality that written genres have not been immediately and totally revolutionized by the introduction of computers (Spinuzzi 66). The consistent level of interactivity across the paper, quasi-paper, and online syllabi discussed above confirms teaching materials as already hybrid genres.

Conclusion

If so much about these genres is assumed, or occluded as Alexander suggests, then a methodology that problematizes the natural and the neutral seems a productive choice. And in attempting to trace something as deceptively simple as teaching materials, it is critical to remain open to possible patterns, influences, and interactions that can find integrated, contextually applicable solutions. Teaching materials are often the first artifact used in a course, are intended to outline the entirety of the course activities, and are expected to clearly relate the course's positions within and to institutions and labor practices. Teachers, as the course designers and implementors, use teaching materials to explain and support course requirements for content and assignments. Students, as course participants and producers as well, use teaching materials to guide their creations of course texts. Teaching materials represent all the learning

possibilities of the writing course semester. They identify relevant discourse communities, scaffold student learning, and establish ethos as necessary parts of the learning ecology of that classroom. The document design of teaching materials has remained unchanged in its use of print based visual conventions and traditional layout. This analysis can serve as a basis for establishing ways forward as teaching materials continue to evolve digitally. By investigating this issue more closely, we can use our improved understanding to develop various professionalization activities for teachers that can support the continued development of their teaching materials by questioning previously assumedly neutral conventions.

CHAPTER TWO

THIS IS WHAT PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH LOOKS LIKE:

MY TECHNOFEMININE GENRE TRACING METHODOLOGY

> What do we learn by appreciating our own native feminism, by looking to our own, peculiarly American historical and personal experience-- heterogenous and heteroglot, abounding in possibility and conflict-- as its source?
>
> -Louise Wetherbee Phelps with Janet Emig,
> "Editors' Reflections: Vision and Interpretation"

> Genres predict-- they do not determine-- structure. There is always more than one way to skin a rhetorical cat.
>
> -David Russell,
> "Rethinking Genre in School and Society: An Activity Theory Analysis"

> **Effective visual rhetoric requires trying to understand and work with (or sometimes against) the expectations and assumptions and values of one's audience concerning ALL the visual aspects of a text.**
>
> -Anne Frances Wysocki,
> *original emphasis and format,*
> "with eyes that think, and compose, and think: On Visual Rhetoric"

Each of the writers quoted above represent three important scholarly dimensions of this project. First, because it is my research, this project is inherently political, feminist, and grounded from a particular position. Second, this project is inherently flexible and intended to consider teaching materials as dynamic genres that display significant variation depending on their context. Third, this project is inherently conscientious of how both writer and audience

perceive and interact with the visual design of teaching materials. In order to better explain how these distinct but related lines of inquiry come together I offer a metaphor from popular culture seen in figure 2.1: 3D glasses.

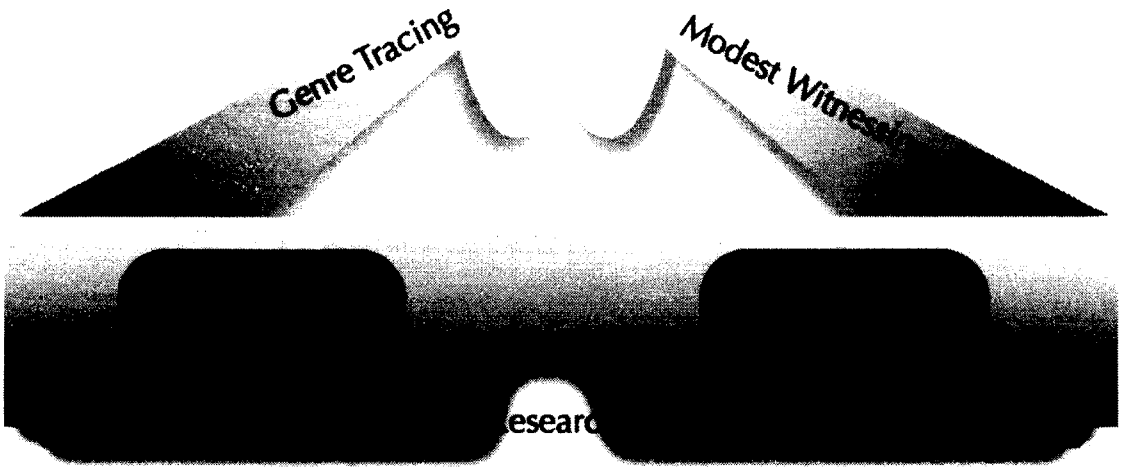

Figure 2.1 My 3D Glasses

3D glasses are made up of three distinct parts: the frame, the blue lens, and the red lens, and they function so as to allow the viewer to perceive flat projections as objects with depth. The frame of my methodology, the essential piece that positions the lens, is based on Patricia Sullivan and James E. Porter's critical construction of reflective practice; methods have been tested to ensure that they meet all four goals for an ethical, critical methodology. Embedded as part of this frame are the more particular research approaches necessary for this project:

- a genre tracing approach to collect and interpret data about how workers negotiate the activity systems within which they live, and

- a modest witnessing approach to highlight the manner in which material realities and cultural powers-- including my own-- may be influencing activity systems.

Further, the blue lens offers the cool rigor of visual rhetoric and allows me to consider the document design of teaching materials for how and in what ways it influences and directs pedagogical activity. Yet, the warm red lens of feminine principles requires me to consider *how* the investigation of the document design of teaching materials can be used to further the development of egalitarian and emancipatory pedagogies and workplaces.

This chapter will define the research questions, defend the methodological frame, and describe the methods used for the data collection and analysis in this investigation. I accomplish this by bringing together these three critical, interrelated perspectives on writing, labor, and technology, primarily drawing from Sullivan and Porter, Clay Spinuzzi, Donna Haraway, Louise Phelps, Anne Wysocki, and Charles Kostelnick and Michael Hassett, in order to form a consistent, feminist approach to the professional writing of writing teachers. Working together, it is my belief that this will render a three-dimensional image of this research site in meaningful and whole terms. This is particularly important for a situation that is so assumed, like the document design of teaching materials, that it is rarely considered as anything but a flat problem or ancillary consideration in the pedagogical research of writing.

(Y)our Research is Both Personal & Political

I began the design of this research project with Sullivan and Porter's calls, particularly as articulated in their book, *Opening Spaces: Writing Technologies and Critical Research Practices*, for more emergent and critical approaches to

methodology. At the heart of this call is the desire for writing researchers to openly acknowledge the rhetorical nature of research design as a process which is concurrently shaped by the lenses of ideology, practice and method; this can make visible the ways that theories, institutions, resources, prior experiences and other contexts influence the researchers' choices at all points in the process (Sullivan and Porter 10- 11). When I embarked on this project, I had two particular goals in regards to my methods and methodology. The first was to ensure that I collected data from my participants in such a way that they were empowered to tell me how they viewed this exigency and to share with me their knowledge and experience. This empowerment is important because nontenured composition faculty are frequently a kind of front-line of teaching, balancing many sections and responsibilities with a limited ability to make structural changes to the writing program. The second goal was to be open ended in the forming of my research questions and methods because I wanted the people, context and conditions of the teaching situation to be able to influence what and how later data was collected. The rhetorical nature of Sullivan and Porter's critical research approach and their further development of the rich term, praxis, provide the stepping off point for the project's evolution.

My Flexible Research Questions

The research questions for this project are centered on describing how teaching materials look and how the look of these documents is perceived by the teachers and students using them. Reflective praxis as a frame for methodology means to insist on flexibility in design over the course of the project because, if the researcher is continuously assessing and reassessing her own positionings and those of her participants, she may need to make adjustments to her methods

or to make admissions and clarifications when issues arise (Sullivan and Porter 69). As research questions are the centerpiece to any investigation, they themselves must be flexible and adjustable as the project progresses:

- What visual conventions do instructors employ in the document design of their teaching materials?
- What influences or reasons do instructors identify when asked about their document design?
- What interpretations on what or comments for what do students have about their instructor's teaching materials?

When I began writing the prospectus for this project, I was frequently frustrated by how clear my idea was and yet how elusive the "right" research questions were. And while the questions I present are not significantly different from the ones I settled on then, the changes they have undergone speak to difficulty in predicting how and in what ways the data you collect with your participants will be interesting or illuminating.

The revision that represents the greatest sticking point in the development of the research questions was what to name these genres as a group. I wanted to look at syllabi, assignment sheets, handouts, other texts I couldn't yet name, and the electronic platforms used to distribute them, as separate but deeply related genres operating within the course activity system. I identified them initially as "syllabi & related documents" because the syllabus represents such a pivotal genre in the system and because my own inspiration for this investigation started when looking at my own syllabus. I soon discovered that this choice created more problems; in addition to being a little unwieldy, it highlighted the syllabus above the other documents causing tension for the reader between considering

these genres as part of a genre ecology, like those Spinuzzi and Zachry describe in the first chapter, and considering the syllabus by itself.

The next iteration was to identify them as "pedagogical documents." I did this, in part, due to my positioning of this research as a professional writing study in/on a pedagogical worksite. I hoped that identifying them as "documents" in particular could highlight the potential for similarities with technical and professional documents outside of the academy. While I stand by my instinct, I found working with this terminology that it felt forced and separated from the work I had always done as a teacher myself. In speaking with my participants, I would frequently need to explain or reinforce which documents I was referring to because the term was my own and not coming from within the activity system. Remaining flexible and open to my participants and my own positions, I arrived on the term "teaching materials" because it is one widely used in educational systems. It is a term easily recognized by teachers as a reference to the artifacts they use to aid students in reaching the course objectives. Further, other revisions reflected similar transitions and attempts to both simplify and clarify what data has been collected and why it has been collected.

Sullivan and Porter argue for a flexible research praxis, in part, from the work of feminist researchers who seek more "experience- first" inductive methods for collecting and analyzing data with participants and argue for a more detailed picture of what feminist research praxis looks like, such as those offered by Liz Stanley & Sue Wise and Patti Lather, among others (Sullivan and Porter 58- 62). The evolution of my diction in regards to naming the genres that are at the center of this investigation is a reflection of this need for praxis because it

demonstrates the different perspectives and approaches I considered as this project has taken form. Sullivan and Porter further argue that this kind of researcher-driven honesty can and should increase the rigor of our research rather then render it "sloppy," as it may be perceived, because this will ask researchers and scholars not only to report what they did, but also to defend what they did as the best available means of enacting their research goals (69). In particular, they cite Michelle Fine's critique of feminist research as often falling short of self-critical activism because they are bogged down in "giving voice" and finding fault with the larger institutions, often at "the risk of romanticizing poor" (Sullivan and Porter 63). I believe that my earlier insistence on the term "pedagogical documents" reflects Fine's point; I have a political goal to promote my participants work as "professional writing," having a felt sense that the work teachers do for their classroom is undervalued by academe at large. Yet, naming them as such offers little as a means of promoting justice or empowerment. My arrival on "teaching materials" does give voice to my participants, as that term was one they easily recognized and used themselves. But more importantly, it is the flexible, reflexive nature of revising my research questions that allowed me to step away from my romantic tale of undervalued "teacher's work," and instead prompts me to ask better questions about how my participants view the role of document design in their teaching materials and what they want to be empowered to do with those materials.

My Ethical Methodological Framework

Sullivan and Porter explicitly define their use of the term "critical" by first considering how critical theory has been constructed historically through Marxist, feminist, and postmodern schools of thought, and then settling on a

definition which encompasses the desire for positive and egalitarian social change through self-aware and reflective research actions (16- 21). It is my aim for this project to reflect a critical, research based praxis, defined by Sullivan and Porter, via Carolyn Miller and Phelps, as, "a 'practical rhetoric,' focused on local writing activities (practice), informed by, as well as informing, general principles (theory), and calling upon 'prudential reasoning'" (26). Sullivan and Porter highlight the "instigation" of research-- a simultaneously personal and political process in which a researcher identifies a set of "tensions" that she wishes to explore, and then must set out to explore this in very "particular" circumstances via very "particular" methods-- as the foundational moment in a research project which, if obscured or left out of the project, will "neglect the tensions that allow certain revelations to be foregrounded at the same time as they deny others" (68). Further, the concept of triangulation of theoretical positioning can offer a window into what research praxis can look like at the methodological level-- that no single theory or practice has an assumed status over the other, but that they exist together, "in dialectical tension," both proving and undermining the assumptions of the other (Sullivan and Porter, 27). By bringing together related but differently nuanced theories and positions on the intersections of writing, technology, and labor, to bare on this project, I intend to expose and explore the tensions surrounding how, why and under what conditions teachers design teaching materials.

Reflective praxis, as a part of a critical research methodology, demands as much from the researcher as it gives because it is explicitly rooted in an epistemological tradition that questions how power is negotiated (or not) through discourse. Sullivan and Porter spend much of their book discussing the

presence and impact of power on how knowledge is created via research, and ultimately contend that with greater flexibility in an emergent approach comes even greater responsibility to promote good and reduce harm to participants. They detail four principles, or goals, for critical research to help ensure that the researcher takes responsibility for how she develops and enacts her methodology: respect difference; care for others; promote access for rhetorical procedures enabling justice; and liberate the oppressed through empowerment of participants (Sullivan and Porter 109- 110). It is important to note that Sullivan and Porter insist that these goals should not be selected from by the researcher, but rather that they must work in concert in order to create a situation that is both rigorous and flexible. The first, "respect difference," is deceptively simple but calls on the work of Luce Irigaray and others and asks researchers to begin an investigation with the expectation that difference always/already exists between and among the participants and researchers and that there is a lot to be discovered in finding those differences while acknowledging that the researcher could have missed something due to her own positioning (Sullivan and Porter 112- 113). "Care for others," also comes from a feminist research tradition, as often demonstrated in the work of Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie, that asks us to be thoughtful of our participants as humans rather than as wells of potential data (Sullivan and Porter 113- 114). In particular, Sullivan and Porter are basing this ethic of care on Nel Noddings's *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, which is also an underpinning of some of Phelps's feminine principles (Sullivan and Porter 113; Phelps 303). Together the first two goals communicate an expectation that truly critical methodologies investigate human conditions

with deep respect for the humanity of the individuals involved as well those the researcher seeks to help by conducting the investigation.

The third and fourth goals Sullivan and Porter articulate attempt to take the critical research agenda the step forward into the activism that Fine is advocating by applying postmodern critiques of power to the framework. "Promote access for rhetorical procedures enabling justice," requires: a careful look at power relations in the research site; an insistence on observing how participants and other humans in the research site affect or are affected by these power relations; and describing the potential for how power could be more broadly shared through greater access to decision making processes of the research (Sullivan and Porter 115- 118). Finally, "liberate the oppressed through empowerment of participants," is the most difficult and radical goal. First, it requires the researcher to approach an investigation openly looking for evidence of oppression, defined by Iris Marion Young as a systematic domination of a group that results in their exclusion from power and decision making processes, while also recognizing that all oppressive conditions are not equal, people will feel lesser or greater negative affects depending on their contexts (Sullivan and Porter 119- 121). Second, in tandem with this, the researcher should not approach the problem with a "liberation" solution in mind so as to not stray into "missionary" style work and its "matri/ patriarchal implications" (Sullivan and Porter 124- 125). This last goal attempts to pull together these complex notions of power and privilege around the idea that critical researchers should embed in their investigation the belief that they can best help participants and others become empowered by offering the results of the research back to participants in a reciprocal, meaningful and usable way (Sullivan and Porter 126- 128). And, it

is my obligation to do so rigorously and with respect to people who live and work within these activity systems and genre ecologies.

My Empowering Selection of Integrated Scope

My feminist positioning, combined with my teaching experiences, leads me to a desire for my research to produce results which are useful and ideally empowering for improving the labor conditions and processes that teachers experience and use. Therefore, this study seeks to employ both the tools of critical research design in concert with the tools of critical professional writing methodologies, such as Spinuzzi's genre tracing. Genre tracing is a framework which has been developed with the stated goal of researching professional writing exigencies in such a way that resists a researcher-as-hero narrative, and instead raises up worker skill, knowledge, and actions as key sites for discovering solutions. In Spinuzzi's *Tracing Genres Through Organizations: A Sociocultural Approach to Information Design*, activity theory forms the backbone for tracing the historical, individual, and instantaneous movements with genre ecologies, offering that "the genre embodies a galaxy of assumptions, strategies, and ideological orientations that the individual speaker may not recognize" (43). In other words, the artifacts or genres used in an activity system, because they are created by people, or collaborators, within a particular context and for a particular goal, can be analyzed as an embodiment of the assumptions different collaborators have about the activity itself.

Teaching materials, as artifacts, are identified as playing the pivotal role of "mediation" in any given activity: collaborators negotiate their operations, actions, and activities through the interpretation and creation of tangible artifacts (Kaptelinin and Nardi 248- 250). In order to explicate and develop a

methodology with a core goal of achieving an integrated research scope, Spinuzzi provides a detailed accounting of his own research project with his theoretical framework. Spinuzzi examines the shifts in genre ecologies as paper documents migrate to electronic databases. While my own study will focus primarily on paper-based teaching materials, the trajectory of Spinuzzi's research speaks to mine in that many teaching materials are migrating to Learning Management Systems, like Blackboard. This project is focused on a genre ecology called the Accident Location and Analysis System (ALAS), a series of tools employed by a variety of state and local agencies located throughout the state of Iowa (Spinuzzi 71). As a first step in his macroscopic investigation, Spinuzzi traces the genre ecology historically over the course of several iterations, including:

- the "preautomation" ALAS, in use before 1974, which relied on workers manually manipulating data as a particular function of the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), data is stored in filing cabinets according to report type (filed by officer, driver, et cetera);
- the mainframe-ALAS, in use from the mid 1970s- early 1990s, which relied on DOT workers to manually manipulate data via punch cards, data is now organized spatially based on a specialized node map for each county;
- the PC-ALAS, in use throughout the 1990s, which opened up the system to government workers at remote sites and therefore allowed a diverse set of users to manipulate data, data remains organized by the node maps described above;
- and the GIS-ALAS, implemented in the late 1990s, which employed Graphic User Interfaces (GUIs) so that diverse and remote workers could

now enter data and run reports by interacting directly with an onscreen node map (74- 109).

After establishing this historical arc, Spinuzzi then drills down by conducting detailed interviews and video observations of particular workers, across multiple sites, using the PC-ALAS system at the same time as a prototype of GIS-ALAS is being tested (122). But doing this kind of macroscopic work first allows an investigator to consider the genres as the descendants of prior activity, rather than as decontextualized tools-of-the-moment. This seems particularly critical when considering genres that are in the middle of a technologically driven evolution by understanding how legacy, labor and culture informed earlier instantiations of the genres.

But, a genre tracing methodology also addresses what Spinuzzi identifies as the frequent problem of "unintegrated scope" by considering genre use at three levels: the macroscopic (cultural-historical activity), mesoscopic (goal-directed actions), and microscopic (habitual operations) (Spinuzzi 30). Tracing genre ecologies through activity systems forces the researcher to step outside of the comfort zones of pet theories or presumed ideas about why "the problem" exists. Spinuzzi illustrates this approach by describing one of his participant's experiences. Barbara is a police officer who uses PC-ALAS to investigate patterns in accidents at particular locations in her municipality (Spinuzzi 132).

At the macroscopic level she is interacting with a genre system that is designed for a diverse set of data housing and reporting needs and is organized around a series of node maps. An early contradiction for Barbara is that the designers of PC-ALAS believed that she would consult with a separate map each time she enters the system in order to locate the node number or range of

numbers she will need to input to access relevant data (Spinuzzi 133). Yet, Barbara avoids accessing the very unwieldy physical map because her work is not spatial in nature and it creates an extra step in her activity (Spinuzzi 155). Consider the action, Barbara is expected to unroll a three foot by three foot square map, find a surface big enough to lay it out, and weigh it down so she can locate the node numbers (Spinuzzi 1). At this goal driven mesoscopic level, the problem of the map and node numbers takes a different turn as we consider it as discoordination of genre management (Spinuzzi 138). Her objective is to retrieve a series of numbers that will let her access particular information within the ALAS system; her objective does not require looking at a map, save for the fact that a physical map is where the number is stored. To facilitate her own action, she begins recording the numbers on Post-It notes, creating another genre in the system. At the microscopic level, the physical issues with the map, such as its unwieldy size, perpetual state of being curled into a roll, and small print mean that Barbara experiences regular breakdowns in trying to identify the correct node numbers and to enter them into PC-ALAS (Spinuzzi 155). To circle back to the macroscopic level, these breakdowns are frustrating for Barbara precisely because she does not need a map genre to complete her task as worker in this activity system (Spinuzzi 155).

Unintegrated scope in professional writing genre research is problematic for Spinuzzi because, "researchers and designers seek a single crux to workers' problems, a foundational problem at the layer under consideration" (31). To achieve an "integrated research scope," Spinuzzi seeks to identify how interactions between collaborators and genres flow or are stalled as they move across the levels of activity, which he collectively identifies as destablizations

(117). At each level of activity, different types of problems can occur: contradictions occur at the macroscopic level when there is a misalignment between the genres-as-wholes and the activity system's major objectives; discoordinations occur at the mesoscopic level when particular genres are mismatched to particular actions; and breakdowns occur at the microscopic level when an element of a particular genre misdirects the operations of a particular collaborator, forcing her to become conscious of a previously unconscious task (Spinuzzi 127- 153). How these levels operate and interact will be discussed in more detail in later sections of this chapter where I describe the particular methods chosen for this project.

Spinuzzi presents Barbara's, among others, narrative in several different ways throughout the text: by presenting the reader with a vignette, by placing it conversation with genre and activity theory, and by presenting it in a contradiction-discoordination-breakdown table. In fact Barbara's vignette leads off the book, and for very good reason, Barbara saved herself. She understood how the PC-ALAS was organized (macroscopic); knew she did not need the map functionally (mesoscopic), so each time she started a new investigation she would take down the node numbers on a yellow paper Post-It Note and placed that in the manilla folder which held the investigation reports for this particular location (microscopic) (Spinuzzi 155). As its core, genre tracing, as a methodology of integrated scope, relies on and respects the workers within the activity system and looks their innovations as possible broader solutions.

My Situated Technofeminist Agenda

A fundamental underpinning of my own sense of ethics and research comes from my readings of Haraway's most prominent work, "The Cyborg

Manifesto," over the course of my graduate study. This essay, first presented as part of talk on feminism and technoscience in 1983, was a powerful one for feminist scholars working in rhetoric, technology and writing in the 1990s, and informs much early feminist writing scholarship on teaching with technology. Haraway's argument for the female cyborg in a technological and technocratic world speaks to the double-edged nature of technology for women where technological tools and their culture can both enslave and liberate. The cyborg is an intensely powerful image because the cyborg must write the world for its own survival, "on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other" ("Cyborg Manifesto" 311). Further, Haraway calls for a "cyborg ethics," as described in her interview with Thryza Goodeve in *How Like a Leaf,*

> You can't have some simpleminded political heroics about resistance versus complicity. What has to happen is that literacies have to be encouraged, as well as many kinds of agency. *Both literacy and agency aren't things you have, but things you do.* (my italics 146-147)

I would argue that the labor this project investigates is (still) being done predominantly by women, often women who lack significant institutional authority, via technological tools. It is important to me that the design reflects these cyborg ethics- namely that I investigate the document design of teaching materials with a respect for the agencies and literacies of the people involved. I would do a disservice to my participants and my audience if I approached this project looking for deficiencies that I-the-researcher can resolve. My research actions in this case should be to both learn about others' actions and knowledge(s), but also to then "do" myself- reporting a multi-voiced, complex discussion of how teaching materials are designed and how that design affects and directs the action of the classroom.

In considering how I could accomplish this kind of woven narrative, I have threaded together two other themes Haraway employs and reworks, Situated Knowledge and Modest Witnessing. In *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse*, Haraway sketches the original "modest witnesses," the cultured gentlemen scientists of the Enlightenment, drawing on Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer's treatment in *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (23), depicting a world in which gender, sex, race, and class have been erased from the picture of science because they exist outside that hegemonic order of "pure" science (30-31). This is Haraway's harshest critique of the Enlightenment search for objectivity-- that it has a tremendously narrowing effect: erasing difference, silencing voices deemed less-than-worthy, and naturalizing the rhetorical choices in experimental methodology and the composition of results (32- 33). Haraway then attempts to redraw the Modest Witness to enable,

> a collective, limited practice that depends on the constructed and never finished credibility of those who do it, all of whom are mortal, fallible, and fraught with the consequences of unconscious and disowned desires and fears. (267)

Witnessing is about mortal, emotional and ideologically embedded people paying attention to the messages and events around them and then creating and sharing constructive critique with others. I would argue that the homogenizing effect of the Enlightenment's argument for objectivity may have some parallels with the near invisible status of our teaching materials as important sites of investigation. Frankly, the very innocuous and assumed design of teaching materials across disciplines leads me to speculate that this is in part due to an evolutionary struggle in the academy to force the messiness of teaching and

learning into neat, objective boxes. My technofeminist agenda rests in part on my desire to make complicated these documents which teachers labor over in order to consider how we might help teachers find greater agency through/with them.

And yet, scientific objectivity is not a framework that Haraway is dismissing out of hand. In an earlier article, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" she argues, rather pithily, that by rejecting objectivity wholesale, educated feminists, often in the academy,

> ended up with one more excuse for not learning any post-Newtonian physics and one more reason to drop the old feminist self-help practices of repairing our own cars. They're just texts anyway, so let the boys have them back. (578)

Haraway is drawing attention to the problematics of rhetorical choice—feminist subjectivity led to arguments that chose to reject all knowledge that was gathered under imperfect frameworks like objectivity. This is one instance in an on-going debate between Haraway and Sandra Harding about the feminist problematization of objectivity and the merits and limitations of eschewing objectivity for a feminist standpoint. Haraway argues that by making this choice, some feminists exclude themselves from both collected knowledge and systems of power for distributing that knowledge. Therefore Situated Knowledge, as imagined by Haraway, is not based on either ephemeral intuition or a professed objective eye, but based on a "feminist accountability" which "requires a knowledge tuned to resonance," a common hum produced when multiple partial knowledges mesh together ("Situated Knowledges" 588). Acknowledging the limits of a situation of knowledge allows for the most ethical choice because it is the least deceptive in answering questions about 'to whom' and 'for whom'.

Situated Knowledge seeks to establish knowledge which is valued for its partiality and purposeful denial of a unifying truth of the situation. Her use of Situated Knowledge, as a frame, shares with Sullivan and Porter's Rhetorical Situatedness a mandate that we make clear the very particular circumstances under which this knowledge has been gleaned ("Situated Knowledges" 584; Sullivan and Porter 28). In part, I am using memoir-- not unlike the third person narratives used by Spinuzzi in *Tracing Genres Through Organizations*, the first person research journal excerpts Kay Sielber used in *Composing Feminisms*, or the vignettes used and described by Phelps in "Becoming a Warrior" to explicate aspects of their research exigencies-- to make more complicated how my own histories and my interactions with my participants as people may impact my perception of this project. Further, all the above cited scholars are attempting to define a position for making knowledge which is oppositional to what Haraway terms "the god trick" of objectivity which "produces, appropriates, and orders all difference" for the benefit of a master, it is by its nature capricious and motivated by selfishness ("Situated Knowledges" 587). My research agenda is to develop and deploy a methodology which intentionally seeks to complicate these teaching activity systems in order to glean knowledge that has frequently been assumed and invisible.

As part of this agenda, I will now include another memoir about collecting the data for this research project, and use it to talk about the complicated nature of lived, scholarly feminism,

> On a freezing January afternoon, I carefully haul my nine month pregnant self into my father's truck after buckling in my three old son. I settle myself and pull out notes to review on the hour long drive, while Dad tunes the radio in to an oldies station. He's staying with us to chauffeur me about during the first few weeks of class- a critical time for gathering

> data- and to look after Jack when I go into labor. When we arrive, he drops me off at a familiar academic building; I wave good bye, knowing that over the next few hours Jack will be happily spoiled by Granddad. Walking in, I try to clear my head and focus. I wanted good observational notes: a detailed picture of the teacher's delivery of her materials and the class's initial reaction.
>
> Observing Emma on her first day of class reminds me again how often a teacher faces the "first day of school" at the postsecondary level. I make a note of how two important moves- introducing herself and introducing the teaching materials- are made near simultaneously. After class we head up to my advisor's office for the first interview. I am no longer working on campus and, as an adjunct, Emma has never used "her" office space on campus before and is unsure if it would be free. As I set up my laptop, I answer friendly questions about how I am feeling three weeks from my due date and ask friendly questions in return about Emma's teenage daughters. Before we begin, Emma also asks me some questions about the university's PhD program- am I happy? challenged? is it flexible? But the pleasant chatter quickly wraps up- it's after 6 pm and we both want to get home. Our conversation flows comfortably, and we easily cover the main points within the hour.
>
> When I return to the crowded commuter parking lot, I spot my Dad parked nearby. I climb back in and am immediately bombarded by Jack with the exciting details- the "just cheese" cheeseburger, the walk around the busy mall, and, especially, the addition of the much coveted *Henry* to his Thomas the Train collection. Eventually his voice slows, and he nods off to sleep while his soon-to-be-born little brother gives me a few swift kicks. I fill my Dad in on the progress I made that night and contemplate the many steps before me in this process...

First, I want to point out how difficult it would be for me to assume an outsider's "objective" eye on the classrooms I witnessed. My participants, Emma and Sarah, teach in the same writing program in which I once taught. We are all three current or former students in the English department's graduate programs. I am deeply empathetic to their position as writing teachers and professional women balancing, "divided, multiple commitments [that can] sometimes preclude ambition or limit engagement" (Phelps "Becoming a Warrior" 301). Second, not only am I deeply empathetic, I am, in fact, divided and multiple myself, endeavoring to add meaningfully to the field of composition while also

endeavoring to nurture my own family meaningfully. This project is the result of years of work with several long lapses between periods of engagement. While I would argue that this has given me time to both think and re-think my ideas in substantive and productive ways, it had been far from a linear journey. As I write this, my children are now six and three respectively. Witnessing this journey results in a complex picture of what the document design of teaching materials is and does in a classroom activity system.

Our Knowledge Genres, Ourselves

Ultimately, this methodology is an incredibly personal and political interpretation, combining parts of all the methodologies described above in a kind of remixed form that reflects my own position and agenda in exploring the document design of teaching materials. These methodologies can be mashed up because all three address a single ethical perspective: human participants must be respected, not as populations that researchers must protect or save via mat/paternal means, but as agents in their own right who should be respected while acknowledging their differing levels of access to power and materials in the activity system. In the following sections I will detail the methods used to collect and code data and then will describe how I used the lens of visual rhetoric and feminine principles to analyze the data.

Participant Recruitment Methods

Participants were recruited for this study through an invitation and research description sent to the email list compiled for all first-year composition teachers at a large state university. I specifically wished to work with writing teachers because this both represented a significant number of instructors teaching in the English department, but also because it would include teachers

who are teaching a general education population of students, some of whom would be more invested in the classroom activity system then others. Further, because I wish to situate a certain amount of the critique within the history of composition in American universities, it seemed important to speak to teachers and students with that experience. Five potential participants responded and all indicated an interest in learning more about approaches to document design in teaching materials and having their own materials analyzed, which was the offered compensation for participation.

The two participants were selected, in part, for the differences in their professional backgrounds and positions within the institution. This deliberative move was made in an effort to seek out and respect difference (Sullivan and Porter), to witness how different situations within an institution produce different or similar results (Haraway), and to provide differing macroscopic views on similar activity systems (Spinuzzi). I chose Sarah, who is a full time instructor, with almost a decade of experience at the particular institution, because I wanted to explore this problem with someone who had some perspective on the institutional culture and history of how teaching materials are designed and function. Further, Sarah also offered a unique (to this pool of volunteers) perspective having had a twenty-year career in professional writing before becoming a writing instructor. This was interesting to me as I thought it was an opportunity to discuss how document design does and does not cross over between academic and professional (nonacademic) writing.

I selected Emma because she was an adjunct teaching two evening sections of general writing at the same institution in conjunction with teaching two AP high school courses in writing and several online sections of writing and

humanities courses. This position allows me to explore the very real lived experience of many writing teachers who are constantly negotiating between differing institutional realities and the impact that has on the design of teaching materials. Emma was also two decades into her writing career, though hers was entirely in teaching. Her prior experiences were concentrated in teaching secondary English and she had only made the move to teaching at the post secondary level a few years before. My own teaching career began at the secondary level and I chose Emma so I could further discuss with her the transfer (or lack there of) of secondary techniques in document design to postsecondary.

Yet, while there are many differences between my participants it should be acknowledged that there are relevant similarities, such that they are both white women of the same approximate age and socioeconomic position. To spell this out a bit further, their demographic similarities have both influenced how they approach their activity systems and how the activity systems respond to them in turn. And while I could have drawn greater age diversity from the five potential participants, it should also be noted that all of them were white women who appeared to be of similar socioeconomic backgrounds-- positions which are, not coincidently, very similar to my own. I include this not to defend my research's limitations, because frankly close studies of this nature that would encompass a true diversity of perspectives is a career-long research agenda, but to note for whom this topic was seen as relevant, helpful, and/both appealing given that the offered compensation was feedback on the participants materials and help with later revisions from me. If one of my goals is offer greater rhetorical options and liberatory empowerment, I do need to understand who wants the help I am offering and consider in later projects how I might tailor or

develop this project in a way that is meaningful for other groups within the field of writing pedagogy.

Data Collection & Coding Methods

Teaching Materials

Each teacher was asked to submit all the materials they used in the course of the semester and provide access to all sections of the course Blackboard site (excepting the grade book for student privacy reasons). This request was developed with an eye for how I might want to work with the documents at each level of scope, as well as holistically. At the macroscopic level, I had access to all the materials delivered by the teacher participants over the course of the semester to the students, as well as access to the electronic platform that all documents were made available through and could look for patterns that emerged across them. Further, the historical and cultural histories behind these documents is gathered in interviews with Emma and Sarah. At the mesoscopic level, I am concerned with the actions that Emma and Sarah take in regards to the individual genre's design. For example, while the syllabus does direct some global and external aspects of the class activity system, such as departmental attendance policies and the institution's grade scale, some of its most important work is to display the course objectives and provide students with an overview of how to reach those objectives. These objectives represent both the beginning and ending of this particular activity system; they are the outcomes that both teacher and students are trying to achieve. Further, an assignment sheet is a goal directed genre as it exists to scaffold students through the work of one assignment. At the microscopic level I investigate how the individual design choices made by the instructor based on ingrained, habituated beliefs affected

the delivery of particular bit of pedagogical function. These individual design choices can represent habitual or operationalized action because they are minute decisions that teachers make, decisions that they make quickly and possibly unreflectively in the moment of getting things done for the start of a new semester. To trace genres as part of an ecology, it is critical that as many of the interrelated genres of the activity system be examined.

All collected documents were first read over in their entirety and coded for elements identified by the textbooks *Dynamics in Document Design* by Schriver and *Document Design* by Miles A. Kimball and Ann R. Hawkins. Types of elements identified were those of page design, such as margins, text justification, spacing, headers, lists, tables, graphics, type, and font selection. Further, as the research project continued, it became clear that Blackboard design was more important than I had previously assumed, and as a result I conducted the same coded analysis for each Blackboard screen a student would encounter. The coded results were compiled and compared both within the separate activity systems of each participant and across participants in order to create a holistic view of how document design is employed.

Semi-Structured Teacher Interviews

A series of semi-structured interviews with my participants forms the core of my data for this project because of these dual desires to both respect their knowledge and experience and to draw out what sorts of problems and solutions they see as workers embedded in the activity. These interviews were conducted at predetermined times in the semester: the first was before the start of the semester to discuss the participants' general philosophies of the document design of teaching materials, the second was conducted a week or two into the

semester to discuss the design of the particular documents being used this semester and how the instructor felt they were working, and the third interview was conducted after the semester closed and grades were posted to discuss how effective they felt the document design was in retrospect as well as to consider together how different document design approaches might have affected that semester's genre ecology.

Again, like the document collection methods, this structure is deliberatively reaching for data at the three levels of activity. The first and second interviews were conducted based on an open ended series of questions were drawn from my own experiences designing teaching materials as well as from *Document Design* by Kimball and Hawkins. The first interview provided a significant macroscopic view of how participants, situated as they are, feel about document design and to what problems they are interested in finding solutions, but also touched on the meso- and microscopic by including a sample syllabus that participants were asked to critique for design strengths and weaknesses. The second interview addressed primarily mesoscopic issues by taking a deep look at how particular instances of these genres were functioning in the context of a particular course section with a particular group of students. The third interview was conducted after the close of the semester and covered two definite topics- one was to explore how successful the teacher felt the design of these documents were and the second was to offer an alternative design of the teachers' materials for discussion. These two topics functioned together to re-trace how the macroscopic influences of the teacher were and were not changed during the semester- both from the experiences of the semester teaching and the experiences of being involved in this research project, but they also gave mesoscopic

interpretations of how design works in the genre ecology and, particularly in considering the researcher-created alternative designs, the microscopic was explored by asking how the participants reacted to their content being redrawn with different design choices. Together, these three interviews function together to explore the embeddedness of these teachers' lived experience.

To draw back into the conversation the cyborgian call to witness agency, these interviews were intentionally conversational and accessible to participant influence. While, the interviews were designed with particular topics, themes, and the necessary corresponding questions, I explained to participants at the outset of every session that they were free to direct their answers as they saw fit--questions that were not meaningful to them were quickly covered, while relevant tangents were encouraged. The original questions were worded in more scholarly language, reflecting the state of research I was in at that moment, but were adjusted in the moment to reflect the more casual but grounded language that teachers use to describe the genres they routinely work with throughout the semester. And given this conversational nature, macroscopic questions of how the participants conceived of their document design practices historically, institutionally, and personally were relatively easily to represent. This difference in discourse on the topic reflects that my participants have never been asked to consider their teaching materials in a scholarly vein before, though both had taken graduate level composition pedagogy courses.

Further, given that the three interviews were scheduled around and grounded in one particular class section over the duration of one semester, the mesoscopic questions were developed with the intention of focusing on how particular and currently in-use teaching materials were designed and what sort

of results they seemed to be having. But, addressing questions to the microscopic level proved to be much more challenging. Initially I considered using methods such as video-recording, think-aloud protocols, or keystroke & screen captures while the participants designed or redesigned their teaching materials, but ultimately rejected these methods in favor of ones that could be more easily deployed within the context of the time commitment of the conversational interviews I was already asking of my participants. However, in their place, I did seek to understand how my participants initially understood and felt about microscopic choices by using a significant portion of the first interview to ask them to react to and critically discuss a sample anonymous syllabus[3] at the same university from a course both participants had taught in recent semesters. The relative familiarity of the institutional background of the course was important here because I wanted my participants to feel deeply comfortable in understanding the pedagogical context in which this syllabus was deployed. Because of this, it is unsurprising that this sample syllabus contained many instances of verbatim language, structures, and lesson topics with the participants' own materials and that served to highlight how these materials had made different individual choices in design. Further, Wysocki, in, "The Multiple Media of Texts," offers that redesigning the visual aspects of a genre can reveal a tremendous amount about the value systems inherent in the individual design choices typically associated with a genre (126). It was with this argument in mind that I chose to focus a portion of the final interview on the teachers' reactions to

3 These samples did come from my own teaching materials. However, due to the informal nature of our interviews, I elected to omit this fact because I wished for Sarah and Emma to respond to them without being influenced to think that these were examples of "good" document design in my mind.

their own material redesigned with different choices made at primarily the microscopic level. Holistically, the interviews for this project were designed to be minimally burdensome on my participants while also allowing them to speak in their own voices across a wide range of topics relevant to how and why they deploy document design in their teaching materials.

I transcribed the six interviews so they could be reviewed and coded for themes. I listened to each interview twice before beginning a transcription document so I could refresh my memory of the event. I transcribed the interviews loosely, only taking notes on my own contributions, while attempting to take down my participants as close to verbatim as was reasonably possible. The interviews ranged in times from 45 minutes and 90 minutes and produced over 50 pages of text. These transcripts were then read and reviewed several times; using time stamps, chunks of text were coded with up to two labels and then sorted into a new document, which grouped these text chunks thematically. In addition, within each themed group, the text chunks were also separated by what I perceived as the "level" of action to which these comments pertained. This felt important to avoiding the trap of the silver bullet solution. Doing so also helped me later identify the interrelatedness particular threads and narratives. After arranging the quotes, I then attempted to write axioms which described the quote within the context of the theme. This step was used as a first proofing process for determining the quality of fit between the quote and the overall theme. Frequently more than one quote was used to support a given statement, and in each case these quotes were paraphrased and identified by time signature and level of activity. After completing this first process, I then re-coded the interviews for a second time and developed a narrative explanation for each

chunk of text, trying to figure out how the stories my participants were telling me related to the themes I was identifying in their comments.

Classroom Observations

Four observations were conducted per participant and were spread out across the semester. The first two observations were completed during the first class sessions because the very first materials, the syllabus most notably, were distributed and expressly covered during the meeting time. This allowed me to take note of how these documents were explained, contextualized and added to when used in the classroom. The third observations were conducted at the midpoint of the semester just before the semester break, and this point was chosen to be able to mark how the relationships within the activity system had developed between teacher, genres, and students. The fourth observations were conducted in the final weeks of the semester, at a point when the teachers indicated they were discussing the final requirements for successfully completing the course. This was selected because it represents the moment before the students' outcomes, as represented by the final work submitted by the students to be judged by the teacher, for whether they met the course objectives. It is my intention that these observations are to triangulate the results found in the analysis of the documents and interview data by witnessing the activity system while it is in motion. Further, it represents one of the two key means that students, critically important members of this activity system, were brought into this investigation as student reactions to, questions about, and conversations around the teaching materials were recorded in my notes. Though students were not recruited directly for interviews, at the start of the semester I was introduced to both classes, gave a short explanation of my research to them, and they were

encouraged to contact me with any questions or concerns. Though none did, this move was made to reflect an ethic of care for others, in that they were afforded an opportunity to have control over their own inclusion in the project. In addition, the teacher participants were asked about particular moments or interactions that I observed and given the opportunity to respond to or comment on them. Observations were considered in light of the results from the document, interview, and student survey analyses and were primarily used to further explain and support the themes and narratives identified

Student Surveys

The students were directly asked for feedback on the design of the teaching materials via two surveys distributed on two of the observation days, one during the first week of the semester and one right before the close of the semester. These surveys represent the second means that students had to influence this research project directly[4]. These surveys were distributed on paper during class time. A web-based survey was not possible as not all the class meetings were able to take place in a computer lab. At the start of each survey session, I explained to students that the surveys were entirely voluntary, anonymous, and the results of them would not be discussed with the teacher until after grades were posted for the semester; this was also done as a means of showing care for the students, who presumably need to receive course credit and are therefore the most vulnerable members of this activity system. These surveys sought to gain insight on both the students' understanding of the syllabus objectives and guidelines based on visual conventions and their beliefs about how functional they found the whole document.

4 Full copies of the surveys are located in Appendix A

Students were asked how the document design of the teaching materials contributed to their understanding of the coursework and in what ways these documents reinforced and/or violated what they expected these genres to look like. The surveys were designed to include both Likert scale questions and open response questions. Likert scale questions were used to gather general, comparable impressions about how students used and felt about teaching materials; while open response questions measured more specificity, students could offer any interpretation or opinion in order to give the students some agency in their responses. The first section of each survey consisted of a series of statements, and students were asked to use a Likert scale to rank how closely the statement reflects their own opinion of the documents, the range of options including "Not Applicable" (N/A) along with numbers from zero to five. The second section contained open ended questions to be further explored below.

The first surveys distributed were developed in advance of the semester based on my research questions, while the second surveys maintained the structure of the first but were directed to gauge student reaction to themes and problems that were emerging from the analysis of the documents, the prior observations, and the prior interviews with the teachers. In particular, the second surveys focused significantly more on how Blackboard affected the delivery and interpretation of the materials. Students were asked to provide a kind of amateur critique of the professional success of these documents in this activity system. This is not done lightly, but deliberatively in an attempt to raise up students to a level where their actions in the system are viewed with same respect as the teacher participants. This had mixed results which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters but was a move made in the good faith of respecting the

students' roles in the activity of a course. Because the teachers are the primary participants of this research project, I am largely seeking liberatory possibilities for teachers who may be oppressed in the innovation and development of the document design of teaching materials based on their positioning. But, students are particularly vulnerable members of this activity system and how they may or may not need to be empowered with regard to the design of the documents they use to receive credit for their work is an equally important question to be considered. In further research, it would be valuable to more deeply explore the student situation within this activity system through student interviews or focus groups, but for now these surveys are used to triangulate and illuminate the teachers' responses to the success of the document design of the teaching materials.

In the first survey, one of the questions draws on macroscopic influences to ask students if, based on their experiences in the activity system, the typicalness of the teaching materials' design helped them interpret and use them. Three of the questions focus on mesoscopic issues asking students to consider how the design of the document helps them take action to meet the course objectives through the use of space and headings. Finally, one question attempts to probe how students see the individual design elements operating by asking about choices in margins and spacing. In retrospect, these questions are somewhat problematic as they are more complex in their phrasing than is ideal for Likert items. However, the results among all students were very consistent and supported by the open response answers discussed below. The second set of surveys were almost identical to the first set, with edits to reflect the time shift from anticipating the coursework, to being almost finished with the coursework.

The first coding of the surveys was to compile the results of the Likert scale questions, determining the percentage of respondents who affirmed each number (0-5). Open response questions were initially open coded for how similar or different the answers were from other answers both within their own activity system and across systems. After the open coding, the grouped responses were coded according to the themes and concerns identified by teachers in their interviews.

Stereoscopic Analysis Methods

The analysis of this data, gathered with an eye to the many levels that activity flows across, was also structured in a rigorous manner reflective of genre tracing and modest witnessing. Visual rhetoric and document design scholarship routinely call for greater attention to how the visual affects our audience's understanding of the text. Kostelnick and Hassett contend that this kind of work is best done through empirical research that does not seek a holy grail of visual design that will solve all problems but instead draws a localized history of how particular design choices were made to communicate with their intended audiences (190). The goal should not be to merely certify existing practice but to acknowledge that while existing designs may serve some needs and perpetuate expected activity, there are also other possibilities which may be more effective for achieving the system's goals (Kostelnick and Hassett 192). Further, teaching materials, as part of a genre ecology that includes multiple texts that will be used in the classroom activity system as well as genres in related activity systems, also have the potential to take advantage of the supra-textual aspects of document design. Kostelnick, in "Supra-Textual Design: The Visual Rhetoric of Whole Documents," argues that "supra-textual design creates cohesion among

documents separated by innumerable reading experiences and other documents" (29). Therefore, using visual rhetoric to investigate the document design of teaching materials in this layered methodology allows me to consider if and how these genres function as parts of a whole during the timeframe of the classroom activity system.

Teaching materials in this project will be considered for how they both explain and are explained by the rhetorical forces present in writing classroom activity systems. Wysocki argues that it is not enough to be aware of,

> the particular visual strategies that a composer chooses when constructing texts aimed at persuading audiences toward specific ends; I want us also to be aware of how the strategies that we choose reinforce (and can perhaps help us be aware of and question) values, habits, and structures of our places and times. (184)

Therefore, when interpreting data, I not only weigh the visual conventions used, and what the teachers and students have to say about their effectiveness, I also consider how the visual conventions reinforce particular levels of activity: microscopic, operationalized typography selections, mesoscopic, action-based decisions about using a bulleted list or a paragraph to display particular content, or macroscopic activity-level choices about whether to layout the directions to an assignment in a Word document, within the Blackboard interface directly, or in a posting on a class blog or other website. Finally, Wysocki, in referencing Kinross's "Rhetoric of Neutrality," articulates a traditional view of writing in which one separates form and content and illustrates that this view is still at play today,

> Many of us have been taught-- and teach-- that the proper way to write an article is to arrange words on an 8.5 x 11-inch sheet of paper with one-inch margins... The paper will be white, the ink will be black, and the typeface will probably be Times or Helvetica ... The "rhetoric of neutrality" is... [o]ur belief that meaning can exist apart from the material embodiment of

> printed timetables, pages in bound books, or screens on computer monitors is woven into a belief that we think has nothing to do with our messy, gendered, raced, aging, nationalized, digesting bodies. (186)

This description of "writing" in many ways matches how my participants, Emma and Sarah, view the design of their teaching materials. Theories of visual rhetoric and document design then prove to be excellent tools for bringing the messiness of how the visual rhetoric and document design are interpreted and/ or function in writing classroom activity systems.

While I do seek to bring a critical eye to the role that document design plays in the composition and delivery of teaching materials, I do so with the intention of also improving the lives of writing teachers and students. Understanding how writing teachers design their teaching materials right now, I can find opportunity for improvement both in the quality of professional experience for the teacher and in the quality of pedagogical instruction experience for students. I do this as an act of compassionate service and respectful dialogue with Emma, Sarah, and their students. In conducting this research, I am deliberately caring of my participants not only as people, but as experts in their own lived experiences, especially their lived experiences in classroom activity systems. Therefore I need a critical lens that deliberately avoids taking a polemical stance against power or empowerment, one that simultaneously strives to be pragmatic and ethical by recognizing the, "inescapable paradox in deploying culturally licensed power for social goods, including reform" (Phelps, 304). Feminine principles, as established by Phelps and Janet Emig in their roles as editors of *Feminine Principles and Women's Experience in American Composition and Rhetoric,* are constructs that allow people to actively chose how and by what means their expressions of feminisms take

place. In particular, Phelps explains in "Becoming a Warrior," "[t]o speak of principles implies something *worked for*, not bestowed or imposed (my emphasis 304). Emma and Sarah are women teaching writing in a very particular moment in the evolution of teaching material genres like the syllabus, and they are very articulate about why they design and deliver materials that look like they do.

While neither teacher was asked, nor did they offer, if they identified as a feminist in any sense, both Emma and Sarah describe themselves and their teaching mission in terms that resemble the ambiguous nature of the feminized role teaching writing has at the postsecondary level, broadly an, "emphasis on relationship, responsiveness, peer collaboration, parentlike caring for student's development, sensitivity to difference and social context, and support for women's developmental needs" (Phelps 303). Phelps with Emig attests their title "surprised and disconcerted" both contributors and readers, but their intention with the deliberately chosen terms "feminine principles" and "women's experiences" is to create an ambiguity that allows a conversation about and with feminism as a construct, without presupposing a particular ideology or agenda on the parts of their contributors, and takes place within the specific context of American composition and rhetoric (407-408). Both Emma and Sarah spoke at length of their struggles in designing materials that were both supportive of students' creativity and explicit of the objectives, and means of reaching the objectives, as possible. This recalls Phelps's paradox, and further reflects, "the irony that, to pursue [their] goal of enhancing student's freedom, growth, and energy, [they] must rely simultaneously on [their] own person vision to control and choose for the student and on [their] role as transparent conduit of cultural

authority" (305). Again, this complicates not only the content of teaching materials, but the means by which they are delivered.

Conclusion

Visual rhetoric and document design scholarship routinely calls for greater attention to how the visual affects our audience's understanding of the text; therefore, the research questions for this project are centered on describing how teaching materials look and how the look of these documents is perceived by the teachers and students using them. The deeply embedded nature of teaching materials genres results in a complex web of influences that can help describe and deconstruct how and why teaching materials look and function the way they do; therefore the identifying, collecting, and analyzing of data for this project occurs across the three levels scope identified in Spinuzzi's genre tracing methodology. But, finally and most importantly, this document design research is critical feminist research because of my own positioning as a researcher and my goal to present findings which are both useful and emancipatory for writing teachers and students.

CHAPTER THREE

IS IT STUPID TO SAY I JUST LIKED THE WAY IT LOOKED? THE FEMININE AND THE VISUAL IN THE GENERIC DESIGN OF TEACHING MATERIALS

A genre functions to create a (semi-) transparent channel through which information can flow (Russell "Rethinking Genre" 510; Spinuzzi and Zachry 171). Teaching material genres rely heavily on generic conventions to quickly convey instructional content because, while each semester contains a unique arrangement of audience and context, there is institutionally standardized purpose and content expected. These genres have evolved in line with developments in written, printed and digital technologies, and because of this they have murky roots and assumed functions, carrying around the "many debts [the writers] owe to these intertextual and intercontextual influences" (Prior 171) that may or may not suit the rhetorical goals of each unique instance of a writing course.

In the previous chapter, I presented an example from Spinuzzi's studies at the Iowa DOT to highlight how people interact with genre across levels of activity. I would like to begin this chapter by similarly exploring a series of interview excerpts with one of my participants to show how teaching materials are affected across levels.

First interview with Emma[5]

Me: What do you think a syllabus should look like? In terms of the visual appearance of it...

[5] These conversations are presented in a dialogue style to highlight their narrative elements because I wish the reader to get a sense for the flow of our conversations.

Emma: I don't want to make it too glitzy; like put in all sorts of graphics because I think it distracts, that might work for an assignment sheet perhaps depending on the assignment, but for a syllabus I think it should be the meat and potatoes, and I think it needs to be laid out in a very readable fashion and I try to start a new page when it's a new topic, you know, not cut off from one to the other...

Second interview with Emma

Me: So fairly recently you sat down with your original document from [English YYY,] you looked it over, what were... for instance- was this the same font that you used in prior documents? do you remember why you chose the font?

Emma: is it stupid to say I just liked the way it looked? [laughs]

Me: No, no. That's not stupid to say at all! Did you play with some of them?

Emma: Yes. I stay away from Times New Roman and Arial because I think that everybody does that, so I just wanted something that is still clear, may be a little bit more flowery and literary looking maybe, you know so that's why I chose that, and I've become very attached to that font [laughs] I don't know why [laughs]

Third interview with Emma

Me: And so what I did was I moved all of the things that had to do with the major projects, essay format, um, conferences, writing folders, I grouped those procedures together, and then course policies I separated, so this is where you get your books, this what you have to bring to class, this is my attendance, and so I sort of separated those two things out so that when they are looking for "how do I put together my work" they go to one section and when they want to know "how is this class operating" they can go to the course policies section, so I just sort of moved those slightly, and then here again, with the course schedule, students seem to really care about dates

Emma: Yes, they do

Me: So that was sort of how I came up with it takes a lot of pages to do it this way, yours was several pages shorter

Emma: But if it breaks it down and avoids questions and confusion in the future it's worth it...

Me: I'll send you the electronic copy so you can see how I did each step

Emma: That would be awesome, it's the kind of thing that you look at and wonder how it was done, it makes a big difference, it really does, it's a lot more important, not that I didn't think the document was important, but I never would've thought about it that much, it's just kind of like, oh you give a syllabus, and I wasn't really that concerned about some of the things that you talked about but now I can see how this would clear up a lot of confusion, and it would help me, and it would help the students

When I began working with Emma, she, like most people, saw document design as a matter of aesthetics. Emma was interested in working with me because she believed a greater knowledge of document design in teaching materials would lead to objectively better looking documents. And, despite Emma's early statement that a syllabus is a "meat and potatoes" genre that should not be "too glitzy," this idea of objectively attractive documents is echoed again in our second interview when she discusses her attachment to the typeface Georgia, which can be seen above.

Yet, by the end of our third interview, Emma's macroscopic vision of the activity of teaching materials has shifted, and she now sees how document design can improve their functionality. These conversations also reveal how her beliefs about document design and teaching materials influenced her mesoscopic actions when making design choices and her microscopic, habitual operations like selecting a favorite typeface. Because the syllabus sits at a juncture of "meat and potatoes" function and "literary" subject matter for Emma, she immediately rejects some typefaces as overused while selecting another that suits her own

ethos. She attempts to create "readability" by making sure to always "start a new page when it's a new topic." When she is presented with a redesigned version of her own syllabus, she is fascinated by the active, alternative choices made in how the content is organized. Figure 3.1, below, is the first page of Emma's syllabus.

Syllabus for ENGL [redacted]: Advanced Composition Spring [redacted]

Call Number: [redacted] **Days:** M/W **Time:** 4:20-5:35 **Room:** [redacted]

Instructor: [redacted], M.S. Ed **Office Hours:** By appointment

Phone: [redacted] **E-mail:** [redacted]

Prerequisites: Writing Sample Placement Test and English 110C.

Course Objectives:
Through careful analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information, students formulate adequate theses, moving beyond the scope of reporting information to composing papers that express their reasoned judgments on meaningful topics. Students strengthen their understanding of rhetorical situations and persuasive discourse by preparing a fully-documented research paper. They select their own topics, use a variety of investigative techniques, and survey a wide range of resources inside and outside the library (lectures, films, documentaries, police reports, interviews). Specifically, in English 211C, students will

(1) refine their writing processes;
(2) abstract and summarize the content of readings in a range of disciplines and analyze both their own texts and the texts of others based on rhetorical criteria (e.g., purpose, audience appeal, voice, style, arrangement);
(3) apply principles of argumentation, including uses of assumptions, claims, emotion and reason and to identify logical fallacies, biases, and propaganda;
(4) become familiar with personal, primary, and secondary sources used for support and learn to properly adapt, place, and document the sources they use;
(5) move from analysis to evaluation, judging texts for effectiveness and credibility;
(6) recognize differences between scholarly and popular treatments of ideas and begin to make careful selection of source materials.

Texts and Materials:

Bookstore:
Quick Access Reference by Troyka, 6th Ed (ISBN: 978-0205664818) - **this book will be used as a general guide for writing, MLA, and revising and editing symbols.**
Everything's an Argument by Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Waters (ISBN: 978-0-312-53861-3)
[redacted] Writing Folder for English 21 or one inch binder

1

Figure 3.1 First page of Emma's syllabus

Emma is interested in learning how to apply these techniques to her future teaching materials both for her own benefit and her students. Further, she expresses an understanding that these alternate choices have been made with the

students' expressed needs and beliefs in mind; Emma has always wanted her teaching materials to be useful to students. Through our work together, the idea that design could make teaching materials more usable was simultaneously obvious and surprising to her. Emma's last comments reflect her realization that better design in teaching materials could help her students produce better work.

My genre tracing investigation in two situated cases of writing instructors designing and delivering teaching materials to particular classes of students demonstrates the strong grip that print culture continues to have on the individuals' writing classroom ecologies. The strength of this grip contributes to the rendering of teaching materials as occluded, neutralized genres. It is unlikely that anyone who has taught writing at the postsecondary level would be surprised by the extensive influence that print culture has on these documents; in fact, we may not even consciously think about its print nature at all. Kostelnick and Hassett identify three major categories of factors which influence how visual conventions change and are changed by the evolutionary moment of the genre: discourse community factors, rhetorical factors, and external practical factors (82). These factors contribute strongly to how particular visual conventions are entrenched within activity systems and genre ecologies. Parallel to this, there is the twin consideration of how these women's experiences with the document design of teaching materials in the field of composition do or do not reflect traditionally feminine principles, particularly of "peer collaboration, parentlike caring for student's development, [and] sensitivity to difference and social context" (Phelps "Becoming a Warrior" 303). Together these constructs create a robust view of the genre ecologies and activity systems within which these teaching materials exist.

By exploring together how Emma views her own document design across levels, and along with my other participant Sarah, I was able to understand not only what they did, or how they approached their document design, but also why they made the document design choices they did in a rich, contextual manner that both respected their genre knowledge and aspired to be helpful to them in their own work. In this chapter, I will present and analyze a variety of data collected from both participants' activity systems to show how external practical, discourse community, and rhetorical factors influence teaching material document design at the macroscopic and mesoscopic layers, resulting in the deep grip that these print based, microscopic choices have. Then, in the next chapter, I will investigate how one particular external practical factor, technology, is changing the evolutionary path of teaching materials and will consider how the grip of print is affecting this change.

Institutionally Communal & Collaborative Activity

In this section I will describe the activity systems of my participants and the documents chosen for analysis, consider the macroscopic influences of discourse communities and the contractual nature of teaching materials, and situate this discussion within a feminine principle of good faith institutional collaboration.

Macroscopic Forces &Activity Systems

As discussed in the first chapter and depicted in figure 1.1, a genre ecology encompasses all aspects of an activity system. The upper triangle connects collaborators and artifacts to both the objectives and the outcomes that define that activity system. The lower triangle accounts for the various entities that influence or control aspects of the activity by describing the collaborators'

domain knowledge, discourse communities, and labor responsibilities within the institution or community the activity takes place. By exploring the genre ecologies of my participants, Sarah and Emma, I demonstrate how the artifacts they produce and deploy in their writing classrooms are situated in a complex web of historically print-based culture colliding with the addressed need of providing writing instruction in an evolving digital age. Further, the genre ecology allows me to present my participants as people-in-the-world facing everyday labor concerns, an important part of my socialist-feminist methodology. It is not just a general "history of print" which affects these genre ecologies; it is also Emma's and Sarah's very particular histories and addressivities that influence the design of their teaching materials.

Sarah

Sarah is full time, non-tenured instructor who teaches a 4/4 load of undergraduate writing courses each semester on a satellite campus of the local State University in a mid-sized metropolitan area. Sarah began teaching writing at the university as a graduate assistant while working on her MFA; it was after completing her degree that she was hired as a full time writing instructor 10 years ago. Prior to entering the MFA program, Sarah was a professional writer who had worked both in marketing and in communications for a local government. It was Sarah, when we were discussing a sample assignment sheet I had brought to the first interview, who casually pointed out,

> ...my ideas are also based on what functions for me as a reader... I'm fifty-one years old, I've been reading the newspaper, I've been reading novels... that's basically what I read, the newspaper and novels, I don't read a lot of magazines... I read some stuff on the web but... you probably could make some connection between the style of document that I would think would be readable and the things that I have been reading for the last forty-five years, as opposed to thinking about students who have, much more, been

> reading on the web, reading USA Today influenced newspaper style... so a document like this might be more readable to them, because of the kinds of documents that they have been reading today

Sarah identifies her professional experiences as having a significant impact on how she views teaching materials and what design decisions she makes when composing them for her students. Figure 3.2, below, illustrates the activity system within which Sarah and her students work.

Figure 3.2 Sarah's activity system

An important aspect of Sarah's case is that her classroom was entirely made up of undergraduate teaching students. Sarah was aware that this would be likely, though the course itself is not identified in the course description as a

pre-service teaching course, because the satellite campus she teaches at houses a significant number of the undergraduate teaching courses. Though she stated that the teaching materials shared the same overall design aesthetic as her other general education writing courses, she had a heightened awareness when teaching aspiring teachers of how they may apply what she does to their own future teaching and teaching materials. Her anticipation of the students' professional aspirations also influenced her overall course design.

Sarah is teaching a section of Advanced Composition, a course with prerequisites for the two-course first-year Composition sequence. In this semester, Sarah has redesigned her course to include an objective for students to familiarize themselves with Service Learning, an education concept. This is part of Sarah's motivation for volunteering for this research; she has not significantly rewritten her syllabus or created brand new assignment sheets for a few years and thought the opportunity to discuss her design practices could be illuminating, both for understanding how her design aesthetic functions and for considering the ultimate successes or failures of the new material.

Sarah's students reported having attended an average of five and half semesters at the post secondary level and an average of two and half semesters of college writing before taking this course. This would make the average student a junior undergraduate and matches the prerequisite that students have completed both required composition courses prior to enrolling in Advanced Composition. Further, it should be noted that more than a third of the students voluntarily indicated that they were either or both transfer students or returning to postsecondary school after a hiatus, so not all of their prior experience was at State University.

Emma

Emma is an adjunct instructor who typically teaches two late afternoon or evening writing courses a semester on the main campus of the same State University, located in the same mid-sized metropolitan area. In addition to her work at State University, Emma teaches two Advanced Placement (AP) English courses at a local private high school and one or more sections of humanities and writing courses each semester for a few for-profit online colleges. Figure 3.3, below, illustrates Emma and her students' writing classroom activity system.

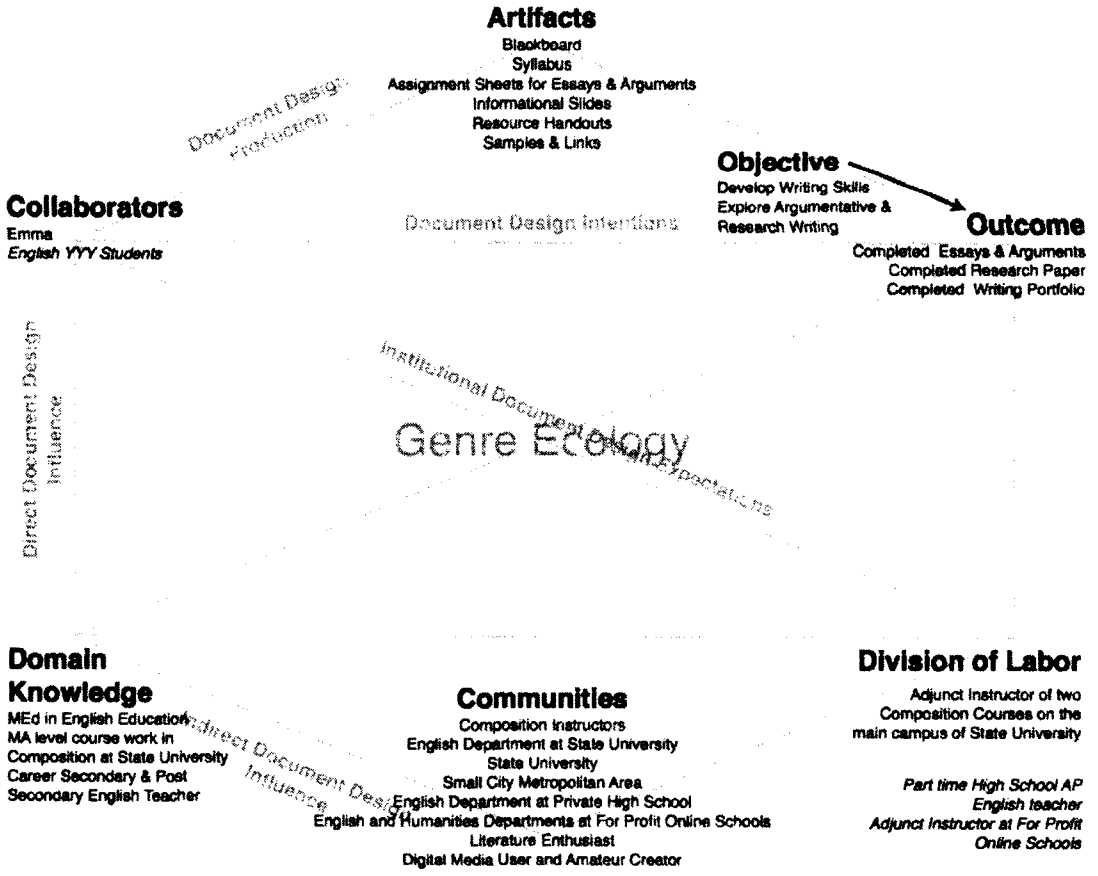

Figure 3.3 Emma's activity system

Emma is a career English teacher of almost two decades, having taught in several public secondary schools before switching to postsecondary and private schools. Emma has a MEd in English Education, as well as several courses towards a MA in Composition and Rhetoric at State University. Emma feels strongly that teaching materials should be welcoming and easy to read for a student audience because of its contractual nature,

> I also think that if the students don't understand it's not in clear language... you don't want to put teacher-ese or jargon in there because ... this is not a document for you to show how smart you are, it's a document for them to understand your expectations, so I think it needs to be laid out clearly and the language has to be straightforward... I think it's ok to make it as long as you have to make it... but it's like a handbook that they can refer back to when they need to

Emma identifies her passion for writing and the teaching of writing, along with a personal interest in visual rhetoric and design, as being key motivators for employing materials that serve as excellent scaffolds for student success.

Because Emma is teaching the second course in the English department's first year composition sequence, her objectives, like the program's, are to continue student literacy development through the introduction of argumentative and research writing. Emma's experiences in the MA courses she took, along with her position as an amateur digital media creator and blogger, have influenced her to create assignments which seek to measure students' rhetorical understanding of their topics and how things shift as they move through the different media of writing, culminating in a departmentally required writing portfolio aligned with the institutional goals for the course.

Emma's students reported having an average of two semesters at the postsecondary level and have taken an average of 1.3 writing courses. Ten out of the seventeen surveys, described the university standard expectation that they

had taken and passed the first course, on the first try, in either they're first or second semester, before moving on to this course. Emma makes note in our interviews that another section of this same course, which meets later in the evening, has a higher population of returning and adult students that might provide different academic biographies. There was one student who indicated that s/he had been taking courses part time over ten semesters, and had taken four prior English courses over this time. Another student revealed that they had taken the first course in this series three times before being allowed to pass on.

Selected Documents & Macroscopic Influences

Three print-based documents were selected for close analysis from each of my participants. From Sarah's case study, the syllabus and Sarah's first handout, a document which provides an extended overview of all major writing assignments as they apply to the service learning theme of the course, were selected because they are the first documents a student encounters in this course.

ENGL 327W—Advanced Composition
Spring 2011

"In many ways writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying listen to me, see it my way, change your mind."
Joan Didion

Instructor: [redacted]
Office: [redacted] **Office Hours:** T/R 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and by appointment
Contact information: [redacted] **Phone:** [redacted]

Course Description and Objectives:
Effective writing is a powerful tool in academic, professional, and personal situations. Writing can be used to explain, to request, to persuade, and to bring about change. The physical act of writing can be used as a way to figure out what you think and develop what you want to say. The goal of this class is to introduce writers to strategies that will enhance critical thinking and enable the creation of more effective documents in a variety of situations outside the classroom. The focus of the class will be on Service Learning as a strategy in education; a variety of research and writing projects will address this topic.

This class will function as a collaborative writing workshop and will include discussions, workshop groups, in-class writing, and writing conferences. Writers will build on existing writing skills by:

- Developing rhetorical awareness through identification of audience, purpose, and genre for a particular writing assignment,
- Honing critical thinking skills,
- Enhancing writing style (tone, diction, voice) and adjusting for a specific rhetorical situation,
- Learning to evaluate their own texts and the texts of other writers for effectiveness, and
- Enhancing revision and editing skills (grammar, mechanics, and citation).

Major Deadlines (subject to change)

Practice Exit Exam	In class Jan. 20	ungraded
Summaries (2 assignments)		Pass/Fail
Annotated Bibliography	**Due: Feb. 1**	**100 points**
Research essay draft	Due: Feb. 8	P/F
Evaluation of classmates' research essays	Due: Feb. 10	P/F
Research essay revision	**Due: Feb. 15**	**100 points**
Commentary draft	Due: March 17	P/F
Evaluations of classmates' commentaries	Due March 22	P/F
Commentary revision	**Due: March 24**	**100 points**
Lesson Plan draft / revision	**Due: April 12 / April 14**	**100 points**
Mini-grant proposal	**Due: April 21**	**50 points**
Portfolio and final essay	**TBA**	**100 points**
Various writing and homework assignments	Due as assigned	

Figure 3.4 First page of Sarah's syllabus

The first page of Sarah's syllabus can be seen above in figure 3.4, as an illustration of what her materials typically looked like.Also selected is the one-page assignment sheet for the commentary assignment because it represents what Sarah described as her typical assignment sheet format. Selected for analysis from Emma's case study were the syllabus, and an assignment sheet and corresponding rubric for the evaluation essay assignment, the last major essay before the final research paper for the course. The syllabus was chosen because it is the first and controlling document for the course. The "Criteria for an

Evaluation Essay" and corresponding rubric documents were chosen because this assignment comes after they have had several weeks experience with the writing course and would now be applying a specific prior knowledge when applying the directions to their work. All six documents represent choices that would be visually familiar to students who have an awareness of the traditional genres in American higher education. They are composed in Microsoft Word; Sarah makes many print copies available on the first day each document is delivered, while Emma supplies a small number of copies the first day for students who have not printed them independently. All six are continuously delivered via the course Blackboard interface throughout the semester.

As described in the previous chapter, all students were surveyed twice during this project, once at the beginning of the semester and once towards the end. For Sarah[6], all students present each time the surveys were distributed, seventeen and fifteen respectively, filled out surveys. One of the 5-point Likert questions was situated at the macroscopic level. This question, pertaining to how "typical" or "normal" the syllabus was, had an average response of 4.9, and showed the least variation of all the questions, with 16 out of 17 students ranking the item with a "5" and one ranking it a "4" on the first survey. When asked this question at the end of the semester, with an emphasis on whether the "typical" nature helped the students complete the work, the results shifted to having the widest variation of responses, with 11 students ranking the item a "5" and 4 students ranking it a "4," though this only results in a slightly lower average response of 4.7.

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[6] A summary of Sarah's students' Likert responses and the full text of their open responses can be found in Appendix B

For Emma[7], all seventeen students present the first day the survey was distributed filled one out, but only ten of the twelve[8] students present the day the second survey was distributed filled one out. On the first survey, students ranked the teaching materials as "typical" at an average answer of 4.2, which is tied for the second highest rating, and had ten students giving a "5," four students giving a "4," and the remaining three answers distributed at "3," "2," and no answer [9]. On the second survey the results for this question increased. Emma's students ranked this same item with an average of 4.7, but because there were proportionally many fewer responses, and there was some attrition over the course of the semester, it seems likely that the very positive students from the start of the semester were the majority present for this final survey, and therefore this leap may not indicate any particular change in attitude from the students. In this round, eight students chose a "5" ranking, one a "4," and one a "3." However it is notable that the positive response, at a minimum, stayed consistent over the course of the semester and did not decrease.

Institutional Contracts & Discourse Communities

There are many external factors that press in on the genre ecologies from all sides. Kostelnick and Hassett identify several outside governing forces which influence how this document will function, namely economic, legal, and

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[7] A summary of Sarah's students' Likert responses and the full text of their open responses can be found in Appendix C

[8] Because student presentations ran long on the day I handed them out, both of these students indicated that they needed to be in other places during the crucial final week of courses.

[9] Emma's scores are somewhat lower than Sarah's, but I would argue that some portion of this could be a result of the fact that Sarah was teaching the third Composition course, Advanced Composition, on a satellite campus. Sarah had a significant number of students report on their surveys that this was the second, or even third, course they took with her. Sarah reported re-using the same syllabus document design in all her materials, therefore these students' answers probably reflect a familiarity with the design. Further, many of these students reported very positive experiences in Sarah's prior courses, so the results may also be buoyed by this. In contrast, Emma was teaching the second of the two required Composition courses on the larger main campus, and only a couple of students reported having taken a course with her prior.

technological[10] (106). Sarah and Emma repeatedly expressed desires to make conventional choices that would result in a crisp printed document, clearly providing the information they need to complete coursework effectively and timely. This speaks strongly to the contractual nature of teaching materials in the writing course system, a contract between the teacher and the student representing all the procedures and deliverables expected from all collaborators in the system. Teaching materials are contractual documents, which govern how student work will be judged, yet they are delivered within constraints that may or may not represent optimal conditions.

The contractual nature of teaching materials is also deeply embedded in their institutional context as the de facto governing body of the activity system. Kostelnick and Hassett offer an analysis of visual conventions used in legal documents, stating that, "legal factors play a consolidating and conservative role" (112). A technique Sarah describes across her genre ecology is to maintain consistent font choice, list, and table styles to reinforce the visual social contract with her students. While Kostelnick and Hassett extensively discuss the social contract between designers and readers, in the case of the student and teacher this metaphor is heightened by the important power differentials between students who need the credit for the writing course to graduate, the teacher who needs a successful course to achieve her vocational goals and needs, and the institution which must maintain curricula and academic standards across thousands of students per year.

Further, by considering the contextual influences of discourse communities, key elements that thread through all three of the bottom,

[10] As previously mentioned, technological factors will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

foundational, categories of the genre ecology: domain knowledge, communities, and division of labor. Discourse community factors represent influences, which can be either deeply entrenched or entirely superficial as they mostly directly reflect the social norms of the community using the document (Kostelnick and Hassett 83). Discourse community factors can be broken down into three general arenas, organizations, disciplines, and cultures (Kostelnick and Hassett 82). For both Sarah and Emma, the predominate organization in these cases is State University, which directs activity both at the institutional level and the departmental level, though both instructors' positions with that structure have some differences, including different job titles and different campuses. Disciplinarily, both identify as English instructors, and have taken some of the same courses (though not at the same time) in composition at State University, yet their professional careers have been in significantly different venues prior to teaching at State University. Culturally, both are of about the same age cohort and have grown up with print cultures, while also exploring and educating themselves in digital culture for both professional and personal reasons.

From an organizational standpoint, both in the institutional sense and in the document structure sense, the sample syllabus each instructor received, as a MS Word document, when they began teaching composition at State University communicated a clear sense of organizational values. Because the instructor's discipline, English, is embedded within the organizational structure, and given that both Sarah and Emma have been graduate students in the department, the departmental syllabus is positioned strongly to represent disciplinary values. Spinuzzi identifies this as a "centripetal impulse" of organizations in genre ecologies to create efficiencies through, "commonly used, official genres ... and

routines" and warns specifically that this may lead to "inflexible tools, stasis, and ossification" (118). Sarah and Emma's exposure to this institutionally sanctioned teaching document influences the content and organization of their own teaching materials because Sarah and Emma recognize that State University is the agent responsible for both employing them and awarding course credit to the students. The previously discussed results from the Likert questions posed to the students reflects this idea that teaching materials have an expected institutional and disciplinary form and that Sarah and Emma closely met their reader expectations.

Emma describes when she was first hired to teach composition at State University,

> [the sample syllabus] was one that they emailed to me, they just said, here's an example of a YYY syllabus" kind of thing ... [the director of composition] gave me a file of them for ZZZ and what at the time was YYY, and then I looked at it and I said ok, there are certain categories that I have to put, and certain things that they are looking for and departmental type things that I have to keep in there and everything, and so I used that pretty heavily for the predefined categories and then I branched off.

Sarah also elaborates, stating that she still uses parts of the sample syllabus she was given when she started at State University verbatim because she has, "never found a real reason to change, and never had a student say I didn't understand the syllabus, I didn't see that on the syllabus, to me it's a format that seems to work." This reflects the idea that, "[d]espite their potential size and bureaucratic behavior, organizations are often the most local-- and social-- type of community that controls conventional codes because their members frequently share them in close community proximity..." (Kostelnick and Hassett 86).

Further, in my interviews with both Sarah and Emma, I showed them an anonymous sample syllabus[11] in a course they both had taught, and each immediately remarked on the various organizational elements that identified it as being from State University, even though I had not told them what institution the document was from. In each case it prompted the above conversations about how influential the departmental sample syllabus was in their own design. Because both instructors received this document at start of their employment, the sample syllabus would also carry significant professional weight because,"[o]rganizational conventions are also intrinsically social because they both reflect and reinforce the ethos of the group" (Kostelnick and Hassett 86). Sarah and Emma are both conscientious professionals who recognize that thoroughness of detail and adherence to the institutional requirements are important in a syllabus because it is a contract between teacher and student for what is to be done in order for students to receive the necessary credit.

Students were also asked to elaborate at a macroscopic level on their opinions of the "look" of the teaching materials in the open response sections of each survey. In response to a question on the effectiveness of the "look" of Emma's teaching materials, six respondents attempted to identify aspects of the document that are functional and important to them for completing the course work, such as "It's important for the assignment list to be clear and concise as to what is due when," while four students comment that they believe the teaching materials should be "organized," and are confident that, "I can locate any relevant information that comes to mind." In response to the same question, one of Sarah's students readily answered that s/he liked, "how straight forward [it

[11] As described in Chapter 2, this was one of my syllabi from teaching at the same institution.

is,] if you follow the syllabus you'll pass the class," while another student stated that, "[i]t looks just like any other syllabus I've had in any other class." Therefore the sample syllabus serves as a tangible model for the instructor to gain a quick pragmatic understanding of what is expected of both her and the students, and provides a quick route into understanding what State University students are likely to expect. It will then influence the pedagogical and administrative components of Sarah and Emma's teaching materials as well as the stylistic choices because the institution must certify that a course meets its criteria.

Good Faith Institutional Collaboration

Sarah and Emma recognize the power the institution has to certify and dictate elements of their teaching materials; they identify their teaching materials as part of a cohesive institutional framework of courses that attempt to award credit consistently and equitably. Sarah, in particular, points out that though there is a departmental syllabus, it is only an exemplar[12]. Instructors may use it verbatim, modify it, or create their own unique syllabus as long as the program director deems that it meets the institutional requirements. Both Sarah and Emma identify as having modified the departmental exemplar, citing needs to match their own pedagogical approaches to teaching writing as well as to ensure that they are in line with the departmental expectations. This reflects the vision described by Phelps in "Becoming a Warrior,"

> A writing classroom headed by a woman teacher is a microcosm where she sets the work agenda and exercises various control... [M]any societal factors do shape and limit what women educators can do in

[12] I am aware that there are many writing programs in which the departmental syllabus is not an exemplar, but rather a required document for instructors to use. A discussion of the ramifications of the document design of teaching materials in those activity systems therefore would be significantly different.

> classrooms...Nonetheless, they hold a special kind of power in that space and time each day. (303)

As discussed previously, this is Phelps's "inescapable paradox," of the two types of authority required to have agency within institutions, "institutional authorization to teach and some degree of personal autonomy in pedagogical practice" (304). Moreover, Sarah and Emma make these macroscopic moves- to directly base their materials on the exemplar- as a kind of collaborative process in which they consciously choose to create bricolage teaching materials, patching together long standing institutional policies with new (to them) pedagogies like service learning and multimodal argument. Franke, in his dissertation exploring the professional genres of writing teachers, remarks, "[s]yllabi often function simultaneously as institutional collaboration and individual expression..." (35), and this observation accurately describes how both Sarah and Emma see their teaching materials.

Yet, this kind of institutional collaboration is not "dialogic," but "hierarchical," as laid out by Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede in, "Rhetoric in a New Key: Women and Collaboration" (236). Lunsford and Ede have a long established interest in how collaborative writing and feminist theories and pedagogies coexist in composition as a field. Hierarchical collaboration[13], as it sounds, is driven by the goals set forth by the "leaders" of the group, and is marked by a need for "productivity and efficiency," and wherein issues of "multiple voices and shifting authority are seen as problems to be resolved" (Lunsford and Ede 236-237). Sarah and Emma are certainly concerned with the directives of their leaders, embodied by in the departmental exemplar, and are

[13] The potential negative consequences of "good faith institutional collaboration" are more fully discussed in Chapter 4.

concerned with issues of productivity and efficiency given the compact time frames of their classroom activity systems. A dialogic approach in this context would require an institutional shift to a more conscious, flexible, and multi-voiced approach to providing support and certification for teaching materials. One possible means would be to collaboratively write the departmental exemplar with teachers from across the institutional activity system. A fuller discussion of what this might look like can be found in Chapter 5, but for now we can consider what if Spiegel, discussed in Chapter 1, had the resources to commission a committee to re-design the departmental exemplar for hybrid writing courses based on her findings using universal design principles of color, consistency, and iconography in her own hybrid teaching materials? A committee of teachers would bring an even wider view and depth of experience with both the content and the design of teaching materials, and together they could work through Spiegel's ideas and test them out with a much more expansive student audience. Ultimately, it remains that Sarah and Emma, as particular woman teachers, do exercise a certain amount of embedded power to collaborate, as granted to them by the institution. They do so with good faith to help students complete the necessary objectives of the activity system to which they are all bound. And their embeddedness within the State University influences them to make macroscopic document design choices that align themselves with the institution's authority.

Pedagogically Rhetorical & Caring Action

In this section I will describe and consider the impact of the spatial and organizational document design choices made by Sarah and Emma, analyze the rhetorical effectiveness of the design of the headings for mesoscopic student

purposes, and examine how the feminine ethic of pedagogical care can explain some of these moves.

Spatial & Organizational Mesoscopic Choices

The spatial layout of printed, academic genres are often assumed and rarely probed for their rhetorical possibilities. Schriver identifies that, "[m]any of the problems in document design occur because, although the designers want the reader to see the text in one way, the structure of the text leads readers to see it differently" (304). This means that while instructors may set margins, choose spacing, and construct lists that appear natural and neutral to their purposes, these choices may not provide the same clues to their student audiences. Given the nature of the instructor-student relationship, students are likely to work with materials provided to the best of their ability because, "... people will attempt to generate meanings for the content even when the structure is haphazard and works against consistent reading. (But most readers will try to work with a poorly designed document for only a short period)" (Schriver 306). It may be relevant to consider that some students may put in a good faith effort to review teaching materials, but if they are poorly laid out, this task may be more difficult than instructors assume. Consider the flowchart from the beginning of Chapter 1, by the time the teacher voice has asked if the student has read all the documentation, both are exasperated. Conversely, it may also improve student performance and understanding if complex academic objectives could be explained in a well laid out and easy to read fashion.

Working together, spatial decisions will guide the audience's ability to scan and read the document, "[w]estern readers usually start, the upper left corner-- moving left-to-right" (Schriver 318). Margins, in setting of the text

within a frame of blank space, are important to a sense of balance because they create symmetry though the contrast of the positive and negative space and the enclosure of the text within that frame. Balance describes how various conventional elements create a cohesive view based on where objects are placed within the document boundaries (Kimble and Hawkins 129- 130). Further, this balance is what allows the Gestalt principles of grounding figures, "even the ground can still convey a sense of purpose, closure, and of aesthetically pleasing forms" (Schriver 309). Spacing, single or double spacing being the most common, creates clear contrast between lines of text as well as text objects that indicates the enclosure as well as the overall similarity of each meaningful segment. Text justification, in deciding whether text should follow a left, center or right alignment, establishes a means of creating connection within all the many text objects within the document. Connection through text justification means that the user can assume there is a simple but direct relationship between all the text that shares a particular justification (Kimble and Hawkins 121). In the six documents, there was remarkable similarity in the whole document spatial choices.

Of particular note, is the narrowness of Sarah's margin choices; she emphasized repeatedly throughout our interviews the importance of producing documents which printed on the fewest pages, citing both departmental and student budgets, and identified her margin choices as one way she achieves this.

Sarah	**Syllabus**	.5 inches	Bottom right: course & page number	Left	Single, one carriage return between paragraphs
	Assignments Overview Sheet	.75 inches	Bottom right: page number & total pages	Left	1.25, one carriage return between paragraphs
	Commentary Assignment Sheet	.5 inches	None	Left	1.25, one carriage return between paragraphs
Emma	**Syllabus**	1 inch right & left;.5 inch top & bottom	Bottom center: page number	Left	Single, one carriage return between paragraphs
	Criteria for an Evaluation Essay	1 inch	None	Left	Single, one carriage return between paragraphs
	Rubric for an Evaluation Essay	1.25 inch right & left; 1 inch top & bottom	None	Left	Single, one carriage return between paragraphs

Table 3.1 Mesoscopic whole document choices

Table 3.1, below, depicts the choices made across documents. Conversely, Emma never spoke about her margin choices, which could indicate that this was a subconscious operation wherein she simply worked with the default margins in her MS Word software. However, there must have been a problem in her bricolage process of designing her syllabus that resulted in a mesoscopic discoordination. Emma's syllabus makes use of footnotes for its page numbers, set at three-quarters-of-an-inch above the bottom the page. This means that the numbers are obscured by text that prints over or crowds the number due to the

half-inch margin setting for the body text on five of the seven pages, as can be seen in figure 3.5, below.

Other Materials:
Student e-mail account
Flash Drive – at least 4 G
Binder with pockets
College level thesaurus and dictionary
Highlighters
Red and black pens

Assignments and Grades:

Major Essays and Assignments:

Issue Exploration	30 points
Issue Presentation	50 points
Definition Essay	100 points
Evaluation Essay	100 points
Writing Conference	50 points
Library Tutorials	20 points
Annotated Bibliography	50 points
Visual Argument Presentation	100 points
Research Paper Outline	50 points
Research Paper	200 points
Issue Connections paper/ Reflection essay (final exam)	100 points
Writing folders	300 points

Additional Assignments/Activities:

Out-of-class reading/preparation; informal writing assignments; group presentations; essay drafts; peer reviews; and other class activities will be part of your grade and vary in point value.

Essay Format and Procedures for Submission:

- ✓ Papers to be peer-reviewed and formal drafts of papers should be full-length, typed in double space with 1" margins, proofread, and printed on white paper with black ink. You must include your name, class, section number, date, title of the essay, and the delineation "draft" or "final" on all papers that are submitted. All essay revisions should be turned in by attaching the corrected copy to the original.
- ✓ Since [redacted]'s Computer Labs are accessible to all [redacted] students who present valid campus identification cards, no formal paper will be accepted that has not been typed, spell-checked and grammar-checked. All papers must follow correct MLA format. Submit assignments in a pocket folder with all previous drafts and notes attached. For your own protection, keep photocopies of submitted work and keep word processed work saved on your flash drive

2

Figure 3.5 Second page of Emma's syllabus

Connection and balance are also both central to choices made in how a document is spaced, as well as the amount of blank space left between text objects. Therefore, "Gestalt principles ...[that] help us guide the reader's focus of attention, emphasize certain groupings, and organize sequences of the content" (Schriver 326) can help instructors make rhetorically effective spatial decisions.

Another way to approach spatial decisions in document design is to consider how figures are placed with respect to vertical and horizontal space. Schriver defines,

> ... vertical space is usually called leading (sometimes linespacing); it is the distance from baseline-to-baseline among lines of text... also the space between paragraphs, the space between the bottom edge of a picture and it's caption, the space between subheadings and text regions. (327)

Vertical spacing decisions would include the top and bottom margins and spacing but would also affect the layout of textual figures such as lists. Lists, text that is visually marked by bullets or alphanumeric marks, are frequently used in documents to create a sequence of related information available to be scanned. Sequencing creates a flow of pertinent information for the user to sift through by indicating the order and similarity of information presented in each list (Kimball and Hawkins 123- 124).

Sarah	**Syllabus**	One: Round bullets, Under heading, "Course Objectives:"	One: Under heading, "What is writing?" within the section "Evaluation criteria"
	Assignments Overview Sheet	Three: Round bullets, Untitled list of mission objectives of service organization; Round bullets, Untitled list of specific assignments within the service learning projects; Dashes, Under heading, "Preliminary Resources"	None
	Commentary Assignment Sheet	None	None
Emma	**Syllabus**	Two: Checkmarks, Under heading, "Essay Format and Procedures for Submission:,"; Checkmarks, Under heading, "Late Work and Make Up Work:,"	One: Under heading, "Course Objectives:"
	Criteria for an Evaluation Essay	One: Round bullets, untitled, comprises most of the page	None
	Rubric for an Evaluation Essay	None	None

Table 3.2 Marked list design choices

Table 3.2, above, describes the design choices made by Sarah and Emma in constructing marked lists. Both employed them to depict their course objectives and to list evaluation criteria on their syllabi. Sarah makes extensive use of lists on her Assignments Overview Sheet. She reported that this particular document gave her problems in its design; she had originally envisioned it as a one-page overview that grew to four pages, in part because this was new pedagogical

content and she was still working out her expectations, the first page of which can be seen below in figure 3.6.

ENGL 327 Advanced Composition
Service Learning Project – Spring 2011

Service Learning projects link community needs with classroom programs to foster student learning, encourage civic involvement, and strengthen communities: the ultimate goal is for students to learn while contributing to the betterment of their community. Our service learning project this semester will support the efforts of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission's new HR Green program, ultimately, we will submit for the organization's website a collection of environmentally focused service learning lesson plans to be shared with elementary or secondary school teachers.

By consolidating the efforts of many community groups, programs, and agencies, HR Green seeks to enhance environmental stewardship in the Hampton Roads area by:

- Fostering proper disposal of fats, oils, and grease
- Preventing and controlling litter
- Encouraging recycling, reuse, and reduction
- Enhancing community beautification
- Enhancing stormwater quality
- Encouraging wise water use

Our service learning project has a number of objectives: to increase our understanding of how service learning projects can be used in educational settings, to enhance our knowledge of environmental stewardship, to contribute to HR Green's efforts, to enhance our critical thinking and evaluation skills, and to improve our writing skills by researching and developing various written documents targeted to specific audiences.

The project will include research on service learning as an educational tool, research on environmental protection and stewardship, research on HR Green and its affiliate programs, and research on Standards of Learning for targeted grade levels. These research activities will assist students in production of the following:

- An annotated bibliography of service learning articles (see below)
- A research paper on service learning (see below)
- An environmental stewardship lesson plan that addresses Virginia Standards of Learning*
- A commentary on service learning, HR Green, or environmental stewardship for *The Virginian-Pilot* or *Education Week* (www.edweek.org)*
- A mini-grant proposal for funding for a service learning project *
- Oral and written evaluations of colleagues' research papers, lesson plans, and commentaries

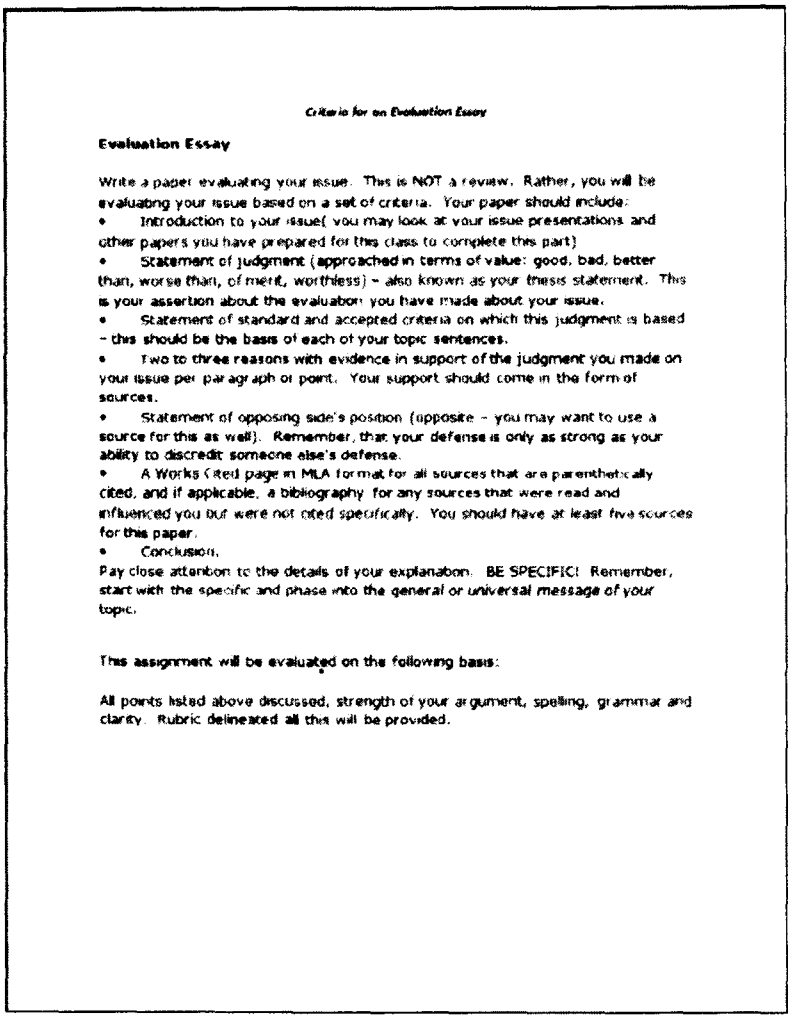
1 of 4

Figure 3.6 First page of Sarah's assignments overview sheet

In some ways, these lists may represent Sarah's attempt to write-to-learn her own curriculum through sequencing and balancing while also seeking to scaffold the student experience in this new arena. For instance, some projects on the list of assignments are marked with an asterisk, and a note at the end of list states that

the asterisk indicates that these assignments will have separate, forthcoming assignment sheets.

Emma experiences a second discoordination, this time on her Criteria for an Evaluation Essay document with her use of lists, as seen in figure 3.7, below.



Criteria for an Evaluation Essay

Evaluation Essay

Write a paper evaluating your issue. This is NOT a review. Rather, you will be evaluating your issue based on a set of criteria. Your paper should include:

- Introduction to your issue(you may look at your issue presentations and other papers you have prepared for this class to complete this part)
- Statement of judgment (approached in terms of value: good, bad, better than, worse than, of merit, worthless) - also known as your thesis statement. This is your assertion about the evaluation you have made about your issue.
- Statement of standard and accepted criteria on which this judgment is based - this should be the basis of each of your topic sentences.
- Two to three reasons with evidence in support of the judgment you made on your issue per paragraph or point. Your support should come in the form of sources.
- Statement of opposing side's position (opposite - you may want to use a source for this as well). Remember, that your defense is only as strong as your ability to discredit someone else's defense.
- A Works Cited page in MLA format for all sources that are parenthetically cited, and if applicable, a bibliography for any sources that were read and influenced you but were not cited specifically. You should have at least five sources for this paper.
- Conclusion.

Pay close attention to the details of your explanation. BE SPECIFIC! Remember, start with the specific and phase into the general or universal message of your topic.

This assignment will be evaluated on the following basis:

All points listed above discussed, strength of your argument, spelling, grammar and clarity. Rubric delineated all this will be provided.

Figure 3.7 Emma's criteria for the evaluation essay

This is particularly problematic because the document is primarily composed of this list, which appears irregularly formatted, as the first line of each item is indented a quarter of an inch, but when the content follows onto a second line,

the text runs to the left margin; this affects the ability to scan the information quickly and efficiently. In my interviews with Emma, I discovered that she had not originally intended to have an assignment sheet for this essay, believing instead that she could hand out the Rubric for an Evaluation Essay on the first day it was assigned, and then scaffold the students in class with more support and description. However, she quickly found that there was still significant confusion amongst her students about what the assignment entailed, so she created this document "on the fly" and posted it to the course Blackboard page. This discoordination is likely a result of her need to rapidly move through this extra task.

Besides vertical spacing, Schriver explains that, "[h]orizontal space, then, is used to characterize the width of objects as well as the distance between them" (328). Horizontal spacing decisions would include the left and right margins, text justification decisions, but also the placement of figures and tables. Tables, verbal or numeric data presented in a series of rows and columns, create a clear hierarchy of information that allows a user to quickly scan for the information she needs, rather than re-read through a paragraph. The patterning used in tables takes advantage of what is called the "power zone," the top most and left most columns or spaces of a page or design object; the power zone is what facilitates the user's ability to scan the material because his eye is already primed to look in those areas for important and directive information (Kimball and Hawkins 125- 126). This power zone reflects the Gestalt principles discussed by Schriver. She argues against spatial decisions being a last minute thought that, "once the blank space has been added and the spell checker had been run, the document [is] finished" (Schriver 330). The totality of these spatial decisions

deeply impact how students read, scan and use the documents to locate information. Careful consideration of these decisions can not only boost the usability of teaching materials, but, by being easier to use, students will have a greater chance of success in creating their own texts.

For this discussion, in contrast to lists which are marked with bullets or numbers, unmarked lists are created visually by careful alignment of particular elements that is offset from the spacing of the body of the text, creating a block of separate text (See figure 3.9 Sarah's commentary assignment sheet for an example). Tables contain at least two columns and two rows, but may or may not have marked cell divisions.

Sarah	**Syllabus**	None	Three: Under heading, "Major Deadlines (subject to change)," 2 untitled columns, no cell borders; Under heading, "Grading Scale," 4 untitled columns, no cell borders; No heading, 2 untitled columns, first column displays, "Due before class on Jan XX," second column displays the assignments, cell borders
	Assignments Overview Sheet	None	None
	Commentary Assignment Sheet	Two: Under heading, "Deadlines:"; Under heading, "Resources"	None
Emma	**Syllabus**	Two: Under headings, "Bookstore:/ Other Materials:"; untitled list of due dates	One: Under heading, "Major Essays and Assignments:,"2 untitled columns, no cell borders
	Criteria for an Evaluation Essay	None	None
	Rubric for an Evaluation Essay	None	One: Follows document title, 4 titled columns: a heading column, "Assignment Criteria," followed by a series of descriptions of evaluation criteria; three empty body columns, titled, "Superior," "Acceptable," and "Needs Work"

Table 3.3 Unmarked list & table design choices

In table 3.3, above, Sarah and Emma's design choices for using unmarked lists and tables are described

Attendance: For a writing community to function, everyone must come to class every day having completed the reading and writing assignments. Please be on time and remain for the entire class. Missing more than three classes will negatively affect your final grade (4 absences = 1/3 letter grade reduction; 5 absences = 2/3 letter grade reduction; 6 absences = 1 letter grade reduction). Missing more than 25% of the class periods (more than 6 classes) may result in failure of the course. If you encounter problems that result in unavoidable absences, you may want to contact Student Affairs: [redacted].

Communication: **CHECK YOUR [redacted] E-MAIL DAILY.** We will use Blackboard for announcements, assignment sheets, documents, grades, e-mail, etc. Go to [redacted] > Current Students. For help with technical difficulties, contact Customer Service at [redacted].

Honor System: Each student is expected to abide by the [redacted] Honor Code. You are responsible for obtaining a copy of the Student Handbook and informing yourself about student conduct regulations. You may visit the Honor Council office in [redacted] or check the [redacted] website.

Plagiarism: Writers who use the words or ideas of others are obligated to give credit through proper acknowledgment and documentation. Failure to give credit is plagiarism, a violation of the [redacted] Honor Code that can lead to expulsion from the University. If the quality of your in-class and out-of-class writing varies dramatically, you may be asked to write under supervision. **If you need help with citation of research materials, please schedule a conference with me or Writing Tutorial Service.**

Special Needs: Reasonable accommodations can be provided for students with disabilities. If you need accommodations for this class, please contact me as soon as possible.

Due before class on Jan. 13	Read "Writing a Summary" and "Build a Bridge" on Blackboard / Assignments; post a summary of "Build a Bridge" with an MLA or APA citation on Bbd / Assignments. Bring to class a copy of the Service Learning Project Sheet from Bbd / Assignments.
Due before class on Jan. 18	Summarize two additional journal articles that you find on the subject of Service Learning; post on Blackboard / Assignments.
Due before class on Jan. 20	Review Exit Exam website
Due Jan. 25	Read "Pursuing Franklin's Dream" on Bbd / Course Documents and be prepared to discuss. Continue research on Service Learning.
Due Jan. 27	Find an additional article on Service Learning (not the ones you summarized) and be prepared to present its main ideas to the class.
Due Feb. 1	**Annotated Bibliography due**; post on Bbd / Assignments.
Feb. 3	Writing day; class cancelled.
Due Feb. 8	Research Paper draft due (at least three pages); post on Bbd / Assignments and bring four copies to class. Also bring an electronic copy for in-class editing.
Due Feb. 10	Write evaluations of your classmates' drafts; post on Bbd / Assignments and bring a copy for the writer. Have an electronic copy of your essay available for in-class editing.

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Figure 3.8 Third page of Sarah's syllabus

The table Sarah employs in her syllabus to depict her due dates uses cell divisions and is very simple in its design and can be seen figure 3.8, above.The due dates listed go from the first week of class until Spring Break, and there is a note at the end in bold, which states, "Check Blackboard/ Assignments for future homework assignment" and appears outside the table object. In contrast, Emma uses a more traditional table format by using the Microsoft provided table wizard and has visible lines around each box to display a detailed schedule of when particular assignments are due, from small reading assignments and

Blackboard postings to the research paper. Interestingly, both Sarah and Emma spoke about how difficult they find designing to communicate the temporal nature of the semester. Neither was particularly satisfied with her own solution, but it was the best they had yet to land on.

Despite some discoordinations in the delivered documents or frustrations that Sarah and Emma identified with their own design, students were, on the whole, satisfied with the document design at the mesoscopic level. Three of the Likert questions were concentrated at the mesoscopic level, asking students to consider how the design of these particular teaching materials can and do help them complete the objectives for the course. On the first survey, Sarah's students gave an average answer of 4.6 for the first of these questions, regarding the overall ability to find important information. Notably, this question had the greatest variation, with seven students ranking this item with a "4," while ten ranked it with a "5." While this is obviously still a very strong vote of confidence, it does show a small amount of hesitancy before the real work of the semester begins. On the second survey, this question shows a jump to a 4.9 which indicates a positive change from anticipating how the documents will work to feeling confident that documents did function well. The next two questions both have a 4.8 average on the first survey, regarding how the headings and how the style choices (i.e. paragraphs, bulleted lists, numbered lists, tables, images etc.) support the students' work. While the question about headings maintains its average ranking of 4.8, the question about style choices drops the most to 4.4, indicating that there were some challenges presented in interpreting how the information was intended to be applied.

Emma's students gave an average answer of 4.2 on the first survey for the question about how easy information is to find on these particular teaching materials. This question showed some of the greatest variation; this may indicate some hesitancy on their part because it is early in the semester and they have not worked with the documents yet. On the second survey, students gave an average ranking of 4.5. The question regarding headings had the highest average ranking, 4.6 on the first survey, and had the most "5"s, indicating that the teaching materials were grouped and labeled according to student expectations, as well as overall created a visual ethos that students recognized. Despite the generally higher scores on the second survey, this question shows a slight dip to an average of 4.5. The question regarding style choices had an average ranking of 4.1 on the first survey and 4.4 on the second survey. However it is notable that these positive responses, at a minimum, stayed consistent over the course of the semester and did not decrease meaningfully. As the semester progressed, students maintained their belief that this document met their expectations for what a syllabus looks like and how it helps them complete their work.

The Rhetoric of Headings

While the categories are not exclusionary, rhetorical factors are more deeply threaded through the upper triangle of the genre ecologies, in some ways referencing the rhetorical triangle itself, connecting rhetor, audience, and purpose together for a particular exigency. For Kostelnick and Hassett, rhetorical factors in visual design are established through the use of stock genres, pragmatic features, and stylistic imitation (96). Headings, the titles and labels used to indicate the type of information found following, are critical signposts via which a user navigates the page. Headings, the titles and labels used to

indicate the type of information found following, create a hierarchy of connections between text objects; the smaller the heading or the less space it is afforded on the page (i.e. is it sitting closely with other text or does it have a lot of negative space around it) the more likely it is to indicate information that is a piece of a larger whole, while the bigger the heading, the more likely it is indicate important or organizing information (Kimble and Hawkins 122- 123). The hierarchy revealed by well appointed headings can, "reveal the content and its structure, enabling readers to see the text in ways that help them to interpret its meaning" (Schriver 284).

All documents contained at least one title, and all but one employed some section headings within the document. documents extensively use headings to create a hierarchy of information presented within these dense, text-rich documents. In addition, Sarah makes deliberate choices to coordinate her materials; the headings within the syllabus, assignments overview sheet and the commentary assignment sheet share many similar features as the syllabus and notably place their course and document titles in the same font size as the rest of the document and are left-justified.

Sarah	**Syllabus**	Center justification; bolded 14 point Times New Roman; carriage return separates body text	Left justification; bolded 12 point Times New Roman; mixed use of carriage return to separate body and body text follows the colon	None
	Assignments Overview Sheet	For both: Left justification; bolded 12 point Times New Roman; carriage return separates body text		Left justification, mixed use of italicized and bolded & italicized 12 point Times New Roman, mixed use of carriage return separates body text and body text follows the colon
	Commentary Assignment Sheet	Left justification; bolded 12 point Times New Roman; carriage return separates body text	Left justification; bolded 12 point Times New Roman; mixed use of a carriage return to separate body and body text follows the colon	None
Emma	**Syllabus**	Center justification; bolded & italicized 14 point Georgia; carriage return separates body text	For both: Left justification, mixed use of bolded and bolded & italicized 12 point Georgia, mixed use of carriage return separates body text and body text follows the colon	
	Criteria for an Evaluation Essay	Center justification; bolded & italicized 11 point Cambria; carriage return separates body text	Left justification; bolded 11 point Calibri, carriage return separates body text	None
	Rubric for an Evaluation Essay	Center justification; bolded & italicized 12 point Arial; carriage return separates body text	For both: None	

Table 3.4 Headings design choices

In table 3.4, above, Sarah and Emma's design choices regarding the headings used through out their documents.

Below, in figure 3.9, you can see an illustration of Sarah's use of headings in her commentary assignment sheet, which she described as based on a standard template for assignment sheets she has devised. Emma's syllabus is the only document to extensively use headings because it is significantly longer and dense with information. After the title, there are seven left-justified headings, organized into three rows with two to three bolded headings per line, organized by tabs, that set off the course and instructor contact information for the course, such as, "Room:," "Instructor:," and "Office Hours:."

ENGL 327 Spring 2011

Commentary on Service Learning / Environmental Stewardship (100 points)

Deadlines:
Draft Due: March 17
Revision Due: March 24
Final, post-conference Revision Due: April 5

Purpose: To develop an argument that uses the three elements of the rhetorical triangle (logos, pathos, and ethos) to persuade a specific audience to consider your point of view.

Description: Using your knowledge of service learning and environmental stewardship, write a commentary (also called an opinion-editorial essay or guest editorial) of approximately 700 words for *The Virginian-Pilot* or 700-1,200 words for *Education Week* that deals with a timely aspect of this topic.

Audience: *The Virginian-Pilot* or *Education Week*

Process: Begin by studying the content of current and previous editions of the publication of your choice to determine the editorial focus and assess the needs, values, and concerns of the audience. Then, read Kranzley's article on writing opinion-editorials (Bbd / Assignments / Commentary).

Now you're ready to write an essay in which you develop an argument relative to the topic. Your essay should include a compelling claim (thesis) and valid supporting evidence from your reading and research on the topic.

For example, for *The Virginian-Pilot*, you could argue that families would benefit from participating in environmental stewardship activities such as Earth Day. For *Education Week*, you might argue that teachers should learn more about the benefits of implementing a service learning project. Of course, you can't use these ideas; you have to come up with your own idea.

Cite all sources according to the requirements of the publication in question. For example, *The Virginian-Pilot* gives credit to sources in-text, but does not include a works cited page.

Resources:
For *The Virginian-Pilot* – pilotonline.com or pick up daily copies in the VBHEC atrium
For *Education Week* – http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html?intc=thed and http://www.edweek.org/info/about/submit-commentary.html?intc=thed

Criteria for Evaluation: Your commentary will be evaluated on the effectiveness of your argument, including the strength of your claim (thesis) and supporting evidence; your consideration of the audience's needs, values, and concerns; your establishment of your credibility as a writer on this topic; your control of grammar and mechanics; and expressiveness and style.

Figure 3.9 Sarah's commentary assignment sheet

Following these, the document employs twenty-two left-justified, bolded and italicized headings over the next six pages to organize the range of content being presented. Her documents are less consistent than Sarah's, but as noted above, similarly received by students.

The use of headings in these teaching materials serves rhetorical functions and seeks to communicate the pedagogical purpose of the coursework. Headings are critical signposts via which a user navigates the page by use of white space and modified fonts effectively chunks particular types of information needed by students to successfully complete coursework. This technique is well regarded in visual design, one which Kostelnick and Hassett describe as "structural cues," commonly used information rich documents that readers will read in a "non-linear" fashion (100). Sarah and Emma both cite that a simplicity-driven aesthetic propels their desire to limit font variation throughout the document, but it is their desire for functional readability, via the "chunking" of information, that allows them to take advantage of bolding, italics and size variation when creating their signposts.

Kostelnick has long identified, "the need to structure information, and the need to stylize it," as the critical issues designers address when approaching a document, and he and Hassett make particular note that the need to stylize information as being grounded in the need to appear trustworthy and credible in the eyes of the reader (Kostelnick and Hassett 99). When asked about how the "look" of the teaching materials helped students complete their specific coursework, one of Sarah's students stated, "A clean, organized syllabus is effective. Much like an index: you can find broad topic (heading) in bold and related topics (heading information) underneath, not in bold. This format

allowed for quick finding of what I needed." The index metaphor used by the student matches the index metaphor that Sarah used when describing how she wants her syllabus to function. Because her class was filled with teaching students, it is possible that Sarah has used this metaphor in class to describe how course documents should function. Regardless, it is still interesting that this response so closely echoes Sarah's words because the metaphor of the index underscores the utilitarian view of the genre by both teacher and students Further, three responses made specific reference to needing "easy" to read documents and four more believed that how "organized" the documents were made an important difference in completing writing assignments. Responding similarly, one of Emma's students explains that the "look" of the documents made finding the information they needed easy to locate important information, "when everything is organized with headings, it helps a lot," and "The syllabus gave a full layout of the whole semester & what was due, when we didn't have class & future assignments." This indicates that Sarah, Emma, and their students recognize the important nature of signposting in such a high stakes activity system like the writing classroom. While not everyone sees writing courses as critical to student success, both Sarah and Emma repeatedly voiced their investment in their students' success both in their current writing courses and in the students' future academic and professional writing endeavors.

Pedagogical Caring

Sarah and Emma, as dedicated writing teachers, are probably most closely attuned to their mesoscopic design choices and how they function rhetorically to help students turn the course objectives into student-produced outcomes. In fact, when coding the interview data, a theme that emerged was how strongly Sarah

and Emma correlated pedagogical needs to their document design choices as a means of: scaffolding objectives, setting appropriate tone through modeling, and establishing a baseline of communication with students on the particular assignments. Further, both women repeatedly expressed an ethic of care and responsibility for their student charges that had document design implications. Phelps discusses the element of "parentlike caring" ("Becoming a Warrior" 303), that has been tied to the feminized history of composition, and both Sarah and Emma's comments align themselves in that manner[14]. Yet again, however, both are somewhat aware of the paradox they are in, and embrace a manner of care that is in line with the concept of "intellectual parenting," as described by Janice Hays in "Intellectual Parenting and a Developmental Feminist Pedagogy of Writing" (161). Hays makes note that an ethic of care is commonly associated with maternal features, and she is deliberately enacting a gender neutral term to connote the belief that men are equally capable of doing the work she describes (161).

But where I most see this concept aligning with what Sarah and Emma practice is this,

> The important thing for us as teachers is to facilitate and enhance growth, taking care not to abort or stunt it. Instructors also need to recognize that when their learning styles do not match those of their students, they must compensate accordingly. (Hays, 163)

For example, Emma's criteria for an evaluation essay document, despite its discoordination, was prompted by her deep concern that her students needed more from her. In this case, she eschewed careful design for the functionality of adding a document. In her second interview, Sarah identifies her understanding

[14] This concept of pedagogical caring will also be more fully critiqued in Chapter 4

of "readability" as being a driving force behind her design choices, stating that she tries to limit all non-syllabus teaching materials, like assignment sheets, to a single page. She is using this readable but brief document to meet her pedagogical goal of getting students to more fully interpret the assignments for themselves,

> I think detail is important, but if it's so long, I think the detail is going to get lost, if there's not enough detail then students understandably have questions, and there's always, as you well know, that that dilemma, between giving too much and leaving it open enough that students are encouraged, required, forced to come up with their own approach, so that's the challenge for me is providing enough detail so that it's doesn't become so cumbersome that they'll never read it, and providing enough guidance, but without being um restrictive or overly prescriptive

Sarah and Emma both put a good deal of thought into the design of their teaching materials, what rhetorical, pedagogical needs that design must meet, and threaded throughout is an underlying sense of care for their students that motivates them to do this work.

Sensitive Grip-Based & Ethical Operation

In this section I will depict the microscopic elements of print based whole document and typeface design choices, situate these choices within the grip of print culture, and, finally, articulate how my own feminine principle of ethical relationships helped me to understand Sarah and Emma's microscopic choices and also attempt to offer them something that would be useful to their own contexts.

Print Based and Typeface Driven Microscopic Choices

There are very specific visual repercussions of the macroscopic choice to use MS Word, or any word processing software, to design teaching materials. When placed online in a Blackboard environment, all six examined documents

are MS Word .doc files that can be downloaded and opened with external software. In the MS Word environment, the document view is one that attempts to show the user what the document will look like printed. In the next chapter, I will discuss how this technology driven choice precludes other design options. In table 3.5, below, the microscopic decisions which affect the look of the whole document are described.

Sarah	**Syllabus**	Portrait on 8.5" by 11" white paper with black ink	Series of stacked sheets
	Assignments Overview Sheet	Portrait on 8.5" by 11" white paper with black ink	Series of stacked sheets
	Commentary Assignment Sheet	Portrait on 8.5" by 11" white paper with black ink	Single sheet
Emma	**Syllabus**	Portrait on 8.5" by 11" white paper with black ink	Series of stacked sheets
	Criteria for an Evaluation Essay	Portrait on 8.5" by 11" white paper with black ink	Single sheet
	Rubric for an Evaluation Essay	Landscape on 8.5" by 11" white paper with black ink	Single sheet

Table 3.5 Microscopic whole document choices

One of the Likert questions was aimed at the microscopic level, though it was difficult to ask such granular questions about the subconscious operations of working with the teaching materials. This question asked students to rank how well choices in margins, font (typeface), and line spacing help them to work with the teaching materials. On the first survey, Sarah's students gave an average

answer of 4.8, and on the second survey they gave an average of 4.9. These answers are consistently very high among already high responses, demonstrating students' recognition of these choices as expected ones. For Emma's students, this question received the lowest average ranking of 3.9 on the first survey and reflected a significant leap to 4.7 on the second survey, though, as noted above, some of this increase may be a result of the smaller sample size, and may reflect only a small rise over the semester. Regardless of even this level of change, the fact that on a 5 point scale, all averages quite high and reflect a clear comfort on the students' part with the "look" of these teaching materials.

Sarah and Emma are well indoctrinated into these conventions and do not want to make radical changes to them because the institutional bounds they are working within also validates these choices at the local level: at the top from supervisors' expectations; up from the bottom with students' expectations; and from the sides in what their peers are producing and handing out to their students (Kostelnick and Hassett 86). This is one of many reasons Sarah cites over the course of her three interviews for why the look of her syllabus has remained largely unchanged, even as she makes significant changes to her pedagogical content over her career. The traditional generic conventions she is choosing from are the result of many activity systems that she and other teachers have cycled through and represent "values and assumptions" formed over that long history (Spinuzzi 115). Sarah and Emma are part-time document designers, making use of institutionally sanctioned templates and samples and responding to the situation at hand.

Another microscopic limitation dictated by the print environment is how typeface is deployed. Schriver notes that more recent trends in document design

show designers mixing different typefaces with a single document or set of documents, explaining, "they offer the best of both worlds: the visually rich texture of the serif faces (typically used for body text) and the sparse, uniform look of the sans serif (often for headings, captions, and marginalia)" (257). Type, typeface, and font are terms that are often conflated in non-designerly discussions and are taken for granted by most word processor users. Type is the catch-all term that refers to the shapes used to create letters, numbers & symbols; typeface refers to a particular type of type, such as Helvetica, Courier or Times New Roman (Kimball and Hawkins 152). With the rise of desktop publishing and the influence of digital file naming, font is frequently used interchangeably with typeface, but more specifically refers to the particular size (10, 12, 14 points) and shape (italics, bold, condensed, expanded, etc.) in which the text is rendered (Kimball and Hawkins 152). Point size is determined by measuring a letter face against it's frame, originally a literal small metal frame set around each individual letterform; and, "[s]trangely enough, even with today's digital typefaces, the typographic community still uses the point system for measuring type" (Schriver 254). Most typefaces can be identified as serif or sans serif faced[15], "a serif is a line or curve that finishes off a letterform" (Schriver 255); Times New Roman is a common serif faced type while Helvetica is sans serif faced. Schriver further explains, "[serif typefaces] have been employed by typographers and book designers since Johann Guttenburg and his colleagues introduced moveable type in 1450..." (255). Serif faced type persist in part because it is

[15] Script and ornamental are two categories of typefaces that were not employed in either of Sarah or Emma's documents. Both are generally considered special case types and would likely have a significant impact on the audience's reading of the document. Schriver herself does not cover these typefaces because they are "typically unsuitable for document design" due to their frequent lack of legibility (255, ft 7).

believed to be easier to read, while sans serif faced type is preferred in situations requiring extensive scanning due to it's high contrast on the page and screen, creating "better visual distinctions among the parts" (Schriver 257).

Depending on the sophistication of the document designer, the typeface choices within a document may be carefully chosen to create a particular user experience with the document; they may be the result of following a particular mandated style guide within an organization; or they may simply represent the default choices present in the word processing software used when the document designer started up the program. In the following two tables, table 3.6 and table 3.7, Sarah and Emma's typeface choices for the body of their documents in depicted.

Sarah	**Syllabus**	Times New Roman	12 point
	Assignments Overview Sheet	Times New Roman	12 point
	Commentary Assignment Sheet	Times New Roman	12 point
Emma	**Syllabus**	Georgia	12 point
	Criteria for an Evaluation Essay	Calibri	11 point
	Rubric for an Evaluation Essay	Primarily Arial, with six instances of Times	10 point

Table 3.6 Typeface choices for general purposes

Sarah	**Syllabus**	Literary quote, twice for emphasis	twice for emphasis	once for emphasis, once to indicate a website	None	Once for emphasis
	Assignments Overview Sheet	None	Periodical titles	None	Used for scaffolding in sample text	None
	Commentary Assignment Sheet	None	Periodical titles	Once for a website	None	None
Emma	**Syllabus**	twelve instances for emphasis	book and periodical titles	Once for emphasis, nine instances for email addresses and websites	None	None
	Criteria for an Evaluation Essay	None	None	None	None	Twice for emphasis
	Rubric for an Evaluation Essay	None	None	None	None	Once for emphasis

Table 3.7 Typeface choices for particular purposes

Sarah's general typeface and font size decisions are precisely aligned, while Emma's vary from document to document. When using related typefaces for particular purposes, such as bold, italics, underline, cross out, and all capitals, Sarah is very constrained in her choices, while Emma uses a significant number.

Sarah's typeface is very common and would likely be available[16] on almost any word processing program or portable document viewer, allowing Sarah to be reasonably confident that the typeface will read as she intended whether it is viewed onscreen on within a range of software or operating systems, or printed to paper on a standard printer. Emma's typeface choices range; they are all common typefaces, with Georgia, Cambria and Calibri being proprietary MS typefaces, and Times and Arial being universal typefaces. Emma's rubric for an evaluation essay has several microscopic breakdowns. There are six instances where a 10 point Times font is used; two instances are in the lines, "Name:_____" that immediately precedes the table, and "SCORE:_____" that immediately follows the table. The other four instances occur within the cells that detail specific assessment criteria, three of the cells contain a sentence in Arial followed by a sentence in Times, while the final cell is entirely in Times. This can be seen in figure 3.10, below. Like the discoordinations noted in her materials above, these are a part of her bricolage approach to document design and her need to deliver materials in an efficient, if not perfected, manner.

In the Open Response section, students made few comments on how the microscopic elements of the teaching materials affected their ability to work with the materials. This is likely a result of the broad phrasing of these questions, done intentionally so as not to overly lead the students' responses.

[16] Typeface availability is an important consideration because if the terminal the teacher or student is reading the document on or printing from does not have the typeface embedded in its software, it will display and print the document in a different typeface. This will frequently result in a document that appears messy or ill-formatted because the substitute typeface does not have all the same features as the original.

Rubric for an Evaluation Essay

Name _____

Assignment Criteria	Superior	Acceptable
Intro paragraph creates purpose and focus for the essay; offers insight into why essay will take the approach it does to the topic and evaluation. Thesis is clear and properly located		
Criteria for evaluation are made clear throughout the essay and are valid criteria for such an evaluation.		
Discussion of each criteria is thorough and supported with relevant facts/examples		
The body paragraphs work well together, the info is presented in a logical manner, develops the focus, & all relate specifically to thesis. Topic sentences should be specific details born from the thesis and the concluding sentence for each paragraph must tie into the thesis		
Transitional devices eloquently connect body paragraphs and ideas within paragraphs to create a "flowing" effect. Think carefully about the order of your points		
The conclusion of the essay ties all the evaluated criteria together in such a way that it clinches the writer's evaluation. You should also provide a universal message about your issue that resounds with the reader. A quote may work well here.		
The tone is appropriate for the subject and purpose of this essay and is consistent throughout. Writer is sincere and genuine, using personal belief and opinion constructively and effectively.		
The writer is critical but fair and even-handed. The opposing viewpoint is mentioned and refuted.		
The writer seems competent to be doing such an evaluation. This is evidenced by the use of ethos, pathos, and logos throughout born from sources found for the paper		
The essay has variety of sentence structures and word choices, creating a strong style. Definitive choices have been made according to subject and purpose.		
The essay has been edited for punctuation, sentence fragments, comma splices, run-on sentences, spelling, and usage errors. Remember the permanence of The Dead Sea of Written. It will be		

Figure 3.10 Emma's rubric for an evaluation essay

Despite the rather obvious breakdown above, none of Emma's students commented on her general use of typeface. However, on the first survey, one of Emma's students states that there is, "a bit too much bold," a second student feels that, "some paragraphs are close together," and a third cites "the number of pages," as being bothersome aspects of the document design of the teaching materials. Given the significant number of typeface choices Emma makes for emphasis, it seems to be overwhelming for this student.

The Grip of Print

The striking visual similarities between Sarah and Emma's teaching materials demonstrate how the concept of grip comes to shape the way visual conventions are selected and interpreted. Kostelnick and Hassett describe this as an issue of "the well-worn path," acknowledging that these kinds of conventions co-constitute generic expectations and create an extremely "stable currency" (171). Further, grip is closely tied to the social contract that visual conventions create (Kostelnick and Hassett 180), and this seems particularly important in documents that are repeatedly described by both participants as representing a contract between them and their students.

Despite its microscopic nature, many novice designers understand that they are able to choose their type (or "font") in their word-processing software and many may understand that this choice could have some rhetorical impact. Sarah and Emma both strongly believed that their teaching materials contribute to classroom ethos. They are concerned about abandoning the old traditions, "because it fosters expectation, which if ignored can erode reader trust and unleash rhetorical chaos. If designers abandon conventional practices, the perceptual disjuncture can misdirect and even traumatize users" (Kostelnick and Hassett 104). When asked directly, Sarah expressed a clear desire for her documents to appear "professional, serious, practical, [and] informed." In our further conversations, Sarah reiterated the same goals but further commented that the result in her syllabus might be that it is "boring," and yet she was comfortable with that because she was unconvinced that something with more "flair" would be more effective pedagogically. Emma describes her materials as appearing, "straightforward, detailed, user friendly," and frequently mentions

that she wishes she had more education about document design and more time to explore it, but she must prioritize her time. She often finds that she runs out of time to work on formatting and design, "and then you just throw it up there because you've spent so much time just on everything that went behind the information here." Sarah and Emma's ethical reflections influence the professional tone and design of their teaching materials because they are a visual representation of their pedagogical ethos.

Of course, well executed conventions do not ensure an appropriate interpretation, and poorly executed conventions do not prevent an appropriate interpretation (Kostelnick and Hassett 167), yet as writers and readers encounter the same conventions, well executed or otherwise, their comfort in applying and interpreting those conventions will grow, and they may become "highly invested in the status quo," and this even, "can give sanction to conventional practices that seem to violate perceptual principles of effective design" (Kostelnick and Hassett 171). They go on to highlight how conventions that are used in "social contracts...[like] public information signs," are particularly subject to grip, placing their writers and designers in a position where changing the conventions, "would confuse and irritate readers and possibly result in a public outcry" (Kostelnick and Hassett 171). Teaching materials also represent a social contract between the instructor, along with the certifying institution, and the students about what the objectives and corresponding outcomes of the course are to be. Therefore, it should not be surprising that "well-worn" print conventions would dominate a writing course instructor's teaching materials.

Ethical Relationships

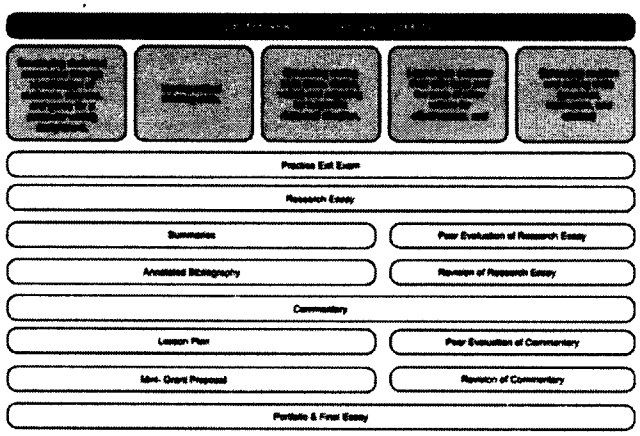
When designing my data collection methods, I had to find a way to approach a conversation about Sarah and Emma's microscopic choices that could reveal hidden biases and values which each of them held about document design and teaching materials. In the following two figures, figure 3.11 presents the second page of Sarah's redesigned syllabus, and figure 3.12 presents the second page of Emma's redesigned syllabus.

Deadlines are important: All assignments must be submitted before the beginning of class on the date they are due. Assignments that are turned in late will be reduced a full letter grade per day late unless previous arrangements have been made. **If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to turn in all work on time and to ask a classmate for the assignments that are due for the next class period so that you can complete them on time.**

Revisions: The value of revision will be emphasized in this class. For each major assignment, you will be required to submit a draft for discussion with your workshop group and prepare written evaluations of your classmates' drafts. Failure to submit drafts, write evaluations, or participate in workshops will result in a letter grade reduction in your grade for the final revision of the essay.

NOTE: Always have available in class an electronic version of the essay or writing assignment you are working on so that we can do in-class editing activities on it.

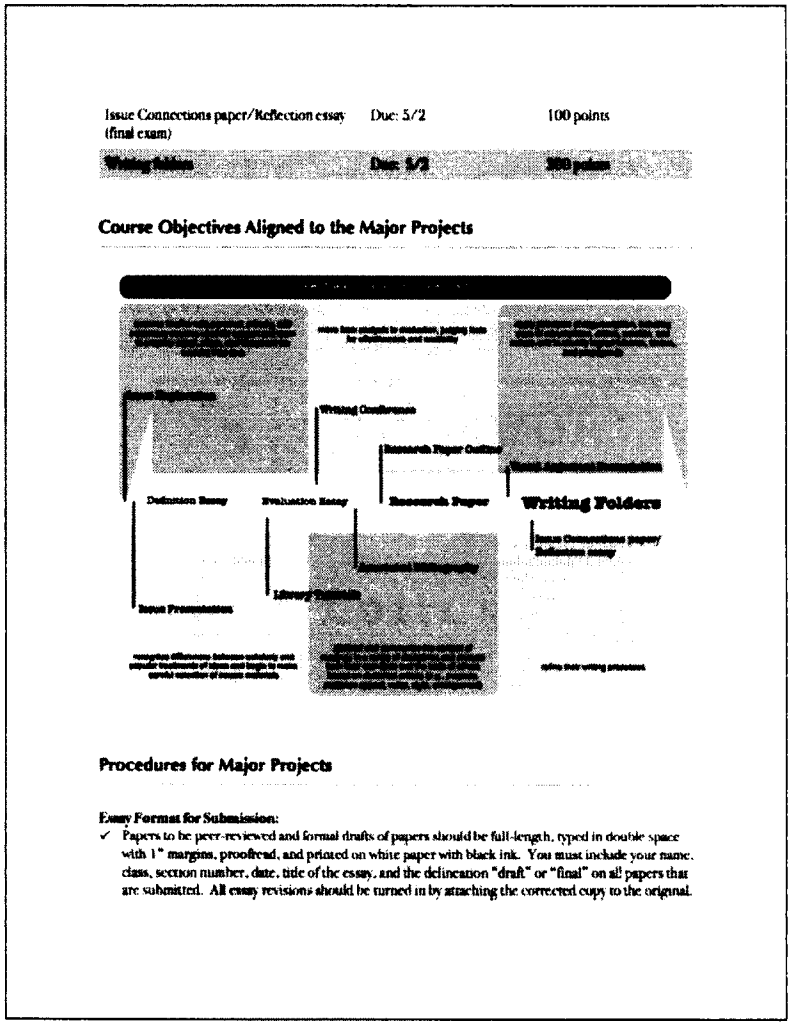
Course Objectives Aligned to the Major Projects



Assessment for Major Projects

Conferences: We will have two scheduled conference during the semester. In addition, I am available to meet with you as often as necessary to assist you in achieving your goals for the class. You may stop by during my office hours or schedule a conference with me at your convenience. We also can conference electronically or by phone.

Figure 3.11 Second page of Sarah's redesigned syllabus



Issue Connections paper/Reflection essay (final exam) Due: 5/2 100 points

Course Objectives Aligned to the Major Projects

Writing Conferences

Definition Essay

Evaluation Essay

Research Paper

Writing Folders

Issue Presentations

Procedures for Major Projects

Essay Format for Submission:

✓ Papers to be peer-reviewed and formal drafts of papers should be full-length, typed in double space with 1" margins, proofread, and printed on white paper with black ink. You must include your name, class, section number, date, title of the essay, and the delineation "draft" or "final" on all papers that are submitted. All essay revisions should be turned in by attaching the corrected copy to the original.

Figure 3.12 Second page of Emma's redesigned syllabus

As I discussed in the previous chapter, I chose to incorporate Wysocki's argument that redesigning known texts visually and presenting them back to the audience can be a means of uncovering microscopic choices. My purpose was not to create "better" versions of their materials but to take some of the student feedback, namely that they wanted to see due dates displayed as prominently as possible, my own domain knowledge, and some of the frustrations that Sarah and Emma had voiced about their teaching materials and use this to try out alternative designs. The significant revisions included mixing sans-serif faced

type in the headings and titles with serifed face type in the body, adding lines to major headings to visually break up types of pedagogical content, moving major deadlines to a table on the front page, and updating the calendar formats. All revisions were made in Apple Pages, a word-processing software comparable to MS Word, which has all the same word processing capabilities. While I considered revising the materials in a digital environment such as Blogger[17], my purpose for creating these revised materials was partly to offer Sarah and Emma alternative designs to consider as part of the compensation for participating in this research, so I wanted to keep the design in line with Sarah and Emma's current design environment.

When I was creating these redesigns, I had thought that some of the moves I made, namely the creation of a "Course Objectives Map," would ultimately be an important part of the workshops I had hoped to create with this project. I developed each map by drawing from my own domain knowledge about learning objectives and assessments, my experiences creating postmodern maps (Sullivan and Porter Opening Spaces) of pedagogical sites, as well as drawing on the work of Linda B. Nilson, in *The Graphic Syllabus and the Outcomes: Communicating Your Course*. Nilson works extensively with a variety of theories of learning from Bloom's taxonomy to Fink's six kinds of learning to argue for an "outcomes map" driven syllabus which graphically displays the course objectives in a flowchart (66- 71). However, Sarah and Emma's reactions to the idea were extremely mixed; Sarah saw little to no value in the exercise, as it did

[17] It should be noted that I did offer to walk through Blackboard with my participants, but I was unable to consider remediating their materials directly into Blackboard (i.e. there is no syllabus.doc, but the syllabus content is dispersed onto relevant Blackboard pages, etc.) because Blackboard is a restricted platform.

not further explicate the connection between the assignments and course objectives for her, while Emma was very enthusiastic, feeling it made the same connections in her materials much clearer. In the end, I am unconvinced that a "Course Objectives Map" or and "Outcomes Map" is the "solution" that Sarah needs. Instead I believe that both Sarah and Emma benefit from being exposed to graphic syllabi and outcome maps as possible design elements that they can draw from if the activity system requires it.

This is part of my intentional practice of creating ethical relationships with these women as part of my technofeminine agenda. I sought to offer them an alternative exemplar that stepped intentionally and, hopefully, evocatively into new possibilities for their document design, while simultaneously respecting their agency and genre knowledge within their own activity systems. Further, my conversations with Sarah and Emma, and the generally positive responses of their students, lead me to believe that whatever the shortcomings of Sarah and Emma's microscopic design choices or the limitations that the grip of print culture seems to place on them, Sarah and Emma actively seek ethical relationships with their students in part through their document design. Emig with Phelps writes, "[w]e believe in common that all teaching possess a moral dimension: teaching represents an ethical transaction with the learner, demanding responsibility, scrupulosity, and nurture" (xv). As unlikely as it may seem from their occluded position, the study of how teaching materials are designed, delivered and used by students has tremendous potential to bolster this ethical transaction.

Conclusion

Teaching materials, both generally and the ones specifically discussed in this study, are examples of stock genres; ones which are currently perpetuated at State University in a MS Word document form, and therefore create a normalcy that teaching materials are print based documents with print based conventions because they, "are so closely tied to their respective genres that a designer could scarcely flout them without [fear of] bungling or reinventing the genre" (Kostelnick and Hassett 98). Yet, Sarah and Emma do not only design their syllabi in a MS Word environment, they also design their assignment sheets and rubrics, contractual documents in their own right, in the same manner. These genres are so closely related to the syllabus genre that it is possible to identify them as subgenres in that their role is to further elaborate the overall objectives set forth in the syllabi. The influence of the departmental syllabus may account for why, "[t]he self-perpetuating power of these sequoialike conventions may result less from their intrinsic design qualities than their widespread acceptance, for they may lack optimal perceptual utility, contradict trends in taste, and flout new technology" (Kostelnick and Hassett103). Interestingly, the idea of the departmental syllabus is a slippery one; in talking to my participants I realized we each received different departmental examples given changes in writing program leadership over time. Therefore, there is no one exemplar to which all these activity systems point, yet the design of it seems to have been remarkably consistent. As a result, print conventions are entrenched.

In sum, both sets of documents from my participants reflect very similar document design decisions in both typography and space. They also demonstrate how analyzing the document design components of teaching

materials, such as syllabus or assignment sheet, reveals each to be, "a field of interacting rhetorical clusters. If the document is well designed, the clusters orchestrate a web of converging meanings, which enable readers to form a coherent and consistent idea of content" (Schriver 344). Sarah and Emma's documents depict print-based choices because the rhetorical situation has typically defined the genres as such. These teaching materials, with their larger history and addressivity, are instances of where and how all these exigencies and influences meet and do much to explain why and for what purposes Sarah and Emma uphold the print based model so closely.

CHAPTER FOUR

COST & EFFECT IN THE DIGITAL AGE: THE ROLE OF GRIP IN LOCAL (R)EVOLUTIONS OF TEACHING MATERIAL DESIGN

Already hybrid teaching materials exist in a deep and historic genre ecology that enmeshes multiple communities, purposes, and contexts. While all of these factors contribute to the tenacity of print culture's grip on these documents and their interrelated invisibility, this tenacity could stifle, misdirect, or otherwise limit the development of new visual conventions and document design practices for teaching materials. Teaching materials, as genres, are critically important documents to their ecologies and are what Spinuzzi identifies as being, "caught between history and addressivity-- between offering the solutions of the past and responding to the exigencies of the present" (117). Below is a story from my experiences observing and talking with Sarah that highlights that feeling of being "caught" in an evolutionary moment that requires flexibility and adaption.

> Six weeks into the semester, I arrive early, arrange a chair in the corner and take out my notebook and pen. Sarah comes over, asking me questions about how I'm feeling and if I have any pictures of three-week old Theo. I chose to observe today because I knew Sarah was introducing the new service learning project; prior her students had been researching and writing about service learning. Sarah begins by reminding her students that this is new ground for her as well; she has never taught service learning before. She pulls up a website and highlights the goals of the environmental task force sponsoring the mini-grants and talks about how she hopes that the project will be "portable" for their future careers.
>
> Eight weeks later, Sarah is planning on going over the last details of the mini-grant proposal and final requirements for the course. Sarah goes back to the task force website. She takes questions-- one student asks if the

> sample application on the website could be used in place of the assignment sheet? Sarah affirms this, though she adds the samples can be used as exemplars, but the students' work does not have to look exactly the same. She instructs them to pay close attention to the directions on the application itself.
>
> Two weeks after the semester ended, Sarah and I have our last interview. Before we begin, she gives me a State University onesie for Theo. I am touched, and we talk for just a moment about babies. Sarah then recounts the problems with the sample grant on the external website which seems to have led some students astray. She explains to me, "... and in the end [agreeing that they could use the website sample as an exemplar] caused problems because that sample did not include everything that was on the grant application, so those people who just followed the sample left out a specific requirement of the application and that was a hard lesson for them."
>
> We return again to the issue of Blackboard, and Sarah explains, "yeah, I would create an assignment sheet, you know I had written up that sort of pseudo assignment sheet on Bb [on the page where students submitted the work online], which we've talked a little bit about, 'oh, ok, are we now moving to the point where we're just having our assignments electronically on Bb,' or are we still having an assignment sheet, and that was sort of a move in that direction, but in the future I would definitely create an assignment sheet, whether it was electronically created [in Blackboard or in MS Word]... rather than just quick [oral] instructions."
>
> Afterwards, I think about how with each new assignment-- even when it's a known genre-- come serious and time consuming questions of design. What inspires instructors to put in this extra effort? Months later, when I am reviewing transcripts, I realize that I had spontaneously asked her this, and Sarah had replied, "I guess I just keep thinking there's some magic out there that I haven't found yet."

I did not highlight this story in my data analysis because it generally falls outside of my research questions; this is a macroscopic contradiction between the external website Sarah chose to include in the course genre ecology and her oral performance in class. This contradiction, students' believing that the exemplar on the website contained all the elements needed to receive full credit from Sarah on their projects, resulted in the students making several microscopic errors of omission when actively composing their grant proposals.

What this does illustrate is how messy genre evolution is when we start trying to blend and commingle our teaching materials with new pedagogies, new exigencies, and new technologies. Sarah is laboring to the best of her ability to find "new" teaching "magic" that will sincerely benefit her students. And with change comes a greater risk of making mistakes of imperfect execution. It is with this mindset that I am presenting these particular writing classrooms, their ecologies, and their struggles to evolve; I am not arguing for universal best practice, but rather for a set of practices that can respond to a local activity system at all levels.

The Effects of Grip: Referential and Nonreferential Functions

As discussed in the prior chapter, Sarah and Emma's teaching materials bear a striking resemblance to each other in their print design, despite the fact that the documents vary in particular microscopic choices. The first reading of the data shows that the document design of the examined teaching materials represents typical, print driven design choices and that teachers and students reported being overall satisfied with how the design of the teaching materials functioned over the course of the semester. Yet, there are tensions within the system that suggest avenues for critical discussion. The interviews with both participants, and the corresponding genre ecologies uncovered, reveal several themes about how these instructors think about, and therefore approach, the design and functionality of their teaching materials. They illustrate grip by describing the invisible forces that shape Western readers' and writers' expectations of the résumé genre,

> To most managers in U.S. businesses, a resume listing qualifications in text segments divided by headings will strike them as the appropriating genre for a job applicant, and their experiences with that genre will

> immediately validate its conventional language. (Kostelnick and Hassett 165)

Much like a resume, instructors rely on this same need to have readers recognize and validate the conventions of their teaching materials due to the timely and high stakes nature of the activity system. Because these teaching materials demonstrate this print culture grip, they can be considered for how these generic visual conventions may support students' understanding of the writing course activity system by considering both their referential and nonreferential functions.

Referential Functions

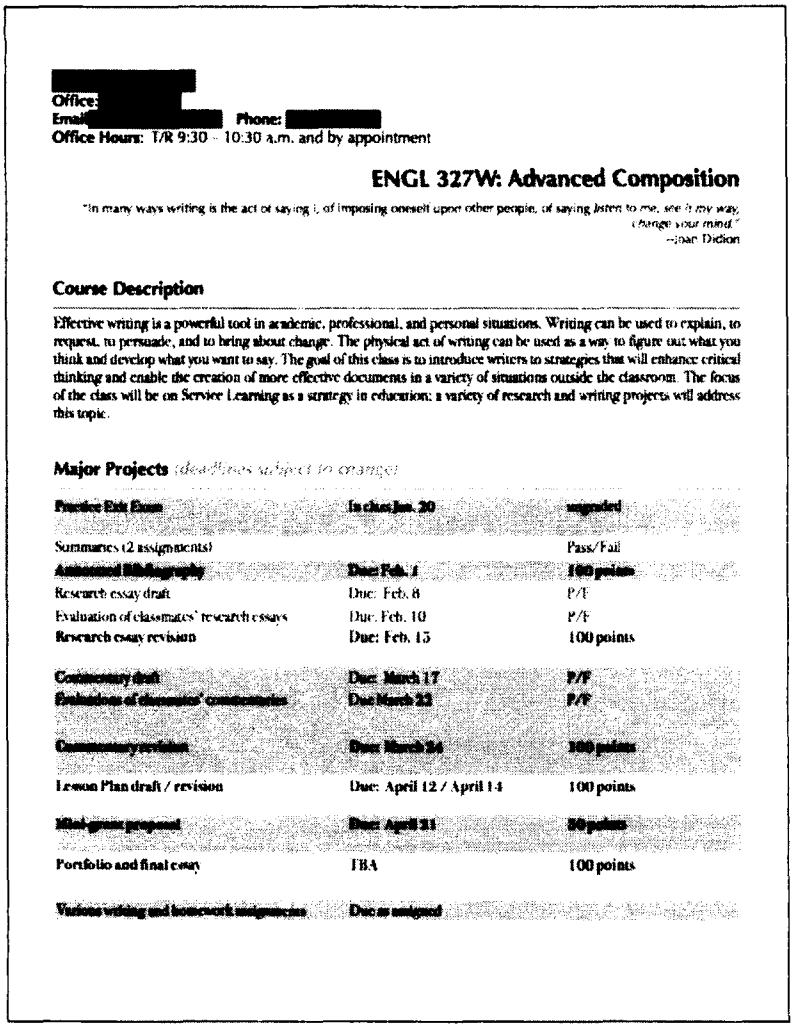
The most common examples of visual conventions that serve referential functions are signs we encounter so routinely that we embody the shape of them with the meaning itself, such as a red octagon for stop sign or an apple silhouette with a leaf and bite taken out for Apple, Inc.. Kostelnick and Hassett explain,

> Referential conventions, then, enhance conciseness by providing a shorthand notation system that gives readers quick access to dense fields of information, often without explanations and legends. (173)

Teaching materials are frequently text driven genres and do not typically contain logos or other kinds graphics as stand-ins for critical content. However, I would argue that the syllabus, as a common teaching material genre, does have one organizational element that remains relatively consistent even when the genre crosses into other disciplines. The syllabus header includes an intentional grouping of identifying course information that grounds the course in a specific time and place, such as the course title, relevant institutional call numbers, days and times the course meets, the instructor name, and instructor contact information, all located at the beginning of the document. The teaching materials

analyzed for this study made use of this grouping, as did most of teaching material I have written as instructor and received as a student.

This structural element is referential because students habitually and unconsciously expect that the document they receive on the first day of class will reflect a general plan of what the course typically entails, but also will be a contractually specific document that reflects what is expected of them to receive institutional credit. So habituated are students to see this header information as specific to their course that Sarah found that her more creative steps, such as using a Joan Didion quote at the beginning of the syllabus, could create confusion, like when she received an email semester addressed to "Professor Didion." This student had misinterpreted the quote as something that must be specific to the course in this time and in this place because of its proximity to the standard header information; yet, this misinterpretation was easily and quickly and resolved. When Sarah was presented with this redesigned header for her syllabus in the final interview, one that maintained the quote but visually separated it from the rest of the course information, she related the story of this email to me and stated that it was an improvement because, "at least one student was confused by the layout, the header layout, of my syllabus, so this makes that crystal clear." A visual convention can have a referential function if it is so embedded in the common psyche of the audience that it can carry meaning, "without explanations and legends" (Kostelnick and Hassett 173). In both cases, the instructors instinctively upheld these expectations in their course headers, and were largely successful, even when small misinterpretations were made.



[redacted]
Office: [redacted]
Email [redacted] Phone: [redacted]
Office Hours: T/R 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and by appointment

ENGL 327W: Advanced Composition

"In many ways writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying *listen to me, see it my way, change your mind*."
—Joan Didion

Course Description

Effective writing is a powerful tool in academic, professional, and personal situations. Writing can be used to explain, to request, to persuade, and to bring about change. The physical act of writing can be used as a way to figure out what you think and develop what you want to say. The goal of this class is to introduce writers to strategies that will enhance critical thinking and enable the creation of more effective documents in a variety of situations outside the classroom. The focus of the class will be on Service Learning as a strategy in education: a variety of research and writing projects will address this topic.

Major Projects *(deadlines subject to change)*

[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Summaries (2 assignments)		Pass/Fail
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Research essay draft	Due: Feb. 8	P/F
Evaluation of classmates' research essays	Due: Feb. 10	P/F
Research essay revision	Due: Feb. 15	100 points
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Lesson Plan draft / revision	Due: April 12 / April 14	100 points
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Portfolio and final essay	TBA	100 points
[redacted]	[redacted]	

Figure 4.1 First page of Sarah's redesigned syllabus

Figure 4.1, above, depicts the redesigned header I created for Sarah.

Nonreferential Functions

In general, the instructors' teaching materials visual convention choices which all served some sort of nonreferential function. Kostelnick and Hassett define nonreferential conventions as, "perform[ing] several broad reader-oriented functions, ranging from structuring a document to building ethos to stimulating interest" (176). They refer to nonreferential functions as conventional choices that do not, "add new information, [but rather] structure or emphasize

existing information" (Kostelnick and Hassett 176). They do so by providing cues about structure, emphasis, trust, and tone.

Structure

This category is one of the most overt in the various teaching material genres explored in this study. Structurally grounded nonreferential conventions seek to allow, "readers not only to access information but also to sequence and structure it" (Kostelnick and Hassett 176). Structure is of extreme importance to the student readers of teaching materials because it helps them make sense of the incredible amount of information and direction they are expected to absorb over the course of a semester. The function of visual conventions to create structure in teaching materials is an important visual manifestation of the overall scaffolding process that should occur in a writing classroom. Both Sarah and Emma regularly sought clarity of structure in designing and organizing their documents. While you could illustrate the structural function of the visual convention choices by discussing many elements, from how tables separate and sequence the relevant assessment criteria for assignments to how lists present the course objectives for the students, structuring the exact content and skills students are expected to master in order to complete the course activity system. But the most interesting attempts to create structure in my analysis is both instructors use of headers to separate distinct types of course content into meaningful chunks, meant to be absorbed in close proximity.

Headers connect relevant types of content and direction into discrete sections. Both Sarah and Emma's use of bolded and bolded and italicized headers to set off information in their syllabi are overt and conscious moves to provide students with "focused and efficient" means to access exactly the

information they need at a particular time (Kostelnick and Hassett 177). If you are a student in Sarah's course and have a concern about the relevant deadlines for projects in the semester, you can easily scan the first page and locate this information. If you are a student in Emma's course and are curious about which textbooks and materials are required for class, you can use the headers similarly. It is important to note that while Sarah's headers are tightly consistent, Emma's headers show some variation in how they are deployed, in particular as to whether the body text immediately follows, follows on the next line, or follows on a line after a carriage return. Sarah's headers provide a cleaner and more controlled look to the document, but structurally both sets of headers work well enough to set off information and serve their conventional function.

Emphasis

This category highlights how visual conventions serve to raise up certain pieces of information as particularly important (Kostelnick and Hassett,177). The need to draw attention to critical pieces of procedural information is important to any document which serves as a social contract. In the case of these teaching materials, both Sarah and Emma make use of different typeface styles to draw emphasis to critical content. Across all six documents, bold, italics, underline and all caps were used to differentiate body text and communicate particular (expected) pitfalls to students as the semester continued. Emma uses bold on her weekly schedule to indicate when class would not be in session so students did not show up on the wrong days. Sarah uses italics to remind students to always have a digital copy of their essay drafts available in class, while Emma uses underline to ask for the students to have flash drives with digital copies of their essays for the same purpose. All caps is used sparingly by both instructors, likely

because of its assumed function of being visualized form of yelling in text, but both employ it in very limited ways:

- Sarah puts, "CHECK YOUR[redacted]E-MAIL DAILY," in all caps (and underline) because she's had particular problems in the past communicating timely information to students when situations arise.
- Emma puts reminders to students to "BE SPECIFIC" when providing assessment criteria for the Evaluation Essay, presumably because in the past she's had problems with students providing detailed examples in their claims.

Emphasis, as a nonreferential function, allows the instructor to raise particular information up that they are afraid students, as novice members of the writing course discourse community, might overlook.

Trust

Trust is the ethos provided by visual conventions and, "their raison d'être the specific purpose of bolstering the reader's trust" (Kostelnick and Hassett 177). The visual convention choice most closely tied to trust is the typeface choice because that is one element present for the reader at every moment in the presentation of text. Sarah's documents, being composed entirely in Times New Roman, varied only in the font styles she chose to employ. This classic, print based typeface is available on most word processing programs and projects a professional, literate ethos. Her consistency across documents also further conveys that she values attention to detail and communicates to her students that she likely expects such care in presentation in return. Emma's documents show a wider range of typeface choice over the ecology, but a predominately focused approach within each document. Her syllabus employs Georgia, a Microsoft

specific, but very traditional serifed font, consistently throughout. Emma prefers Georgia because it is, "still clear... a little bit more flowery and literary looking maybe, you know so that's why I chose that, and I've become very attached to that font." Emma's other documents, however, are delivered in other typefaces; very likely influenced by either or both the defaults used by her version of Microsoft Word, or by sample documents she sought out from other sources. Emma's particular story reflects her overall narrative as an adjunct professor; Emma manages courses at three to five institutions at any given time. Time is always of the essence. Once again, while her conventional choices are less consistent across documents than Sarah's, Emma's ability to adhere to the overall code of standard print based typeface choices in a limited range of styles and sizes, means that the convention adhered to grip closely enough that the nonreferential meaning held.

Tone

Visual conventions, like other rhetorical elements, can convey tone, indicating a, "range from formal and technical to conversational and low-key" (Kostelnick and Hassett 177). The tone of a syllabus or assignment sheet, like those designed by Emma and Sarah, is drawn both from the nonreferential conventions employed and not employed. For example, as previously mentioned, both Sarah and Emma employ tables to illustrate the evaluative criteria, including tables to make clear the due dates of major assignments or the objectives and outcomes being assessed. The serious nature of assessing student work for its ability to meet the institutionally-approved outcomes of the writing course activity system is displayed in table format in part, possibly, to convey an objective-like stance for awarding grades to student for how well their outcomes

matched the objectives. Further, this idea of tone is also threaded through the overall choice made by these instructors to design their documents in Microsoft Word, a near-ubiquitous word processing program designed to compose documents for printing onto 8.5 by 11 inch pieces of white paper, rather than to design them directly in the institutionally-sanctioned web portal, Blackboard, or on their own digital platform, from WordPress to Blogger. Noticeably absent from all six documents is any use of color, graphics, or photo images. When discussing the reason for eschewing graphics, Sarah explains that if she uses a cartoon, it de facto endorses her students using cartoons in their assignments, something she is "just not ready for" yet. The grip of print culture is evident in the tone of visual conventions chosen by these participants and in their desire to model for students the principles of print culture, believing that this will be an important academic and professional writing skill.

The Costs of Grip: Technology, Workers, & Women

Sarah makes extensive use of Blackboard, making sure that she has uploaded or linked all of her teaching materials. These materials range from the syllabus and assignment sheets she designs herself in MS Word to the resources she finds online to support their projects, such as resources on service learning as a pedagogical project and resources related to the non-profit agency with which her students would be working. This variety of resources need to be located in logical and appropriate places within the course site, as well as incorporating Blackboard's Assignment feature which allows her to create pages for each assignment where she can identify directions and due dates in the same place where students can turn in their assignments digitally. Emma, like Sarah, also relies on Blackboard. She sees it as a means to help students organize and locate

all of the critical course information, and therefore also makes an effort to ensure that all her teaching materials, again, from self-designed MS Word documents to web links for external resources are present. While Emma does not make use of Blackboard's Assignments functionality, she does heavily use its Announcements feature to send whole class emails that remind or update students on items like due dates and assignment clarifications. These emails are also permanently posted to the opening page of the course Blackboard site.

Sarah and Emma's access to various technologies directed them to make particular choices about where and how they would design their materials. Sarah, in particular, spoke at length about designing her documents for print and brings up the department's printing budget as a constraint. But she also extends the discussion to consider the costs to her students if they are printing the documents themselves after accessing them on Blackboard. In addition to the cost of toner or ink, Sarah also cites grappling with her clean design versus the number of pages as an important constraint. Sarah admits she could shrink some documents down to 10-point font to make them fewer pages, saying that students could "always just zoom in on Blackboard," but states that she is uncomfortable that this sacrifices the readability of the document when it is printed. Sarah's dilemma places her firmly in that moment of hybridization, where the genre has begun its evolution into digital form yet still maintains many of the constraints of printed documents. When asked about using color in teaching materials, Sarah replies,

> we have color printers in our building here, I could do color printing and then of course my name comes up on the hit list of people who are doing color printing, so you know I'm cognizant, I am aware of, and I'm buying into the idea that we need to keep our costs down

Yet, just as students could "zoom in on Blackboard," to make a 10-point font more readable, they could also view teaching materials in color through Blackboard too. This reinforces Kostelnick and Hassett's description of how technological tools maintain certain conventional choices, "business documents are inflexibly tied to a standard page size (8.5-by-11 inches), ... all of which would have to change if this convention were to lose its currency" (107). Here the primacy of print constraints seem to push Sarah toward conventions that would read best on the page, regardless of Blackboard's capabilities.

Emma also spoke about print constraints, though she did not worry about the number of printed pages or printing costs as much; Emma only prints a few copies of her syllabus for students who do not have access to Blackboard prior to the first day of class but does not provide printed copies for any other document. Emma feels that by putting her teaching materials on Blackboard, she has made it available to the students and it is their responsibility to access it however they need. But while student responsibility is one of her reasons, another is that, as an adjunct, Emma does not, "know how I would go about [having teaching materials printed] here for myself." Emma prints those initial copies on her home printer because she does not want anyone to be left out of the loop the first day of the semester, but to print all the materials herself is cost prohibitive and accessing State University's printing seems too cumbersome given Blackboard's capabilities.

A genre is fundamentally changed when it comes into contact with the computer interface; it, "migrates into the ecology of an interface [and] must be combined with (i.e., become represented or recast in) an existing interface genre" (Spinuzzi 66). The introduction of web-based courseware, such as Blackboard,

has the potential to significantly alter the genre ecology. Technological factors influence the integration of traditional print based documents with the Blackboard platform because it creates redundancies, such as duplication of descriptions, instructions, and deadlines. This shows that while Blackboard has opened up many new opportunities for designing and delivering teaching materials, it is not a magic bullet, similar to what Spinuzzi discovered when studying the introduction of a new, automated system at the Iowa Department of Transportation,

> ...genres are interconnected and animated through their users' interpretations and practices. One might expect that by pulling an entire genre ecology into an interface and automating the connections between genres, designers could fix and regulate the activity... in pulling genres together, designers brought those genres' activities into contradictory tension. (Spinuzzi 197)

For instance, Sarah frequently discusses the possibility of eliminating her print documents entirely because she worries about mistakes of duplication having important criteria located in more than one place. After learning that some of the instructors at her satellite campus no longer create and post print based teaching materials, instead entering all of the information directly into Blackboard, she has begun to consider going this route herself. When asked how this move might make her feel, Sarah states that she's "not unhappy" about it, but,

> I think it presents a whole new set of quote unquote document design issues because you can't design documents in exactly the same kind of way on Blackboard, on our current system that you can in Word, that's not to say that they can't be effective, but that's just a new process.

Both sets of students expressed comfort with Blackboard, both generally and with these particular course sites. One of Sarah's students pointed to Blackboard as something that keeps her organized, "I frequently lose papers. It is extremely helpful to have Blackboard as a back-up reference;" and it is very portable, "I can

access them from anywhere." One student stated that s/he found Blackboard helpful in Emma's course, but not in all classes, "It isn't always efficient and is sometimes hard to explain and/or understand." Blackboard and other digital platforms in the classroom are strong external forces that will change how teaching materials are designed.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, while the conventional choices in Sarah and Emma's teaching materials reflect a print-based aesthetic, the conventions themselves are not exclusive to printed documents. The use of headers, for example, is possibly even more common place in writing for digital media than for print because it is expected that readers can and will view these sites in a non-linear fashion. Yet, exporting the purpose of these documents into a Blackboard interface results in a very different reading experience, a when you compare an Assignments page designed and created in Blackboard with one designed and created in MS Word. Many writing instructors feel institutional pressure in this moment of increased digital tools, such as Blackboard or Pearson's MyCompLab, and increased hybrid on-campus/ online courses and distance education courses to incorporate more distributed digital media such as HTML coding, WordPress, Twitter, et cetera in the design of their teaching materials.

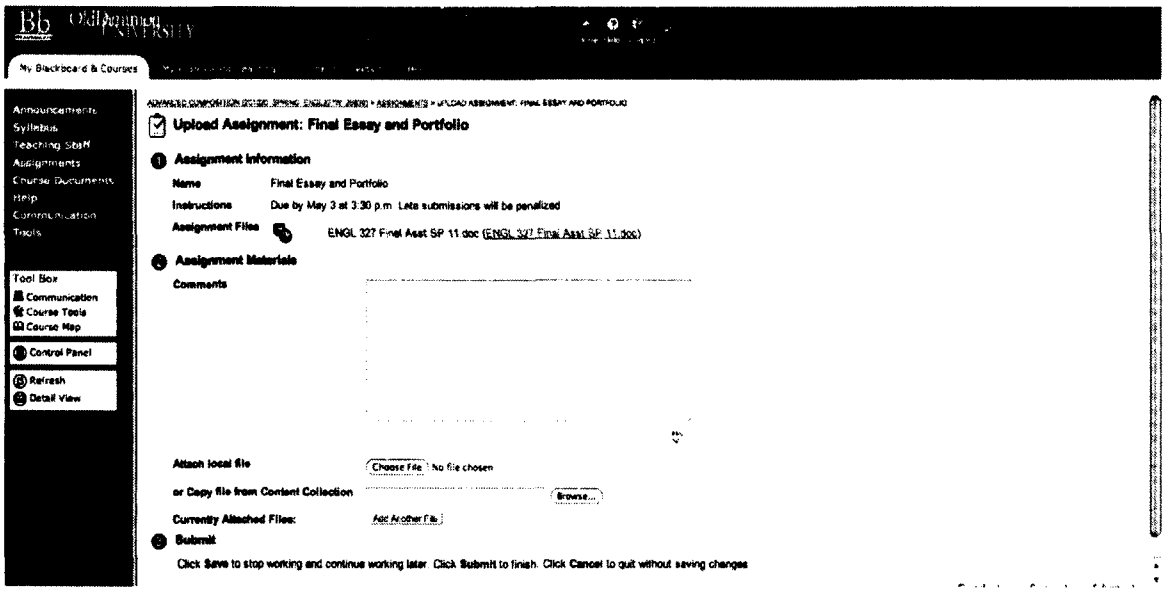


Figure 4.2 Sarah's Final Essay Assignment Sheet in Blackboard

Above, in figure 4.2, is an example of one of Sarah's Blackboard "assignment sheets" for her final essay and portfolio. Further, disciplinary and interdisciplinary calls from fields like Computers and Writing, Digital Humanities, and Professional Writing amplify this sense. Both Sarah and Emma saw tremendous value and potential in both the institutionally mandated and the disciplinarily supported digital platforms, and yet, when both approach designing their syllabi (the first, most contractual document) and other major assignment sheets, they turned to MS Word. And it is important to state that students appear very comfortable with this moment in teaching materials. Redesigning their teaching materials outside of MS Word would be both time consuming and risky and the potential rewards are unknown. Kostelnick and Hassett warn designers that, "[r]edesigning the identity will not meet reader expectations if it subverts an image they've grown accustomed to (and perhaps even grow fond of); however, a redesign might meet their expectations on an

aesthetic level by getting in step with contemporary styles, which the organization's designers may be eager to imitate" (117). When Sarah relates to me that she thinks she's "stuck in the last Ice Age," it is in the context of wondering if students would be more comfortable with documents that look more like web pages and less like newspapers. At the same time, as a veteran teacher, she has no reason to believe that re-designed teaching materials would produce better outcomes-- the very objectives of the classroom activity system.

This leaves Sarah and Emma in much the same place as Spinuzzi's participants at the Iowa DOT when the updated, graphical user interfaced, version of the ALAS system is introduced. There,

> ...is a fundamental confusion about exactly what role GIS-ALAS [or Blackboard, WordPress, etc.] is to play in Terry's [or Sarah's and Emma's] activity... How should it be integrated into the existing genre ecology? Or should it actually replace the ecology as a stand-alone program that encapsulates the totality of genres within itself? In sum, what are the implications of pulling existing genres into the computer interface?" (Spinuzzi 159)

In the final sections of this chapter, I will walk through three key problems, as identified by Kostelnick and Hassett, associated with conventional grip over certain genres: naturalization, visualization of new knowledge, and implementation of new technology (182). I then seek to identify how these problems manifest themselves in Sarah and Emma's genre ecologies across all three levels of scope.

Naturalization & The Problems of Institutional Collaboration

The grip of print culture and print conventions naturalizes documents that are black and white and fit on 8.5 by 11 inch pages. Students are neither surprised nor discomforted by receiving a syllabus or assignment sheet that is designed under these constraints. Teaching materials designed for print, maybe

especially in a writing course, reinforce an idea that writing for the academy is writing for the printed page. And, in the case of these particular activity systems, that is true; Sarah and Emma expect students to produce mostly traditional academic texts in a word processing program. Kostelnick and Hassett argue that, "[m]istaking the artificial for the natural can be particularly dangerous to readers, who are typically more hermeneutically vulnerable than designers, and who often stand more to lose, especially if they are stakeholders" (183). Students are unlikely to question this material choice because of their position in the activity system. Further, this illustrates why it was with some hesitancy that I identified particular macroscopic forces as acts of "good faith institutional collaboration" in the previous chapter. As someone who identifies as a socialist-feminist ideologically, it is difficult--though not impossible-- for me to reconcile those concepts as a positive feminine principle to enact in terms of the document design of teaching materials.

Yet, this research provides a jumping off point for questioning the naturalized state of print materials and critiquing the institutional forces at play, much like the model of institutional critique described Porter, Sullivan, Stuart Blythe, Jeffrey T. Grabill, and Libby Miles in their article, "Institutional Critique: A Rhetorical Methodology for Change." By looking at this issue of naturalization in the context of Sarah's attitudes towards her own document design, we can, "... hope that institutions can be sensitized to users, to people, systematically from within and that this sensitizing can potentially change the way an entire industry perceives its relationship to the public" (Porter et al 611). This sort of institutionally driven critique does not seek to shame Sarah and Emma, or their institution, into making different material choices, but does ask for critical

reflection on the assumptions and implications therein. Below, in table 4.1, I present a cross-scope look at why Sarah does not choose, or even consider, design elements such as graphics and color. Sarah argues that she makes a choice in her design to present teaching materials that reflect and model the quality and tone she expects in return as a part of the social contract. Therefore, her microscopic decision to employ Times New Roman as her font is a reflection of her macroscopic belief that Comic Sans has no place in professional writing, as well as her mesoscopic concerns about providing appropriate models to her writing students.

Macro (activity)	Sarah develops her materials in conjunction with the departmental exemplar. Aesthetically, Sarah does not feel that color, creative fonts, clip art or other images are appropriate for classroom writing. They do not fit the ethos she is trying to convey to her students. Sarah does not believe that modeling or teaching her students about this kind document design would be transferable to other coursework. She also explains that she is not a visual person, so graphic displays like concept mapping do not come naturally to her, and she has not had many opportunities to learn about them.
Meso (action)	Sarah's print focus and personal limitations on document length mean that she relies heavily on tight, blocked paragraphs with headers to organize and display the majority of her content. Sarah seeks to create materials within the same set of conventions she expects her students to deploy, and therefore does not see graphics or other non-paragraph form as rhetorically appropriate for most of her content.
Micro (operation)	Sarah deploys no graphics and limited tables and other non-paragraph formatting when designing her materials despite their availability in her word processing program.

Table 4.1 Sarah's cross-scope document design activity

More importantly, however, is Sarah's deeply held macroscopic belief that by collaborating with the institution and producing a particular kind of print bound document, her microscopic eschewing of alternative document design results in her students experiencing that such design is inappropriate in this institutional context at the mesoscopic level.

By viewing this problem of naturalization across levels of scope, we can not only understand that these particular teaching materials demonstrate the naturalized grip of print, but we can also begin to tease out how Sarah and Emma's institutional collaboration activity reinforces this naturalization throughout the system. In her chapter, "Equivalent Students, Equitable Classrooms," Christy Desmet describes a pedagogy of feminist jurisprudence that seeks to illuminate very real power discrepancies between teacher and student in order to more openly engage students in their own empowerment (156). Particularly relevant to this discussion of institutional collaboration is how Desmet situates expressivist and feminine pedagogies within Foucault's panopticon, describing how this ends up, "...obscuring completely the sources of power" (157). Sarah and Emma's naturalized activity of collaborating with the institution as a measure of good faith with their students reifies print culture once again in students' minds and lives. Further,

> In Foucault's analysis, the disappearance of the judge-- the diffusion of the judge's power and responsibility throughout an impersonal structure-- doubly disempowers those caught in discipline mechanisms, including those caught in the 'pedagogical machine.' Feminist teachers ... may occupy the panopticon unwittingly. (Desmet 157)

In other words, Sarah, Emma, and their students, are all disempowered by the occluded nature of print culture and the power that it holds.

As discussed throughout this work, the feminized nature of the writing classroom has frequently been viewed as, "a refuge from those male-constructed institutions" (Porter et al 617). But this is a mesoscopic answer to dynamic issues that affect women teachers' lives across levels of scope, effecting, "a kind of liberal, trickle-up theory of change that pins political hopes on the enlightened, active individual" (Porter et al 617). Through this genre tracing of Sarah and Emma's relationship to how print culture is naturalized, I share the hopes of Porter et al that critiques which hold institutions accountable, while also seeking to empower the people within those institutions, can be productive. It seems inadequate to use this research merely to criticize teachers for not being more multimodal or experimental in their document design. However, as a discipline, English Studies has been attempting to make a move towards more digital writing in composition courses. What are the consequences when students are provided with a naturalized, print-based syllabus or assignment sheet, yet may be expected to produce digital texts, either for this course or another composition course? Students have the most to gain or lose, namely college credit or tuition money, in a writing course activity system and are unlikely to question why instructors make the design choices they do, instead they will take cues from the teaching materials, assuming them to be the most natural writing exemplars for gaining credit.

Visualization of New Knowledge & The Costs of Pedagogical Caring

The grip of print culture, as reflected in Sarah and Emma's teaching materials, also stifles innovation. Both Sarah and Emma modeled their materials on the departmental sample syllabus. They have had reasonable success with their materials, as evidenced by their students' comments. This means they have

also seen little reason to alter radically the materials' visual design, especially given the constraints that both women felt in terms of time. Sarah and Emma reported that designing new teaching materials was time consuming labor. It should be noted that Emma is an adjunct instructor, and, as contingent labor, is especially vulnerable in this activity system. Eileen Schell in, "The Costs of Caring: Feminism and Contingent Women Workers in Composition Studies," highlights the "grim facts about the gendered nature of contingent writing instruction," and how, "an ethic of care may reinforce the labor patterns that feminists critique" (81). Emma, and Sarah, who is not tenure tracked, are certainly at risk for being exploited through their caring. Further, making materials available on Blackboard is, in itself, time consuming. Emma explains that often she, "just throw[s] it up there because you've spent so much time just on everything that went behind the information here," planning and designing the course content and then uploading it to Blackboard leaves little room for play and innovation.

Yet, despite their time constraints, Sarah and Emma volunteered to participate in this project because they care about the quality of their teaching materials as is demonstrated by their self selection. In fact, it is because they care about all aspects of their pedagogy that they are looking for certain labor efficiencies to be achieved by either reusing familiar document design or collaborating with existing institutional and disciplinary documents.Yet Schell's findings state that, "[her participants] revealed that while they liked, even loved, to teach, they nearly all had negative feelings about their working conditions and their relation to the institution at large" (84). Sarah and Emma both profess to love teaching writing, but they are far less negative about their institutional

relationship than the teachers Schell describes. While they do not profess a deep love for the institution, they seem comfortable with their situation.

As I have discussed previously, I chose to bring sample materials to my first interviews with Sarah and Emma respectively so we could discuss the similarities and differences to Sarah's and Emma's materials, and then followed it up in the third interview with a redesigned version of their own syllabi. Both Emma and Sarah had neutral to negative reactions to the sample materials presented in the first interview, in general terms feeling that they were overly long, wordy, and displayed too many unique choices in their visual conventions. Emma stated that she recognized this instructor's attempt to play with design as a positive thing but ultimately judged it unsuccessful. Sarah and Emma's less than enthusiastic responses reflect one of Kostelnick and Hassett's arguments for why a well-worn path is so enticing in conventional design, "designers may have justifiable reasons for deploying these [new or unique] conventions in these situations, but peeved and bewildered readers may lack the patience to discern them" (207). Both Sarah and Emma did seem to feel a bit peeved or bewildered by the absent instructor's choices. While reviewing the sample point based (as opposed to holistic) rubric, Sarah declared that it, "just makes [her] think about getting a job at Dairy Queen." Sarah's reaction represents the "peeved and bewildered" reader; despite even the printed nature of the sample document, she is discomforted by the deviations in tone and style from visual conventions that would be considered more traditional in formal academic writing.

INSTRUCTOR: [redacted]
OFFICE HOURS: Th 1:30- 3:30 and by appointment.
OFFICE: [redacted]
EMAIL:
COURSE:
PREREQUISITE:

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will.

- Successfully conduct visual and textual research projects
- Critically examine aspects of popular and mainstream culture
- Effectively explain the relationship of audience within the rhetorical triangle
- Rigorously engage with a variety writing technologies and argument contexts

TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

- Wood, Nancy. *Perspectives in Argument.* 6th edition.
- Troyka, Lynn Quitman. *Quick Access: Reference for Writers.* 5th edition.
- [redacted] Writing Folder for English [redacted] (available in bookstore)
- Access to Blackboard (you must check Blackboard before every class).
- [redacted] student e-mail account

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

Attendance & Participation ---------- *15%*

2 undocumented absences with no penalty
On the 3rd, 0 for the day
On the 5th, fail the course
*See "Attendance Policy" below for further information

Participation will be assessed on a credit/ no credit basis. Credit will be denied in such cases as excessive tardiness or daydreaming, and in all cases of sleeping, gaming, texting, etc. during class time.

NOTE: If Reading Quizzes are required they will be assessed at 5% of the final grade, the Attendance & Participation Grade will then become 10%

Figure 4.3 First page of the sample syllabus used in the first interview

The first page of the sample syllabus Sarah and Emma saw is above in figure 4.3. Sarah also believes that teaching materials designed in this way are problematic because students would have a difficult time reading and applying its content; that they, in fact, neglect the students' pedagogical needs.

Macro (activity)	Sarah believes that teaching materials should aim to be as transparent as possible, concise and clean looking in appearance so as to provide an appropriate amount of pedagogical scaffolding. The sample materials were interpreted to be confusing, though she noted that students could be taught to use them effectively because they did contain enough appropriate and relevant content.
Meso (action)	Sarah felt that teaching materials for a given writing course should be designed rhetorically, both in form and content, so the ethos-based/ tonal choices she makes in typeface, font selection, etc., should reflect the range of rhetorical design choices available to her students. Sarah was thrown off by the tone/ ethos choices made by the instructor in the sample assignment sheet and she was critical of having deadlines and other critical assignment information at the bottom of the page on the sample assignment sheet.
Micro (operation)	Sarah reported disliking formatting choices, such as the use of more than one typeface and font style, pull quotes, etc., (in conjunction with its conversational style) in the sample materials from the first interview because she felt it pulled the eye too many places and she had difficulty focusing on what the important information was and what kind of a document she would be expected to hand in to the instructor.

Table 4.2 Sarah's cross-scope reaction to sample syllabus document design

Sarah's reaction to the sample materials is not surprising when traced through the levels of activity of her own genre ecology, and can be seen in table 4.2 above.

I believe this also points to a potential blind spot of Sarah's in being able to visualize a new way of designing her teaching materials. Sarah knows how to teach using the tools she has come to rely on, for her the "advances in technology," that offer her a much wider range of visual conventions than ever before appear to be potentially "costly and time-consuming," and "lack optimal usability" in her opinion because they deviate from the academic model of writing she is trying to present to her students (Kostelnick and Hassett 187). Interestingly, in the third interview, Sarah had a largely positive reaction to the re-designed materials that rearranged and re-formatted her original syllabus for

her course focused on service learning. She still noted that it was a few pages longer than her document, and, being self-described as "not a visual person," she did not immediately warm to the course objectives being redrawn as a visual map, which can be seen in Chapter 3, figure 3.11, connecting the objectives to specific writing assignments. Yet, she still felt it had the appropriate tone, conveying clean and professional standards of visual writing conventions to her students.

Comparatively, Emma was entirely enthusiastic when she reviewed her re-designed syllabus. One piece that was important to her was a more functional calendar format, but she also was interested in the visual map of the course objectives. She thought it had a lot of potential as tool for teaching her objectives on the first few days of class, explaining that including the connection between the objectives and the assignments in such a visual format as the revised materials do may help composition students understand that the many steps of a research project are not "busy work." Emma felt that the graphic map of her objectives and assignments worked well in conjunction with the table for major due dates on the first page. Further, Emma explained that she thought it would be useful both for sharing with other teachers about her course and for being a good reflective tool for students when putting together their writing folders. This is a reflection of Emma's idea of pedagogical caring; as a trained high school teacher, Emma sees communicating course objectives a particularly important obligation she has to her students. Emma also noted that this graphic map of objectives could be a way of checking to make sure that all of her objectives and her assignments measurably tie together and allows her to ensure there are no gaps.

Macro (activity)	Emma believes that teaching materials, as a contract with students, should contain readable, findable information that helps all students not only complete the coursework, but understand why and how the coursework connected together.
Meso (action)	Emma believes that the graphic map of the objectives provides a jumping off point for her to explicitly teach her students the course objectives as well as providing her students with a road map to the work of the semester.
Micro (operation)	Matching each assignment with particular objective(s) in the map made the connections between them much more apparent in Emma's opinion.

Table 4.3 Emma's cross-scope reaction to graphic map of objectives

Emma's reaction is described in table 4.3 above. While Emma has done her own coursework in visual rhetoric and embraces multimodal assignments in her composition pedagogy, she had not previously thought to include any sort of info-graphics or maps on her teaching materials. By exposing the grip that print conventions and their constraints have on teaching materials, teachers like Sarah and Emma may be able to expand and develop how they present pedagogical content to students, opening up new paths for scaffolding.

Yet, none of this seems to do much to alleviate the costs of caring as articulated by Schell. In fact, asking these teachers to invest time in learning new document design practices seems to make them more vulnerable, open to mistakes and miscommunication with their students, peers, and administrators. Schell argues that, "a pedagogy based on an ethic of care is simultaneously empowering and disempowering: it offers psychic rewards while exacting a distinct emotional and material price from women workers" (83). I do not disagree with that, nor do I disagree with her statement that she and other,

"[a]cademic women also directly and indirectly benefit from the exploitation of other women's labor, particularly non-tenure-track faculty members" (Schell 89). But I do disagree with her characterization of Phelps and Emig's Feminine Principles, as named in a group with other feminist composition scholars and their projects, such as Cynthia Caywood and Gillian Overing's *Teaching Writing: Pedagogy, Gender, and Equity*. Schell explicitly uses Caywood and Overing's volume to illustrate how feminist composition scholars in the late 80s and early 90s, "advocate a pedagogical approach rooted in Nodding's ethic of care: a process of ethical decision making based on interrelationships and connectedness rather than on universalized and individualized rules and rights" (75). I believe, that while this may accurately reflect Caywood and Overing's thesis, this is not what Phelps and Emig argue. Rather, Phelps states clearly in "Becoming a Warrior,"

> In short, our current understanding of the feminization of composition provides neither ethical nor strategic guidance in 'right action'...Handling our own power, that is, coming to terms with the ineluctable authority of the writing teacher, is a central, unresolved problem for feminist classroom pedagogy. (292)

While she does reference Nodding's ethic of care, it is grounded in her own, deliberate choice to do so based her own ethos as a writing program administrator. Phelps is illustrating for her audience how she negotiated her power and position in regards to her workers. Further, the entire chapter is an illustration of ethical traps of leadership, such as the costs of caring in any institutional context and the real risks of exploiting the very workers you are trying to care for,

> Calls for improving the conditions of employment for postsecondary teachers of composition often emphasize professionalization... A further irony our program illustrates is that these privileges may amount to

> exploitation if they become a condition of employment for teachers paid by the section or burdened with overly heavy loads along with the demands of graduate school. (Phelps 312)

This supports my concerns for how Sarah and Emma's pedagogical caring contributes to the entrenchment of print culture, at the detriment of finding new ways to visualize pedagogical content. Simultaneously, it supports my concerns for how attempting to ask Sarah and Emma to move beyond the print medium might put them at risk rather than empower them and their students.

Implementation of New Technology & Further Complications of Ethical Delivery

Of course, despite the potential dangers of asking writing teachers to actively step back and reconsider the role that grip plays in their activity system and their active document design choices in their teaching materials, as Phelps puts simply, when considering her own ethical paradox, "[t]he thing is, the alternatives were worse..." (313). The grip of print culture appears to be retarding, though certainly not stopping, the development of teaching materials via digital media. The prominence of MS Word as the composition tool of choice for developing teaching materials stands in contrast to the widespread availability of web authoring tools, such as Blogger or WordPress, and even classroom management tools such as Blackboard or Moodle. As Sarah notes, Blackboard has all the capabilities for her to create her teaching materials within its instructor interface. And while she has spoken to instructors who make use of these functions, it does not appear to be the predominate manner that Blackboard is used by State University writing instructors.

Yet, all writing instructors at this institution are using of Blackboard in their classrooms, if only because the institution strongly encourages its presence.

This mirrors, in some ways, how the typewriter was initially resisted in business writing,

> The basic technology to build a functional typewriter existed in the early 1800s; however, the handwriting industry, fueled by legions of scriveners and writing masters who practiced and taught the orthodox styles, delayed its introduction into the workplace until the end of the century. (Kostelnick and Hassett 187)

Obviously, the typewriter eventually overtakes handwriting in dictating the visual conventions of business writing, and computer-based word processing then overtook the typewriter[18]. The 8.5 by 11 piece of paper seems to hold the same position that writing masters did in the nineteenth century. Emma is facing this same moment of transition that Sarah is, but she has yet to consider using Blackboard as a composition tool at all, despite having embraced it as her primary means of delivering her teaching materials to her students.

[18] For another discussion of this evolution, see Dennis Baron's "From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technologies"

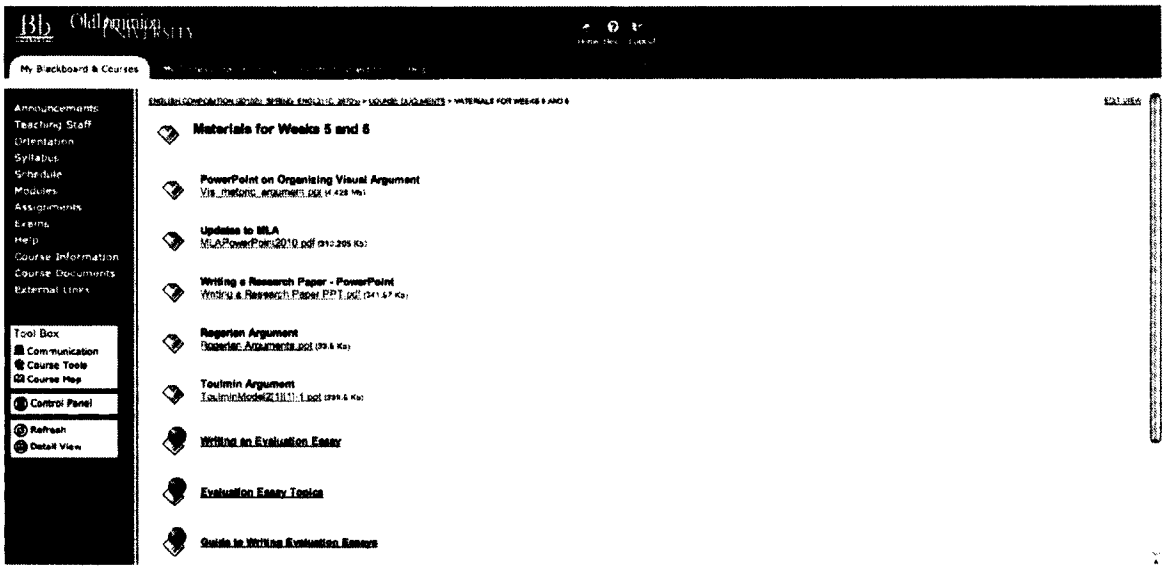


Figure 4.4 Assignments Page from Emma's Blackboard page

Above, in figure 4.4, is a page from Emma's Blackboard site which displays relevant teaching materials for weeks five and six of this particular semester. Emma's extensive use of Blackboard as a delivery tool has, in some ways, increased the number of documents she creates in MS Word to support her pedagogy.

Further, like the word processors and operating platforms described by Cynthia L. Selfe and Richard J. Selfe Jr., in "The Politics of the Interface: Power and Its Exercise in Electronic Contact Zones," the Blackboard " . . . interface, and the software applications commonly represented within it, map the virtual world as a desktop constructing virtual reality, by association, in terms of corporate culture and the values of professionalism" (Selfe and Selfe 486). This means that no matter how interactive the Web becomes, or how egalitarian the narrative, ultimately it possesses many of the same exclusionary practices of the office

applications which came before it. Emma's approach to Blackboard is outlined in table 4.4 below.

Macro (activity)	Emma appreciates Blackboard's capabilities in the sense that she sees the various icons of functionality, but she uses very little of them because she has not had the opportunity to receive any direct instruction on Blackboard.
Meso (action)	Emma does not design her assignments directly in Blackboard, but uses it to house her documents and to give her a blast email platform
Micro (operation)	Emma creates on the fly documents because she uses Blackboard as a means of distributing them without printing.

Table 4.4 Emma's cross-scope document design activity

Emma's hybrid solution is to maintain her print-influenced design and composing processes, while simultaneously taking advantage of the ease of digital distribution.

Yet as Joel Haefner tells us in, "The Politics of the Code," ". . . the basic premise behind most computer programs is profitability" (330). Emma self identifies as a proficient user of Blogger and uses Blogger in her secondary classrooms, in ways that are both similar and disparate from how she uses Blackboard, yet when asked about using Blogger in a State University classroom she explains that she has considered it, but with Blackboard it seemed redundant. Sarah has considered making a personal website as a library for readings she uses most frequently in her classrooms, but had not really considered it as a place to post course specific information. When we discussed this further, she also explained that it felt like that site would be another thing to maintain in addition to her Blackboard course site. Blackboard's monopoly over academic software markets makes it difficult for other software products to

compete, and thus the software industry has little profit motivation to develop alternative applications of even pre-existing software such as Blogger or WordPress.

Kostelnick and Hassett describe how the "process of adapting technology to entrenched conventions has not yet fully played out"(188) in the type of genre evolution that teaching materials are experiencing; both Sarah's and Emma's students are "...shuttl[ing] between...two media.. [with] ... considerable perceptual disjunctures... [and] which, on the one hand, enriches their interpretive experiences by dichotomizing the two realms, but on the other, creates cognitive overload"(189). In other words, each medium and corresponding visual conventions offer a distinct array of strengths and weakness which can both provide a more complete picture of the genre ecology for students and create too many opportunities for students to get lost among the many competing arenas. Finally, it is notable that the only digital medium that these instructors use to either compose or deliver teaching materials is the institutionally supported Blackboard.

While the focus of this research was on teaching materials in face-to-face classrooms, the importance of the design of teaching materials in distance education seems to be a logical next consideration. In distance activity systems, the design of the teaching materials and the digital platform that the course takes place within would seem to take on even greater importance when the types of contact a teacher has with her students, both formal and informal, shifts entirely online. Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo have also raised this concern and have offered usability testing as sustainable means of observing, considering, and redesigning online writing courses to meet students' needs in their article,

"Determining Effective Distance Learning Design Through Usability Testing." Many of their findings corroborate with my own; this leads me to believe that as course management platforms like Blackboard proliferate, teachers in the many contexts, face-to-face, distance and hybrid, will face similar design problems.

Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo conducted usability testing for an online course at a community college where teachers are given significant amount of control over the design of the content and teaching materials for their online courses (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo 92), and this is similar to the amount of freedom Sarah and Emma are granted in their activity system. Further, I agree with Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo's resistance to a top-down approach that would merely give writing teachers templates for course design that they must implement, believing instead, "that usability testing can offer general guidelines for the successful design of online courses that can be adapted by other online instructors" (93). To briefly summarize the relevant findings, Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo discovered critical areas that need consideration. The first is that student users took more time than anticipated "to skim" materials at the start of testing sessions (101). Locating relevant information to the assigned tasks required not only navigation skills through the various pages but also within the page itself (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo 98). Closer examination revealed that students often, "missed information repeated in several areas in the course" and "missed important information if it was located in large text blocks" (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo 98-99). These results call into question Sarah and Emma's beliefs that tightly blocked information on their syllabi and assignments sheets reflected a usable design for students, despite students' general acceptance of their design. Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo suggest avoiding long chunks of text, careful use of

"bold font or color" to create relevant emphasis, as well as streamlining content because, "[s]tudents tended not to closely read big chunks of text; it is cumbersome for students to read on the computer screen, so the likelihood is that they won't" (103). Sarah and Emma are designing their block paragraphs in the grip of print culture but are not accounting for the many times students will inevitably read these documents on a screen.

Second, Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo discovered, like Sarah, that having deadlines for assignments repeated throughout course materials was extremely confusing (99). They felt that, "deadlines/due dates should all be in one place with information about assignments, so when the students find that information, they've found everything they need. (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo, 103). Interestingly, I had initially resisted this idea when talking with Sarah because it seemed that redundancy would increase student awareness, but Sarah's observations coupled with Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo's findings have me re-thinking that assumption. Another concern raised by Sarah addressed by Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo is the importance of understanding how the students' interfaces and navigational paths are different from teachers. Sarah mentioned her frustration with not being able log into Blackboard and "see what the student sees," echoing Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo's statement,"if the instructors are using a course management system like BlackBoard or WebCT, instructors will want to make sure that they view the course from the students' perspective to determine whether it looks and functions as they expected" (104). These findings highlight the importance of understanding the particular contexts teachers and students live within in order ensure ethical delivery of writing instruction. Applying usability testing to the writing classroom will require a significant

labor commitment, much like other innovations discussed above, which is why a project that is empowering to teachers, it is likely best situated within a writing program initiative that supports teachers across levels. A fuller discussion of what this might look like is in the final chapter.

Conclusion

Ultimately, we are at a critical moment in the evolution of the modality of teaching materials, and this has deep implications for their document design. While there is no clear cut path for how this might be handled, paying attention to how these activity systems operate can help us negotiate the situation openly and ethically. We must be flexible in our approach; understanding,

> The impossibility of ever ensuring the ideal case, though, creates the need to guard against totalitarian community by maintaining spaces and gaps in the workplace structures and demands that permit flexibility of commitment, distancing, and dissent. (Phelps 314)

It seems that the forces behind the larger institutional mandate to use Blackboard for distributing teaching content and teaching materials, combined with the departmental model syllabi and assignment sheets, and along with the personal and professional histories of the instructors, all strongly contribute to the particular way these documents are hybridized. The grip of print culture is both embedded through the layers of the ecology both resisting and being slowly changed by the new technology being introduced and implemented at other layers.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRETTY IS AS PRETTY *DOES*: MY TECHNOFEMININE PROPOSAL FOR EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TEACHING MATERIAL DESIGN

> Thirty years ago, as a first year TA, I taught freshman composition, which in terms of medium was delivered similarly at every institution in the country: in print... It might mean typed copy; it might mean a handwritten submission-- and in fact, although it probably sounds quaint now, when we gathered at the ditto master to run copies, we debated passionately about the ethics of requiring students to type their final copies, and this by the way was the language we used to describe the final task.
>
> -Kathleen Blake Yancey
> "Delivering College Composition into the Future"

> And I argue that-- because in acknowledging the broad material conditions of writing instruction we then also acknowledge the contingent and necessarily limited structures of writing and writing instruction-- people in our classrooms ought to be producing texts using a wide and alertly chosen range of materials-- if they are to see their selves positioned, as building positions is what they produce.
>
> -Anne Frances Wysocki
> "Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications"

> It seemed just common sense that if you want to implement something like writing instruction that is very complicated, requiring intelligence and improvisation, people doing the work need to be treated as agents, not automatons.
>
> -Louise Wetherbee Phelps
> "Becoming a Warrior: Lessons of the Feminist Workplace"

The case studies presented in the last two chapters depict two very specific situations for two particular individuals and their students. When I set out to research document design in teaching materials, I had expected some sort of best practices to rise to the top. Further, I expected to bring some of my own ideas and practices to the conversation, such as the "Course Objectives Map,"

and have them ratified or rejected by my participants. This is not quite what happened. My methodology asked me to resist the urge to save my participants and to listen and learn from them about their own contexts. By looking at their teaching materials within an activity system, and across levels of activity, I have realized that the present design of their materials was working well enough from both their and their students' perspectives. This is not to say that their documents could not be designed better; it is that better is a very subjective and ecologically bound concept. Another complicating factor in compiling a list of best practices is the particular hybrid technological moment. All of the documents examined were designed in Microsoft Word but delivered to students primarily through the online platform Blackboard. This fact frequently came up in discussions with Sarah and Emma about how and in what ways do they anticipate changing the design of their teaching materials in the future. A best practices in the document design of teaching materials should presume to make recommendations that are medium specific as well genre specific. It is unclear at this time that making recommendations based on word processing software, intended to produce documents that look good on paper, will be relevant in the next ten years. There is a wealth of knowledge in English studies about rhetorical approaches for design, especially as it relates to computers and writing, and they need to be applied to teaching materials.

Kostelnick and Hassett conclude all of their chapters in *Shaping Information* with pedagogical suggestions and applications, many of which are geared to help students identify and play with the rhetorical aspects of document design, stating,

> Students who constantly interrogate the rhetorical and social variables surrounding conventions are much more likely to deploy them appropriately... because it enables designers to negotiate them from both the top down and the bottom up-- to discern the socially constructed patterns and the local, situationally dependent variations within those patterns. (42)

I would argue that many professional teachers are novice document designers, as document design is rarely a required topic in pedagogy courses. As such, both teachers and administrators may have many unexamined assumptions about how and why teaching materials should be designed. Sarah and Emma both have pedagogical goals for their classrooms that drive their desire for clear and easy to read teaching materials because these documents function as an extension of their in-class teachings when their students are away from the classroom. Both Sarah and Emma produced documents that were successful enough within their ecologies, yet they both reported that they were more conscious of the choices they had made as a result of our conversations. They both intended to modify the design of their documents going forward in a direct response to conversations from this study.

I return to Phelps's piece, "Becoming a Warrior," because I believe that the feminized position of teaching materials in these activity systems requires an approach which acknowledges socio-cultural histories while also seeking solutions for current problems and anticipating future ones. Phelps seeks to describe the pragmatic possibilities of using the institutional power of writing programs to seek utopian-minded solutions. One such set of solutions is her efforts towards "deconstruction by asymmetries" (Phelps 319). This is a deliberate move away from decontextualized, idealized discussions of how

power can be distributed symmetrically by limiting, "central authority," and encouraging, "privileged members... to be suppressed in order to give more power to the subordinate and vulnerable" (Phelps 321). The problem with this approach to ameliorating the very real harm asymmetries of power cause for the subordinate and vulnerable is its decontextualized nature; instead Phelps advocates studying the "local context" with care and developing means both to dismantle the most harmful constructs and to work within those asymmetries to find a sustainable, rhetorical system which respects difference productively (321-322). By matching members of the program in groups that intentionally mixed various positions and affiliations, identified as,

> clustered into three groups: (1) institutional authority (usually legitimated by academic credentials) and the symbols and rewards associated with it (status, pay, etc.), (2) attributes of competence, and (3) commitment or investment of oneself in the program, (Phelps 322)

and tasked with various executive and pedagogical functions within the program, Phelps states that her, "strategy was to play with power relations" (my emphasis 322). As part of this strategy, she looked for ways to align these asymmetries in a kind of "social architecture" that considers how to establish the best conditions, structures, and exemplification for the programmatic context (Phelps 323).

In this chapter, I will use this schema of conditions, structures, and exemplification to consider what paths forward there are in which we can apply the findings regarding grip from this research to consider carefully the contexts and approaches needed. In the first section, I articulate how careful institutional critique of the materiality of teaching materials in local contexts is a means to promote the conditions for critical collaboration among administrators, faculty,

and students in writing programs. In the second, I outline how pedagogical applications of usability and rhetorical design approaches to teaching materials, as Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo advocate for online writing instruction, can create structures that nurture and sustain teachers and students in writing programs. And finally, in the third section, I argue that ethical leadership and community initiatives are necessary to establish and maintain the kind of relationship building needed to promote active and evolving design work. I conclude by considering how my own journey with this project has both complicated and simplified my own perspective on designing teaching materials.

Institutional & Programatic Conditions for Collaboration

When considering how to change the institutional culture around the design of teaching materials, one which will ask more of its administrators and teachers, we need to carefully account for how design knowledge will be dispersed, negotiated, and supported. The conditions required to create a "diffusion of power by deconstructive means" are deceptively basic: "[a]ccess to information (a two way-flow) and an explicitly enunciated rhetoric of empowerment (Phelps 323). The first requires a robust approach both to make a wide range of content and skills accessible for a disparate, heterogenous group of workers and to establish the means to learn from them as well (Phelps 324). The second needs a dynamic leader or team of leaders that is actively engaged with workers about what empowerment means in this local context (Phelps 324).

An enunciated rhetoric of empowerment in this case must account for the role the institution and the writing program plays in establishing the grip of print culture in teaching materials. It must critically acknowledge the materiality of teaching materials as a genre. Further, the critique itself should be

"unabashedly rhetorical... mediating macro-level structures and micro-level actions rooted in a particular space and time" (Porter et al 612). The practice of institutional critique blends well with Phelps project in part because she was acknowledged at the start of Porter et al's article, "Institutional Critique," as someone whose work, "promote[s] a type of administrative action that rethinks and reshapes the roles that each of us plays within institutional structures" (615). And the institutional critique needed for rethinking and reshaping an empowering rhetoric of document design should focus on the materiality and modality of teaching materials. As highlighted in the quote above, Wysocki, in the introduction to *Writing New Media*, offers a definition of new media that is focused not on the digitality of a text, but rather its materiality, seeing textual changes as less deterministic and part of a larger web of forces. This move is in opposition to scholars who might tout the advent of new, digital technologies as bringing momentous change in communications.

In an earlier collection, *Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies*, Wysocki and Johndan Johnson-Eilola confront the literacy debate with, "Blinded by the Letter: Why are We Using Literacy as a Metaphor for Everything Else." Using "technology literacy" as a model, Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola probe the myths of literacy as "some basic, neutral, context-less set of skills whose acquisition will bring the bearer economic and social goods and privileges" (352). The material conditions, including access to computer technologies, will always be ideologically laden and contextually driven, and the authors describe the variety of ways of having access or possessing some "basic" skills may offer little in the way of social and economic goods. Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola offer an alternative view of a literacy that privileges the spatial over traditional linear

narratives; this move toward spatiality allows for a literal and metaphoric manipulation of what a text is in terms of it material shape (362). It encourages thinking, as well as text design and construction, that not only takes advantage of the possibilities of technological literacy but uses them to expand the very definition of literacy.

While course management software, such as Blackboard, are relatively new to writing instruction (see Kathleen Blake Yancey's comments above) they have swiftly moved into a central, institutional position of influence. In her opening essay, "Delivering College Composition: A Vocabulary for Discussion," Yancey discusses the many and varied sites in which writing instruction is now delivered, including virtual sites where, "it often exists inside a course management system separated from any larger context, which as Darin Payne argues, tends to remove agency at the same time it may increase opportunity" (3-4). Therefore, an empowering rhetoric of institutional critique should include direct engagement of institutions in conversations about the generic roles of software such as Blackboard.

A theme that occurred repeatedly in my conversations with Sarah is her belief that our teaching materials will be inevitably remediated into Blackboard. Sarah states that she's "not unhappy" about this evolution, but,

> I think it presents a whole new set of quote unquote "document design" issues because you can't design documents in exactly the same kind of way on Blackboard, on our current system that you can in Word, that's not to say that they can't be effective, but that's just a new process.

Sarah's questions recall some of the problems experienced by the DOT workers that Spinuzzi uncovered when the GIS-ALAS system was introduced to automate the genre management of traffic accident data,

> How should it be integrated into the existing genre ecology? Or should it actually replace the ecology as a stand-alone program that encapsulates the totality of genres within itself? In sum, what are the implications of pulling existing genres into the computer interface? (Spinuzzi 159)

The sustainability for Sarah, or Emma, or their peers to continue designing teaching materials outside the boundaries of an automated genre management system, such as Blackboard, seems to be a particularly important consideration to arise from this research. Further, automation of genre management is the driving, "centripetal" force behind the development of the GIS-ALAS,

> ...designers had taken that work... regulated it through the compliant agency of the computer... further limiting human involvement in genre management, [and] ensured that genres would be managed in stable, predictable ways. (Spinuzzi 171)

As Sarah's comments indicate, moving the design of her teaching materials into the Blackboard space certainly will not eliminate document design decisions, but rather it may further obscure them or move them out of the hands of the teachers and department level administrators. A clearly enunciated rhetoric of empowerment for teachers in the venue of materiality could aid teachers like Sarah in making careful and critical decisions regarding technologies.

Access to a two-way flow of information, the other half of Phelps's conditions for deconstructing by asymmetries, is also critical to the endeavor of institutional critique. It is not enough to identify sites of concern and begin a conversation, you must also contribute meaningfully to the project of improvement by, "developing strategies for changing" the sites you identify (Porter et al 626). As highlighted in the narrative passage that begins the previous chapter, Sarah sometimes struggles to manage what feels like an exponentially expanding genre ecology. When to create separate assignment sheets, in MS Word and then posted to Blackboard, and when to post assignment

instructions directly through the Blackboard interface are frequent questions she faces. For Sarah and her students, at this moment, and especially for the students who have taken one or two prior courses with her, assignment sheets are a known genre, employing visual conventions, "...which stand like lighthouses in a sea of information, supplying readers with reliable reference points for interpreting their purposes" (Kostelnick and Hassett 97).

When Sarah discussed her lesson plan assignment, she explained that she elected not to make an assignment sheet for, and rather just placed "quick instructions" on Blackboard at the submission location, and this created problems similar to the problems encountered with the mini-grants. Ultimately, it reinforced for her that she does need to be deliberate in creating either a traditional (for her) assignment sheet or a, "sort of pseudo assignment sheet on Blackboard" to remedy this problem,

> ... so I was starting to think oh ok, well I've been feeling some disjoint with some of these assignment sheets and assignments because I've got Bb, I've got the syllabus, I've got the assignment sheet, and then within Bb, I have... when I post the documents, sometimes I'll write a direction there, which isn't the same as what I put on the assignment for the student and so um you know there's sometimes almost too much, too many opportunities to communicate and not necessarily do it well...

This reflects Yancey's claim that, "[t]he role that these multiple genres, media, and environments will play in defining composition, finally isn't clear, nor can the current major position statements of the field help" (7). The current two-way flow of information here is stymied. No one is helping Sarah work through these problems, and no one is hearing what Sarah's concerns are.

Therefore, institutions need to establish a means to help both teachers gain proficiency with technology in general and, in this context, Blackboard in particular. They need to find ways, as institutions, to adapt the technology to the

needs of their teachers and students rather than always assuming that the teachers and students will adapt to the technology. In Selfe and Selfe's, "The Politics of the Interface," they argue that the typical word processing interface necessarily tells users from outside middle class, office culture, "that entering the virtual worlds of interfaces also means, at least in part and at some level, entering a world constituted around the lives and values of white, male, middle- and upper-class professionals" (487). This article was published nearly two decades ago, and little has changed in the metaphors used by word processing interfaces. These office metaphors are repurposed in interfaces like Blackboard because of their assumed ubiquity, a grip that they are exhibiting in the digital realm. Beyond the interfaces lurk the implementations, layers of code and one or more databases, put together with the interfaces into platforms like Blackboard by software programmers who may or may not have a deep understanding of the activity systems and genre ecologies for which they are writing. Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo discovered that the difficulties students encountered were both problems that were a result of the teacher's design and problems that were a result of the platform's design, they, "found that [they] needed to brainstorm ways to work around the inevitable usability problems that [their] students encounter that are beyond [their] control" (101). Further, Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo are quite clear that, it is, "useful to know what problems there are in the institutional system and then see if there are ways to work around them" (102). This would be critical data to collect when engaging in institutional critique of the materiality of teaching materials.

As Richard Selfe lays out in *Sustainable Computer Environments*, we need to be cognizant of and critical about what, how, and for whom we integrate

technologies into our pedagogy, placing, "people, first; pedagogy, second; technologies, third" (1-2). It is possible that designing teaching materials directly in Blackboard or similar platform is the best, most effective way forward in many pedagogical situations. But we cannot forget that,

> [i]f a department installs the same software on all of its employees' computers, for example, the technicians who control the design defaults-- type style and size, page composition, screen display options-- control that department's visual language, however unknowingly." (Kostelnick and Hassett 108)

Therefore, we need a vision going forward that accounts for variety, novelty, and changes in our pedagogical approaches that take best advantage of the collaborative, bricoleur nature of writing teachers.

A wider approach to materiality allows for a bricolage that has the potential to allow teachers to,

> [interact] with [their subject] physically, by manipulating materials, or symbols, or icons in rich associative patterns, by arranging and re-arranging them constantly until they fit together in a satisfying or meaningful way." (Selfe and Selfe 493)

Institutional critique of the materiality of teaching materials could investigate how well these interfaces and implementations are functioning for diverse users and seek out partnerships with the software designers to develop initiatives to find new perspectives implementation design and deployment, as well as new metaphors for interfaces. The administrators of writing programs are likely best situated to direct such a project because, as Phelps points out, they are located in a nexus of resources, such as university and programmatic resources and software vendor relationships. But, that is not to say such a project will easily gain support, which is why more critical scholarship is a key component of institutional critique because it can provide the theoretical and empirical

warrants needed to argue for and sustain such a project. Teachers need strong advocates and mentors in their administrators and the scholarship of the field if this re-envisioning of teaching material design is to happen across levels of activity. At the least, it is conversation that teachers, administrators, and scholars should be having both within and without our discourse communities given the importance of materiality to writing classroom genre ecologies.

Pedagogical Structures for Caring about Teachers & Students

Structures are needed to ensure that the conditions of deconstruction of asymmetries are given time and space to take root and grow throughout the writing program. Phelps identifies many tactical solutions to creating structures that support and enhance the programmatic goal of getting heterogenous workers with a range of "institutional authority," "range of competence," and, "commitment or investment" (322) in the goals of the writing program. Some solutions are common planning times, which often resulted voluntary co-teaching efforts, peer evaluation systems, and increased opportunities within the program and the larger institution for publication and public speech about writing instruction (324- 325). All of these tactics are ones which could be implemented to support programmatic change in how teachers design their materials, especially when combined with best practices in visual rhetoric and professional writing methodologies. Because these tactics are intended to empower teachers to improve their pedagogies, they can be developed in a manner which cares for the needs of both teachers and students.

Usability testing, as a structural component of a writing program, seems a natural fit here because both Sarah and Emma spoke about multiple instances throughout the design and delivery of their teaching materials of modifying their

materials as a result of prior or current feedback from their students. Professional writing scholars have long advocated usability testing as a methodology for determining how people work with genres in order to find more effective and appropriate approaches for communicating with audiences. Robert Johnson, in "Audience Involved: Toward a Participatory Model of Writing," argues that technical communicators should be aware keenly of the needs and culture of their audience, the users of the professional text. He believes that because technical communicators have the job of transforming content from one culture or institution into another, they are in an incredible position to take up the classical role of rhetoricians-- to be experts of audience analysis. Clearly, the same is true of teachers as teaching materials evolve deeper into the machine. Johnson illustrates the possibilities of a professional pedagogy that not only considers users in design and documentation, but collaborates with the audience/ users as rhetors early in the process. He presents the teaching of user centered design and usability as not only a skill to be mastered, but an aspect of technical communication where the ethical and efficient can co-exist. Mixing aspects of usability testing with tactics of team teaching efforts, evaluations, and public speech can raise up necessary concerns about the document design of teaching materials, creating structures that value user-centered thinking to care for past, present and future students.

Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo describe a wide range of suggestions for implementing usability testing in pedagogical situations in ways that are respectful and caring towards students. Like all rigorous methodologies, teachers should start first by clearly articulating the specific objectives of the testing, "and then selecting a testing method (i.e., heuristic evaluation, pluralistic

walkthrough) most appropriate for those goals" (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo 103). Further, they offer particular kinds of tasks teachers should consider when writing their objectives,

- tasks [students] would need to be able to do in any online course (i.e., find assignment prompts, deadlines, syllabus)
- tasks [students] must do repeatedly in this specific course (i.e., take quizzes, post to discussion boards, upload to a course drop box) and
- tasks students have had trouble with in the past (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo, 103)

In many ways, this reflects questions both Sarah and Emma ask themselves at the end of each semester; the last one, unsurprisingly, was repeatedly mentioned. Teachers are warned to try and account for the course management platform by, "be[ing] sure to choose tasks that test his or her course separately from the institutional system" (Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo 103). This suggestion, in particular, indicates a need for a structural support system that pairs teachers with deeper knowledge of the course management systems than others, allowing both sides to see these problems through alternate perspectives. Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo take care to note how important it is for the usability testing to be conducted outside of the classroom activity system and with a tester who is not the students' teacher, arguing that, "[s]tudents need to feel comfortable being honest about their experience navigating the course, and they might not be honest if they are concerned about their grade in the class"(103). Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo express their own ethic of care by suggesting ways teachers can more efficiently manage teaching materials in course management platforms,

such as keeping "a master list" of items that "will need to be updated and revised each semester, then the workload will be kept to a minimum" (104).

Another strongly recommended approach for document design practitioners and teachers from Kostelnick and Hassett is outlined in Schriver's textbook, *Dynamics in Document Design*. It is one that will ask teachers to take a step back from their materials and,

> assess the appropriateness of conventions for specific [students] and [activity systems], and based on that assessment, to select, blend, and adapt (and even flout) [these conventions] accordingly. (Kostelnick and Hassett 80)

It is rooted in usability testing to determine how best to take advantage of the rhetorical weight that the document design of genres carries. Prototypes need to be created locally and with care to consider the inherent power these prototypes can carry. Sullivan, arguing in "Practicing Safe Visual Rhetoric," finds there are limitations to some document design guidelines when there is an over-reliance on considering how "visual cueing" works for the general population at the detriment of considering, "the cultural forces shaping the production and reception of a document" (110). Making structures, such as prototypes, to support teachers' quest for better, institutionally specific, document design could help avoid, or at the very least, make visible, the "safe visual rhetoric" traps described by Sullivan. She is prompted by a similar ethical concern to mine,

> ... to what extent [would] my offering of a training-wheels approach suggest to the class that expediency might be a primary goal? To what extent [would] it suggest that those specifications were really standards for good design practice? [Would] I remove more than the design risk from the situation? The more I consider the situation, the more culpable I [could] become as a preserver of safe practices. (Sullivan 105)

Sullivan notes that it is the most vulnerable at our institutions, "students, women, minorities, handicapped," among others will be the most likely to adopt

"safe visual rhetoric," at the expense of truly considering all design options rhetorically (111). In digital spaces, all design choices are made with the knowledge that, "the visual look of the page no doubt will shimmer and shake" (Sullivan 112). Writing teachers will be best equipped to handle these uncertainties if there are institutional structures which educate and support them to innovate visual design and to develop design knowledge. Sullivan asks the field of rhetoric to carefully explore "when and how... we should abandon the safety of our print graphic traditions in order to grow..." (118), and a cross-scope project centered on visual design for teaching materials provides an excellent exigency to take up this call.

To create these local prototypes, teachers, either individually or in teams, will need to approach teaching materials as a body of work that best functions as a holistic and recognizable system of documents. These prototypes will need to be flexible enough to account for most of the types of content teachers need to convey, while also providing a rigorous structure that helps guide teachers to make informed, rational decisions about the design. Schriver asks that design practitioners adopt Alison Black's rhetorically driven heuristic of first taking an inventory of all possible textual and visual elements they will need in their final design, "one that includes long and short paragraphs of body text, long and short headings, and long and short footnotes," as well as list types, calendar formats, tables, etc. (272). Schriver argues that by first thinking about what the design needs to contain, design practitioners are given an opportunity to try out how different designs look on the page and screen, and therefore are better able to select and reject different stylistic choices before they format specific content (272-3). Further, "Black's heuristic provides a systematic way to base typographic

decisions on an analysis of the whole document...," ensuring that special cases, elements which are not used on every document, such as the calendar on a syllabus, are considered in light of overall look of the document, rather than being shoehorned in at a late stage (Schriver 273). So while it can be time consuming to take these inventories and create prototypes, the act of doing so can prompt conversation about not necessarily what looks best, but what looks appropriate for the situation. If this project is undergone in a structural manner, teachers will be gaining valuable experience in document design that can make future work far more efficient.

Design prototypes, or templates, which are based on an inventory of common and less common content elements can also be further developed through the use of a rhetorical grid. After the elements needed are identified, a rhetorical grid approach asks design practitioners to break out the tunnel vision of "the well worn path," to consider how to best use the whole space to convey meaning to the reader. Schriver builds on usability and document design research to articulate that "[w]ithout typographic and spatial cues, documents demand more mental work of readers, forcing them to relate texts parts and to figure out part-whole relationships" (Schriver 285). By taking advantage of the whole page or screen and paying careful attention to these relationships through the use of a grid may also help the teacher get deeper insight into what the document is trying to do and how to guide, "readers [to] make reasonable (and appropriate) inferences about internal relationships among the parts of the document" (Schriver 313). A grid can also reveal how and in what ways the various elements on a particular page or screen can influence each other, allowing teachers to consider the impact of placing certain items near or far apart

from each other can have (Schriver 315). A grid may also provide a gateway for those teachers who predominately design their materials for print to begin to see the greater possibilities afforded, and of the necessary limitations, when designing teaching materials for the screen.

Schriver's rhetorical grid approach literally asks design practitioners to place individual visual elements on a gridded field so they can play with the elements before finalizing the template, potentially opening up new ways of visualizing the space and the design options available. Much like Black's inventory heuristic, the rhetorical grid is also a heuristic which establishes the rules for that play; one that teachers can apply, "systematically explore how the content 'looks and feels' when presented through the lens of differing visual structures" (Schriver 341). Grids can serve as "inventional tools" that help teachers understand how their own pedagogy works on paper or on screen, guiding them to see what is missing to make a particular connection or what is extraneous to the particular course or assignment (Schriver 341). Working with the inventories of elements and the potential layouts in rhetorical grids may slow down the document design approach teachers take initially, which is why I would strongly urge administrators and teacher educators to promote this work through pedagogical coursework and professional development time and to catalogue this work in online databases that teachers can access after the course or meeting is over.

Another step in Schriver's usability based approach, unsurprisingly, then asks writers and designers to test their materials with real audiences and gather feedback via as many channels as are appropriate. Teachers have unique access to their professional audiences in their classrooms. While teachers could formally

survey or interview their students about the success of the teaching materials, more casual and organic approaches may work just as well. Many teachers take the opportunity to introduce coursework at the time that they pass out or otherwise make available a particular syllabus or assignment sheet; many teachers also take this time to answer student questions about the work. I would suggest that this is an opportune moment to ask students direct questions about the anticipated usability of the assignment sheet. In particular, students can be directed to elements on the screen or page that were hard to design (or word, for that matter) and directly asked if the content is clear. Further, many writing teachers already have students write reflections after completing assignments or engage the class in post-assignment wrap up conversations, again in this moment students can be asked to share their experiences using the teaching materials to scaffold their work.

Schriver's suggestions can be applied though a variety of means. But particularly, the structures of team teaching, peer evaluation, and public speech could be used as the vehicles of change for making these suggestions possible. In fact, the occluded nature and generic assumptions around what makes teaching materials teaching materials might make it an excellent topic for the very first class, first team initiative or first program meeting when the teacher or writing program administrator is presenting her own syllabus. Writing pedagogy students and writing teachers could be asked:

- what assumptions they make about the writing pedagogy teacher or writing program administrator?
- writing pedagogy in general?

- and, the work of the course in specific based on simply scanning the syllabus?

Not only will this reveal student assumptions about document design, but it could springboard a highly productive discussion about the work that writing teachers do and the activity systems in which they operate. As the semester progresses, aspects like Black's heuristic and the rhetorical grid can be introduced, discussed, and used to support the teaching students creation of first assignments or prompt revisions of writing teachers' existing materials.

It should be acknowledged that, unlike the institution at which Sarah and Emma teach, many writing programs employ standard syllabi and other teaching materials. In these contexts, I would still advise writing program administrators to have explicit and critical conversations about how and why the standard materials are designed the way they are. First, discussing the design, much like usability testing it with writing students or the first day "assumptions" activity described above, can prompt a critical awareness for how these documents will ideally function in these particular activity systems; both experienced and novice teachers who are working from curricula they have not designed will likely benefit from the insight. Second, not only would this explicit conversation help all teachers better understand the activity system, but it will also provide a rich understanding for departmental expectations of them as teachers, including what would be expected of them were they to develop their own courses. Frequently, composition and other beginning writing courses are the "first" jobs novice teachers hold in their departments, and direct instruction on the document design values of the department would be beneficial to their development as teachers.

Writing program administrators and writing pedagogy instructors are in the strongest position to promote a strong rhetorical approach to document design in writing classrooms. Time and time again, my participants and I discussed all the things we would love to do with our materials, if only there were the time, the training, and/both the system of support that would scaffold us as teachers through new design developments and technologies. Incorporating document design within the composition pedagogy curriculum and within the departmental support system for teachers of composition will provide grounded opportunities to discuss critically the context and means by which student learning happens: what do the genres look like? how well do they function? how might they modified, remediated, improved? These conversation could, and should, quickly develop into something much more than a discussion of typography or margin setting, but one centered on issues of teacher ethos and instructional clarity.

In addition to caring for the structural needs of teachers and students in the evolving genre ecology of teaching materials, these projects of usability testing and rhetorical grids can also serve another function important to our field. By probing the materiality and functionality of teaching materials, we can support teachers in their endeavors to include more multimodal objectives in writing classrooms, a critical concern for twenty-first century writing instruction. Cynthia Selfe consistently calls for critically and ethically grounded theory and pedagogy of writing with technologies, such as those in her book *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century*. Her work in *Writing New Media* reflects an ethic of care she takes in regards to both teachers and students in addressing the visual aspects of multimodality in the writing classroom.

Selfe is incredibly empathetic as she considers why many, if not most, composition instructors do not include digital and multimodal work of the rigorous level described by Wysocki and many more: teachers are experts in alphabetic texts, their material conditions are limited by economics, and their socio-professional situations are unlikely to benefit from such a time consuming move (71). Selfe places these material conditions alongside the very real reasons, discussed at length above and below, as to why multimodality, especially with the increasing importance of visually based communication in digital environments, is a necessity in the writing classroom (68- 69). This echoes Wysocki's earlier remarks in that collection,

> How might the visual appearance of most academic texts of the previous century-- texts most often without photographs or illustrations or varied typography-- have encouraged us to value (or devalue or repress) the visual in the circulation of academic and other 'serious' writing? (14)

With such a deeply entrenched culture of print-based conventions, it is incredibly difficult to imagine how such a change in perspective can take place without structures in place in which teachers can work together, in public to take care of each other and their students.

Ethical Exemplification for Building Design Relationships

If we consider a program of institutional critique of the materiality of teaching materials in order to establish the appropriate conditions for collaboration as a macroscopic initiative, and a series of tactics such as usability testing and rhetorical grids as a means of improving the conditions of designing teaching materials as a mesoscopic set of solutions, then there still needs to be a microscopic approach to the problem to ensure that we are meeting teachers' needs at the subconscious, operational level. Phelps's idea of exemplification

suits this purpose well as it requires a constant, self-conscious presence of leadership to publicly practice values of collaboration and consensus building, with the goal of spreading empowerment through example and encouragement (325- 326). Exemplification is aimed at making the values of empowerment a part of the writing program's culture. This kind of ethical modeling and relationship building can find ways to blend these strategies into the document design that most are already doing unconsciously, providing additional means to communicate with the students in their activity systems.

Exemplification is important to creating a coherent environment for pedagogical practice. John Odo and Jamie Parmelee, in their article "Competing Interpretations of 'Textual Objects' in an Activity System: A Study of the Requirements in the _____ Writing Program," set out to explore what destabilizations have affected the implementation of new departmental guidelines for first year writing courses, as evidenced by the interpretation of a new requirements document for the courses by the writing coordinators at a particular university. One impetus for the new requirements document, written by a committee of the institution's writing faculty, was to develop the curriculum beyond a current-traditional model of composition to include more practice in multimodality and digital composition. Yet, while the resulting document establishes very clear guidelines for the goals and assignments required for a writing course section, including adding a requirement that students compose multimodal texts(Odo and Parmelee 63- 64). Drawing on Cheryl Geisler's idea of the "Textual Object," an activity theory based construct interested in how texts change and produce change when they become public documents intended to scaffold certain outcomes, Odo and Parmelee sought to determine how the

differing motives of two of the major collaborators in enforcing this requirements document, the coordinator and assistant coordinator of the writing program, affected the implementation of the requirements by instructors (65- 67). In particular, they discovered through this project that the program coordinator and the assistant coordinator had very different interpretations of the document, resulting in instructors receiving very different direction in the number and type of assignments they were expected to include in their course design (Odo and Parmelee 78). Odo and Parmelee accounted for a large part of this difference in interpretations to the relative difference of power and closeness to the day-to-day administration of the program; while both coordinators strongly supported the document as creating programmatic coherence, the overall coordinator tended to interpret loosely and according his own philosophy, while the assistant coordinator tended to adhere to the letter of the document (74-79). This analysis speaks to the problems created when there is not a set of conditions and structures in place to aid the social architecture.

In addition, this research indicates a few very important things about the activity systems within which teaching materials exist. The first is that teaching material genres are the result of many institutional activity systems dictating course requirements, objectives, and assessment types, and the genres of those activity systems, are important for creating programmatic coherence. The second is that, much like the writing coordinators in the above study, the interpretation of a given requirements document, whether departmental guidelines or an assignment sheet handed out in class, will be different depending on the teacher's power and positioning within the activity system. And finally, I would posit that destabilizations within writing department activity systems, like those

happening in many writing programs around the country as more and more digital composition and new media theory makes its way into writing instruction, will be creating a situation where syllabi and other course documents will be even less stabilized and instructors will be expected to create and/or deploy new pedagogical documents with greater frequency. Were there to be an underlying project of exemplification about the new requirements, the destablizations may not have occurred.

Kate Ronald, in "'Befriending' Other Teachers: Communities of Teaching and the Ethos of Curricular Leadership," addresses some concerns about how to lead and mentor teachers into new and ever changing institutional situations. The practices Ronald outlines speaks to how she attempts, "to enable people to consciously seek and practice their own empowerment for constructive purposes" (Phelps 325). Ronald speaks directly about the challenges of teaching a curricula agenda in relating her own experiences re-tooling her institution's composition course and her need for new and current teachers alike to understand and support it. Ronald states that without "passionate" and invested teachers, there was little chance of the new curriculum finding "success" (Ronald 320). She offers up principles of ethos (derived from Gregory's "Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Teacherly Ethos") and the possibilities of community as ways of considering and approaching these types of teacher development challenges when presenting a particular curriculum or pedagogical practice.

The responsibility to ensure that everyone's speech is heard rests with the leader, and Ronald asks leaders to participate in and model the act of befriending. In her communal work to define and describe a new curriculum for composition, she considers that to befriend other teachers while developing

curricula, you are, "providing overviews of curriculum that teachers in isolation don't possess, pointing out connections and disconnections across sections or whole division curricula" (Ronald 323). The important benefit here to novice teachers is that this approach fights "cynicism" and the "very real impulse of teachers to 'just close the door and teach'" (Ronald 324) by offering models of teaching teachers explicitly designed to foster an intellectual and vocational community. By extending a sense of friendship and community within a writing program, we can hope to create an honest dialogue that is not reactionary, but rather practically revolutionary.

Practical revolutions of exemplification would necessarily be open by design, both in the sense of being open to heterogeneous peoples and being open to change and evolution in the contextual factors of the genre ecology. Spinuzzi attempts to articulate a way forward at the conclusion of his genre tracing methodology, asking that if,

> genre tracing presumes a dynamic, social, expansive work activity in which communities interpret, use, and shape the genres that collectively mediate their work...[then h]ow can we cultivate the dynamic social interactions that make workers' innovations sustainable? (203)

He posits "open systems" as a perpetual, heuristics driven design process that asks all members of the activity system to actively monitor, revise, and add to the genre ecology, much, "like an artificial reef, might help to shape the ecology that grows around it, but it is not designed to maintain control over the ecology or constrain the ecology" (Spinuzzi 204-5). Interestingly, this somewhat parallels Phelps's metaphor about being, "animals of the tidal zone, neither land nor sea creatures" (291); evolution is a messy, complex process in which all creatures must learn to adapt.

One example Spinuzzi gives is the English department website at the University of Texas at Austin; when the site was first developed it "grew asymmetrically," with some pages, namely the technical communications and rhetoric and composition related ones, being much more sophisticated in design and function compared to other programs, like literature and creative writing (209- 210). A team was developed to consider the problem, to seek a deconstruction of and by asymmetries, and while everyone understood why the problem existed, it took some exploration of both the university level information technology infrastructure as well as the particular needs of both the English department as a whole and its individual members (Spinuzzi 210). And while the solution to build a common form for all department members, including departmental, programmatic, and individual pages, to use when adding to the department seems like a simple one, the task of designing and developing it was quite complex since they were aiming,

> to construct a truly dialogic site, one that was designed using a conversational metaphor and that would consequently support the epideictic, deliberative, and forensic activities of the department. (Spinuzzi 210)

The form they constructed required no HTML coding knowledge, allowing highly skilled users a much faster way to deliver content via the website and allowing less skilled users new access to the medium; further, the department maintained a certain amount of centripetal control over the website for coherency purposes, while dispersing the ability to add and modify specific content centrifugally (Spinuzzi 211). Spinuzzi presents three critical elements of open systems, an open-source model, a rich knowledge base, and a community building approach. Using these elements, writing programs can construct a

similar approach to the University of Texas at Austin's in website building when considering how to implement a more rhetorical approach to document design with specific writing classroom activity systems. While these elements will likely be most successful when implemented at a departmental or writing program level, individual writing teachers could take advantage of them informally with interested peers and colleagues. At their core, all three elements draw on a collaborative approach to both design and content development, and I believe that teaching communities, as they already exist in many English departments, will find them a natural fit with other pedagogical and professional instruction and mentorship programs they are already using.

Open-source is a concept Spinuzzi borrows from computer programming, a practice that is defined by programmers offering up their work freely for use by others. A driving philosophical assumption is that participants can speed up the development of better, more robust, more easily replicable code by working together for the benefit of the community (Spinuzzi 213). Often, an open-source approach seeks to find the most usable solution to the problem, highlighting the importance of the end user in any technological activity system. Spinuzzi himself highlights that this can, "... strike some as utopian [in a professional environment]. But as Nardi shows, workers already program spreadsheets and other software-- but enough workers to make a difference" (Spinuzzi 214). For a writing program or writing pedagogy course, an open source model to the document design of teaching materials would include a database of teaching materials, as described above. Both Sarah and Emma spoke at length about relying heavily on one or two model documents when they first started developing their own. Had they had access to more models, it is possible they

may have discovered other design elements, which may have worked better for them.

But in the computer programming world, an open-source project is more than a mere repository of code. In fact, some open-source software projects aspire to an egalitarianism and even a utopianism that cares deeply about how power is shared. Members of the community have the ability to submit "bug reports" and "feature requests"; community members can report problems with existing genres and request help in revising or developing genres, while responsible and/or interested community members can respond to these reports and requests. At a departmental or program level, this could facilitate a system in which writing teachers could not only submit their teaching materials but also submit reports and requests for design layouts and elements to their fellow teachers. In a writing pedagogy course, this could be introduced as community learning project, possibly in connection with a course wiki or Blackboard site. And, while I am explaining the potential for an open-source model in terms of document design issues, it could easily be combined with other pedagogical topics and concerns- creating a sort of super-repository and community response system.

In order to have an exemplifying open-source model of teaching material design and development, there needs to be a clear knowledge base as a structure to support the condition of a two-way flow of information. And while a database of teaching materials used by the department is one kind of knowledge base, it needs to be richer and deeper, to support an open system project. The domain knowledge of all members of the community needs to be tapped into it, and outside knowledge needs to be gathered and made available,

> A commonly accessible knowledge base can expand this genre ecology, not (necessarily) replacing existing genres, but augmenting them with other genres that have been developed and shared by the workers. (Spinuzzi 215)

In a writing pedagogy course, the ostensible goal is to expand the activity system participants' knowledge base by means of direct instruction. This can be augmented not only by including document design as a topic, but also by crowd sourcing with writing pedagogy students about what document design knowledge they bring to the classroom. Many writing programs already actively seek to develop a shared knowledge base amongst its teachers, and in those cases document design could also be included. A departmental wiki or blog about document design and other topics related to writing classrooms would create a dialogic space where community members can share and catalogue their knowledge for others use.

Finally, a community building approach is necessary for any true "open system" approach to the document design of teaching materials. A well developed knowledge base, deployed in an open-source model, will do much to improve the deployment of robust, replicable, user centered document design in teaching materials, as well as generally raise the visibility of teaching materials as critical genres in writing classroom ecologies. Yet,

> [w]ithout such civic mechanisms and a rich ecology of genres to support them (from ballots to legal briefs to award speeches), workers can swap solutions, but those solutions will tend to be reactionary rather than proactive and forward looking. In other words, there is a world of difference between the folklore that shows up in knowledge bases and the sort of long-term collaborative planning done in civic life. (Spinuzzi 217-218)

The kinds of "civic mechanisms" Spinuzzi is endorsing are essentially task forces within a particular professional environment, where workers can bring reports

or requests that go beyond the bounds of the system as it currently exists, who are empowered to take an integrated look, and where, "workers can organize themselves, discuss their goals as a community, and collaboratively chart a course for the software" (Spinuzzi 218). Similar such task forces could be organized for a variety of topics, including document design, and could be aligned or combined with existing departmental committees. For writing programs and departments who wish to build or improve upon collaborative approaches to teaching and learning, a document design initiative could provide an excellent means to start the conversation because of the ubiquity of teaching materials in writing classrooms.

An open system approach, like Spinuzzi is advocating, would build upon collaborative approaches that are already in place in many programs, and would scaffold the exemplification of a communal teaching environment going forward. It would make visible document design in teaching materials by raising it up as an important topic for inquiry and development within the department, program, or pedagogy classroom. And yet, another aspect of the open-source model that underpins this approach is that it can exist beyond the boundaries of a single department, institution, or even discipline. Therefore, open systems projects on topics like document design in teaching materials, or the remediation of teaching materials in digital and distributed spaces, or others could be developed out of professional organizations, interdisciplinary initiatives, or other interested groups. Open-source projects can be developed in any kind of community, as long as its work is for the benefit of that community and has a public, democratic process.

A programmatic approach to exemplifying friendship and open source development will not only benefit teachers and students in the design and usability of their teaching materials, but will also create fertile ground for empowering teachers and students to understand the rhetorical weight of the materiality of genres. When I set out to design this research project, I was driven by the idea that teaching materials, as genres, did not receive enough critical attention, especially as it relates to their visual design. I felt that document design did important work in communicating the expectations of the writing classroom and scaffolding students' learning experiences. As such, this research project sought to answer the questions:

- What visual conventions do instructors employ in the document design of their teaching materials?
- What influences or reasons do instructors identify when asked about their document design?
- What interpretations or comments do students have about their instructor's teaching materials?

I had hoped to use the answers to these questions to advocate for particular design recommendations, but, as I developed my exploratory, grounded methodology, and as I implemented that methodology by spending time with Sarah and Emma inside and outside of their classrooms, I realized that there is no "one size fits all" solution. And, so I had to go back, carefully attempt to answer the research questions, and then look through that to see what revealed itself.

This works answers a direct call made by Kostelnick and Hassett at the conclusion of their book. It represents two case studies which,

> examine how an indigenous visual language develops within a given discourse community; how members acquire, deploy, and interpret that language; the rhetorical purposes it serves, both internally and externally; and how power relations among its members influence these processes. (Kostelnick and Hassett 230)

Sarah and Emma's teaching materials were examined for their visual language, and they spoke at length about how, why and under what conditions they design and deliver their teaching materials. Power relations are clearly important here as teaching materials evolve into digital and distributed spaces because it is the power of the program and the institution which guide and direct the technologies that are both available and supported.

Still more research is needed to follow up on how and in what ways technological changes are influencing the design and delivery of teaching materials, particularly in other institutional contexts. Further, if a writing program, classroom, or professional group wanted to develop an open system approach to document design, I would advocate conducting some genre tracing case studies or ethnographies first, so as to more deeply understand the community's needs. This research does not fully address the student position in a writing classroom genre ecology, as the two surveys did not produce as complete a picture as would have been ideal; therefore I would advocate that any further projects conduct student interviews or focus groups to get a more well-rounded impression of their experiences and needs as end users. Another call made by Kostelnick and Hassett, "pedagogical research might also explore how students learn visual language, particularly how they acquire fluency in the visual language of their disciplines" (230), I addressed in some ways by asking Sarah and Emma about their prior knowledge about document design, but could be explored more deeply with both both teachers and students. How both students

and writing teachers learn visual language, what they are indoctrinated into and what they discover on their own, seem to have a significant impact on what they consider to be "good" document design.

In addition to finding ways forward for "good" document design in classroom activity systems, I have consistently reached out to make connections across various lines of writing scholarship. Like Miller-Cochran and Rodrigo, I believe strongly that,

> as more rhetoric and composition scholars, especially those in the field of computers and writing and technical communication, apply usability studies, theories, and methodologies to their research, reading, and writing, we will further expand our understanding of rhetoric and communicative acts. (105)

But, I wish they had expressly identified pedagogy in this list, given their demonstrated belief that pedagogical sites are highly deserving of rigorous study. I believe that this research into typography and spatial design choices of texts like syllabi and assignment sheets demonstrates my commitment to the project of, "retheoriz[ing] the relationship of research to service in the fields of rhetoric and composition, professional writing, and computers and composition" (Porter et al 632). The daily lived writing experiences of American writing teachers is certainly a rich site to enact this ethic. The genres we design, compose, revise, and revisit in our classrooms are critically important to the professional work we do as teachers and should be treated as such.

Final, personal thoughts...

I would like to close this dissertation with a last narrative and a few final reflections.

> I stare at my computer screen, hunched over, trying to distill some key aspects of my findings into a coherent and pragmatic presentation for a conference audience that could be made up of a range of teachers,

administrators, teacher educators, researchers, and other scholars and practitioners of the vast field that is English Studies. My coffee is cold- I have no idea how long I have been staring at the same ecology diagram, trying to figure out what *exactly* I should say about it, in order to convince my audience that a topic that is often reduced to Comic Sans jokes and default margin settings requires a deep dive into genre ecologies.

There's a strange pressure when designing slides for a presentation on design, too many chances to undercut your ethos. But, more so, I am struck by the idea that, when I proposed this topic to my advisor there was a pragmatic end goal. Workshops: Here's how you do it. Yet, I find myself in the position of stepping back and saying... well, a workshop would be great, except that I could best write one for specific contexts, such as *the* regional state university I studied. Then, I could lean on not only my research and my domain knowledge, but also my deep understanding of the communities and divisions of labor within those activity systems. Would a more generic workshop be useful to other contexts? Possibly, but I'm not sure that is the best takeaway anymore. There remains a wealth of document design "best practices" knowledge within our field and others, but each department, each teacher, maybe, needs to find the practices that best support the work they are doing, i.e. the objectives they are trying to turn into outcomes, and the systems they are in.

The large screen behind me displays my presentation. I had chosen a chalkboard background and set my titles in the "Chalkduster" typeface- largely because the "Chalkboard" typeface I originally selected looked too much like aforementioned Comic Sans. You never know when there might be a typography nerd in the room. I'm happy to see we do have a few attendees at 8:30 am on the last day of a four-day conference, and am further bolstered when a friendly face arrives to cheer on my presentation. As I bring up my final slide, I am smiling because, with all the work I have done, I *can* boil it down to one, simple, takeaway. Written on the chalkboard background, in Chalkduster letters is this:

I will be rhetorical when designing my teaching materials.

I will be rhetorical when designing my teaching materials.

I will be rhetorical when designing my teaching materials.

The above narrative reflects the perspective of a socialist-feminist scholar with the obligatorily postmodern sense of ironic juxtaposition. I stand by my words. But, I still feel a calling also to enact a sincere ethic of feminine honesty. When I discovered Phelps's chapter, "Becoming a Warrior," I was excited to discover

something that offered such rich concepts with which to work, ones that felt appropriate and productive to the exigency I saw. Yet something inside me resisted; I resisted because, like some of the reactions to their call for proposals, I hesitated to take up the word feminine. The feminine carried so many connotations I have actively avoided in my life: vanity, frailty, weakness, it felt like stooping to conquer to use it now- whatever the theoretical and rhetorical gains.

Doggedly, however, I pursued those concepts, absorbed them and began to understand what they offered me. Like Phelps, as described by Emig with Phelps in, "Introduction: Context and Commitment," I too grew up in a household where the intelligence, capability, and ambition of women was never questioned (xiii). Both my paternal grandmother and one great-grandmother had college degrees from a prestigious women's college, the same one from which my sister and I would later graduate. My mother and my father, who came of age in the explosive 1970s, spoke to my sister and me about women's issues and women's rights when the situation called. They both nurtured my love of reading, and in doing so immersed me in a world of amazing women. So, in a sense, I had strip away layer after layer of hard earned experience as a woman in this world, and return to a time when being feminine and articulate and powerful seemed a given in order to work with this idea of feminine principles effectively and sincerely. I recall Phelps's words that principles are things that are worked for, not bestowed. The connotations that matter are the ones I evoke. I offer now three perspectives on this project, rooted in my feminine heros of childhood: Ma Ingalls, Marilla Cuthbert, and Governor Ann Richards.

"Pretty is as pretty does" -Ma Ingalls in The Little House on the Prairie book series

Vanity need not be considered a feminine principle. Ma Ingalls was a plain spoken, hard working, highly sentimentalized frontier woman who never shied away from a day's work. While to her daughter Laura's eyes she was a symbol of grace and femininity, the palpable presence of her work ethic and pragmatism permeated their interactions. Whenever Laura lamented her "plain" physical features, Ma frequently reminded her, "pretty is as pretty does."

I have been known to squeal over "pretty" document design; aesthetically effective form and structure gives me pleasure. But my purpose here has never been to raise up glitz, glamor, or the cutting edge of design above substance and rhetorical functionality. The document design of teaching materials should first and foremost address the needs of the activity system effectively and appropriately. Pretty is a pleasing thing, but the functionality of teaching materials, both for teacher and student, is paramount.

"You'll hardly fail completely in one day, and there's plenty more days coming." -Marilla Cuthbert in Anne of Avonlea

Neither does frailty naturally align with the feminine. Marilla Cuthbert, guardian of Anne Shirley, in the *Anne of Green Gables* series, is another plain spoken, hard working woman, though less sentimental and given a far more interesting narrative arc of growth and change than Ma. Marilla is reacting to horrified tales of Anne's first days as a teacher at the local school with her characteristic aplomb. Anne, struggling to get her students onboard with the pedagogical agenda, despairs that anything is possible in this classroom, at this moment. But Marilla assures her that there is plenty of failure to go around, no need to worry about it all at once.

What I learn here is that failure is not a reason not to try. Yes, a project like re-imagining the materiality of teaching materials, programmatically, institutionally, and across levels may seem daunting. But change is coming, the materiality is shifting in both subtle and obvious ways. Paying attention, taking risks, and standing up and taking on the job are all principles of perseverance. The design of teaching materials affects classroom activity systems, so we need to figure out how to deal with it.

"After all, Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did. She just did it backwards and in high heels.[19]*"*

-Governor Ann Richards, Keynote Address at the 1988 Democratic National Convention

And, finally, I break with the model of the first two literary examples, to tell the story of an eight-year old girl curled up on an orange, floral 1970s couch, next to her mother, having a feminist awakening. While my mother had certainly spoken with me directly about women's rights before, I do not know that I had truly understood before this moment that the observations she and I were making about the sexes was a conversation beyond our household. And as I watched Ann Richard's speak, the jabs at George H.W. Bush flying completely over my head, I was mesmerized by the sheer force of her delivery. I was already feeling a kinship with her when she delivered the quoted line... and I was staggered. Someone had articulated that contradiction I felt at eight when interacting with the outside world- I would be both under-appreciated and overworked compared to a male peer.

[19] This line is often misattributed as being originally Richards's, but it first appears in a comic strip, *Frank and Earnest*, in 1982, drawn by Bob Thaves.

It is difficult to ask writing teachers, predominantly under-compensated women, to take up more by asking them to engage in the project of re-visualizing how they design and deliver teaching materials. And yet I must because, "the alternatives [are] worse" (Phelps 313). The occluded, neutral nature of teaching materials, such as syllabi and assignment sheets, may very well be connected to the somewhat subordinate position we, as a field, seem to put our pedagogical writings into, when compared to the work of professional writers or even our own writing for academic venues like peer-reviewed journals and professional organization conferences. Going forward, I plan to continue to advocate for a more deliberate approach to the document design of teaching materials. I plan to continue to advocate for professional writing driven investigations into the work that writing teachers do.

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APPENDIX A

FIRST AND SECOND STUDENT SURVEYS

Introduction Script for Both Surveys

Hi, my name is Erin Duffy Pastore, thank you for allowing me to come to your class today. I am working on a project focused on how the document design of writing class syllabi and assignment sheets contributes to your ability to successfully complete the major writing assignments for this course. I am hoping you can help me by completing the following anonymous survey. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose not to participate in the study at all or you can skip any question that you do not feel comfortable with. However, I do hope you will help me by answering as truthfully and completely as you can. Because the survey is anonymous, please do not put your name or other identifiers on the survey.

This survey is being distributed on paper and will be collected directly by me, and I will be the only person viewing it directly. Because this survey is not intended to interfere with the semester's work, your instructor will be not be reviewing individual answers, and will only receive general feedback on the whole class survey responses after grades are posted at the conclusion of the semester. Thank you for your participation.

First Student Survey

I. Rank Your Response

Directions: Please circle the number that best describes your experiences working with the syllabi and assignment sheets for this course, using "0" as "does not describe my thoughts at all" through "5" as "describes my thoughts very well;"

you may designate any statement as n/a (not applicable) if you have no opinion on the statement.

1. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and I am confident that, after an initial close reading, I can/ could locate all information relevant to my writing assignments by scanning through the document.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because the margin, font, and line spacing (single, double, etc.) choices appear professional and/ or appropriate for the syllabus and assignment sheets.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because they use clear and consistently formatted headings to organize information into recognizable groups.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because the visual formatting within sections appears logical, such that paragraphs, bulleted lists, numbered lists, tables, images etc. are used to show how the information within sections relates to the coursework.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

5. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because they look "typical," "normal," and/ or resemble other syllabi and assignment sheets I have seen before.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

II. Open Response

Directions: Please answer with as much detail as you wish.

6. How many university semesters have you attended? How many writing courses have you taken in this time at this university or another post-secondary institution (other university, college, community college, online institution, etc.)?
7. How would you describe the "look" syllabus and/ or assignment sheets to another student in a different writing class?
8. What is particularly interesting or effective about the "look" of these documents for explaining the work you need to do to earn your grade in this course?
9. Is there anything particularly confusing or discomforting about the "look" of these documents?
10. Based on the "look" of the syllabus and assignment sheets, what are your expectations (of any kind) for the coursework to be completed? Why?
11. Based on the "look" of the syllabus and assignment sheets, what are your expectations (of any kind) for the instructor's presentation and/ or teaching style? Why?

Second Student Survey

I. Rank Your Response

Directions: Please circle the number that best describes your experiences working with the syllabi and assignment sheets for this course, using "0" as "does not describe my thoughts at all" through "5" as "describes my thoughts very well;" you may designate any statement as n/a (not applicable) if you have no opinion on the statement.

1. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and I am confident that they have and will help me successfully complete all of the work for this course.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because the margin, font, and line spacing (single, double, etc.) choices appear professional and/ or appropriate for the syllabus and assignment sheets.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

3. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because they use clear and consistently formatted headings to organize information into recognizable groups.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

4. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because the visual formatting within sections appears logical, such that paragraphs, bulleted lists, numbered lists, tables, images etc. are used to show how the information within sections relates to the coursework.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

5. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because they look "typical," "normal," and/ or resemble other syllabi and assignment sheets I have seen before.

   n/a 0 1 2 3 4 5

II. Open Response

Directions: Please answer with as much detail as you wish-- use the back of this paper for extended answers.

6. Do you believe that the "look" of course documents (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) helps you to complete the work in any writing based courses? How?
7. What is an example of how the "look" of one or more course documents (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) helped you complete work for this writing course?
8. Which document/s (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) from this course are particularly helpful or unhelpful in their "look"? Why?
9. Do you believe that Blackboard helps organize the course documents and helps you in completing the work in any writing based courses? How?
10. Describe how easy or hard it is to locate a course document you need in this course's Blackboard site.
11. As a writing student, do you believe what a course document looks like affects how well you are able to do the work of the course? Why?
12. Any further comments you would like to add- either about this writing course or others- about how the "look" of course documents or Blackboard affects how you completed the work for the course?

APPENDIX B

SARAH'S TEACHING MATERIALS & STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Sarah's Teaching Materials

ENGL [redacted]W—Advanced Composition
Spring 20[redacted]

"In many ways writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying listen to me, see it my way, change your mind."
Joan Didion

Instructor: [redacted]
Office: [redacted] **Office Hours:** T/R 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and by appointment
Contact information: [redacted] **Phone:** [redacted]

Course Description and Objectives:
Effective writing is a powerful tool in academic, professional, and personal situations. Writing can be used to explain, to request, to persuade, and to bring about change. The physical act of writing can be used as a way to figure out what you think and develop what you want to say. The goal of this class is to introduce writers to strategies that will enhance critical thinking and enable the creation of more effective documents in a variety of situations outside the classroom. The focus of the class will be on Service Learning as a strategy in education; a variety of research and writing projects will address this topic.

This class will function as a collaborative writing workshop and will include discussions, workshop groups, in-class writing, and writing conferences. Writers will build on existing writing skills by:

- Developing rhetorical awareness through identification of audience, purpose, and genre for a particular writing assignment,
- Honing critical thinking skills,
- Enhancing writing style (tone, diction, voice) and adjusting for a specific rhetorical situation,
- Learning to evaluate their own texts and the texts of other writers for effectiveness, and
- Enhancing revision and editing skills (grammar, mechanics, and citation).

Major Deadlines (subject to change)

Practice Exit Exam	In class Jan. 20	ungraded
Summaries (2 assignments)		Pass/Fail
Annotated Bibliography	**Due: Feb. 1**	**100 points**
Research essay draft	Due: Feb. 8	P/F
Evaluation of classmates' research essays	Due. Feb. 10	P/F
Research essay revision	**Due: Feb. 15**	**100 points**
Commentary draft	Due: March 17	P/F
Evaluations of classmates' commentaries	Due March 22	P/F
Commentary revision	**Due: March 24**	**100 points**
Lesson Plan draft / revision	**Due: April 12 / April 14**	**100 points**
Mini-grant proposal	**Due: April 21**	**50 points**
Portfolio and final essay	**TBA**	**100 points**
Various writing and homework assignments	Due as assigned	

ENGL 327W - 1

Deadlines are important: All assignments must be submitted **before the beginning of class on the date they are due.** Assignments that are turned in late will be reduced a full letter grade per day late unless previous arrangements have been made. **If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to turn in all work on time and to ask a classmate for the assignments that are due for the next class period so that you can complete them on time.**

Revisions: The value of revision will be emphasized in this class. For each major assignment, you will be required to submit a draft for discussion with your workshop group and prepare written evaluations of your classmates' drafts. *Failure to submit drafts, write evaluations, or participate in workshops will result in a letter grade reduction in your grade for the final revision of the essay.*

NOTE: Always have available in class an electronic version of the essay or writing assignment you are working on so that we can do in-class editing activities on it.

Conferences: We will have two scheduled conference during the semester. In addition, I am available to meet with you as often as necessary to assist you in achieving your goals for the class. You may stop by during my office hours or schedule a conference with me at your convenience. We also can conference electronically or by phone.

Writing Tutorial Service: Graduate students from the English Department are available to read your essay and provide helpful feedback. This can be done in person or on-line. In [redacted], e-mail [redacted]; in [redacted], call [redacted]; or go to http://[redacted]for more information. If the writing you submit needs additional attention, you may be required to visit WTS prior to resubmission.

Evaluation criteria: What is effective writing? Your assignments will be evaluated on the following:

1. Focus: clarity and communication of thesis, main ideas and purpose, limitation of topic, and use of relevant material.
2. Organization: an arrangement of sentences and paragraphs that reflects planning and the purpose of the assignment.
3. Development: effective support and elaboration of thesis and main ideas by use of definition, illustration, specific references, comparisons, examples, and concrete details.
4. Perspective: ability to develop thoughtful and complex ideas and connections. Ability to add a fresh perspective to the dialogue on the topic.
5. Rhetorical awareness: effectiveness of the essay for the specific situation and audience.
6. Style: control and variety of sentences; appropriate and lyrical use of words and phrases.
7. Mechanics: grammar, spelling, punctuation, citation, and other boring but essential stuff.

Grading Scale

94% – 100% = A	87% – 89% = B+	77% – 79% = C+	67% – 69% = D+
90% – 93% = A-	83% – 86% = B	73% – 76% = C	63% – 66% = D
	80% – 82% = B-	70% – 72% = C-	60% – 62% = D-

Attendance: For a writing community to function, everyone must come to class every day having completed the reading and writing assignments. Please be on time and remain for the entire class. Missing more than three classes will negatively affect your final grade (4 absences = 1/3 letter grade reduction; 5 absences = 2/3 letter grade reduction; 6 absences = 1 letter grade reduction). Missing more than 25% of the class periods (more than 6 classes) may result in failure of the course. If you encounter problems that result in unavoidable absences, you may want to contact Student Affairs: [redacted].

Communication: **CHECK YOUR [redacted] E-MAIL DAILY.** We will use Blackboard for announcements, assignment sheets, documents, grades, e-mail, etc. Go to [redacted] > Current Students. For help with technical difficulties, contact Customer Service at [redacted].

Honor System: Each student is expected to abide by the [redacted] Honor Code. You are responsible for obtaining a copy of the Student Handbook and informing yourself about student conduct regulations. You may visit the Honor Council office in [redacted] or check the [redacted] website.

Plagiarism: Writers who use the words or ideas of others are obligated to give credit through proper acknowledgment and documentation. Failure to give credit is plagiarism, a violation of the [redacted] Honor Code that can lead to expulsion from the University. If the quality of your in-class and out-of-class writing varies dramatically, you may be asked to write under supervision. **If you need help with citation of research materials, please schedule a conference with me or Writing Tutorial Service.**

Special Needs: Reasonable accommodations can be provided for students with disabilities. If you need accommodations for this class, please contact me as soon as possible.

Due before class on Jan. 13	Read "Writing a Summary" and "Build a Bridge" on Blackboard / Assignments; post a summary of "Build a Bridge" with an MLA or APA citation on Bbd / Assignments. Bring to class a copy of the Service Learning Project Sheet from Bbd / Assignments.
Due before class on Jan. 18	Summarize two additional journal articles that you find on the subject of Service Learning; post on Blackboard / Assignments.
Due before class on Jan. 20	Review Exit Exam website.
Due Jan. 25	Read "Pursuing Franklin's Dream" on Bbd / Course Documents and be prepared to discuss. Continue research on Service Learning.
Due Jan. 27	Find an additional article on Service Learning (not the ones you summarized) and be prepared to present its main ideas to the class.
Due Feb. 1	**Annotated Bibliography due**; post on Bbd / Assignments.
Feb. 3	Writing day; class cancelled.
Due Feb. 8	Research Paper draft due (at least three pages); post on Bbd / Assignments and bring four copies to class. Also bring an electronic copy for in-class editing.
Due Feb. 10	Write evaluations of your classmates' drafts; post on Bbd / Assignments and bring a copy for the writer. Have an electronic copy of your essay available for in-class editing.

Due March 3	TBA
March 7-12	Spring Break

Check Blackboard / Assignments for future homework assignments.

ENGL 327 Advanced Composition
Service Learning Project – Spring 2011

Service Learning projects link community needs with classroom programs to foster student learning, encourage civic involvement, and strengthen communities; the ultimate goal is for students to learn while contributing to the betterment of their community. Our service learning project this semester will support the efforts of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission's new HR Green program; ultimately, we will submit for the organization's website a collection of environmentally focused service learning lesson plans to be shared with elementary or secondary school teachers.

By consolidating the efforts of many community groups, programs, and agencies, HR Green seeks to enhance environmental stewardship in the Hampton Roads area by:

- Fostering proper disposal of fats, oils, and grease
- Preventing and controlling litter
- Encouraging recycling, reuse, and reduction
- Enhancing community beautification
- Enhancing stormwater quality
- Encouraging wise water use

Our service learning project has a number of objectives: to increase our understanding of how service learning projects can be used in educational settings, to enhance our knowledge of environmental stewardship, to contribute to HR Green's efforts, to enhance our critical thinking and evaluation skills, and to improve our writing skills by researching and developing various written documents targeted to specific audiences.

The project will include research on service learning as an educational tool, research on environmental protection and stewardship, research on HR Green and its affiliate programs, and research on Standards of Learning for targeted grade levels. These research activities will assist students in production of the following:

- An annotated bibliography of service learning articles (see below)
- A research paper on service learning (see below)
- An environmental stewardship lesson plan that addresses Virginia Standards of Learning*
- A commentary on service learning, HR Green, or environmental stewardship for *The Virginian-Pilot* or *Education Week* (www.edweek.org)*
- A mini-grant proposal for funding for a service learning project *
- Oral and written evaluations of colleagues' research papers, lesson plans, and commentaries

  * Refer to separate assignment sheet

Preliminary Resources:

- HR Green website (under construction) -- http://www.cahoonandcross.com/hrpdc/
- Local environmental programs -- http://www.cahoonandcross.com/hrpdc/website.html
- Instructional Resources -- http://www.doe.virginia.gov/
- ODU Library -- www.odu.edu / Libraries / Find a Database - Academic Search Complete, ERIC, or Education Research Complete

Annotated Bibliography -- Service Learning
Due: Feb. 1; post on Bbd / Assignments

Compile an annotated bibliography of at least five articles from peer-reviewed journals on the topic of service learning. (Do not use "Build a Bridge.") Use the three-paragraph format below for each source. The title of this document should be Annotated Bibliography, and the entries should be alphabetized by the authors' last names.

Begin with a citation for each source using either MLA or APA citation guidelines. Use the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University as a source for new MLA and APA guidelines: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/. Beware: Microsoft Word does not always format entries correctly. Then write a summary paragraph beginning with the title of the article, the author's name, and the publication information, and restating via paraphrase and quotation the author's main thesis and ideas. Do not include your opinion of the article. A summary should reflect only the ideas expressed in the source. In a second paragraph, establish the credibility of your source. In other words, write a justification of why you think this is a source that your audience for the research paper (teachers and future teachers) will believe to be authoritative or credible. In a third paragraph, reflect on how this article enhances your understanding of various points of view or aspects of the topic.

Example using MLA citation:

Kelly, John. "Service Learning: Community Service on Steroids." *Education Theory and Practice* 6.6 (2010): 595-600. Web. 1 Jan. 2011.

In an article titled "Service Learning: Community Service on Steroids" published in *Education Theory and Practice*, Dr. John Kelly attempts to convince readers that the benefits of service learning projects outweigh the disadvantages. He argues that teachers who implement service learning "not only help their students learn but also contribute to their own professional development" (587). He recognizes that service learning projects take time to develop and are often underfunded; however, he maintains that the increased learning and exposure to community needs benefits everyone involved. ~~I think he is wrong because if school boards believe in service learning projects, they need to provide funding for them.~~

Dr. John Kelly holds a doctorate in educational development from Harvard University and has published many articles on this topic. This article appeared in a national journal for the Society of American Educators, which is peer- reviewed and widely accepted as a valid source among

educational researchers. In addition to having impressive credentials, Kelly cites several authorities on educational theory and cognitive development.

Before reading this article, I thought service learning was just a way for communities to get free labor for fixing community problems and for teachers to get out of teaching boring lessons in the classroom. Now I can see that service learning projects could be productive for students with diverse learning styles, especially those who learn best through active projects. I was especially impressed with his case study on urban gardening; the project taught a number of important lessons about environmental stewardship and introduced students to the environmental benefits of eating locally grown food.

Research Paper

Draft Due: Feb. 8; minimum three pages; post on Bbd / Assignments and bring four copies to class; also bring an electronic copy to class for in-class editing.
Evaluations of classmates' drafts due: Feb. 10; post on Bbd / Assignments and bring a copy to class for the writer. Have an electronic copy of your essay available for in-class activity.
Revision Due: Feb. 15; post on Bbd / Assignments; also bring an electronic copy for in-class activity.

Write a five- to seven-page persuasive paper on the topic of Service Learning. Consider your audience to be your classmates as well as new and prospective teachers who have not yet learned about Service Learning as a tool for education. Your essay should incorporate at least five sources from peer-reviewed journals (those on your annotated bibliography or others you have found since).

For example, based on what you learn from your research, your argument could be that service learning projects are an excellent way for new teachers to tap into funding sources that can help them equip their classrooms with resources that can be used on the service learning project as well as for future purposes. Or you might argue that by collaborating with another teacher, the time commitment to develop and implement a service learning project can be significantly reduced. It is up to you to determine the argument you want to make and the kinds of evidence that will be needed to support your claim (thesis) and convince your audience. Remember to consider all three parts of the rhetorical triangle as you develop your ideas (logos, pathos, and ethos). Your ultimate goal is not simply to reiterate what has already been said about Service Learning; it is to contribute a new idea to the ongoing discussion on this topic.

Sources must be cited using MLA or APA citation guidelines (See OWL at Purdue: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/).

Your essay will be evaluated on the effectiveness of your argument, including the strength of your claim (thesis) and supporting evidence; your consideration of your audience's needs and concerns; and your control of grammar, mechanics, and citation. Expressiveness and style will also be considered.

ENGL 327 Spring 2011

Commentary on Service Learning / Environmental Stewardship (100 points)

Deadlines:
Draft Due: March 17
Revision Due: March 24
Final, post-conference Revision Due: April 5

Purpose: To develop an argument that uses the three elements of the rhetorical triangle (logos, pathos, and ethos) to persuade a specific audience to consider your point of view.

Description: Using your knowledge of service learning and environmental stewardship, write a commentary (also called an opinion-editorial essay or guest editorial) of approximately 700 words for *The Virginian-Pilot* or 700-1,200 words for *Education Week* that deals with a timely aspect of this topic

Audience: *The Virginian-Pilot* or *Education Week*

Process: Begin by studying the content of current and previous editions of the publication of your choice to determine the editorial focus and assess the needs, values, and concerns of the audience. Then, read Kranzley's article on writing opinion-editorials (Bbd / Assignments / Commentary).

Now you're ready to write an essay in which you develop an argument relative to the topic. Your essay should include a compelling claim (thesis) and valid supporting evidence from your reading and research on the topic.

For example, for *The Virginian-Pilot*, you could argue that families would benefit from participating in environmental stewardship activities such as Earth Day. For *Education Week*, you might argue that teachers should learn more about the benefits of implementing a service learning project. Of course, you can't use these ideas; you have to come up with your own idea.

Cite all sources according to the requirements of the publication in question. For example, *The Virginian-Pilot* gives credit to sources in-text, but does not include a works cited page.

Resources:
For *The Virginian-Pilot* – pilotonline.com or pick up daily copies in the VBHEC atrium.
For *Education Week* – http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html?intc=thed and
http://www.edweek.org/info/about/submit-commentary.html?intc=thed

Criteria for Evaluation: Your commentary will be evaluated on the effectiveness of your argument, including the strength of your claim (thesis) and supporting evidence; your consideration of the audience's needs, values, and concerns; your establishment of your credibility as a writer on this topic; your control of grammar and mechanics; and expressiveness and style.

Student Survey Results

First Survey: Likert Scale

In the first survey, students were presented with the following series of statements to rank using a Likert scale that included a "Not Applicable" (N/A) option, along with numbers from zero to five:

1. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and I am confident that, after an initial close reading, I can/ could locate all information relevant to my writing assignments by scanning through the document.
2. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because the margin, font, and line spacing (single, double, etc.) choices appear professional and/ or appropriate for the syllabus and assignment sheets.
3. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because they use clear and consistently formatted headings to organize information into recognizable groups.
4. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because the visual formatting within sections appears logical, such that paragraphs, bulleted lists, numbered lists, tables, images etc. are used to show how the information within sections relates to the coursework.
5. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because they look "typical," "normal," and/ or resemble other syllabi and assignment sheets I have seen before

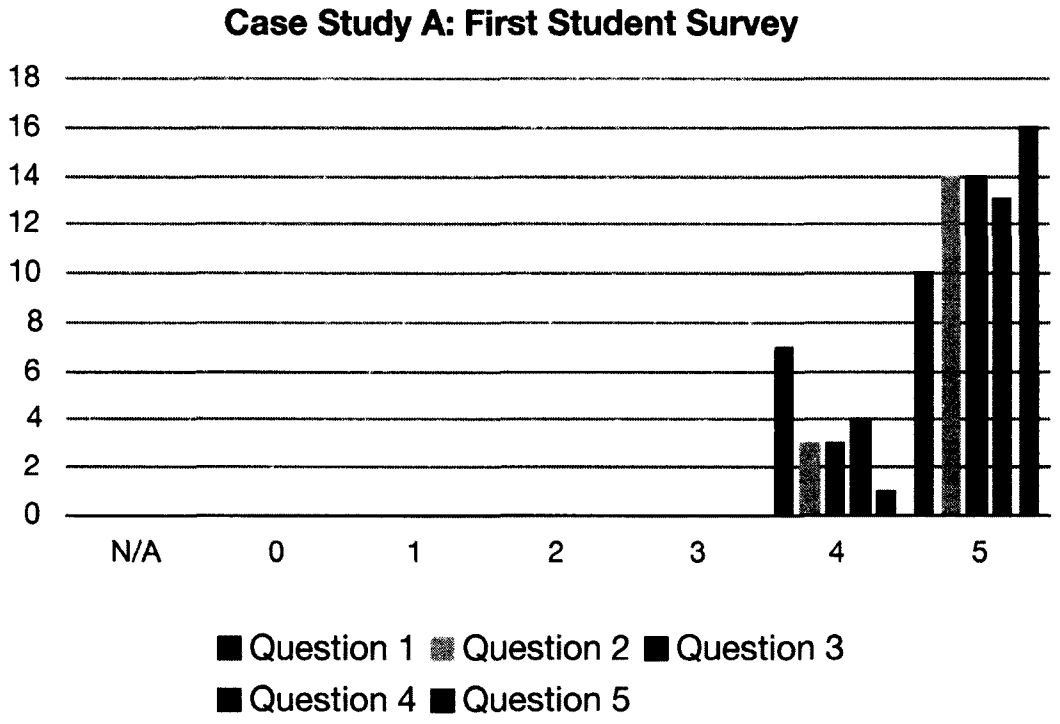


Figure B.1 Bar Graph of First Survey Responses

4.6	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.9

Table B.1 Average Answer by Question for First Survey Responses

First Survey: Open Response

Students were asked six questions on the second part of the survey; each question was followed by a blank space for students write in as much or as little as they wanted. The directions suggested using the back of the paper if needed, though no student answer required this. Typically responses were written in phrases, though a few students had one or two complete sentences. Each

question will be presented below, followed by a short summation of the responses for each.

6. How many university semesters have you attended? How many writing courses have you taken in this time at this university or another post-secondary institution (other university, college, community college, online institution, etc.)?

All seventeen students responded to this question. On average, the students had attended five and half semesters of university prior to this class meeting, and completed two and half writing courses. This would make the average student a junior undergraduate and matches the prerequisite that students have completed both required composition courses prior to enrolling in Advanced Composition. It is notable that one respondent made a note the s/he was pursuing hir degree part time, while another divided up hir semesters into community college and university semesters. Three more respondents listed having one or two "ODU" semesters, rather than responding to the question with a holistic answer. One of these respondents listed having completed three writing courses "at TCC," indicating that s/he has attended more than two semesters at the post-secondary level. Two respondents also showed hesitation when enumerating their writing courses by qualifying the answers with an "approx." and "can't remember all" notations.

7. How would you describe the "look" syllabus and/ or assignment sheets to another student in a different writing class?

Fifteen students responded to this question. Common adjectives used were: clean, organized, typical, easy to follow, and simple. There were three particularly interesting answers. The first, "Information presented is brief,

providing a feeling the syllabus is not overwhelming," echos a specific goal that Sarah had articulated to keep things as clear as possible she had typically tried to minimize how much information needed to be on each document. The second, "A road map to the course starting with what the course is and instructor to the last day of class," references a metaphor frequently used in the interviews to describe how the documents should function for the class. And the third, "The guidelines are easy to follow, just make sure not to miss bolds, italics..." highlights a central problem in document design- design choices may be clean and easy to follow, but students must ultimately recognize and use them.

8. What is particularly interesting or effective about the "look" of these documents for explaining the work you need to do to earn your grade in this course?

Fourteen students responded to this question. Five respondents specifically noted the clarity of deadlines, while six more students referenced the table structure for assignments, use of headers and the overall organization. In discussing due dates, one student made a point of saying the layout of the due dates "keeps me organized," and a second one stated, "how straight forward [it is,] if you follow the syllabus you'll pass the class." Another student referenced the previous question by answering, "It looks just like any other syllabus I've had in any other class." These answers reinforce the importance students place on due dates and clear directions for completing coursework.

9. Is there anything particularly confusing or discomforting about the "look" of these documents?

Seventeen students responded to this question; of that twelve students responded with simply, "No," and one additional student responded with,

"Nothing." Two respondents mentioned particular details of clarity around dates: "the date span with no specific day & time," and, "I wish that they said whether Jan. 18 was a Tues or Thur." Two other respondents interpreted the question to be about syllabi in general and not this particular syllabus. One student raised the concern that, "Often, syllabi present too much information, bringing down 'morale/ enthusiasm/ energy' of teacher and student." Another pointed out that it, "depends on the teacher some teachers do not follow their own syllabus causing students to not know exactly when things are due." The first answer once again reinforces the idea that too much information can have drawbacks for interpreting course documents. The second answer illustrates an important aspect of "the syllabus as contract," idea by pointing out that if all parties do not honor the contract there will be inevitable problems for students trying to complete the coursework.

10. Based on the "look" of the syllabus and assignment sheets, what are your expectations *(of any kind)* for the coursework to be completed? Why?

Fourteen students responded to this question. Four respondents made specific mention that because the syllabus was "well organized," and, "clear," that meant they were expected to deliver work of the same type and caliber. Three respondents wrote that they expected the course to be "a lot" of work with many assignments based on the assignments chart, and a fourth student stated, "It seemed overwhelming at first because this is my first semester as a full time student in a very long time." Three respondents referenced expectations that both they and the instructor will use the syllabus as a way of managing their time, because, "Everything is laid out and explained in the syllabus. I will not be expecting any surprises as I go through the course." Finally one student cited

professional expectations that the course will be, "Challenging and rewarding. These all seem like very interesting projects that can be applied to my field of study and future job." Overall, these answers closely relate to the expectations Sarah presumed students would have of her syllabus and writing course content.

11. Based on the "look" of the syllabus and assignment sheets, what are your expectations *(of any kind)* for the instructor's presentation and/ or teaching style? Why?

Fifteen students responded to this question. Eight respondents made a direct correlation between the organization and clarity they perceived in her syllabus with an expectation that her teaching style will be clear and professional; one student stated, "She is organized and professional. She articulates herself as well on paper as she does in person." A ninth respondent alluded to the syllabus as contract metaphor, "I believe that Prof. A---- will adhere to the dates listed and uphold what she has in her syllabus." Three students referenced an expectation that deadlines will be strictly enforced, two of which used "demanding" as an adjective, as in, "demanding, but in a good way," and, "helpful but very demanding." A fourth student made a similar comment, but highlighted a particular contrast seen, "The instructor appears to be relaxed and easy going after first meeting, but at first glance of the syllabus the instructor appears rigid." Overall five respondents referenced that they believed that Sarah wanted them to succeed, with one student who had already taken a class with her before stating, "I've had her before, she's great! She expects things in time and good content. She gives you all the tools you need to be set up for success." These final answers continue to affirm that the values Sarah expects she is communicating to her students are, in fact, the ones they are taking away.

Second Survey: Likert Scale

In the second survey, students were again presented a series of statements to rank using a Likert scale that included a "Not Applicable" (N/A) option, along with numbers from zero to five. These questions, listed below, were almost identical to the first set, with only the addition of the phrase, "and help me complete my assignments," to reflect the time shift from anticipating the coursework, to being almost finished with the coursework.

1. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and I am confident that they have and will help me successfully complete all of the work for this course.
2. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because the margin, font, and line spacing (single, double, etc.) choices appear professional and/ or appropriate for the syllabus and assignment sheets.
3. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because they use clear and consistently formatted headings to organize information into recognizable groups.
4. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because the visual formatting within sections appears logical, such that paragraphs, bulleted lists, numbered lists, tables, images etc. are used to show how the information within sections relates to the coursework.
5. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because they look "typical," "normal," and/ or resemble other syllabi and assignment sheets I have seen before.

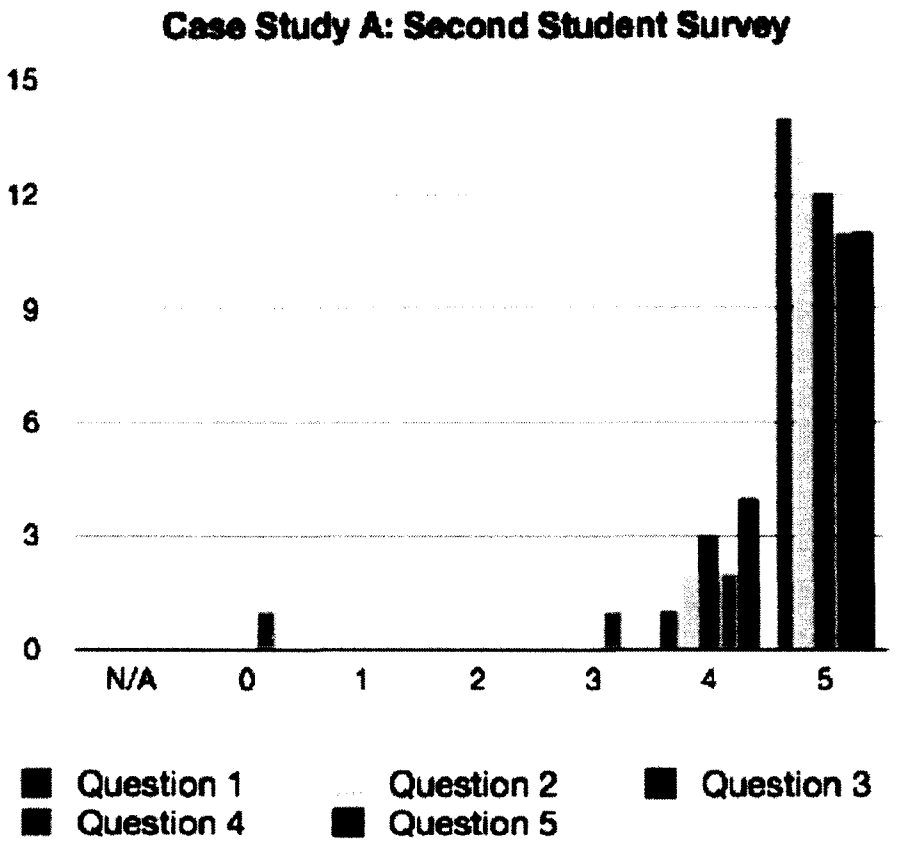


Figure B.2 Bar Graph of Second Survey Responses

4.9	4.9	4.8	4.4	4.7

Table B.2 Average Answer by Question for Second Survey Responses

All fifteen students present the day the survey was distributed filled one out, and it should be noted that out of the fifteen surveys, ten surveys ranked all items with a "5." The averages are once again very high, though Question 4 is the only average that dips, just barely, below a 4.5. Despite the limitations with the Likert items mentioned previously, the same items were used again to maintain

consistency within the study. On the whole, the average answers stayed the same from the beginning to the end of semester. There are two interesting variations in the contrast between the two rounds of surveys. The first question, focused on how the documents holistically will aid the completion of course work, shows a jump from a 4.6 to a 4.9 which clearly indicates a positive change from anticipating how the documents will work to feeling confident that documents functioned well. Conversely, Question 4, focused on how logically formatted the information is with paragraphs, lists, tables, etc., took the greatest dip in comparison, from a 4.8 to a 4.4, indicating that there were some challenges presented in interpreting how the information was intended to be applied.

Second Survey: Open Response

Students were asked seven questions on the second part of the survey; again each question was followed by a blank space for students write in as much or as little as they wanted. As with the prior survey, responses were generally written in phrases with a few responses written in one or two complete sentences. Each question will be presented below, followed by a short summation of the responses for each.

6. Do you believe that the "look" of course documents (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) helps you to complete the work in any writing based courses? How?

Twelve students responded to this question. Of these, ten began their answer with a "yes," and the remaining two answers were positively phrased: "clear and precise," and, "A clean, organized syllabus is effective. Much like an index: you can find broad topic (heading) in bold and related topics (heading info) underneath, not in bold. This format allowed for quick finding of what I

needed." The index metaphor used by the student matches the index metaphor that Sarah used when describing how she wants her syllabus to function. Because this is a class filled with Education students, it is possible that Sarah has used this metaphor in class to describe how course documents should function. Regardless, it is still interesting that this response so closely echoes Sarah's words. Further, three responses made specific reference to needing "easy" to read documents and four more believed that how "organized" the documents were made an important difference in completing writing assignments.

7. What is an example of how the "look" of one or more course documents (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) helped you complete work for this writing course?

Eight students responded to this question. The answers to this question were brief and vague which may indicate that either students did not understand the question's intention or did not see it as particularly important or interesting. Generally, the respondents felt the documents were well organized with important deadlines appropriately highlighted, and headings and sections were logical.

8. Which document/s (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) from this course are particularly helpful or unhelpful in their "look"? Why?

Thirteen students responded to this question. This question is a weak question because it asks students to respond on both the helpfulness and unhelpfulness of the documents within the same answer leading to vague answers. Nine answers were positively phrased, once again reiterating the high level of organization and clarity of due dates. One respondent identified having a separate assignment sheet for each assignment as particularly helpful, and

another particularly mentioned, "[all the assignment sheets] were similar looking," as a positive. Two responses were ambiguous, "the use of Blackboard," and "class readings and websites." Two responses seem to address unhelpful aspects such as, "unhelpful, assignment sheet on blackboard" and "PDF files, but thats technology for you." It is difficult to be sure what the particular technology problems the two negative respondents had, but it signals that the student encountered something unexpected while trying to access the information s/he needed to complete certain assignments.

9. Do you believe that Blackboard helps organize the course documents and helps you in completing the work in any writing based courses? How?

Thirteen students responded to this question. Eleven respondents answered affirmatively, with three answers just being, "yes." Many students particularly pointed to Blackboard as something that keeps them organized, "I frequently lose papers. It is extremely helpful to have Blackboard as a back-up reference;" and it is very portable, "I can access them from anywhere." Two respondents were more cautious about Blackboard. One student cited how the instructor uses Blackboard as being important, "If professor can maintain a well designed/ concise Blackboard, it is helpful. Some profs keep all links but will never use them." Students clearly are comfortable using Blackboard in general and feel it benefits them to have access to electronic copies of the course documents.

10. Describe how easy or hard it is to locate a course document you need in this course's Blackboard site.

Twelve students responded to this question. Eight respondents felt that it was easy to find documents, and offered little additional explanation beyond,

"Easy, log in to Bb and click either assignments or course documents," and "Easy. Use the headings." Of the remaining four responses, students gave more tempered answers, such as, "Sometimes. They can be tucked away," and, "Relatively easy is you're familiar with Backboard." These qualified statements could be a reflection of the course demographics wherein several students identified as returning students or transfer students from a nearby community college and may not have been as familiar with Blackboard in this context. This could also reflect Sarah's use of electronic submission on Blackboard, which many but not all other writing instructors use. As described in the documents section, an assignment that is designated for electronic submission has an additional page created within Blackboard that contains the due dates and some assignment related directions. These responses indicate that students who felt comfortable with Blackboard had no difficulty locating what they wanted, while those less familiar had to find their way around.

11. As a writing student, do you believe what a course document looks like affects how well you are able to do the work of the course? Why?

Twelve students responded to this question. Eight respondents answered positively, explaining again that organization is important and, "...because if it looks good then I will put more effort to make my document to just as nice." One of the positive respondents gave a limited answer saying that, "It is always easier when you know what is exactly expected of you. The look of the course documents helps." Of the four negative respondents, only two gave a rationale, "Its not the look, but if what is written is understood: clear directions/ questions to avoid student confusion," and, "No. Most writing is from student views." The first student explanation still considers the document itself important, but places

more of an emphasis on the quality of verbal design over visual, while the second student explanation is more student-centric, indicating that the document can only function as well as the student who uses it. On the whole, it students seemed to value course documents as important tools for completing their work and recognized how the design of these tools contributed to their effectiveness.

12. Any further comments you would like to add- either about this writing course or others- about how the "look" of course documents or Blackboard affects how you completed the work for the course?

Two students responded to this question. In both cases, the respondents used the space to praise the instructor: "The sessions that she schedules individually to go over questions specific to your paper. I've never had a teacher do that. Very Constructive!," and "great effective class wonderful teacher." While neither comment is particularly relevant to the research questions, they both highlight the significant amount of ethos Sarah had earned with many of the students.

APPENDIX C

EMMA'S TEACHING MATERIALS & STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Emma's Teaching Materials

Syllabus for ENGL [redacted]: Advanced Composition Spring [redacted]

Call Number: [redacted] **Days:** M/W **Time:** 4:20-5:35 **Room:** [redacted]

Instructor: [redacted], M.S. Ed **Office Hours:** By appointment

Phone: [redacted] **E-mail:** [redacted]

Prerequisites: Writing Sample Placement Test and English 110C.

Course Objectives:
Through careful analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information, students formulate adequate theses, moving beyond the scope of reporting information to composing papers that express their reasoned judgments on meaningful topics. Students strengthen their understanding of rhetorical situations and persuasive discourse by preparing a fully-documented research paper. They select their own topics, use a variety of investigative techniques, and survey a wide range of resources inside and outside the library (lectures, films, documentaries, police reports, interviews). Specifically, in English 211C, students will

(1) refine their writing processes;
(2) abstract and summarize the content of readings in a range of disciplines and analyze both their own texts and the texts of others based on rhetorical criteria (e.g., purpose, audience appeal, voice, style, arrangement);
(3) apply principles of argumentation, including uses of assumptions, claims, emotion and reason and to identify logical fallacies, biases, and propaganda;
(4) become familiar with personal, primary, and secondary sources used for support and learn to properly adapt, place, and document the sources they use;
(5) move from analysis to evaluation, judging texts for effectiveness and credibility;
(6) recognize differences between scholarly and popular treatments of ideas and begin to make careful selection of source materials.

Texts and Materials:

Bookstore:
Quick Access Reference by Troyka, 6th Ed (ISBN: 978-0205664818) – **this book will be used as a general guide for writing, MLA, and revising and editing symbols.**
Everything's an Argument by Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Waters (ISBN: 978-0-312-53861-3)
[redacted] Writing Folder for English 21 or one inch binder

1

Other Materials:
Student e-mail account
Flash Drive – at least 4 G
Binder with pockets
College level thesaurus and dictionary
Highlighters
Red and black pens

Assignments and Grades:

Major Essays and Assignments:

Issue Exploration	30 points
Issue Presentation	50 points
Definition Essay	100 points
Evaluation Essay	100 points
Writing Conference	50 points
Library Tutorials	20 points
Annotated Bibliography	50 points
Visual Argument Presentation	100 points
Research Paper Outline	50 points
Research Paper	200 points
Issue Connections paper/ Reflection essay (final exam)	100 points
Writing folders	300 points

Additional Assignments/Activities:

Out-of-class reading/preparation; informal writing assignments; group presentations; essay drafts; peer reviews; and other class activities will be part of your grade and vary in point value.

Essay Format and Procedures for Submission:

- ✓ Papers to be peer-reviewed and formal drafts of papers should be full-length, typed in double space with 1" margins, proofread, and printed on white paper with black ink. You must include your name, class, section number, date, title of the essay, and the delineation "draft" or "final" on all papers that are submitted. All essay revisions should be turned in by attaching the corrected copy to the original.

- ✓ Since [redacted]'s Computer Labs are accessible to all [redacted] students who present valid campus identification cards, no formal paper will be accepted that has not been typed, spell-checked and grammar-checked. All papers must follow correct MLA format. Submit assignments in a pocket folder with all previous drafts and notes attached. <u>For your own protection, keep photocopies of submitted work and keep word processed work saved on your flash drive</u>

attached. For your own protection, keep photocopies of submitted work and keep word processed work saved on your flash drive

- ✓ All papers must be submitted via hard copy unless otherwise directed by the instructor. If you are absent and want to email your paper, so I will note that it has been turned in on time, that is acceptable as long as you submit a hard copy of the paper on your first day back to class. Running out of ink on your printer, not having time to print the paper, etc. are not acceptable excuses for not having a hard copy and will negatively impact your grade. Please plan ahead to be sure you will have hard copies ready to be turned in on the due date.

Late Work and Make up Work:

- ✓ Students are expected to turn in all papers on time regardless of whether or not they attend class the day the paper is due. If you are not in class, papers should be emailed to me as either a Word document or in Rich Text Format to [redacted] I will send confirmation of receipt of your paper within 24 hours. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade a day until they are turned in. You are also responsible for obtaining any notes or missing assignments from a student in the class. Often what we complete in class will be part of your writing portfolios or prepare you for writing an essay. Any paper not ready for peer review or missing on peer review day will equal a zero for that day's in-class writing.

- ✓ All formal papers must be revised and re-written. You will receive between 20 and 30 points for essay drafts that will be based on turning your draft in on time, addressing the topic, and meeting the length requirements. Late drafts will be accepted so you get the feedback needed to complete the final paper but **no credit will be given for late drafts.**

- ✓ You will not receive a grade for the paper itself until you turn in the final copy. Revising papers is the best way to master the writing process and the focus of the assignment. Failure to turn in final copies of papers will result in late penalties or a zero if the paper is not turned in by the next week of class. Failure to complete major papers will affect your grade for your writing folder because all stages of paper writing must be included in the writing folder. If applicable, extenuating circumstances will be considered, but communication is key to resolving any issues.

Conferences:
The conference grade consists of two required conferences: one during the middle of the term and one at the end of the term when you turn in your writing folders. You are expected to schedule each conference (sign-up sheet provided in class) and then come to the conference prepared to discuss the focus areas.
Aside from emergency absences, missing a conference or failing to schedule or prepare for the conference will result in a zero.

Writing Center:
In addition to our class writing conferences, I strongly recommend an appointment with the writing center to help you with your essays. You should consider making an

appointment with them to discuss any essay we were unable to discuss in our conference. Your reward will be higher grades on the essays.

Writing Folders: These are available at the [redacted] bookstore. However, a one inch binder with an acceptable cover page may be substituted for this folder. In order to pass the class, you must submit a writing folder all polished essays (as delineated in the syllabus) and their revisions (number your revisions and be sure to use colorful fonts or pens to make your corrections) along with various other assignments noted in the folder checklist you will be given at the end of the semester. Make copies of any papers you submit should something happen to your folder. **Failure to hand in a major assignment as delineated in class constitutes failure in the course.**

Attendance: You must prepare for, attend, and participate in all scheduled class sessions and conferences. In-class assignments, group project participation, and peer reviews cannot be made up, so absences will affect your final grade. **According to English Department policy, you will receive an F if you miss 25 percent of scheduled class time.** In addition, please be on time to class. Late arrivals to class are disruptive and often negatively impact class activities.

Drop Policy: Please check the University catalog for the complete policy. You can withdraw from the class without my signature until 1/21; a "W" will appear on your transcript. After midterm, only extreme extenuating circumstances will allow you to drop the course.

Honor System:

You are responsible for obtaining a copy of the Student Handbook and informing yourself about student conduct regulations. You may visit the Honor Council office in [redacted]

Plagiarism:

Writers who use the words or ideas of others are obligated to give credit through proper acknowledgment and documentation. Failure to give credit is plagiarism, a violation of the [redacted] Honor Code that can lead to expulsion from the University. If the quality of your in-class and out-of class writing varies dramatically, I reserve the right to ask you to write under supervision. If you have questions about how and when to acknowledge sources, please refer to the *Quick Access* guide. You may also use an official MLA guide or any of the following websites: www.noodletools.com; http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/; or http://www.easybib.com/. Remember, Internet-based citation makers are often inaccurate, so you may use them to get an idea of how to format your sources but should still consult your textbook or an MLA guide to be sure your citation is accurate. If in doubt, ask me.

Original Essays:

Please be sure that all essays you produce for this class are written specifically for the class assignment given. Do not use and/or restyle essays that have been written for another class. Essays that are not generated specifically for the essay assigned will not be accepted.

Writing Tutorial Services:

Consider bringing drafts to the trained tutors at WTS, [redacted] 1002. This is a free service to [redacted] students. Appointments are required. You may contact WTS at 683-4013 [redacted]

Special Needs:

If you have special needs because of a documented disability, or if you have emergency medical information to share, please feel free to notify me so we may discuss the accommodation process.

Weekly Schedule:

All classes meet on Tuesdays from 7:10-9:50 in starting in BAL 3069 and will begin meeting in a computer lab (room to be announced) in mid-February. We will decide as a group whether we will skip a formal break and be dismissed at 9:30 instead.
The *Everything's an Argument* book is abbreviated as *EAA* and the *Quick Access* book is abbreviated as *QA*.

Week One – 1/10; 1/12: Introduction to the class, review of syllabus, getting to know each other, overview of textbook, ethos, pathos and logos. Discuss essay – "Issues Inspiring Passion" – brainstorming and taking a stance.

For Next Time: Unless otherwise stated in class, assignments due for next time are due on the first class day of the week. Complete three page essay – "Issues Inspiring Passion" – double spaced – be sure to examine ethos, pathos, and logos. In *EAA*, read Chapters 2, 3, 4 and In Part V – "Arguments" - choose one article and be ready to summarize it and discuss its use of ethos, pathos, and logos – opening activity for next week's class.

Week Two – 1/19 (no class on 1/17 – MLK Day): Essay - "Issues Inspiring Passion" – turn in. Article discussion in small groups and presentations. Discuss readings . Discuss definition essay. Sign up for issue presentation.

For Next Time: In *EAA*, read Chapters 5, 7, and 9. Read "Social Network Sites" – Boyd and Ellison pgs. 653-667. Bring in typed draft of definition essay.

Week Three – 1/24;1/26: First set of issue presentations. Discuss Chapters 5, 7, and 9 and the Boyd and Ellison essay. Work in groups to shape to revise and edit the definition essay.
For Next Time: Definition essays due. Prepare your issue presentation if it is your assigned day. In *EAA*, read Chapters 6, 8, and 10.

Week Four – 1/31 (no class on 2/2 – instructor at a writing conference): Turn in final copies of definition essays. Next set of issue presentations. Discussion of Chapters 6, 8, 10 and introduction to the evaluation essay.

For Next Time: Draft of evaluation essay to be turned in for revising and editing. In *EAA*, read chapters 19 and 20

Week Five – 2/7;2/9: Next set of issue presentations. Peer review and editing of evaluation essay. Discuss and review Chapters 19 and 20 – MLA format, etc.

For Next Time: Go to the following link and complete StarQuest tutorials Part I and II [redacted] Print out the results of your tutorials. You are graded on completing the tutorials by our next class, not on your score. You will need to log into the library to access the tutorial. Final copies of evaluation essays due. **Meet in the computer lab. Room number to be announced in class.**

Week Six – 2/14;2/16: Library session in the computer lab. Turn in your evaluation essay. Sign up for your writing conference. These will take place on 2/22 and 3/1.

For Next Time: Writing conferences to discuss first two essays and writing concerns in general.

Week Seven – 2/23 (no class on 2/21 – instructor out of town): Conferences about essays - location to be announced.

For Next Time: Read Chapters 13 in *EAA*. Writing conferences on 3/1 for those students who did not meet with me today.

Week Eight – 2/28 (no class on 3/2 – instructor in Norway): Conferences continue – shortened class. Review of Chapters 13 and completing an annotated bibliography.

For Next Time (class on 3/16): Complete your annotated bibliography and post your topic on the discussion board, so I can organize visual argument groups. Read Chapter 14 in *EAA*.

Spring Break – 3/8

Week Nine 3/16 (No class on 3/14 – instructor returning from Norway) – Turn in annotated bibliography. Issue presentations. Review guidelines for visual arguments and announce groups. Introduce research paper and review format for outlines.

For next time: Review Blackboard documents and QA guide for techniques on writing a research paper. Outlines for papers due.

Week Ten 3/21;3/23: Outlines due. Issue presentations. Review guidelines for research paper. Work on research paper planning guides.

For next time: Research paper planning guides due next time. Work on drafts of research paper – due on 4/5.

Week Eleven – 3/28; 3/30: Turn in planning guides for research papers. Issue presentations. Discuss visual argument. Begin work on visual arguments if time permits.

For next time: Draft of research paper for peer review due next time – should be at least 6 pages long. Work on visual arguments with your groups.

Week Twelve – 4/4;4/6: Finish any stray issue presentations. Peer review of research paper drafts. Work on visual arguments.

For next time: Continue work on visual arguments and research paper. Final copies of research paper in hard copy AND emailed by our next class.

Week Thirteen – 4/11 (no class on 4/13): Final day to work on visual arguments and revise research papers. All final copies of research papers turned in hard copy and emailed today.

For next time: Group visual presentations. Work on final essay and writing folder. Make any necessary revisions to the research paper.

Week Fourteen - 4/18;4/20 –Visual arguments presented today. Be sure you burn your presentation to a CD.

For next time: Meet with instructor on 5/3 between 6:30 and 8:30 to turn in final writing folders and papers

No class on 4/25 – work on writing folders and final essays

Week Fifteen – 5/2: Final writing conference – turn in your writing folders and final papers. Refer to the writing folder checklist to be sure your folder is complete.

Criteria for an Evaluation Essay

Evaluation Essay

Write a paper evaluating your issue. This is NOT a review. Rather, you will be evaluating your issue based on a set of criteria. Your paper should include:

- Introduction to your issue(you may look at your issue presentations and other papers you have prepared for this class to complete this part)
- Statement of judgment (approached in terms of value: good, bad, better than, worse than, of merit, worthless) - also known as your thesis statement. This is your assertion about the evaluation you have made about your issue.
- Statement of standard and accepted criteria on which this judgment is based - this should be the basis of each of your topic sentences.
- Two to three reasons with evidence in support of the judgment you made on your issue per paragraph or point. Your support should come in the form of sources.
- Statement of opposing side's position (opposite - you may want to use a source for this as well). Remember, that your defense is only as strong as your ability to discredit someone else's defense.
- A Works Cited page in MLA format for all sources that are parenthetically cited, and if applicable, a bibliography for any sources that were read and influenced you but were not cited specifically. You should have at least five sources for this paper.
- Conclusion.

Pay close attention to the details of your explanation. BE SPECIFIC! Remember, start with the specific and phase into the general or universal message of your topic.

This assignment will be evaluated on the following basis:

All points listed above discussed, strength of your argument, spelling, grammar and clarity. Rubric delineated all this will be provided.

Rubric for an Evaluation Essay

Name:_____

Assignment Criteria	Superior	Acceptable
Intro paragraph creates purpose and focus for the essay; offers insight into why essay will take the approach it does to the topic and evaluation. Thesis is clear and properly located.		
Criteria for evaluation are made clear throughout the essay and are valid criteria for such an evaluation.		
Discussion of each criteria is thorough and supported with relevant facts/examples.		
The body paragraphs work well together: the info is presented in a logical manner, develops the focus, & all relate specifically to thesis. Topic sentences should be specific details born from the thesis and the concluding sentence for each paragraph must tie into the thesis.		
Transitional devices eloquently connect body paragraphs and ideas within paragraphs to create a "flowing" effect. Think carefully about the order of your points.		
The conclusion of the essay ties all the evaluated criteria together in such a way that in clinches the writer's evaluation. You should also provide a universal message about your issue that resounds with the reader. A quote may work well here.		
The tone is appropriate for the subject and purpose of this essay and is consistent throughout. Writer is sincere and genuine, using personal belief and opinion constructively and effectively.		
The writer is critical but fair and evenhanded. The opposing viewpoint is mentioned and refuted.		
The writer seems competent to be doing such an evaluation. This is evaluated by the use of ethos pathos, and logs throughout born from sources found for the paper.		
The essay has variety of sentence structures and word choices, creating a strong style. Definitive choices have been made according to subject and purpose.		
The essay has been edited for punctuation, sentence fragments, comma splices, fused sentences, spelling, and usage errors. Remember the presentation of The Deadly Sins of Writing. I will be		

looking for you to avoid them.

The essay is in proper MLA form. Be sure that this includes the opening page, heading, header, parenthetical documentation, Works Cited page, and bibliography.

SCORE: _____

Student Survey Results

First Survey: Likert Scale

In the first survey, students were presented with the following series of statements to rank using a Likert scale that included a "Not Applicable" (N/A) option, along with numbers from zero to five:

1. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and I am confident that, after an initial close reading, I can/ could locate all information relevant to my writing assignments by scanning through the document.
2. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because the margin, font, and line spacing (single, double, etc.) choices appear professional and/ or appropriate for the syllabus and assignment sheets.
3. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because they use clear and consistently formatted headings to organize information into recognizable groups.
4. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because the visual formatting within sections appears logical, such that paragraphs, bulleted lists, numbered lists, tables, images etc. are used to show how the information within sections relates to the coursework.
5. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read because they look "typical," "normal," and/ or resemble other syllabi and assignment sheets I have seen before

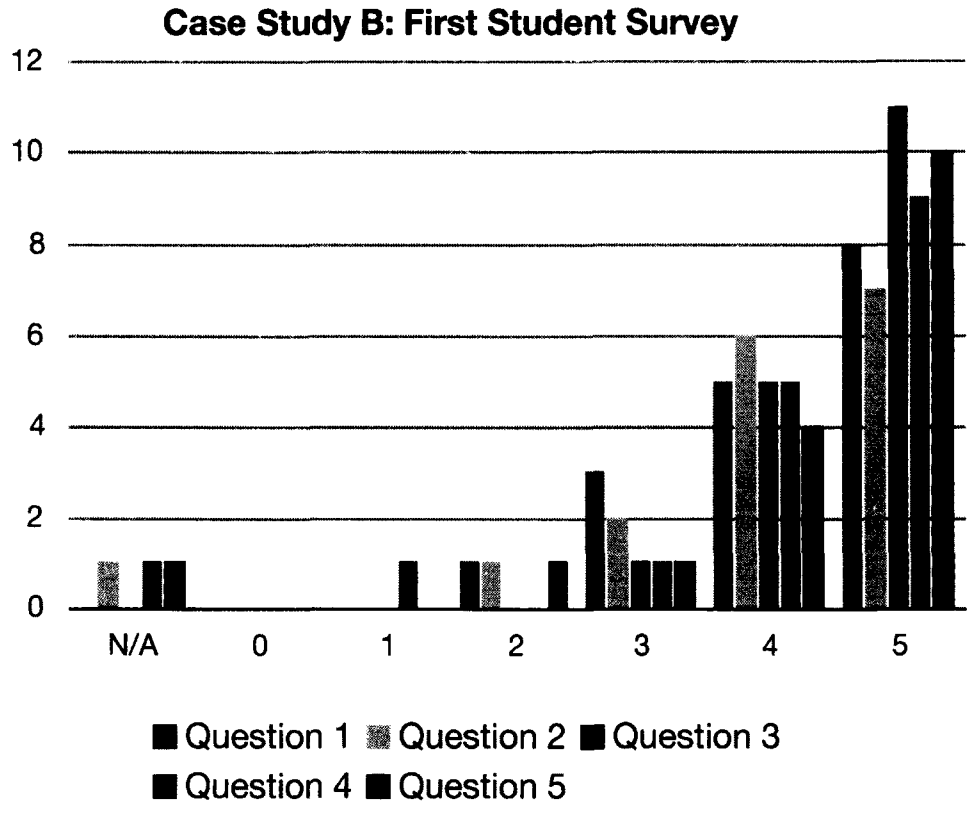


Figure C.1 Bar Graph of First Survey Responses

4.2	3.9	4.6	4.1	4.2

Table C.1 Average Answer by Question for First Survey Responses

First Survey: Open Response

Students were asked six questions on the second part of the survey; each question was followed by a blank space for students write in as much or as little as they wanted. The directions suggested using the back of the paper if needed, though no student answer required this. Typically responses were written in phrases, though a few students had one or two complete sentences. Each

question will be presented below, followed by a short summation of the responses for each.

6. How many university semesters have you attended? How many writing courses have you taken in this time at this university or another post-secondary institution (other university, college, community college, online institution, etc.)?

All seventeen students responded to this question. The majority of students had previously attended an average of 2 semesters at the post-secondary level, and had taken 1 or 2 writing courses previously to the this course. Ten out of the seventeen surveys, described the university standard expectation that they had taken and passed the first course, on the first try, in either they're first or second semester, before moving on to this course. Emma makes note in our interviews that another section of this same course, which meets later in the evening, for three hours, has a higher population of returning and adult students which might provide different academic biographies. There was one student who indicated that s/he had been taking courses part time over ten semesters, and had taken four prior English courses over this time. Another student revealed that they had taken the first course in this series three times before being allowed to pass on.

7. How would you describe the "look" syllabus and/ or assignment sheets to another student in a different writing class?

Sixteen students responded to this question. Six students directly stated that the syllabus looked, using descriptors such as "standard," "fundamental," and "typical." Eight students described the syllabus as "clean," "professional," "easy to read," and "organized." These terms were used in some form in the

Likert scale questions, so the consistency may be that the students are borrowing language from the survey itself. When describing the specific design choices made by the instructor, one student does describe it as "a bit cramped" while another describes it as "attractive because of the use of bold lettering and larger font."

8. What is particularly interesting or effective about the "look" of these documents for explaining the work you need to do to earn your grade in this course?

Thirteen students responded to this question, though one responds with "nothing." Three students comment on the course schedule and calendar, while another two specifically comment on the assignments list, and another comments on the grading breakdown. These six responses attempt to identify aspects of the document that are functional and important to them for completing the course work, such as "It's important for the assignment list to be clear and concise as to what is due when." Four students comment that they believe the document to be well "organized," and are confident that, "I can locate any relevant information that comes to mind." Another three students indicate that it's use of bolding makes it "effective," and "less intimidating."

9. Is there anything particularly confusing or discomforting about the "look" of these documents?

Seventeen students responded to this question, but fourteen students responded with some variation of "no," with little explanation. Interestingly, after the previous question, one student states that there is, "a bit too much bold." A second student feels that, "some paragraphs are close together," while

a third cites "the number of pages," as being a bothersome aspects of the document design.

10. Based on the "look" of the syllabus and assignment sheets, what are your expectations (of any kind) for the coursework to be completed? Why?

Fourteen students responded to this question. Four students responded with vague references to improving their writing. Eight students responded with some version of that they expect to do a lot of writing and that the instructor expects them to turn it in on time, "It's going to be a lot of writing. It says how much time will be spent on papers;" "I know how to manage my time based on what assignments are due;" and "to do a lot of rough drafts b/c of the peer reviews/ teacher reviews" are exemplars of these students' takeaway. Of the remaining responses, one indicated, "its doable/ its similar to my advanced high school class" and another, "very user friendly and clearly organized class experience."

11. Based on the "look" of the syllabus and assignment sheets, what are your expectations (of any kind) for the instructor's presentation and/ or teaching style? Why?

Fifteen students responded to this question. Most were positive in nature, with six students stating that her syllabus made her seem "personable," "helpful," "fun," and "far more student-friendly than my previous English teacher." Eight students stated their expectations that she would be "organized, everything is separated & bulleted," "thorough," and "easy to understand." Another student was more neutral in hir answer, simply stating, "hard class/ lots of writing."

Second Survey: Likert Scale

In the second survey, students were again presented a series of statements to rank using a Likert scale that included a "Not Applicable" (N/A) option, along with numbers from zero to five. These questions, listed below, were almost identical to the first set, with only the addition of the phrase, "and help me complete my assignments," to reflect the time shift from anticipating the coursework, to being almost finished with the coursework.

1. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and I am confident that they have and will help me successfully complete all of the work for this course.
2. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because the margin, font, and line spacing (single, double, etc.) choices appear professional and/ or appropriate for the syllabus and assignment sheets.
3. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because they use clear and consistently formatted headings to organize information into recognizable groups.
4. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because the visual formatting within sections appears logical, such that paragraphs, bulleted lists, numbered lists, tables, images etc. are used to show how the information within sections relates to the coursework.
5. The syllabus and assignment sheets for this course are easy to read and help me complete my assignments because they look "typical," "normal," and/ or resemble other syllabi and assignment sheets I have seen before.

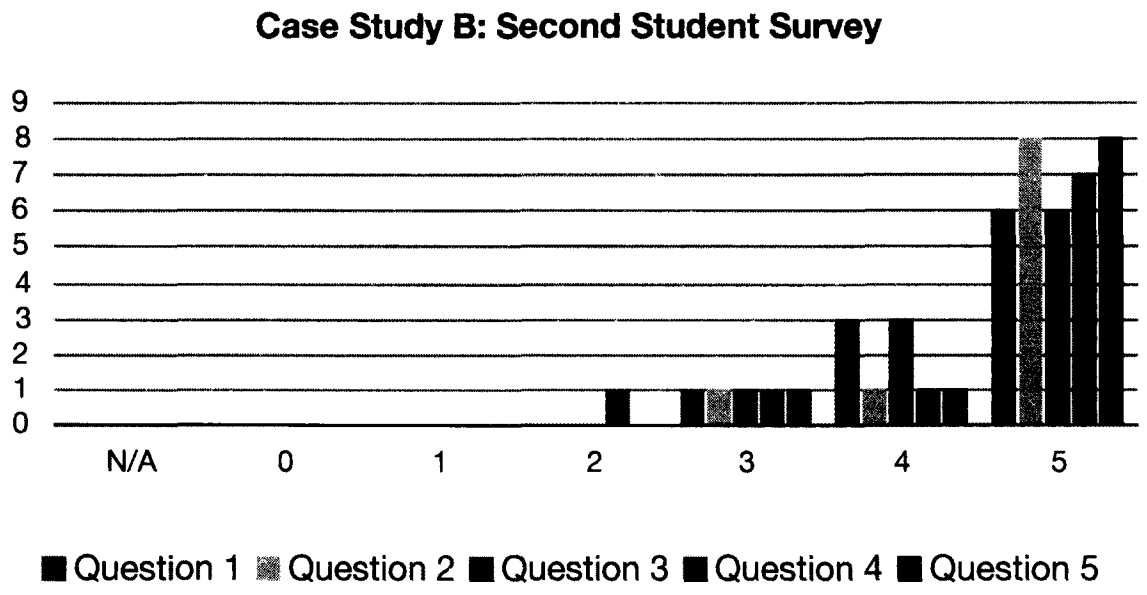


Figure C.2 Bar Graph of Second Survey Responses

4.5	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.7

Table C.2 Average Answer by Question for Second Survey Responses

Second Survey: Open Response

Students were asked seven questions on the second part of the survey; again each question was followed by a blank space for students write in as much or as little as they wanted. As with the prior survey, responses were generally written in phrases with a few responses written in one or two complete sentences. Each question will be presented below, followed by a short summation of the responses for each.

6. Do you believe that the "look" of course documents (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) helps you to complete the work in any writing based courses? How?

Nine students responded, and all nine stated "Yes" to the first part of the question. Two students elaborated that the fact that this document resembles other syllabi made it easier to use than if it had a unique design, "Yes, because you're not trying to figure out a new style and can find assignments and info easily." Six students emphasized how the organization of the syllabus kept them on track, with one explaining, "Yes. I often refer back to teacher's documents if I am ever confused by what is required of an assignment. If the information is presented in a clear and logical way, than I can usually figure it out."

7. What is an example of how the "look" of one or more course documents (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) helped you complete work for this writing course?

All ten students responded to this question. Eight students indicated that the "look" of the documents made finding the information they needed easy to locate important information, "when everything is organized with headings, it helps a lot," and "The syllabus gave a full layout of the whole semester & what was due, when we didn't have class & future assignments." One student referenced the instructor's posting of her lecture slides to Blackboard, "I liked using the slides. They gave simple information in regards to the assignments without having to read extensively."

8. Which document/s (syllabus, assignment sheets, and other handouts) from this course are particularly helpful or unhelpful in their "look"? Why?

Eight students responded to this question, though one student answered, "None come to mind." Two students responded that the syllabus had been the most helpful document, while three students answered that the assignment sheets were the most helpful. All three students said it was because the assignment sheets contained the most detailed and specific information, with one student explaining that these were more helpful than the syllabus, which was "too much." Two students responded with "course documents" stating that they were, as a group, well organized and contained all the information they were looking for.

9. Do you believe that Blackboard helps organize the course documents and helps you in completing the work in any writing based courses? How?

All ten students responded to this question, and all ten students answered affirmatively in some form. One student stated that s/he found Blackboard helpful in this course, but not in all classes, "It isn't always efficient & is sometimes hard to explain &/ or understand, another added yes, but, "the change was a little hard to get use too," while a third explains that it can be, "confusing when some teachers send attachments to my email & not blackboard." One student answered interestingly, ""Yes I do. without blackboard most teachers would be lost." The remaining answered that Blackboard was helpful to them because it helps them locate the specific document, assignment or other piece of information quickly and reliably.

10. Describe how easy or hard it is to locate a course document you need in this course's Blackboard site.

Eight students responded to this question. Seven of the eight students indicated the Blackboard site for this class was easy to use, with one student

explaining, "it went by weeks." In counterpoint, one student thought that it was, "More challenging because it is organized by week instead of topic."

11. As a writing student, do you believe what a course document looks like affects how well you are able to do the work of the course? Why?

Nine students responded to this question. Six students answered yes, explaining that if it is easy to use and locate information, it makes their work a lot easier to complete. One student responded that, "a more 'typical' style makes it less confusing. but if explained properly, practically any style would do." Two students answered no, with one highlighting the importance of content and the other stating that syllabi change from teacher to teacher.

12. Any further comments you would like to add- either about this writing course or others- about how the "look" of course documents or Blackboard affects how you completed the work for the course?

Nine students either did not respond or with some version of "No." One student took the opportunity to both praise and criticize the instructor unrelated to the document design.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE MATERIALS USED IN FIRST INTERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR: [redacted]

OFFICE HOURS: Th 1:30- 3:30 and by appointment.

OFFICE: [redacted]

EMAIL: [redacted]

COURSE: [redacted]

PREREQUISITE: [redacted]

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Successfully conduct visual and textual research projects
- Critically examine aspects of popular and mainstream culture
- Effectively explain the relationship of audience within the rhetorical triangle
- Rigorously engage with a variety writing technologies and argument contexts

TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

- Wood, Nancy. *Perspectives in Argument.* 6th edition.
- Troyka, Lynn Quitman. *Quick Access: Reference for Writers.* 5th edition.
- [redacted] Writing Folder for English [redacted] (available in bookstore)
- Access to Blackboard (you must check Blackboard before every class).
- [redacted] student e-mail account

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

Attendance & Participation ---------- *15%*

2 undocumented absences with no penalty
On the 3rd, 0 for the day
On the 5th, fail the course
*See "Attendance Policy" below for further information

Participation will be assessed on a credit/ no credit basis. Credit will be denied in such cases as excessive tardiness or daydreaming, and in all cases of sleeping, gaming, texting, etc. during class time.

NOTE: If Reading Quizzes are required they will be assessed at 5% of the final grade, the Attendance & Participation Grade will then become 10%

Reading Responses ---------- *10%*

Each student is expected to formulate a 250 word response in a blog comment addressing the class on the given topic. There will be 6 Reading Responses during the semester.

Group Research Projects ---------- *20%*

Defining the Blogosphere	8%
Defining & Critiquing Social Media	12%

Individual Research Projects ---------- *55%*

Exploratory Research Paper	
Essay Draft 1	5%
Essay Draft 2	10%
Extended Research Paper	
Proposal & Survey	2%
Annotated Bibliography & Survey Results	5%
5-7 slide presentation	
Draft 1	3%
Draft 2	5%
Digital Collage	5%
Argumentative Essay	
Draft 1	5%
Draft 2 (w/ Digital Collage)	15%

GRADING SCALE:

93-100 = A	77-79 = C+	64-66 = D
90-92 = A-	74-76 = C	60-63 = D-
87-89 = B+	70-73 = C-	59 & below = F
84-86 = B	67-69 = D+	
80-83 = B-		

*The **criteria for successful college writing** include the following:*

1. Scope and Focus: clarity and communication of central purpose and main ideas, limitation of topic, use of pertinent material and avoidance of irrelevant material.

2. Organization: form, coherence, orderly progression of sentences and paragraphs reflecting sound planning.

3. Development: adequate support and elaboration of thesis and main ideas by use of definition, illustration, specific references, examples, concrete details and/or evidence.

4. Perspective: soundness of knowledge and judgment; ability to develop mature, thoughtful connections; avoidance of second-hand opinions and third-hand facts.

5. Rhetorical awareness: effectiveness of the text for a particular situation and audience.

6. Expressiveness: control and variety of sentences; precise, appropriate, and vigorous use of words; resourcefulness and flexibility of idiom.

7. Mechanics: correctness; observance of standard usage, spelling, punctuation, etc.

POLICIES:

Attendance: You must prepare for, attend, and participate in all scheduled class sessions and conferences (two conferences are required).

> *From the English Department:* English 110 and 111 have a mandatory attendance policy: students should miss no more than one week of class time (3 contact hours) without penalty. Students who are absent for **more** than two weeks of class time (4 classes for TTh sections), will receive an F for the course.
>
> In accordance with University Policy, reasonable provisions should be made by the instructor for documented representation at University sponsored athletic or academic functions, mandatory military training and documented illness.
>
> *Late:* If your are more than 20 minutes late, you have missed too much of the class to be an active participant and will receive a 0 for the day. If you habitually arrive late (after the door has been closed), I reserve the right to refuse class admittance.

Classroom Deportment: Turn off all cell phones, pages, and other electronic devices before entering the classroom. Be on time for class. If you are unprepared for class, you cheat yourself and your classmates. You must bring your text to each class unless otherwise advised. We will be discussing many topics that may be controversial. Everyone's opinion is important. It is expected that you will treat each other and each others' ideas with respect and courtesy at all times.

> ***Electronic Ethics and Respect:*** Electronic media allows us some freedoms that print media does not allow. Consequently, it is also subject to abuse. Please be respectful of your peers throughout the semester by not displaying, viewing, or posting web pages, files, or emails that may make others uncomfortable. Violations of this respect can be considered harassment according to university policy and will be handled as such.

Readings and Quizzes: I reserve the right to institute pop quizzes on the readings, to be factored into the participation grade.

Drop Policy: Please check the University Catalog for the official policy.

> *Briefly:* You can withdraw from the class without my signature until about mid-term (i.e., this semester until [redacted]); a "W" will appear on your transcript. After this date, only extreme extenuating circumstances will allow you to drop the course.

Please remember [redacted] is the last day to DROP classes with no grade or financial penalty. [redacted] **is the last day to register or add a course.**

Honor System: You are responsible for obtaining a copy of the Student Handbook and informing yourself about student conduct regulations.

> You may visit the Honor Council office in Webb Center, Room 2129 or at [redacted] Please remember you signed the honor pledge at orientation.

Plagiarism: Writers who use the words or ideas of others are obligated to give credit through proper acknowledgment and documentation. Failure to give credit is plagiarism, a violation of the [redacted] Honor Code that can lead to expulsion from the University.

If the quality of your in-class and out-of class writing varies dramatically, I reserve the right to ask you to write under supervision. If you have questions about how and when to acknowledge sources, please refer to your textbook or see me for advice.

Essays: Please type final copies of each essay, double-spaced, with margins of 1 inch on all sides. Put your name, section, and a page number on each page. Submit assignments in your Writing Folder with all previous drafts and notes attached. For your own protection, keep photocopies of submitted work. A five point a day late penalty will be assessed on all late papers.

Writing Folders: You can pass the course only if you submit a complete Writing Folder, containing all assigned essays, no later than the last day of class. You are responsible for keeping all of your written work in your folder throughout the semester.

Writing Tutorial Services: Consider bringing drafts to the trained tutors at WTS, in BAL 1002. This is a free service to all [redacted] students. Appointments are required. You may contact WTS at 683-4013 or [redacted].

Special Needs: If you have special needs because of a documented disability, or if you have emergency medical information to share, please feel free to notify me so we may discuss the accommodation process.

Weekly Plans

Week	Daily Topics	Readings (due on Tuesdays)	Deliverables (due on Thursdays)
1	***Introductions*** *Tuesday, 9/1:* Community Building Writing Diagnostic *Thursday, 9/3:* Community Building Syllabus Review *Introduce Ad Analysis Paper*	***DUE THURSDAY*** Read Syllabus	Email me a (250 word) response to the syllabus: •What were you expecting to learn in this course? •How has the syllabus changed your expectation? •What did you find confusing, fair, or unfair about the syllabus?
2	***Why Pop Culture?*** *Tuesday, 9/8:* Importance of Pop Culture as Site of Investigation Introduce Blogosphere Presentations *Thursday, 9/10:* PowerPoint Tutorial Lab/ Group time	Lunsford, et al. "Everything's an Argument" Gurak, et al. "Introduction: Weblogs, Rhetoric, Community, and Culture"	Reading Response due on course blog before the start of class
3	***Advertising & The Rhetorical Triangle*** *Tuesday, 9/15:* What is the Rhetorical Triangle? How Is It Useful to Me? *Thursday, 9/17:* Lab/ Group time	Wood, "Types of Proof" Peretti, "My Nike Adventure" Twitchell, "How to Advertise a Dangerous Product"	First Draft: Ad Analysis Paper

Week	Daily Topics	Readings (due on Tuesdays)	Deliverables (due on Thursdays)
4	***Your Audience is Important*** *Tuesday, 9/22:* Reading Discussion Group Time *Thursday, 9/24:* Group Presentations	Lunsford, et al. "Readers and Contexts Count" Solomon, "Masters of Desire"	Blogosphere Group Presentations
5	*Class sessions canceled for conferences*	Choose a reading that relates to your paper (either from textbook or outside source)	Reading Response due on course blog before the start of class
6	***Online Writing & Culture*** *Tuesday, 10/6:* Exploring and Defining Online Communities *Thursday, 10/8:* Introduce Social Media Group Projects Lab/ Group Time	Jenkins, "Convergence Culture" boyd, "Final Report: Friendship"	Final Draft: Ad Analysis Paper

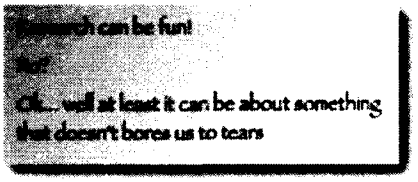
While I will make every effort to follow this course schedule, please note that it is subject to change.

Exploratory Research Papers:
Advertisements, Television & Audience

So, what are we doing?

In keeping with the objectives of the syllabus, the first project will ask you to:

- IDENTIFY AN ARTIFACT: select a television program
- CONDUCT PRIMARY RESEARCH ON YOUR ARTIFACT: view the program with advertisements and take notes
- CONDUCT SECONDARY RESEARCH RELATED TO YOUR ARTIFACT: read, take notes on, etc. sources which will help you construct an argument about your artifact and its audience



- ASSEMBLE RESEARCH INTO A COHERENT ESSAY CLEARLY DEMONSTRATING A SINGLE ARGUMENT: plan, draft, revise, edit and publish *(sound familiar?)* the actual paper

What's the topic?

View a television program that you are familiar with-- document and describe 2-3 advertisements that occur within the program. Analyze these advertisements using *at least* 2 sources from class and 2 outside sources to **argue** for who the audience of this program is based on what advertisers are trying to sell and what appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) are used to reach the presumed audience.

What will the requirements be?

- Two drafts:
  - Draft 1 is due Thursday, 9/ 17/ 2009
  - Draft 2 is due Thursday, 10/ 8/ 2009
- **Both** should be 1200- 1500 words
  - average is 300 words per page, so 4- 5 pages, depending on document design
- Title page (with word count) and Works Cited are *additionally* required
  - MLA ***or*** APA formatting may be chosen, but must be consistent throughout
- A 30 minute conference with the instructor is required after Draft 1 is turned in

Rubric

Demonstrable Objectives	Points Assigned	Points Awarded
careful and descriptive reporting on the "who/ what/ where/ when/ how" of the artifact *(achieved by careful viewing, note taking and thinking)*	20	
special note is taken on how these particular advertisements use different appeals to relate to their audience	10	
appropriate selection and balance of secondary materials *(achieved through thoughtful searching)*, from among: - books and book chapters - peer reviewed journal articles - periodical articles - professional online articles (periodicals only published online) - new media online posts (blog or other social media posting)	10	
accurate and clear paraphrasing and quoting from secondary sources *(achieved by careful reading, note taking and thinking)*	10	
effective secondary sources are used to create an "argument" for who *(what audience)* the program	10	
interesting and persuasive integration of primary observations, secondary concepts & critiques, and writer's views	20	
appropriate and consistent citation and formatting	5	
effective use of Standard Written English	5	

APPENDIX E

SARAH'S REDESIGNED SYLLABUS

[redacted]
Office: [redacted]
Email [redacted] **Phone:** [redacted]
Office Hours: T/R 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and by appointment

ENGL 327W: Advanced Composition

"In many ways writing is the act of saying I, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying *listen to me, see it my way, change your mind.*"
--Joan Didion

Course Description

Effective writing is a powerful tool in academic, professional, and personal situations. Writing can be used to explain, to request, to persuade, and to bring about change. The physical act of writing can be used as a way to figure out what you think and develop what you want to say. The goal of this class is to introduce writers to strategies that will enhance critical thinking and enable the creation of more effective documents in a variety of situations outside the classroom. The focus of the class will be on Service Learning as a strategy in education; a variety of research and writing projects will address this topic.

Major Projects *(deadlines subject to change)*

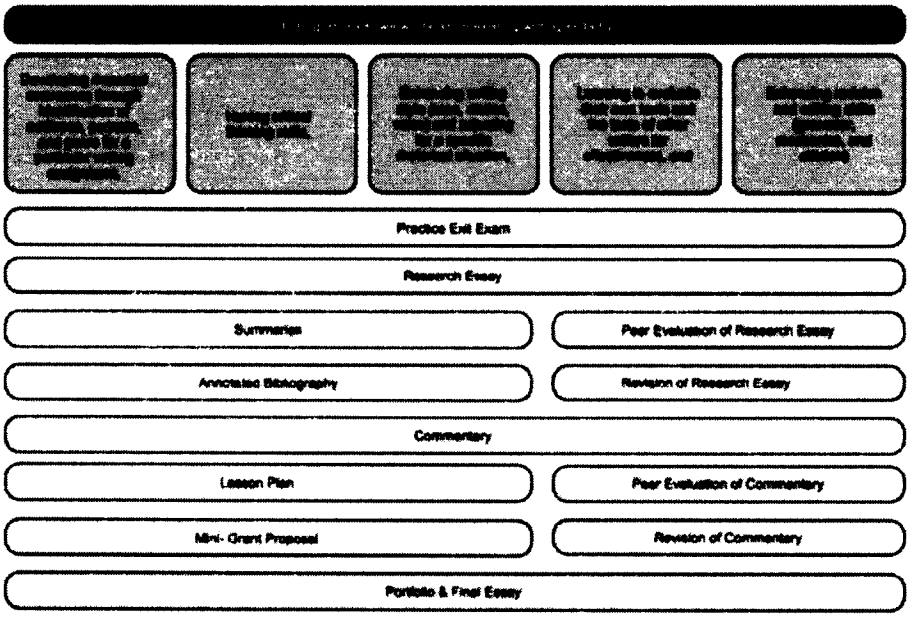
Practice Exit Exam	**In class Jan. 20**	**ungraded**
Summaries (2 assignments)		Pass/Fail
Annotated Bibliography	**Due: Feb. 1**	**100 points**
Research essay draft	Due: Feb. 8	P/F
Evaluation of classmates' research essays	Due. Feb. 10	P/F
Research essay revision	**Due: Feb. 15**	**100 points**
Commentary draft	**Due: March 17**	**P/F**
Evaluations of classmates' commentaries	**Due March 22**	**P/F**
Commentary revision	**Due: March 24**	**100 points**
Lesson Plan draft / revision	**Due: April 12 / April 14**	**100 points**
Mini-grant proposal	**Due: April 21**	**50 points**
Portfolio and final essay	**TBA**	**100 points**
Various writing and homework assignments	**Due as assigned**	

Deadlines are important: All assignments must be submitted before the beginning of class on the date they are due. Assignments that are turned in late will be reduced a full letter grade per day late unless previous arrangements have been made. **If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to turn in all work on time and to ask a classmate for the assignments that are due for the next class period so that you can complete them on time.**

Revisions: The value of revision will be emphasized in this class. For each major assignment, you will be required to submit a draft for discussion with your workshop group and prepare written evaluations of your classmates' drafts. Failure to submit drafts, write evaluations, or participate in workshops will result in a letter grade reduction in your grade for the final revision of the essay.

NOTE: Always have available in class an electronic version of the essay or writing assignment you are working on so that we can do in-class editing activities on it.

Course Objectives Aligned to the Major Projects



Assessment for Major Projects

Conferences: We will have two scheduled conference during the semester. In addition, I am available to meet with you as often as necessary to assist you in achieving your goals for the class. You may stop by during my office hours or schedule a conference with me at your convenience. We also can conference electronically or by phone.

683-4013; or go to [redacted] for more information. If the writing you submit needs additional attention, you may be required to visit WTS prior to resubmission.

Evaluation criteria: What is effective writing? Your assignments will be evaluated on the following:

1. Focus: clarity and communication of thesis, main ideas and purpose, limitation of topic, and use of relevant material.
2. Organization: an arrangement of sentences and paragraphs that reflects planning and the purpose of the assignment.
3. Development: effective support and elaboration of thesis and main ideas by use of definition, illustration, specific references, comparisons, examples, and concrete details.
4. Perspective: ability to develop thoughtful and complex ideas and connections. Ability to add a fresh perspective to the dialogue on the topic.
5. Rhetorical awareness: effectiveness of the essay for the specific situation and audience.
6. Style: control and variety of sentences; appropriate and lyrical use of words and phrases.
7. Mechanics: grammar, spelling, punctuation, citation, and other boring but essential stuff.

Grading Scale

94% - 100% = A	87% - 89% = B-	77% - 79% = C+	67% - 69% = D+
90% - 93% = A-	83% - 86% = B	73% - 76% = C	63% - 66% = D
	80% - 82% = B-	70% - 72% = C-	60% - 62% = D-

Course Policies

Attendance: For a writing community to function, everyone must come to class every day having completed the reading and writing assignments. Please be on time and remain for the entire class. Missing more than three classes will negatively affect your final grade (4 absences = 1/3 letter grade reduction; 5 absences = 2/3 letter grade reduction; 6 absences = 1 letter grade reduction). Missing more than 25% of the class periods (more than 6 classes) may result in failure of the course. If you encounter problems that result in unavoidable absences, you may want to contact Student Affairs: 683-5869.

Communication: CHECK YOUR [redacted] E-MAIL DAILY. We will use Blackboard for announcements, assignment sheets, documents, grades, e-mail, etc. Go to www.odu.edu > Current Students. For help with technical difficulties, contact Customer Service at 757-683-3192.

Honor System: Each student is expected to abide by the [redacted] Honor Code. You are responsible for obtaining a copy of the Student Handbook and informing yourself about student conduct regulations. You may visit the Honor Council office in Webb Center or check the [redacted] website.

Plagiarism: Writers who use the words or ideas of others are obligated to give credit through proper acknowledgment and documentation. Failure to give credit is plagiarism, a violation of the [redacted] Honor Code that can lead to expulsion from the University. If the quality of your in-class and out-of-class writing varies dramatically, you may be asked to write under supervision. **If you need help with citation of research materials, please schedule a conference with me or Writing Tutorial Service.**

Special Needs: Reasonable accommodations can be provided for students with disabilities. If you need accommodations for this class, please contact me as soon as possible.

Course Schedule *(first half of the semester)*

NOTE: Check Blackboard/ Assignments for future homework assignments.

Due before class on Jan. 13:
- Read "Writing a Summary" and "Build a Bridge" on Blackboard / Assignments
- Post a summary of "Build a Bridge" with an MLA or APA citation on Bbd / Assignments.
- Bring to class a copy of the Service Learning Project Sheet from Bbd / Assignments.

Due before class on Jan. 18:
- Summarize two additional journal articles that you find on the subject of Service Learning
  - Post on Blackboard / Assignments.

Due before class on Jan. 20:
- Review Exit Exam website.

Due Jan. 25:
- Read "Pursuing Franklin's Dream" on Bbd / Course Documents and be prepared to discuss.
- Continue research on Service Learning.

Due Jan. 27:
- Find an additional article on Service Learning (not the ones you summarized)
  - Be prepared to present its main ideas to the class.

Due Feb. 1:
- **Annotated Bibliography due**
  - Post on Bbd / Assignments.

Feb. 3:
Writing day; class cancelled.

Due Feb. 8:
- **Research Paper draft due** (at least three pages)
  - Post on Bbd / Assignments and bring four copies to class.
  - Also bring an electronic copy for in-class editing.

Due Feb. 10:
- **Write evaluations of your classmates' drafts**
  - Post on Bbd / Assignments and bring a copy for the writer.
- Have an electronic copy of your essay available for in-class editing.

Due Feb. 15:
- **Revision of Research Paper due**
  - Post on Bbd / Assignments.
  - Also bring an electronic copy for in-class activity.

Due Feb. 17:
- Review and bring to class a copy of the Lesson Plan assignment sheet and template on Bbd / Assignments.

Feb. 22 & 24:
Class cancelled for conferences (room 201); bring at least three written questions for the conference based on instructor comments on draft.

Due March 1:
- Propose a lesson plan topic (250 words)
  - Post on Bbd / Assignments

Due March 3:
- TBA

March 7-12:
Spring Break

APPENDIX F

EMMA'S REDESIGNED SYLLABUS

[redacted]
E-mail: [redacted]
Phone: [redacted]
Office Hours: By appointment

ENGL 211C: Composition, Spring 2011

Prerequisites: Writing Sample Placement Test and English 110C
Section: 26703; MW 4:20-5:35
Room: Constant Hall 2065

Course Description

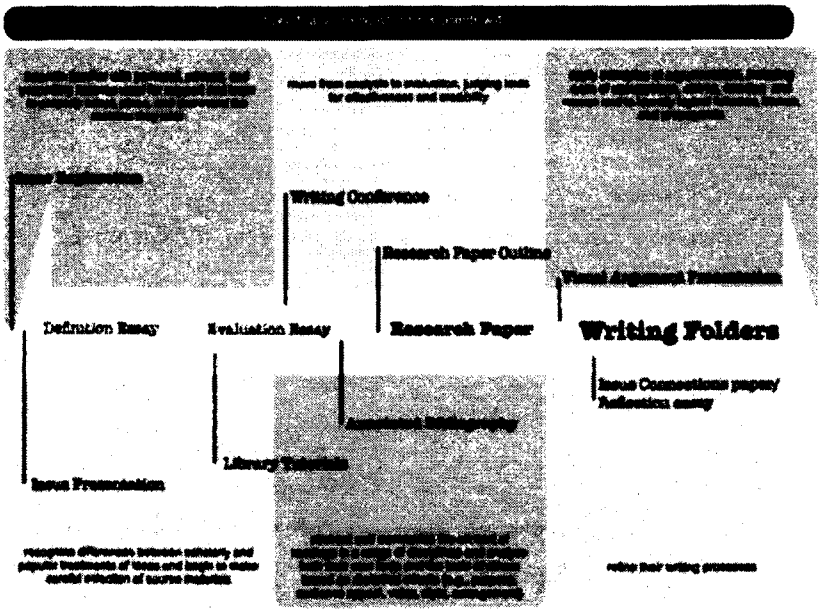
Through careful analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information, students formulate adequate theses, moving beyond the scope of reporting information to composing papers that express their reasoned judgments on meaningful topics. Students strengthen their understanding of rhetorical situations and persuasive discourse by preparing a fully-documented research paper. They select their own topics, use a variety of investigative techniques, and survey a wide range of resources inside and outside the library (lectures, films, documentaries, police reports, interviews).

Major Projects *(deadlines subject to change)*

Issue Exploration	Due: 1/19	30 points
Issue Presentation	Due: 1/24 or 1/31	50 points
Definition Essay	Draft 1 Due: 1/24 Draft 2 Due: 1/31	100 points
Evaluation Essay	Draft 1 Due: 2/7 Draft 2 Due: 2/14	100 points
Library Tutorials	Due: 2/14	20 points
Writing Conferences	Due: 2/23 or 2/1	50 points
Annotated Bibliography	Due: 3/16	50 points
Research Paper Outline	Due: 3/21	50 points
Research Paper	Draft 1 Due: 4/5 Draft 2 Due: 4/11	200 points

Issue Connections paper/Reflection essay (final exam)	Due: 5/2	100 points
Writing folders	**Due: 5/2**	**300 points**

Course Objectives Aligned to the Major Projects



Procedures for Major Projects

Essay Format for Submission:

- ✓ Papers to be peer-reviewed and formal drafts of papers should be full-length, typed in double space with 1" margins, proofread, and printed on white paper with black ink. You must include your name, class, section number, date, title of the essay, and the delineation "draft" or "final" on all papers that are submitted. All essay revisions should be turned in by attaching the corrected copy to the original.

- ✓ Since [redacted] Computer Labs are accessible to all [redacted] students who present valid campus identification cards, no formal paper will be accepted that has not been typed, spell-checked and grammar-checked. All papers must follow correct MLA format. Submit assignments in a pocket folder with all previous drafts and notes attached. For your own protection, keep photocopies of submitted work and keep word processed work saved on your flash drive

- ✓ All papers must be submitted via hard copy unless otherwise directed by the instructor. If you are absent and want to email your paper, so I will note that it has been turned in on time, that is acceptable as long as you submit a hard copy of the paper on your first day back to class. Running out of ink on your printer, not having time to print the paper, etc. are not acceptable excuses for not having a hard copy and will negatively impact your grade. Please plan ahead to be sure you will have hard copies ready to be turned in on the due date.

Late Work and Make up Work:

- ✓ Students are expected to turn in all papers on time regardless of whether or not they attend class the day the paper is due. If you are not in class, papers should be emailed to me as either a Word document or in Rich Text Format to [redacted]. I will send confirmation of receipt of your paper within 24 hours. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade a day until they are turned in. You are also responsible for obtaining any notes or missing assignments from a student in the class. Often what we complete in class will be part of your writing portfolios or prepare you for writing an essay. Any paper not ready for peer review or missing on peer review day will equal a zero for that day's in-class writing.

- ✓ All formal papers must be revised and re-written. You will receive between 20 and 30 points for essay drafts that will be based on turning your draft in on time, addressing the topic, and meeting the length requirements. Late drafts will be accepted so you get the feedback needed to complete the final paper but no credit will be given for late drafts.

- ✓ You will not receive a grade for the paper itself until you turn in the final copy. Revising papers is the best way to master the writing process and the focus of the assignment. Failure to turn in final copies of papers will result in late penalties or a zero if the paper is not turned in by the next week of class. Failure to complete major papers will affect your grade for your writing folder because all stages of paper writing must be included in the writing folder. If applicable, extenuating circumstances will be considered, but communication is key to resolving any issues.

Conferences: The conference grade consists of two required conferences: one during the middle of the term and one at the end of the term when you turn in your writing folders. You are expected to schedule each conference (sign-up sheet provided in class) and then come to the conference prepared to discuss the focus areas. Aside from emergency absences, missing a conference or failing to schedule or prepare for the conference will result in a zero.

Writing Folders: These are available at the [redacted] bookstore. However, a one inch binder with an acceptable cover page may be substituted for this folder. In order to pass the class, you must submit a writing folder all polished essays (as delineated in the syllabus) and their revisions (number your revisions and be sure to use colorful fonts or pens to make your corrections) along with various other

assignments noted in the folder checklist you will be given at the end of the semester. Make copies of any papers you submit should something happen to your folder. Failure to hand in a major assignment as delineated in class constitutes failure in the course.

Additional Assignments/ Activities: Out-of-class reading/preparation; informal writing assignments; group presentations; essay drafts; peer reviews; and other class activities will be part of your grade and vary in point value.

Course Policies

Texts and Materials:

Bookstore:

- *Quick Access Reference* by Troyka, 6th Ed (ISBN: 978-0205664818) - this book will be used as a general guide for writing, MLA, and revising and editing symbols.
- *Everything's an Argument* by Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Waters (ISBN: 978-0-312-53861-3)
- [redacted] Writing Folder for English 21 or one inch binder

Other Materials:

- Student e-mail account
- Flash Drive – at least 4 G
- Binder with pockets
- College level thesaurus and dictionary
- Highlighters
- Red and black pens

Attendance: You must prepare for, attend, and participate in all scheduled class sessions and conferences. In-class assignments, group project participation, and peer reviews cannot be made up, so absences will affect your final grade. According to English Department policy, you will receive an F if you miss 25 percent of scheduled class time. In addition, please be on time to class. Late arrivals to class are disruptive and often negatively impact class activities.

Drop Policy: Please check the University catalog for the complete policy. You can withdraw from the class without my signature until 1/21; a "W" will appear on your transcript. After midterm, only extreme extenuating circumstances will allow you to drop the course.

Honor System: You are responsible for obtaining a copy of the Student Handbook and informing yourself about student conduct regulations. You may visit the Honor Council office in Webb Center, Room 2129 or at [redacted].

Plagiarism: Writers who use the words or ideas of others are obligated to give credit through proper acknowledgment and documentation. Failure to give credit is plagiarism, a violation of the ODU Honor Code that can lead to expulsion from the University. If the quality of your in-class and out-of class writing varies dramatically, I reserve the right to ask you to write under supervision. If you have questions about how and when to acknowledge sources, please refer to the *Quick Access* guide. You may also use an official MLA guide or any of the following websites: www.noodletools.com; http://

www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/; or http://www.easybib.com/. Remember, Internet-based citation makers are often inaccurate, so you may use them to get an idea of how to format your sources but should still consult your textbook or an MLA guide to be sure your citation is accurate. If in doubt, ask me.

Original Essays: Please be sure that all essays you produce for this class are written specifically for the class assignment given. Do not use and/or restyle essays that have been written for another class. Essays that are not generated specifically for the essay assigned will not be accepted.

Writing/Tutorial Services: Consider bringing drafts to the trained tutors at WTS, in BAL 1002. This is a free service to all [redacted] students. Appointments are required. You may contact WTS at 683-4013 or http:[redacted]

Special Needs: If you have special needs because of a documented disability, or if you have emergency medical information to share, please feel free to notify me so we may discuss the accommodation process.

Course Schedule

All classes meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:20- 5:35 in [redacted] 2065 and will begin meeting in a computer lab (room to be announced) in mid-February.

Unless otherwise stated, assignments due for next time are due on the first class day of the week.

The *Everything's an Argument* book is abbreviated as *EAA* and the *Quick Access* book is abbreviated as *QA*.

Week One: Monday 1/10 & Wednesday 1/12

- Introduction to the class: review of syllabus, getting to know each other, overview of textbook
- Lecture on ethos, pathos and logos
- Discuss essay Issue Exploration paper: brainstorming and taking a stance

Due Wednesday, 1/19

- Complete Issue Exploration paper: three pages, double spaced – be sure to examine ethos, pathos, and logos
- In *EAA*, read Chapters 2, 3, 4
- In Part V – "Arguments" - choose one article and be ready to summarize it and discuss its use of ethos, pathos, and logos for the opening activity for next week's class

Week Two: Wednesday 1/16 *(No Class Monday, 1/17 for MLK Day)*

- Turn in Issue Exploration paper
- Discussion: Student chosen articles from *EAA* Part V in small groups with presentations on the articles' rhetorical appeals
- Discuss *EAA* Chapter readings
- Discuss definition essay
- Sign up for issue presentation

Due Monday, 1/24

- In *EAA*, read Chapters 5, 7, and 9
- Read "Social Network Sites" – Boyd and Ellison pgs. 653-667
- Bring in typed draft of definition essay

Week Three: Monday 1/24 & Wednesday 1/26

- First set of issue presentations
- Discuss Chapters 5, 7, and 9 and the Boyd and Ellison essay
- Work in groups to shape to revise and edit the definition essay.

Due Monday, 1/31

- Definition essays due
- Prepare your issue presentation if it is your assigned day
- In *EAA*, read Chapters 6, 8, and 10

Week Four: Monday 1/31 *(No Class Wednesday, 2/2, instructor at writing conference)*

- Turn in final copies of definition essays
- Next set of issue presentations
- Discussion of Chapters 6, 8, 10
- Introduction to the evaluation essay

Due Monday, 2/7

- Draft of evaluation essay to be turned in for revising and editing
- In *EAA*, read chapters 19 and 20

Week Five: Monday 2/7 & Wednesday 2/9

- Next set of issue presentations
- Peer review and editing of evaluation essay
- Discuss and review Chapters 19 and 20 – MLA format, etc.

Due Monday, 2/14

- Go to the following link and complete StarQuest tutorials Part I and II: http://www.lib.odu.edu/libassist/tutorials/index.htm Print out the results of your tutorials. You are graded on completing the tutorials by our next class, not on your score. You will need to log into the library to access the tutorial.
- Final copies of evaluation essays due
- **Meet in the computer lab. Room number to be announced in class.**

Week Six: Monday 2/14 & Wednesday 2/16

- Library session in the computer lab
- Turn in your evaluation essay
- Sign up for your writing conference. These will take place on 2/22 and 3/1.

Due Wednesday, 2/23

- Writing conferences to discuss first two essays and writing concerns in general

Week Seven: Wednesday 2/23 *(No Class Monday, 2/21- instructor out of town)*

- Conferences about essays - location to be announced.

Due Monday, 2/28

- Read Chapters 13 in *EAA*
- Writing conferences on 3/1 for those students who did not meet with me previously

Week Eight: Monday 2/28 *(No Class Wednesday, 3/2, instructor in Norway)*

- ***Conferences continue – shortened class***
- Review of Chapters 13 and completing an annotated bibliography

Due Wednesday, 3/16

- Complete your annotated bibliography and post your topic on the discussion board, so I can organize visual argument groups
- Read Chapter 14 in *EAA*

Spring Break: March 7-12:

Week Nine: Wednesday 3/16 *(No Class Monday, 3/14, instructor in Norway)*

- Turn in annotated bibliography
- Issue presentations
- Review guidelines for visual arguments and announce groups
- Introduce research paper and review format for outlines

Due Monday, 3/21

- Review Blackboard documents and QA guide for techniques on writing a research paper
- Outlines for papers due

Week Ten: Monday 3/21 & Wednesday 3/23

- Outlines due
- Issue presentations
- Review guidelines for research paper
- Work on research paper planning guides

Due Monday, 3/28

- Research paper planning guides due next time
- Work on drafts of research paper – due on 4/5.

Week Eleven: Monday 3/28 & Wednesday 3/30

- Turn in planning guides for research papers
- Issue presentations
- Discuss visual argument
- Begin work on visual arguments if time permits

Due Monday, 4/4

- Draft of research paper for peer review due next time – should be at least 6 pages long
- Work on visual arguments with your groups

Week Twelve: Monday 4/4 & Wednesday 4/6

- Finish any stray issue presentations
- Peer review of research paper drafts
- Work on visual arguments

Due Monday, 4/11

- Continue work on visual arguments and research paper
- Final copies of research paper in hard copy AND emailed by our next class

Week Thirteen: Monday 4/11 (*No Class Wednesday, 4/13*)

- Final day to work on visual arguments and revise research papers
- All final copies of research papers turned in hard copy and emailed today

Due Monday, 4/18

- Group visual presentations
- Work on final essay and writing folder
- Make any necessary revisions to the research paper

Week Fourteen: Monday 4/18 & Wednesday 4/20

- Visual arguments presented today. Be sure you burn your presentation to a CD.

Week Fifteen: No Classes for Monday, 4/25 and Wednesday 4/27 (for Reading Days)

Week Sixteen: Monday 5/2

- Final writing conference – turn in your writing folders and final papers. Refer to the writing folder checklist to be sure your folder is complete.

VITA

Erin Duffy Pastore

Department of English, Old Dominion University

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Education

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Major: English

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