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Chapter XVI

Composing Identity in Online Instructional Contexts

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ABSTRACT

As writing instruction moves from the defined spatial and temporal parameters of the traditional classroom to various degrees of online interaction—from explanatory e-mails to courseware mediated distance education—instructors have had to reconceptualize how they identify themselves to their student audience. While many instructors have tried to translate their face-to-face strategies to the digital medium with disparate degrees of success, others understand the different parameters digital media offer and see new opportunities for literally composing their instructional identity. This contribution will examine the strategies instructors have used to compose their identities with computer-mediated communications and propose suggestions for negotiating this process.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1990s, the rapid popularity of computer-mediated communication applications (e.g., e-mail, Web sites, synchronous and asynchronous discussion software) prompted instructors, for better or for worse, to extend their pedagogical presence beyond the physical space and scheduled time of a given course. Whether instructors were teaching distance education through online classes or supplementing their face-to-face course with online distance components, they have had to rethink the rhetorical strategies that they use

to communicate the course content and manage the course. More recently, many instructors who originally thought that adopting these technologies would be optional are now “seeing the writing on the screen” and facing similar challenges. As a result, instructors from across the curriculum are using much more writing to present themselves, and most of this writing is being composed with digital composing (DC) applications and often sent to student audiences through computer-mediated communication (CMC) applications.

Even when a class is over for the day and the instructor has left the classroom, the building,

the campus, or even the country (maybe for a conference), the instructor can continue to teach her students and, in some situations, is expected to continue instruction. For example, an instructor going to Budapest for conference can log onto her computer during the wee hours of the morning to meet her students in a courseware chatroom. Or she can leave the students with a blog assignment that they can complete over the week of her absence and that she can review upon her return—although she may choose to check on her students' progress during her down time. And if the students have questions about the instructions she left (or posted), they can e-mail her and potentially get a response even though she is half-way around the world. Likewise these same applications can be used to mediate a distance education course that brings together an instructor in southern Virginia with students in both Washington D.C. and Washington state. In spite of the absence of the instructor's physical body in all of these situations, she is actually quite present through the texts that she creates to communicate with her students. The instructor's physical presence has always been one of the texts that student read (Kopelson, 2002); now through a combination of DC and CMC applications, the instructor can literally present herself as text, and, in some cases, she is asked to or expected to. But how do students read their virtual instructors? And how does the instructor compose this text to facilitate both their personal and pedagogical agendas?

This chapter addresses these questions by examining the strategies instructors, as rhetors, adopt to compose their identity for various online instructional situations. This conversation will begin with an interrogation of the terms computer-mediated communication application and digital composing application and how recent upgrades in these applications have blurred the distinction between two. This diminishing distinction lends itself to new promises and possibilities for composing one's online identity; however, these promises are subject to the rhetorical parameters

of the computer-mediated situation. To illustrate how instructors use various CMC and DC applications (e.g., word processing, e-mail, Web sites, slideware, courseware, wikis) to make ethical appeals, I use qualitative evidence from sample hybrid pedagogical models to explain the aims that the instructors intended to achieve (i.e., how they wanted to be perceived) with/through these applications. The conclusion provides strategies rhetors in instructional contexts can adopt and suggests future trends.

DC APPLICATIONS AND CMC APPLICATIONS

Most discussions about CMC focus on applications characterized as being directly networked to each other and facilitating both synchronous (e-mail, bulletin boards) and asynchronous (MUDs/MOOs¹, instant messaging) communication. We have witnessed, according to Hawisher, LeBlanc, Moran, and Selfe (1996), a shift from computer-as-data-processor to computer-as-word-processor to computer-as-social-space, a process facilitated by the advent and proliferation of CMC applications (pp. 184-185). These historians of computers and composition studies further explain that the development of online social spaces, such as "virtual spaces, virtual classrooms, [and] online parlors" helped to "enact the social construction of knowledge" (p. 185), one of the many social benefits CMC applications afford. Arguably, the social feature of these programs that have come to characterize CMC applications is becoming, as other applications integrate social features into their interfaces, the feature that least distinguishes CMC from other applications.

Allucquère Rosanne Stone (1995), addressing the social promise and problem of—what was a decade ago—new social networking software (or applications that were also being classified as CMC) inquires what is new about networking (p. 15) and suggests two responses:

Answer 1: Nothing. The tools of networking are essentially the same as they have been since the telephone, which was the first electronic network prosthesis. Computers are engines of calculation, and their output is used for quantitative analysis. Inside the little box is information. I recently had a discussion with a colleague in which he maintained that there nothing new about virtual reality. "When you sit and read a book," he said, "you create characters and action in your head. That's the same thing as VR, without all of the electronics." Missing the point, of course, but understandably.

Answer 2: Everything. Computers are arenas for social experience and dramatic interaction, a type of media more like theater, and their output is used for qualitative interaction, dialogue, and conversation. Inside the box are *other people* (pp. 15-16, original emphasis).

Stone's double-edged response demonstrates an astute understanding of the technologies' evolution; not only does she describe many characteristics of social networking applications from a decade ago, her description also clearly applies to recent developments in CMC applications, as well as the evolutionary trajectory of these applications in the near future. At the very core of their programming, these applications are merely the most recent iterations of older technologies—from the telephone to e-mail to MySpace, from the paper and ink Lord of the Rings trilogy to World of Warcraft. The changes in our digital discourse demonstrate that we are no longer limited to communicating with computer technologies, instead we are communicating through computer technologies. A process of communicating with the technology can be described as data input to data transfer to data reception and exemplified by a word-processed document that is printed and snail mailed to its recipient. The move to communicating through the technology represents the evolution of the computer-as-data-processor to the computer-as-social-space and illustrates

the desire for more qualitative interaction when using the computer.

The social aspect of computer technology has become so prominent that we see it driving the design of other application, such as hypertext and DC applications. Historicizing new trends in computers and composition during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Hawisher et al. (1996) interestingly discuss CMC applications separate from hypertext and hypermedia. In one regard, most hypertext of a decade ago would not fulfill CMC's criteria of facilitating social interaction. Although hypertexts could be designed to create a more interactive experience for one's audience than a print text (Bolter, 2001; Joyce, 1995), these applications, at the time, did not commonly foster an exchange between interlocutors like CMC applications. Consequently, these different applications would understandably be adopted to fulfill different rhetorical purposes. To the contrary, hypertext is a form of communication mediated by computers. While this seems like simple word play, it also calls into question the term, "computer-mediated communication." What does this term literally mean? What connotations have we attached to this term? And how have those who study and have used these literacy technology been constrained by the term and/or its connotation?

Exploring the implications of these questions will help us understand recent iterations of hypertext. In the last decade, hypermedia has evolved into multimedia and integrated more interactive features. Many commercial Web sites, from electronic stores to newspapers to Wikipedia, are encouraging their audience to review and rate their products and/or services. Discussion boards have also become a ubiquitous feature on many Web sites, from MySpace to various fan sites to groups discussing medical conditions, and, in many ways, the Web sites allow this participating audience to shape the sites' content and how others experience the site. Similarly, many blogs encourage this type of interaction between writer and audience. Just as

important, those who design some CMC applications have chosen to adopt Web-based interfaces that are more user-friendly and, literally, more animated. For example, the Web-based interface offered by Google, Yahoo, MSN, and other e-mail and instant messaging providers is fairly easy for users, especially novices, to negotiate. Likewise, we have witnessed online gaming applications evolve from text-based MUDs to a hypermedia interface to online social games with animated interfaces (e.g., World of Warcraft, Second Life). Thus, the distinction between DC applications, like hypertext and CMC, have become less relevant than they used to be.

Similar comparisons can be made between those programs classified as CMC and those considered to be used for composing a text. At one time in our recent past, the average user composing in a word processing application, such as Microsoft Word, would have to print his document in order to hand it to his intended audience by hand or send it by snail mail. Some users, who knew all of the steps to uploading the document into a Unix-based e-mail application, could send these documents electronically, assuming that their audience knew how to download the document when they received it. Others would cut and paste the text into the Unix program, but the program would often alter the text's format making it difficult to read or nearly impossible to edit in a word processing application without significant reformatting. In many ways, the applications that we once used for composing texts were quite separate from those that were used for transferring text.

Now, with graphical user interfaces or Web-based interfaces being virtually ubiquitous for e-mail applications, it is often quite easy to e-mail and receive a document file as an attachment. With some e-mail interfaces, the writer can click a button that allows them to browse for the desired file and then upload it simply by clicking another button; other e-mail programs allow the writer to simply drag the icon of a saved file into the e-mail

message. The programmers of Microsoft Word have made this process even easier by including a function in this word processing application that helps writers send the document currently open on their desktop as an attachment (they have even included a button on their review menu interface to expedite the process). When this function is chosen, the default e-mail program is opened and a message with the composed document attached is ready to be sent. Composers now commonly find this seamless transition from DC applications to e-mail in other Microsoft programs like PowerPoint and Excel.

Other examples also highlight the social interaction now supported by DCs. An instructor reading an electronic version of her students' drafts can use the review functions to discuss how she reads the text and suggest revisions. Again, the instructor is only two clicks away from sending the document to the student who can continue this conversation. If e-mail is not the most situationally expedient method, these files can be uploaded from the word processing program to an instant messaging program. And if we are convinced that Web pages constitute CMC, then we should note that Microsoft allows users of Word, PowerPoint, and Excel to save their documents as html or pdf files, which can be posted to the Web. Likewise, we now see features of word processing being integrated into the interface of CMC programs. For example, blogs and wikis encourage writers to compose detailed responses and meticulous entries. These applications, as well as Web-based e-mail and courseware applications, provide many of the basic formatting tools one used to only find on their DC interfaces. As the design of various types of applications overlap, how do we discern between DC and CMC applications? How does a blurring of these programs affect our understanding of these application? And is "computer-mediated communication" still a useful term to describe these networked social applications?

For DeWitt (2001), "computer-mediated communication" is more applicable to a category of technologies that have limitations in a composition curriculum. He defines CMC as:

Any written interaction generated and transmitted with the use of computer technology. CMC encompasses a wide range of communications in many different settings: short memos and messages, ongoing arguments on specific topics, formal business letters, political petitions and letter-writing campaigns, collaboration on group projects, requests for information, announcements for social gatherings. Even a banking slip from a banking ATM could be considered CMC (p. 75).

DeWitt liberally opens up the definition of CMC to include a multitude of technological and rhetorical outcomes. His definition recognizes that "communication" is a broad and inclusive term "that encompasses a wide range of activities in which some type of information is transmitted and received" (p. 75), an activity that resembles the data-process features of earlier computer applications. DeWitt, as a result, prefers the computer-mediated discussion (CmD) for describing "multiple, continual exchanges that are focused in topic and purpose between two or more people, where each exchange potentially becomes a moment of invention" (p. 76). Thus "CmD" returns us to the applications that have been traditionally categorized as CMC, but his revision—from "communication" to "discussion"—emphasizes the applications' dialectical nature and enacts what writing instructors found valuable in CMC applications, "the social construction of knowledge" (Hawisher et al., 1996, p. 185). While I agree that CMC is a much more inclusive category, I believe—with the advantage of witnessing several years of technological evolution—DeWitt defines his category of CmD too narrowly; the types of applications he attributes to "communication" now interact almost seamlessly with those used for "discussion." I think we are moving into a phase of technological evolution in

which we benefit more from understanding how the design of applications informs each other, and by extension our uses of them, than discerning the differences in applications.

As instructors enter the new territory of online and hybrid courses, they will be developing strategies for composing not only their course content and their policies, but also their instructional identity. To create effective strategies, they need to know which applications will allow them to communicate with their students and how to use these applications to communicate with their students. Narrowly defining the applications available to do this work may make them feel constrained and frustrated. We can anticipate that many instructors will become anxious as they are asked to learn unfamiliar CMC applications that will support the courses' online component or even the most advanced functions of DC applications that facilitate social interaction. However, these instructors' ability to use familiar applications in new ways will give these instructors a foundation upon which to build these strategies. Furthermore, these instructors' confidence working within a computer-mediated context expands their composing repertoire and gives them more choices about how they will interact with their students, as well as how they will effectively present themselves electronically.

DIGITAL IDENTITIES, OR THE IMPLICATIONS OF "THE SOCIAL EXPERIENCE"

By its very design, CMC applications, especially first generation applications like chatrooms, discussion boards, and MOOs/MUDs, have generated literature about issues of identity that range from promises of democracy to cautionary tales. Since these applications not only allow but encourage individuals to make connections with people whom they have never met face-to-face, individuals rarely know whether there is a one-to-

one correlation between the people they imagine to be communicating with and the actual people at the other end of the wire. There is both hope and despair.

Individuals hope that the anonymity supported by these technologies offer safe spaces for individuals physically marked by their race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, or ability to equally participate in public discourse. One of participants working with cyberpsychologist, Sherry Turkle, realized that the possibility of drafting multiple identities in MUDs made her feel more complete: "I'm not one thing, I'm many things. Each part gets to be more fully expressed in MUDs than in the real world. So even though I am playing more than one self on MUDs, I feel more like 'myself' when I'm MUDding" (Turkle, 1995, p.185). For Turkle, these technological applications help individuals realize the postmodern notion of the fragmented individual, which allows us to explore other possibilities:

On MUDs, one's own body is represented by one's own textual description, so the obese can be slender, the beautiful plain, the 'nerdy' sophisticated. The anonymity of MUDs... gives people the chance to express multiple and often unexplored aspects of the self.... MUDs make possible the creation of an identity so fluid and multiple that it strains the limits of the notion (Turkle, 1995, p. 12).

In many ways, CMC applications allow the individual to be whomever the individual can compose themselves to be. Other users of CMC applications have used these technologies to achieve the potentials of collaborative identities (Byrd & Owen, 1998, Rhiengold, 2000), to practice future identities (Cooper, 1999; Rouzie, 2005), and to actively participate in, rather than merely read, narratives (Murray, 2000).

Yet, individuals also despair that the person they interact with has adopted a counterfeit persona in order to manipulate them. For example, in "The Strange Case of the Electronic Lover," one of the most infamous narratives about digital

identity and interpersonal manipulation, Van Gelder (1991) describes Joan, a female psychologist whose life was tragically interrupted when a drunk driver left her as a quadriplegic. Joan's successes on an early iteration of a listserv support many of the familiar tropes about the power of CMC applications to create opportunities for individuals commonly forgotten or systemically ignored by the public. After several months of support from her audience, Joan revealed that she was actually Alex, an able-bodied male psychologist who claims to have stumbled upon the ruse when he learned that compared to his face-to-face sessions, more people opened up to him online when he was accidentally mistaken for a female. While Alex's manipulation repulses many audiences, especially since he was soliciting other members for cybersex (and real sex), the story also teaches us that CMC applications literally allow us to rewrite the body; most of Alex's audience were persuaded by the identity for a considerable period of time. Although today's audiences are much more skeptical because of the Alex/Joan narrative, this story has taught us that the personas digital writers compose are themselves constructions meant to persuade an audience.

Similarly, the absence of face has prompted others to behave inappropriately in online contexts. Another infamous cyberculture narrative is the "rape" in LambdaMOO in which a group of male college students programmed a degenerate clown character to perpetrate sexual violence on female played characters (Dibbell, 1997). Lisa Nakamura (2002) also laments how many netizens co-opt tropes from Asian folklore, particularly geishas and samurais, to act out certain gendered fantasies. In the classroom, the nature of CMC applications seem to encourage students, as witnessed by Cooper and Selfe (1990), Faigley (1992), McKee (2004) and Regan (1993), to act out and normalize hegemonic behaviors, such as homophobia. In short, they choose uncivil identities for these rhetorical situations. Thus, we see that when individuals are given the opportunity

to revise themselves, they do not always migrate towards civility and respect.

Even though these technologies offer individuals the potential to compose their desired identity, scholars (Banks, 2005; Blackmon, 2003; Kolko, 2000; Nakamura, 2002) have observed how these technologies privilege the identity composing practices of our society's hegemonic populations. They contend that the dearth of racism in online spaces is influenced less by how people use the CMC applications and more by how the technologies are designed. Racial civility in online spaces can be attributed to default whiteness, or the way that every individual is assumed to be white when they meet in networked spaces until individuals distinguish themselves. Examining the program infrastructure for MUDs, Kolko (2000) notices that while these spaces require individuals to set their gender (various forms of gender neutrality are an option, but those who use it are often assumed to be female), setting one's race or ethnicity is not a programmed option. Both Kolko (2000) and Nakamura (2002) observed that those who describe their avatar using real racial or ethnic markings (as opposed to elves, dwarves, and ogres in some online environments) were often criticized by the environment's administrator and/or their online peers for politicizing the space. While the individuals tried to overcome the (presumably) deliberate programming oversight by literally composing their ethnic and racial identities, the practice violated the social conventions that privilege default whiteness.

Does this mean that ostracized populations, including those marked by their race or ethnicity, cannot use CMC applications (or even recent DC applications) to create safe spaces for themselves online? Arguably, every computer user has the opportunity to compose the online identity that they desire. But Romano (1999) reminds us that "[s]uccesses online are fleeting, and rewards for careful construction of ethos are strikingly ephemeral. [Computer users] are writers... required simultaneously to analyze and produce

discourse, to be rhetoricians, rhetors, and subjects under construction by others as well" (p. 258). Just using the CMC applications will not produce the desired online identity. These individuals must recognize that they are now digital rhetors; they have to work within a program's parameters and limitations—as well as within social parameters and limitations—to achieve their desired outcome (DePew, 2004).

STRATEGIES FOR COMPOSING INSTRUCTIONAL IDENTITIES ONLINE

Modifying Stone's (1995) question, I inquire what is new about the online classroom; we can, like her, answer both nothing and everything. The basic framework is still the same: Upon establishing the course's pedagogical goals, the instructor uses the available resources to achieve these goals. Likewise, many of the pedagogical tools and strategies—lectures, activities, discussions, assignments, feedback—get utilized for both types of classes. Yet, the delivery of the course changes everything; many of the practices that make the instructor and instruction present in the face-to-face classroom are either absent or need significant modification in the online class. For example, online instructors may give lectures through PowerPoint presentations, hold class discussions within courseware chat rooms, and use Microsoft Word's comment function to provide feedback. So using the computer as a social space, as Hawisher et al. (1996) describes, instructors harness the social epistemic potential of the CMC and DC applications they deliver the course through. In other words, the technology through which they teach the course can enhance how students learn from their peers and the instructor. And through the use and management of these technologies, the instructor can deliberately direct the flow of knowledge, including how their

physical and digital identities become integrated into the knowledge making process.

Therefore, one cannot simply ask what the most effective strategies are for composing one's identity for an online class. The answer will depend upon multiple factors presented by the rhetorical context—from the discipline to the technologies that both the instructors and the students can access to the personalities and values of all classroom participants—and how the instructor, as rhetor, responds to them. Although an instructor has many options for composing one's identity, especially with the expanded repertoire that CMC and DC applications offer, we will rarely find instructors replicating the rhetorical strategies Alex used to completely alter his identity. However, we may find these instructors deliberately practicing similar strategies to argue for the legitimacy of their position in the classroom or that they possess attributes that their student audience values, but cannot see in an online environment—fairness, compassion, and an interest in their success. Or they may use these applications to argue for an identity that emphasizes or de-emphasizes traits their audience may prejudge.

To illustrate the possibilities for digitally composing one's identity to respond to specific hybrid courses, I will analyze the practices I examined in two case studies. The first case study was an examination of an Asian international teaching assistant (ITA) who taught first-year composition at a Midwestern university in a networked computer lab during the Fall 2001 semester. Although there was a strong face-to-face feature of this course, there was still a fair amount of communication mediated by the computers both in the class and outside of the class. The second study examined an education course taught by an endowed professor at a Mid-Atlantic university during the Fall 2006 semester. Although there were two sections of the course, a face-to-face section of approximately eighty students that met twice a week and an online section of approximately 160 students that met twice during the entire semester

for televised sessions, both sections were mostly treated as a single entity.

For both of these studies, I designed the data collection to acknowledge the rhetorical situation by interviewing the instructors three times to discover what their rhetorical intentions were, surveying the students three times to learn how they perceived the course and the instructor, doing periodic observations of the class to corroborate the instructors' and students' perspectives, and collecting the print and online documents that were given to the students to view some of the artifacts. With the education course, I also interviewed the instructor's two teaching assistants (TAs) because of their interaction with the students and the course consultant who had been a TA for the instructor in the past because of his influence on how the course was being taught; due to minimal resources, other graduate and undergraduate students on the instructor were not interviewed.

Akiro (all names are pseudonyms), the Asian ITA with whom I worked for the first study, was in his third semester of teaching composition courses at the time of the study. Because previous students, in their end of semester evaluations, had commented on his noticeable accent and questioned how "he could teach English when he could not speak it," Akiro requested to teach in a networked classroom. He believed that using the technology would help reduce the impact that his accent—a characteristic that students believed was detrimental to their ability to learn from him. While we must consider that students do not always fulfill their responsibilities as interlocutors when interacting with ITAs (Rubin, 1992), Akiro accepted full responsibility for any miscommunications between him and his classes and has decided to proactively respond these "failings." In essence, the instructor envisions the technology—both CMC and DC applications—helping him deemphasize a physical trait his previous audiences have identified as problematic by providing more opportunities to proficiently communicate

in written English. Thus, he hoped that students would question his legitimacy as an English instructor less.

To appear more proficient in English, Akiro used multiple CMC and DC applications—from a course Web site, to e-mails, to Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Word—to communicate with the students both face-to-face and outside of the classroom. The course Web site provided a solid instructional foundation for the course. It was thorough and well-organized. He would use e-mail to send out announcements to the class and correspond with individuals about their inquiries. With both the Web site and the e-mails he explained how he would compose the texts (e.g., instructions for an activity, a response to a student), let them sit, proofread it, and then “publish” the text. With this practice, he gave himself the opportunity to catch the grammatical errors in these texts, thus presenting an English instructor who can proficiently produce prose. During one class, he did misspell a word on a Web page he was presenting. While the students were working on an activity, he wanted to revise and repost the page to remove his blemish. Where a domestic instructor who comfortably stands at the front of the classroom may have sheepishly let the error slide, Akiro wanted to take advantage of the fluidity of Web published texts to remove an error that might support his students’ arguments about his questionable qualifications for the position.

Because he still met with his students three days a week in a networked computer lab, Akiro still had to speak to and with his students. As a result, he often supplemented his lectures or instructions with a text composed as a Web page, a slideware presentation, or a word-processed document and projected on a screen in the class. While he would speak, he would often scroll over the text he was discussing—often just a few sentences or a bullet point—and highlight the text (a function normally used for cutting and pasting text). This would help emphasize what he was saying to the students. By the second student survey, many of

the students made it clear that they had noticed his spoken accent. While none of these respondents characterized it as an attribute and some characterized it as a detriment, the third and final student survey produced similar results. Despite these responses, many of these same students also stated that they learned a lot from the course about writing, and they clearly understood what was expected of them because of the Web site, the e-mails posted to the class, and their individual e-mail correspondences with Akiro when they needed clarification. Although Akiro was unable to compose the identity he desired with various combinations of CMC and DC applications, he did, in the student’s opinions, fulfill the rhetorical purpose of his position: teaching them how to be more effective writers. This case study illustrates the rhetorical nature of the composing your identity with CMC and DC applications. Not only does the technology have the inability to automatically create the persona you desire, but deliberate use of these technologies does not always produce the intended outcomes. Yet, sometimes, our deliberate use of these technologies, at least helps to fulfill some of one’s goals.

In the education course, the instructor, Charlie, chose to use an experimental pedagogy that asked each student to compose a 1000 word entry on an educational issue in Wikipedia during the first four weeks of the course; this became the course textbook that they used over the last eleven weeks. Conceptualizing the computer-as-a-social space, Charlie established a CMC application, wiki, as the foundation of his pedagogy to advance the development and exchange of social knowledge. However, since many students were unfamiliar with the wiki technology and over half the class was taking the course from a distance, Charlie was presented with the challenge of teaching students how to use this technology through other CMC and DC applications. Also, Charlie recognized the innovative nature of his curriculum and wanted to study various pedagogical features.

To support both the management and research of this course, Charlie surrounded himself with a team of graduate students assigned to different management assessment, and research tasks. Members of the team were compensated either financially, with credit, and/or the opportunity to develop a publishable research project. Two TAs, Dave and Helen, were responsible for managing the courseware site and fielding inquiries that that students made face-to-face outside of class, by phone, and by e-mail. However, students who wanted to communicate directly with Charlie were always given this opportunity. With this team's support, Charlie's instructional identity not only reflected what how he interacted with the students, but also how members of his team interacted with the students. Unlike Akiro, whose identity composing repertoire was limited to his own knowledge and resources, Charlie's repertoire included the knowledge and resources others brought to his team. However, when one develops a team to assist in the composition of her or his instructional identity, this instructor of record is also responsible for how team members shape this identity.

Charlie, as he explained in our discussions, was not an expert with the technology. He openly recognized that members of his team were more skilled with some of the technologies used to manage the class than he was. But, he believed that his comfort with the technology, his curiosity about the technology, and his ability to assemble a skilled team compensated for some of his technological limitations. At times, though, members of his team exceeded his expectations. For example, when students were struggling to follow the exact steps needed to establish their wiki accounts and post their entries, one of Charlie's team members, on his own initiative, developed video tutorials detailing the procedure for each step needed to fulfill these tasks. After these tutorials were posted to the courseware site, support calls were dramatically reduced. With these tutorials, and other resources available on the courseware site,

students, according to a limited sample of surveys, remarked that they rarely felt lost in the class because of the extensive resources made available to them. Rhetorically, Charlie recognized his limitations for composing a technologically cutting-edge instructional identity, but with his team he was able to provide students with the instruction he envisioned.

In the limited sample of surveys, students who took the face-to-face, section mentioned that they were endeared by Charlie's friendly personality and his willingness to get to know the students before class sessions. The online students, who interacted with him in televised sessions twice a semester, for obvious reasons, did echo not comments. Charlie even mentioned that this was one aspect of his pedagogy that he would want to replicate online. However, to a certain extent, Dave, as one of the primary communicators with these students, compensated for this with his approach to his communications with the students. Dave explained to me that he wants to see all of the students succeed and he sees his role contributing to that success. For face-to-face interaction and on the phone, Dave wanted students to perceive him as casual and friendly—one of them. When using e-mail to communicate with students, he felt that he was able to replicate this persona in e-mails addressed to the entire class by using informal language that one would use to e-mail a friend and sometimes drawing out a message longer than expected to add a personal touch. For example, he started a message delivered on October 31 with, "First, Happy Halloween! Hope you guys have lots of fun stuff planned for this evening. Just make sure to brush your teeth before bed! :) Now, on to business." In responses to student's individual inquiries, Dave thought that this strategy might violate the simple response that the students expected to their inquiries. Through this team members' careful consideration of how to use the CMC and DC applications to keep the entire student audience engaged in the course, Charlie, as the team leader, projects a professional

instructional identity. Although all of the team's work reflects upon him, he makes an effort to distribute this credit. As an instructor at the cutting edge of technology, Charlie aspires to making this a model of future education.

CONCLUSION

As academic institutions become more immersed in various forms of online education, and instructors have fewer options to teach without a computer, instructors will have to ask themselves how the technology shapes the ways their students perceive them. By extension, they will also be inquiring whether the perception their student create is how they want to be perceived and whether they can have more agency over shaping this perception. Therefore, instructors will want to understand how to use CMC and DC applications together to compose their instructional identities in these new digitalized environments. To prepare for these new academic futures, there are some paradigms that we will want to reconceptualize. And as we design new practices, we will want to study the resulting outcomes.

First, we will want to interrogate the categories we use to define our technologies. As we move into an era of new media and Web 2.0 applications, the original taxonomy that we developed to describe what certain types technologies did are, as I explained, breaking down. And we can anticipate that any new categories that we develop will also break down as computer technologies evolve. But, as new iteration of these technologies cross boundaries or head in completely new directions, we have to question how our conceptualizations of these technologies, including our practices with them and our scholarship about them, are limited by the categories we create. Those of us in the academy are in the best position for doing this critical inquiry, especially those using these technologies to conduct class.

Second, we need to rethink how we prepare instructors for these new teaching situations. While many instructors have ridden the learning curve as new CMC and DC application get adopted for academic purposes, there is still a population of instructors who barely use the computers to interact with their students. At many college campuses, training in instructional technology often takes a one-size-fits-all approach; they assume that all instructors will have the same concerns as they enter the computer-mediated class. Furthermore, these training sessions mostly focus on the applications the campus endorses and rarely helps instructors learn alternative technologies. This training gives instructors few options for customizing their instruction and provides only a limited repertoire for composing their instructional identities.

Finally, with all of the social and collaborative opportunities that new CMC and DC applications afford, we will want to re-imagine our current academic paradigms. While instructors may instinctively try to replicate their face-to-face instruction when they teach hybrid or online courses, they should resist this call. Starting with their pedagogical goals, they will want to examine the applications that they are adopting and see how the technologies can best facilitate these outcomes. Likewise, the academy may want to reconsider the way courses get taught. For example, the team approach that Charlie uses takes advantage of multiple peoples' talents. However, he cobbled this team together using various resources; this is currently not an instructional paradigm that gets institutional support. But we need to go above and beyond just the team approach to instruction, we need to really examine how the technologies can reshape the ways we currently teach. These changes will, of course, reshape how instructors use writing technologies, such as CMC and DC applications, to rhetorically achieve their instructional intentions and influence how their students identify them.

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KEY TERMS

Computer-Mediated Communication Applications: Traditionally these have been computer applications that are directly networked to each other and facilitate both synchronous (e-mail, bulletin boards) and asynchronous (MOOs/MUDs, instant messaging) communication.

Default Whiteness: The assumption that the interlocutor one interacts with in online spaces is white; this assumption is reified by the taboo of identifying race and ethnicity in certain online environments.

Digital Composition Applications: Computer applications that have traditionally been considered as tools for composing stand alone texts, such as programs in the Microsoft Office Suite, Web authoring programs, and visual editing programs.

Hybrid Classroom: A classroom in which some interaction is conducted face-to-face and some interactions is computer-mediated; as more DC and CMC applications get developed and as institutions see more need for pedagogical

flexibility, there are becoming many different formulas for combining face-to-face interaction with computer-mediated interaction.

Instructional Identity: This is the identity that an instructor presents to her or his students inside and outside the classroom; composing and presenting one's instructional identity is an act of persuasion and, therefore, requires rhetorical strategies.

Online Classroom: A classroom that has no face-to-face component; all interaction between the students and the instructor—both synchronous and asynchronous—is conducted using a combination of CMC and DC applications.

Wiki Textbook: A textbook that the students compose—based upon assigned topics—early in the term using wiki applications; throughout the latter part of the term, students learn the course content by reading, editing and rating their peers' entries.

ENDNOTE

1. Multi-user dimensions (MUDs) and multi-user dimensions, object-oriented (MOOs) are online spaces that a user enters to participate in role-playing games or academic discussions often by interacting through a textual interface. In other words, "the room" the user occupies is described on the interface so that users can imagine the space (although rudimentary ASCII images were sometimes employed). Later iterations of MUDs and MOOs supported by the Web allowed individuals to use generic and customized images.