Hi Jennifer,
I have looked at your literature review and proposal. It is good and I like the work that you have done so far in reading up on ideas and connecting them.

The below comments in this email are what are most important. They are the hardest, but I think most important things to consider as you start your study. I think once you have these questions and global issues addressed, your dissertation and writing will be on a solid, strong track. Ask Beth if you are wondering if some of the below work for the prospectus - she is your main advisor.

Below are things that I think will help you in creating a strong prospectus:
1) When writing the prospectus, keep the motto of "write about issues first; Theory/literature comes second". Synthesize ideas/concepts at the beginning and ending of the paragraph. Embed the ideas of other scholars in literature in the middle.

(This may sound simple, but I think it works- Have you heard of the Sandwich method of writing paragraphs with source material?
See visual on this page: https://libraryofantiquity.wordpress.com/2016/02/26/help-with-undergraduate-research-the-classics-essay/)

I think the above motto will help you write stronger paragraphs and relate the ideas more coherently for your reader. This will allow you to synthesize your ideas in much more coherent and stronger ways as currently your review focuses too much on what other scholars say, but short thrifts how their ideas connect to the research gap you are trying to study. It is important as the gap frames the study, and the literature needs to speak to your gap.

What I mean by this is that I see you writing paragraphs that are based on introducing literature in almost a chronology and with theory in time as a leitmotif. That is fine initially, but for the prospectus I would like you to think about the "why" - as in, why are you introducing the concepts of digital rhetoric, procedural rhetoric, and electracy in light of digital or new composition practices? What other concepts inform composition with technology? (If so, maybe also consider adding an overview paragraph of the scholarship (briefly) on multimodal composition) My question is why only digital rhetoric, procedural rhetoric, and electracy, but why not multimodal composition?

2-For paragraphs, a good writing tip that I think will be of benefit - consider doing less quoting and more paraphrasing and using APA to your advantage to highlight concepts and key ideas.

Use APA in-text citation and paraphrase to your advantage by being short and citing the author(s) and year and then paraphrasing their ideas. This saves space and clarifies the ideas as you don't spend so much time introducing the source or weaving in the "quote" and then trying to get the idea connected to your direction. Instead, you are using theories to advance YOUR ideas.

For example:
Selber (2004) criticizes the idea that technology is neutral, and instead asks us to do XYZ (p. ?). This is important because it points to composition …..

I say this because you do a lot of "quoting" and in you carefully weave in what other people say - kind of like a literature paper. For the dissertation, it is okay to do a bit less of quoting and use more paraphrasing and for you to discuss and highlight issues and concepts in literature as they relate to what you are doing for the dissertation. I think this will help you write more concise and use the theories to support your points.

3-Move up the conceptual framework from page 11 to top of the literature review to solidify WHY you are using digital theories to study composition.

I think you should consider moving up your point on page 11 to the top of the literature review. Here is where you are getting to important ideas as to why you are conducting this study. You have placed the really solid ideas at the end of the section, whereas placing it at the beginning will help you clarify the connections between digital rhetoric, and procedural rhetoric because you are telling your reader why the ideas below are important in light of your study. Right now it is placed as an afterthought, when it is THE main thought and why you are studying and doing this dissertation.

4-I need you to early on consider positioning your idea of technology as functional/rhetorical AND critical (maybe procedural? other?) by using Selber's multiliteracies framework much earlier in the literature review to position your approach to technology in composition.

That is, tell us why we need to become critical, function and rhetorical practitioners of technology in composition. DIscussions in this have gone on for quite some time in the field, and they are important because they lead to the idea that technology is both functional (tool), but also practice with political, cultural implications that position us differently. Hence, we need to be critical of that idea (technology=progress, tool, good) and be rhetorical in our use of technology. We think in replacement models but these have implications in that when we use technology not all is better and not everything improves (consider how computers create literacies and a digital divide) These discussions you mention, and are central to computers and composition and a lot of work by Hawisher and Selfe, Selfe and Selfe, Selber, Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola. Beth will appreciate this, as she teaches the rhetoric of technology - this is Andrew Feenberg's idea of critical theory of technology. Technology is a tool, but also something else that transforms us. So make sure to address this early on so you can use it to synthesize ideas later on when you introduce digital rhetoric and other research areas in your review in relation to composition.

5- Strongly consider briefly scanning for important ideas the following papers to inform your idea of composition. These point to composition as changing rapidly and happening across social networks. This will help you create a stronger idea of composition as ubiquitous, distributed

changing rapidly and happening across social networks. This will help you create a stronger idea of composition as ubiquitous, distributed AND participatory. Students are literally composing in multiple environments across different spaces.

Pigg, Stacey. "Emplacing Mobile Composing Habits: A Study of Academic Writing in Networked Social Spaces." College Composition and Communication 66.2 (2014): 250-275.

Pigg, Stacey, Jeffrey T. Grabill, Beth Brunk-Chavez, Jessie L. Moore, Paula Rosinski, and Paul G. Curran. "Ubiquitous Writing, Technologies, and the Social Practice of Literacies of Coordination." Written Communication 31.1 (2014): 91-117.

6- The methodology section needs to be based around you answering your Research Questions. Here is where you need to describe a chronology of answering your RQ1,2,3 and using literature in methodology by Creswell and others that discuss why a certain instrument is used to find out answers. Also discuss why you are doing something and in what order.

I see you using "grounded" as a term - grounded theory works. Consider adding discourse analysis as instrument - your survey will lead to discourse analysis of various documents which will lead to follow-up interviews which will inform your new definition/categories of (digital?) composition. In your study you try to address how "composition" is changing - maybe to digital composition (which can then inform digital rhetoric, literacies, and theory in general which speak to the digital turn)

If you are wondering how to write your methodology, repeat your research questions, then tell us that these point to qualitative research. Consider using Cresswell as a source to define qualitative research. Then describe in sequence as a chronology, how you will gather data and why you will do so (this to answer your research questions). Consider explaining the sequence of your data gathering - why are you starting with surveys, what happens next?

One tip that I recommend heartily is seeing if people are doing similar studies, and then using their methods but amending them to find answers to your particular research gap. I also strongly recommend reading up on a methodology section by one of your fellow graduate students who did a similar study under Beth. It will give you a better sense of how that section is organized.

(If you have time, sign up for Jennifer Clifton's methods course).

Hope this helps! I know it is a lot, but in the long run, I think this will help you move along more quickly in writing the dissertation. If you need come and discuss these ideas, let me know and we can sit down. I will be happy to talk about them further if you need.

Ask me questions if you have them, okay?
I am here to help you. :-)
Good luck,
Gustav

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From: Falcon, Jennifer
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2016 5:08 PM
To: Verhulsdonck, Gustav A
Subject: Prospectus Draft

Dr. Gustav,
     Thanks for your help today. I attached the current draft of my prospectus. The areas that still need some revision are the Lit Review section and the Methodology. With the Lit Review I am wondering if I should add more the procedural rhetoric part, or leave it as is since this is intended to be a brief lit review. I know for my dissertation I would certainly need to discuss procedural rhetoric in more detail, but I'm unsure if this is too brief for the Prospectus. Also, I have reorganized the lit review a few times, which means I am still working on my transitional sentences.

Any feedback or insight you can give me would be greatly appreciated. It's been a task to discuss these topics and organize them in a way that is useful.

GV_comments_FalconP
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