Semester Overview

Looking back on the work I completed this semester, and the readings we discussed it class, it seems the best place to begin is with “Pencils to Pixels.” The Barron piece does well in establishing the connection between rhetoric and composition and technology. The mere fact that most of what composition instructors cling to was once questioned, because of its status as a new technology sets the framework for the entire course. Many readings urge composition instructors and scholars to include more technology in their classroom, and that the assignments in the curriculum should reflect both the changes in technology as they demand that students develop other literacies, and give students an opportunity to compose with technology. The readings that I found most helpful as an instructor addressed the ways in which composition classes must move away from the essay, and give suggestions for assignments that do so. I found these readings the most helpful because like a lot of instructors I see the value, and necessity for composition classes to include assignments that help develop the multiliteracies Selber mentions in his book *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age.* However, it’s difficult to implement assignments that develop those multiliteracies, and other skills that are beneficial to students when the semester never seems long enough to do everything we, as instructors, feel the need to do. I continually return to Selber book

Selber’s book, and Arroyo’s “Participatory Composition” not for ideas about assignments, but for the concepts and theories that should inform the way I teach assignments. With only fifteen weeks to teach and help students develop so many different skills and literacies I think a course like this is important not because we can trace the inclusion of specific uses of technology, and shifts in the way we think about and use technology. Class discussion, I felt, often times mirrored some of the concerns that scholars address, and work around. Yancey’s 2004 CCCC address speaks to the resistance, and hesitance of instructors to move away from alphabetic text assignments. It was common that we, as a class, brought up the difficulties of teaching an assignment like the video essay, or the value in doing so. Within our own class we encountered some that would question why we teach a video assignment, or more importantly why do we as a field incorporate an assignment such as that when other fields still rely heavily on the essay. It’s clear that the service course label is difficult to shake, and might be so ingrained in our own experiences or pedagogy that moving away from what we know has value to other disciplines proves incredibly difficult. I don’t have an answer for many of these difficult questions, but I hope that the work in this portfolio falls in line with many of the scholars that urge the field to incorporate assignments that reflect the current direction and uses of writing as influenced, and/or dictated by technological advancements.   
 The work in this portfolio, I believe, support the continued pursuit of a curriculum in composition courses that embrace the shifts in technology, but do more than simply transfer previous pedagogical practices and approaches to the learning objectives of assignments that incorporate technology, such as the video essay, or digital multimodal assignments, etc. The coursework and assigned reading of this course should more than adequately prepare the students to critically engage with the theory behind specific assignments, while providing the necessary framework to develop our own pedagogies for implementing assignments.

**Journal Overview: technoculture**

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| Intended Audience(s) | The primary audience would appear to be scholars, or students interested in critical work that researches how technology impacts society, but the journal states that their readers are not necessarily academics, and therefore “jargon and stilted language should be avoided.” Articles that address writing, and the role of technology in present day writing suggest this may be geared towards RWS, but the work published can easily be read, and understood by those outside RWS.  A simple interest in writing, technology, and/or technology studies would be more than sufficient to find the published work interesting. Those outside of RWS can easily make up this population of their readership. The journal is an online peer reviewed journal. There are PDF versions, print friendly versions, and the ability to email every page.  The focus appears to be geared towards RWS, technology, and anything related to those, but there is a creative section that includes poetry, and fiction. The creative work is encouraged to be multimodal, but it is not mandatory for publication. |
| Types of research and scholarship published | *What do you notice about the types of scholarship published? Does it relate to a set of focused topics, is the research method similar across articles, is the medium unique, etc.?*  The scholarship published generally relates to technology, and the impact technology has on society. The impact can be as seemingly simple as addressing the commodity, identity, and implications of internet celebrity, viral videos, and online communities. However, there are articles that explore the rhetoric of technology, reading and theorizing print, and in some articles the impact of technology on a past society. Not all articles about the impact of technology on society are written about a current technology use. There are critical writings about an older technology’s impact. Articles that address this include Roxanne O’Connell’s “Your Granny’s Gramophone: The Cultural Impact of 78 rpm Recordings on Ireland and Irish America.”    As expected, with the high numbers of people using different social media platforms, there is a higher number of articles that research and/or analyze social networks, and the writing done within them.  The types of research are a balanced mix of theory and critical analysis. They do not seek work that only focuses on the ways in which technology can be used as part of a pedagogical process. |
| Editor(s) | **Editor**  Keith Dorwick, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette  **Research Interests** - Queer studies, technology studies, children’s literature, disability studies, drama, history of rhetoric, the essay  **Assistant Editor**  André Favors, The University of Memphis  **Research Interests** -  phenomena related to place and space, technology and new media, and LGBT studies  **Creative Editor**  Sarah K. Jackson, Southern University of New Orleans  **Reviews and Critical Web Editor**  Lillie Connor-Flores, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette  MA student  **Research Interests** - English, Early Christianity, Textual Criticism, Apostle Paul and the Pauline Letters, and [Ecclesiology](https://www.academia.edu/People/Ecclesiology)  **Web Developer**  John Patterson, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette  **Research Interests** – Unknown, at this point, but he is responsible for coding the creative section |
| Editorial | The note from the editor appears in each issue, and it gives background information about each issue, and the circumstances that lead to that particular area of interest. There are introductions for any new editors, and call for papers for upcoming issues. |
| Publisher/Sponsor | Technoculture is an independent journal, and not for profit organization. There is no sponsor, but they gladly take donations. The journal offers continuous publication.  *Technoculture* is a member of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals and a 501-c-3 not for profit corporation, as determined by the IRS. |
| Different sections of journal | Critical Essays – In early issues this section was not themed. In recent issues there are themes, and the articles are presented as “Critical Essays on” and then the specific theme of the issue follows. However, it is important to note that articles that fall outside of the theme are included, and are labeled as “Other Critical Articles.” It would appear as though they will publish work that falls under the general theme of the journal, even when they theme an issue.  Reviews – These are not themed. As expected authors review works related to technology and its impact on society.  Creative Works – The creative work includes poems, fiction pieces, and video performances on the subject of technology. Creative works are encouraged to be multimodal, but it is not a requirement. Some works include an audio or video file of the written work to be played.  Note from the Editor – Presents the issue, and gives background information about each issue, and the circumstances that lead to that particular area of interest. Since it’s an online journal there are occasionally reminders that the current issue may not yet be complete. There are introductions for any new editors, and call for papers for upcoming issues.  Interviews – Interviews do not appear in every issue, but do occasionally appear as a section of the journal.  Postscript – This contains the acknowledgements for each issue.  CFP – A call for papers for future volumes. This section is a link to a section on the website that gives information about upcoming volumes. Links to specific themes/topics for future issues can be found here. |
| Guidelines for authors | There are no limitations for submissions, but they do request submissions that are not only text based. There are specific requirements for all forms of media. They encourage works to incorporate media. The preferred file formats are mp3, and Ogg for audio, Ogg, Webm, and Mp4 for video files.    Technoculture prefers the most current MLA, but Chicago and APA may be considered after discussion with the editor. It appears as though, while they prefer MLA, they will accept Chicago, or APA if that is the citation system used by the author, or commonly used by the filed of the author. There is no information about IRB.  The journal provides its Standard CSS style sheet  .  Code to be added to the CSS Rules section of a TC Journal Page:  @import "?q=css/get/96";  For General Formatting by Class:  .author  .abstract  .bio-heading  .cited  .copyright  .essay-heading  .notes  .section  .poetry-wide  .white (for white backgrounds)  Horizontal rule, 50% of the page, centered  hr.partial  Spacing: 40 px; 25px; 20px; 15px;  .hugebreak  .bigbreak  .smallbreak  .tinybreak  For paragraphs  p.indent  p.noindent  p.both-ident (both left and right margin pulled in .5 in)  p.abspar  p.hanging  p.blockquote  p.courier  p.times  p.verticalpadding  For images, with wrapped text; includes a border as below  .floatLeft  .floatRight  Without a border:  .floatleft  .floatright  (Note the change in capitalization)  Border for images and other elements  .border  For center (useful with divs)  .center  For center with tables:  .centerTable  For indention outside of a paragraph tag as well as compound indention:  .indent  For CSS3 columns and content grouping:  .twoColumn  .Column  For text alignment:  .text-left  .text-center  .text-right  For spans:  span.courier  span.courier-bold  span.times  Sidebars with an illustration or other object plus a caption with border:  .sidebarRight  .sidebarLeft  To make a sidebar, create a div (or span) with a class of either of the sidebars, then place any code you want between the two tags. The background will change to white; text and lineheight reduced to 90%; items in the div bordered just like our floatRight or floatLeft (black, 2px); and the whole box floated to the right or left.  Primary use: illustrations with captions. Between the divs, add the img tag then one nested paragraph, with a short text between the p tags. Multiple lines may be used (for instance, to add a photo credit): use the the br tag within the p tags to break text up into shorter lines. Add the divider class to the upper element of the sidebar to add a black line between the two elements.  NOTE: This should not replace the alt tag but be used with it! |
| Upcoming calls, etc. | technoculture has rolling publications, therefore they still accept work after an issue is published. It is not clear when an issue is deemed closed for submissions. Based on the fact that articles that fall outside of any theme established for an issue, it would appear as though work that addresses a previous theme, or topic, may be included in newer issues.  There are two special issues coming up.  Vol. 5, 2015 is described as open topic issue.  “For this open topic issue of *Technoculture* (Vol. 5, 2015), we seek creative works that use new media and/or are on the subject of technology, and essays from a broad a range of academic disciplines that focus on cultural studies of technology. Essays we publish examine the topic *technology and society*, or, perhaps, *technologies and societies*. This is an open topic issue and we encourage a broad definition of *technology*.Topics could include depictions of technologies that treat a wide range of subjects related to the social sciences and humanities.”  Topics for Vol. 5 might include:   * The use of technology by youth, especially beyond or other than their use of social media * The use of technology by older individuals, especially beyond or other than their use of social media * The access problem today * Medical issues and technologies * Intellectual property concerns, especially patents and trademarks, and in different historical moments * Literary and cinematic descriptions of technology in any historical period such as Bellamy's *Looking Backward* * Use of technology by minorities or from non-Western perspectives * Game studies (especially in the form of or delivered via playable online games) * Music, theater, and other plastic arts and the use of technology by artists * Sound and silence, and especially noise, the latter especially in positive senses and applications * Alternative forms of print texts and especially of "books" * Work and labor issues * Leisure   Other creative works, especially those that use video or audio in new or exciting ways  Vol. 6, 2016 is a special issue on theatrical magic edited by John Patrick Bray, University of Georgia; and Stephen Fernandez, University of Waterloo.  For this special issue, technoculture seeks “critical and creative works that use new media and/or are on the subject of technology. Volume 6 (2016), "It's Magic!", focuses on the tropes that associate technology with magic and vice versa.”  Topics for this special issue may include:   * Essays that address the two maxims found above (Clarke's Third Law and Benford's variant on it) * Wishful and magical thinking and technology * Energy use that seems or is unlimited (whether of humans or machinery) * Lack of agency for end users due to magical thinking about technology * Technological design and magic as its inspiration * Stage and screen trickery, especially to create the illusion of magic * Cultures that have used or now use technology as magic as a means of control of their populace * The idea of magical figures in games and other online environments * Games based on fantasy * The idea of the wizard in productivity software such as Microsoft Office and OpenOffice * Technocracy * Popular descriptions of technology that use magical language in literature and film * Whiz kids in young adult and adult literature * Misunderstandings of technology as magic * Other readings of technology as magic in a variety of cultural and historical periods   In every call technoculture is clear to state that they “are not interested in “how to” pedagogical papers that deal with the use of technology in the classroom.” |
| Back-matter | At the end of each issue is an Acknowledgments section. This section includes a Postscript section that contains the acknowledgements for each issue, and a CFP that includes a call for papers for future volumes. This section is a link to a section on the website that gives information about upcoming volumes. Links to specific themes/topics for future issues can be found here |

**Article Analysis**

*Name* Everything Old is New Again: A Barthesian Analysis of Tumblr

K. Shannon Howard, University of Louisville

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**Bibliographic Information:** MLA

**Predominant Research Methodology:** Archival, textual analysis, ethnography

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| **Potential Topics Covered** | **How Handled in the Article?** | **Anything Unexpected?** | **Anything Missing or Insufficiently Explored?** |
| Problems Prompting the Study | The researcher, it appears, was influenced by the traditional organizational structures of the text-based posts on Tumblr. She views the structure and format of the posts as a prime example of the ways in which the text design is not new, but something old and familiar to users.  The researcher is studying the manipulation of text, and integration of graphics in posts on Tumblr. Tumblr is known for humor, the use of multimedia, and short posts, but this critical essay explores the ways in which it relies on written text to generate content, and user interaction. | The title made it clear that this analysis will focus on the text found on Tumblr. However, this was a bit unexpected because Tumblr is a multimedia blog site. A large number of posts are multimodal, so it was unexpected that this analysis would mostly address text posts, and the texts on Tumblr. |  |
| Research Questions | How does the design and content of Tumblr merge traditional organizational patterns with new ones to create a social network?  How is original authorship represented on Tumblr with written text when the platform encourages forwarding ideas?  How does content and authorship alter communication?  How do people engage in dialogue in the structure of this particular online community? | The research questions focus on the design and how it influences the reading of content on Tumblr. However, by only addressing the text on Tumblr there is a missing analysis of how the multimedia, and posts that are multimodal, alter communication.  There may have not been efficient space, or time, to research the multimodal posts in addition to the text posts. |  |
| Previous Related Research | Web 2.0, Barthes on Structuralism, analysis of multimodality, activity theory, new media studies, |  |  |
| Design of Study | This article is a textual analysis. The design of the study is to analyze the ways in which Tumblr users engage with each other that, based on the structure of the site, are similar to what is now viewed as traditional forms of media and text production.  She focuses on the vertical lines, and lists that structure the content.  It could be seen as a very general case study, because the author does follow Tumblr users, but does not appear to continually follow the same users throughout the article. |  |  |
| Research Site | *Where is the research located?*  All research is done on Tumblr. |  |  |
| Subjects/  Participants | There are no active participants in the study, but the researcher does give examples of tumblr posts that clearly show usernames. | Do you need permission to use posts from social media sites? If they are public, does that mean they can be used without consent from the user? |  |
| Data Collection | The data does not appear to be collected over a specific timeframe. The data presented also does not appear to have been collected in a specific manner. The author does not state that she was following, or tracking specific tags or specific users. Rather, examples or images are used to demonstrate the structure, and format used on Tumblr. |  |  |
| Findings | The findings of this analysis are that the structure and format of tumblr posts is reminiscent of newspaper, and other seemingly “old” forms of text communication.  Essentially, while this very “new” site is branded as a “new” social media network, many “old”, or “older” forms of text communications are used to drive the content of the site. So, what is new is actually old. |  |  |
| Picturing of Data | Screenshots of Tumblr posts, and the organization of notes on Tumblr are used. The purpose of their use is to give a visual to accompany the description of the design, organization, and format of these types of posts. | The focus of screenshots primarily on the structure. For example, the use of vertical lines, but not always addressing the content of the post when it is not only a text post. | Here is a screenshot used in the article. The analysis of the structure dictates that the author addresses the use of vertical lines, and the top/down reading. The analysis doesn’t address how the images used influence the structure, or the ways in which it alters text meaning. This is a short example. Many tumblr posts have so many users adding to the original post that responses are either cut off, or fall outside the frame, and the impact that has on communication among users isn’t analyzed.  So, if the format reinforces hierarchy of information, what does that mean for the users who have posts that fall outside of the line, or are cut out to keep from one post from being too long and taking up so much space on a user’s dash?  Macintosh HD:Users:jenniferfalcon:Desktop:Figure3.0.png |
| Discussion | The data collected are examples of the types of posts on Tumblr, and the ways in which they are structured. The discussion of what is collected from Tumblr focuses on how this is a replication of previous forms of text production. |  |  |
| Limitations |  |  | Only focusing on text posts on Tumblr, despite the heavy use of multimedia, and multimodal posts. |
| Conclusion/  Recommended Actions | The article concludes with the author stating that Tumblr, and “its blend of old and new suggest users today are still eager to attribute authorship and create hierarchies of information,” which of course are based on the structure and format of the site. The conclusion may suggest, or serve as a reminder of what these types of formats reinforce. |  |  |
| Needed Further Study | Not explicitly. The author mostly points out the similarities in posts on a newer social blog site that harken back to previous styles, formats, and structures of text. |  |  |
| Place of Publication | The article fits well within the journal, and its other published content. It addresses how the format and structure of tumblr is not only similar to previously used structures is “old” media, but also how this impacts the lives of Tumblr users. The structure and format keeps users within the confines of previously established acceptable forms of text communication. This suggests that it does impact their life, or at the very least reinforce these ideas, and structures.  It appears in the Critical Essay section of the journal, which is appropriate. |  |  |

**Contribution of study:**

*Write a paragraph of or two that evaluates the study. Who should read it? For what purpose? What overall issue or topic does it contribute to? What recommendations might you make to the author, etc.?*

The study of text posts on Tumblr is interesting, and does have its merit within RWS. I understand that some may not view the type of writing done on a blog site, such as Tumblr, as worth researching, or understanding the ways in which the structure and format influence the content and communication on the site. Using Barthes, and strucuturalism help to strengthen the analysis, and prove that the “new” on Tumblr, is similar to an “old” form we are familiar with. Personally, the applying of something old, or older, to something seemingly new, always fascinates me, because it sometimes only serves to validate, or introduce, a newer media in the field.

I don’t know why, in some circles, there is a push to prove that something “new” actually uses “old” or “older” technology, formats, and/or structure. It only stands to reason that user familiarity is vital to success in new, or other mediums, so naturally it would mimic a newspaper, or be somewhat plain, but easy to read and/or follow. The functional aspect of this type of format is clear, but this analysis could do more to explain the critical and rhetorical choices that are made, or presented, to users as a result. In areas of this article the focus is directed more at the existence of the format and structure in the text posts, than what they may or may not push users to do.

The general purpose of this article is not only to highlight the old as something “new,” but the underlying tone is that there is important research and opportunity to analyze not only this type of writing, but how technology influences it. However, if it’s going to research something newer, like Tumblr, then the multimodal posts should be analyzed too, or analyzed in depth as well. I understand that the point of this was to demonstrate that even on a site known for multimedia posts, and the heavy use of multimodality, there is a large amount of text that drives content, and this text relies on attributing authorship and a hierarchy of information.

The only suggestion I have for the author is to address the multimodality more, and the overall heavy use of multimedia on Tumblr. On a blog site that so heavily relies on multimodal posts, and the use of multimedia, it seems difficult to truly capture some of the practices of users within the format and structure without including an analysis of those types of posts as well.

Review of Literature

*Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook* intends to be a starting point for instructors that wish to incorporate multimodal compositions into their curriculum. Continued growth in popularity due to numerous calls to action to improve digital literacies and to incorporate multimodal assignments over the last ten years plush make it difficult for instructors to know where to begin if they are starting to rethink their approach to incorporating multimodal compositions. There’s no shortage of collections that address multimodal compositions. However, this book sets itself apart from other collections. It has much to offer instructors that currently teach, and make use of multimodal pedagogy. The organization of the book proves to be one of the many things it does well to enhance the purpose of this critical sourcebook. Which, I believe, one of the main arguments of this book, is quite simply that it should be the go to sourcebook for those instructors that currently teach multimodal assignments, or the place to start for instructors interested in multimodal composition. Within that framework and goal the book is split into six parts to that address very specific areas of multimodal composition.

This is a long book, boasting over 500 pages of content. For this reason, the organization is incredibly important, but also very necessary. It would be impossible to go into specific detail about each section, but to provide a better understanding of how this book presents itself as the critical sourcebook for all things multimodal composition here is a brief overview of the six sections. The first section aims to work through the very definition of multimodal composition. Part two approaches design. Part three investigate the value of incorporating multimodal composition into composition classes, but also what is lost as result of moving from print based media to the Internet. Part four acknowledges that instructors can no longer deny the importance of multimodal composition, which accounts for this section of the book. This section specifically discusses assignments and assessment of multimodal composition. This section situates assessment as a driving force behind assignments. Simply put, the argument presented in the book here is without knowing how to assess these assignments it is difficult to encourage support for teaching them when instructors have more training in how to assess alphabetic text. This section is the most informative, and demonstrates the practical nature of the book. The pedagogies that influence multimodal composition, the role of composition in creating new meanings by using different modes, gives examples of assignments, and how to assess them, as well as presenting different literacies and practices found in multimodal composition collections such as this one. Often times it is the part of the book with the most advice for practical application, and attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In a collection like this, aimed at the beginning instructor, or instructor just beginning to teach multimodal composition this section likely has the most value of any other section.

Part five discusses the need for building an infrastructure that supports the inclusion of multimodal assignments in a composition classroom. Part six has two purposes. The first is to continue to demonstrate the power of multimodal composition due to the inclusion of multiple voices, and the second addresses the need for more scholars to research this aspect of multimodal composition. Rather than attempting to include a formal conclusion to an incredibly long, but well put together book, the editor chose to include a list of further reading as the closing for this collection.

The organization of the book allows for instructors familiar with multimodal composition to select which section they feel comfortable reading first. The six sections do not necessarily build off of each other. It is possible to read an article in one section and move on to another that complements it. This is interesting, and demonstrates the editor’s knowledge of the restraints of a print book, that e-books or interactive platforms offer the reader. Part of the success of this approach is a direct result of the introductions before each section. The organization is a major strength of the organization of this book, because of the inclusion of introductions before each section. These introductions serve two purposes, for two different audiences. For the beginning instructor, or instructor setting out to include these types of assignments in their classroom for the first time, the introductions help to situate the articles that follow. They offer a brief explanation as to their place in the book, but also in the overall ongoing discussion of multimodal composition, and specific areas of interest as a result of inclusion of multimodal assignments in composition classrooms, and curriculum.

The inclusion of multimodal composition assignments in the composition classroom is common in the filed of rhetoric and composition, as is scholarship on the benefits of these types of assignments to students, but the resistance and lack of deep understanding of multimodal compositions continually needs to be discussed. Without a clear, and agreed upon definition of multimodal, it is difficult For this reason, this book serves as a great resource. It frames the movement towards multimodal composition by providing a history of multimodal composition, and offers not only assignment suggestions, but assessment guidelines as well. This approach to multimodal composition makes this book effective for instructors of all levels.

The organization of the book allows for instructors familiar with multimodal composition to select which section they feel comfortable reading first. The six sections do not necessarily build off of each other. It is possible to read an article in one section and move on to another that complements it. This is interesting, and demonstrates the editor’s knowledge of the restraints of a print book, that e-books or interactive platforms offer the reader.

An example of how this book is set up to first define multimodal composition, and then dive deeper into the grey areas of why this is done in composition classes, how to do it, how to assess it, and then how to support it can be found in the first section. In an article written by Claire Lauer, the author gives a historical background of the usages of the terms multimedia and multimodal. This article explains why both are in use in composition classrooms despite the fact that multimodal is more accurate in a theoretical sense. However, multimedia tends to be the bridge to discussing concepts associated with multimodal, and is more frequently used in public and industry. This article is an example of how the framework of the book can be useful to both the experienced and inexperienced instructor. It’s obviously aimed more at the beginning instructor, but understanding what the public (our students), use versus what we (scholars and instructors) use help to remind everyone that we arrive at these assignments with different skills and knowledge. An article such as this reminds all instructors that it is important to understand that the vocabulary students are familiar with is not always, or ever, going to be the same as our own.

The section that most reading this book would be eager to read is part four “Assignments and Assessments.” It is one of the shortest sections in the book, despite being one that most readers would want to be longer. In order to incorporate multimodal compositions in the classroom instructors need to know what some of these assignments look like, and what should be considered when grading them. This section does address those issues, but not in the detail beginning instructors might need. The main focus of this section is to inform instructors that they need to be very clear when developing these assignments so that instructors are aware of their goals in teaching multimodal composition, and understand the consequences, or benefits, of teaching one assignment over another. The other sections in this book are incredibly thorough, as suggested by the overall length of this collection, but what might be most vital to inexperienced instructors is the shortest section. This could be in part due to the fact that many narratives exist in other collections, and single author books about specific types of assignments, or it could be a result of the editor’s own choice to promote agency of the reader. This may be viewed by the editor as a book that gives instructors the framework to go out and design assignments, and areas to asses son their own. It is a curious fact that this section is so short despite the book’s claim that is collection is a practical sourcebook.

Another major critique of this book is the length. It’s well organized, which makes the length incredibly easy to navigate, but for the beginner it may be intimidating, and for the instructor that has some, or a lot, of experience teaching multimodal composition it will be repetitive in certain sections. If you are familiar with multimodal composition, then you’ve likely ready some of these theories, or schools of thought in previous journals or collections. This appears to have been put together with a specific audience in mind, but it has value for those that are not entering multimodal pedagogy for the first time. For the experienced instructor this collection will have value because it houses most of the important works on multimodal composition in one place, and can be sifted through quite easily to get to new or different takes on previous research.

Lutkewitte, C. (Ed.). (2014). *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook*.

Bedford/St Martin's.

Student-Led Seminar

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| Introduction |

multimodal composing - conscious manipulation of the interaction among various sensory experiences – visual, textual, verbal, tactile, and aural – used in the process of producing and reading texts

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| Ch. 1 Cheryl, Tia, and Tyrell |

Discuss the goals of Cheryl’s class, and some of the problems she encountered.

-assignments were too open ended

-resistance from students

-not enough time for assignments

-”safe” assignments, “wowlessness”

-reflective assignments--not successful

- neglected to include scholarship on multimodal composing to encourage meta thinking about the assignment

Mutt genres (28)

Why is it important to encourage transfer?

Avoiding the five-paragraph video essay

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| Ch. 2 Multimedia Essays |

What is a multimedia essay, and what are the benefits of assigning it?

How is turning an essay into a multimedia essay different than transferring the five-paragraph essay into a video?

“all literacy is multimedia literacy: You can never make meaning with language alone; there must always be a visual or vocal realization of linguistic signs that also carries nonlinguistic meaning.” (39)

thesis vs. idea

“multimedia essays offer abundant creative opportunities coupled with corresponding creative rhetorical challenges.” (50)

Do multimedia essays have to be creative to help students understand and use various technologies?

How would students in a traditional classroom compose multimedia essays?

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| Ch. 3 |

Multimodal does not always mean digital

activity-based multimodal approach

“The genres students acquire – or do not acquire – in writing courses will also shape how they view new situations and contexts” (85)

Student-led Seminar Synthesis

February 9, 2015  
Sabrina Student Led Seminar Notes

The definition of writing must now include epistemic, multivocal, multimodal, and multimediated practices in computers and writing classrooms. Ultimately this leads to a different idea of what literacy means. The meaning of reading and writing has changed. The return of orality, performance, and delivery account for the shifting of meaning not only in context, but also in physical location, and that alters the shape of the writer, reader, message, triangle. The triangle, though still important, now has a shape that includes, or at least accounts for, the performative relationships where writing favors immediacy, quickness, associative leaps, and a fluid flexible sense. This favoring of immediacy gives us the opportunity to redefine writing. The terms coined by Dr. Shankar in her dissertation assist in giving us a more critical vocabulary to work with when redefining writing. Letteracy, prosodacy, spriting, and talkument give us a framework for how to shape our assignments, or ways in which to improve our assignments, that makes use of these skills that students have, or will need. This brings about the educational goals of a composition class, and what role translating does or does not have. Ultimately this leads to Selber and the multiliteracies students need to be taught.

**What assignments, or how can assignments include translating from one form to another? Where can we put translation in an assignment to include the four educational goals on p. 172?**

In class we discussed the ways in which the current curriculum at UTEP attempts to reach some of those goals. Specifically, the Genre Analysis looks at how the message is shaped, the Lit Review looks at the content, and the film doc and op-ed are similar assignments, but students present the information to their audience in different mediums. The translation isn’t direct. In 1302 students don’t take a paper they wrote, and compose it as a video, but they take information they obtained, and in some cases pieces of what they wrote to compose a documentary.

**Computer Literacy**

**How is computer literacy measured? Do you think that these four points has been realized?**

The points haven’t likely been realized, but a lot of students have these skills. They know how to do many different things on a computer, but they don’t think about what they’re doing. They aren’t pressured to continue to develop the skills, unless they go in to a more specific field at the university level that requires that these skills become more refined.

Ch. 2 Functional Literacy

**What other parameters need to be added to the list?**

The parameters need to include different qualities, because the technological parameters have changed in ten years. So, the educational goals, social conventions, specialized discourses, management activities, technological impasses, still apply, but they need to include technological advancements, or consider them. The qualities of a functionally literate student are general enough that they still apply today.

**In a classroom where there is an approach to writing using different measures, why would the current age deflect from incorporating computers into the classroom?**

Not every English class has computers in the classroom. It’s very necessary to have access to computers, and to be able to effectively use them to communicate, etc. Instructors need to be comfortable using the computers, and those that want to use them in the classroom, or incorporate their use with assignments. In 2004, perhaps there were more backlashes against using computers, and using them for more than writing a paper.

**Is there that same reluctance today? Is it possible to imagine that someone will be educated without technology being a factor?**

**What if you do have a computer classroom, and they don’t get used? What if they get used in other ways?**

Instructors that don’t use the computers may be concerned that they will distract students. Instructors need to let go of that fear that students will be on Facebook. Instructors should be able to give students ways in which to use the computers, if they are in the classroom. This can be as simple as explaining that they can print slides, and write on them, or print them, and type on them. This goes back to the ways in which students should learn how to use the computer in more than one way to serve them.

**How does one measure or assess literacy, if literacy is supposed to be looked at as an ability to read and write, and nothing more?**

Assignments that touch on each of the parameters in Selber, if you are using Selber as a guide, can be used to assess their literacy, and possibly using that to show improvement over the duration of the semester. With an expanded definition of writing students can learn that writing isn’t only what they have been told it is, and that it is more than typing a paper. The hope is that with this broader definition students will see the importance of assignments that incorporate different types of composing.

There is Minecraft as an example of research. Research that they are then doing something with, which in this example is to build or create something within Minecraft that they didn’t know how to do previously. This use of research and the process of using it could be built upon. Whether people view that as research or not, it is a skill that many students will have acquired due to their exposure, or use of, apps. Moving forward, or thinking ahead, this may mean that instructors may have to think of ways to incorporate these skills in assignments.

The final thoughts on these chapters focus, and the article focus on the openness to technology instructors should have, so that they can approach their assignments with multiliteracies in mind. An instructor embraces a broader definition of writing, should also be as adaptable to using technology.

Conference Proposal

The Digital Self-Reflection: Metacognitive Practices through Multimodality.

Students reflecting on completed assignments in a composition class allows for instructors to gain insight on the overall effectiveness of these assignments. However, there remains much discussion about the effectiveness of these assignments. These types of reflection assignments should not be dismissed, or removed from composition curriculum. Rather, students need to have more options made available to them when composing these reflections in order to make them more useful in developing their metacognitive and reflective skills, in addition to building multiple literacies.

The emerging need for students to begin to create multimodal pieces, and develop multiple literacies, creates space for the integration of Tumblr, a social network and microblogging site, in the classroom. Tumblr gives students practical, and relatively easy ways to create multimodal compositions, such as a piece of writing that makes use of memes, animated gifs, in addition to text to convey students’ understanding of an assignment.

The majority of this scholarship focuses on social media platforms as a communicative tool. This paper aims to exploring the benefits of using Tumblr as a pedagogical tool, and platform, for low stakes assignments, such as the reflection, that promote rhetorical and critical thinking. These assignments, and the use of Tumblr’s affordances to post reflections as multimodal compositions give students the opportunity to interact with each other, produce more in-depth reflections, and build multiple literacies.

<https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/61579>

Digital Project

Video project collaboration with Liz submitted via trashcan

The evolution of technology influences rhetoric and rhetoric studies in a number of significant ways. Select one or two (if two, they should be interrelated) topics from the list below and discuss how we’ve seen their concept/role/practice shift and how writing and rhetoric instruction has changed (or not) along with it.

Practice Comp Exam

The evolution of technology plays a significant role in the approach to rhetoric and composition in a vast amount of ways. Baron (1982), in “Pencils to Pixels” establishes the link between the two when he states that the computer “promises, or threatens to change literacy practices, for better or worse, depending on your point of view” (p.7). Advancements and changes in technology shift our views and approaches to both the teaching and understanding of rhetorical strategies. The evolution of technology changes the way we think, and use that technology. It also changes the way we approach, teach, and research literacies, and composition practices. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the ways in which advancements in technology influence scholars, and instructors of composition to shift how they conceptualize, understand, and teach arrangement, and delivery through the work of Barron, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Stuart Selber, and Sarah Arroyo.

The connection between rhetoric, composition, and writing studies and technology is on going. The evolution of technological tools influences the field of rhetoric and composition because comp/rhet reacts to advancements in technology, as they tend to affect literacies. Researchers and instructors in composition must concern themselves with the ways in which technology affects literacies, but also in how to use technology to further develop these literacies.

As technologies continue to evolve, and develop, so do literacies. Yancey (2004) in “Made not only in words: Composition in a new key” declared the field to be in a most important moment. Throughout that address, the call to move away from alphabetic text only compositions is clear. Yancey (2004) through Daley presents the argument that “the screen is the language of the vernacular” (305). If it’s the language of the vernacular, then the approach to teaching, and using arrangement and delivery need to reflect that. The delivery of the content, or message the author attempts to convey, must express that delivery was part of their composing process. As Yancey points out, “we are digital already” and our students move from one medium to another. In doing so, they also change the way they arrange and deliver. Yancey (2004) continues by stating that the “potential of arrangement is a function of delivery, and what and how you arrange -- which becomes a function of the medium you choose -- is who you invent” (318). The role, and function of arrangement can’t be separated from delivery. Without thought, and practice going into the arrangement of a multimodal assignment, something not only in words as Yancey urged in 2004, then, the delivery of the message within the assignment will not be successful. Arrangement can’t exist outside of delivery, and delivery will not be successful without arrangement. In addition to rethinking of the canons, instructors must understand elements vital to other forms of composing. The two are closely related, and dependent upon each other for the student to successfully complete the learning objectives of digital multimodal assignments. These assignments rely heavily on arrangement, and delivery.

This call from Yancey, and similar observations about the role of technology, specifically the computer and the growing involvement of the Internet in our daily lives, leads to a shift to include the production of multimodal compositions in to composition curriculums. The developments in technology also lead to a similar call from Selber in 2004. In Multiliteracies for a Digital Age, Selber urges scholars to help develop students’ multiliteracies by changing their approach to using and integrating technology in the classroom. He believes to do this we must commit to moving beyond the functional level, and assist students in reaching a critical, and rhetorical level. The theoretical framework Selber provides helped to establish that students should be questioners of technology (critical literacy), and rhetorical in the way that they understand the implications of technology. Civic engagement has long been a learning objective, or byproduct of the curriculum found in composition classrooms. With the many shifts in technology, and their implications for society, Selber argues “if students are to become agents of positive change, they will need an education that is comprehensive and truly relevant to a digital age” (234). This comprehensive education must be different than what is taught with the alphabetic text essay. The learning objectives, and elements taught must be different, or else the student only learns how to transfer an essay to a different genre, or format. Attention must be paid to arrangement, because it relates to design and anything visual demands elements of design need to be taught, in addition to bringing delivery to the forefront along with content.

The urging of Yancey, Selber, and other scholars resulted in the inclusion of multimodal assignments. These assignments are typically in digital form. Assignments that aim to move the field of composition away from only teaching, and writing in alphabetic text causes instructors to rethink the ways in which the canons are taught, and/or used in composing, in addition to teaching other elements, such as arrangement, that are closely linked to multimodal composing. The evolution of technology influenced the types of assignments taught in composition classes. With new assignments came updated learning objectives. The NCTE Statement--"Multimodal Literacies and Technology" addresses some of these concerns. It is of no surprise that elements of arrangement and delivery are apparent in the statement.

The NCTE statement supports the inclusion of arrangement and new attention paid to delivery as a result of the multimodal assignment. The multimodal assignment is a direct result of the shift in technology. It also reflects the move away from alphabetic text that Yancey called for in 2004. The NCTE states “All modes of communication are codependent. Each affects the nature of the content of the other and the overall rhetorical impact of the communication event itself” (NCTE). In an assignment that incorporates visual elements, as is the case with a multimodal assignment, each element used to compose, and thus convey the message of the composer equal attention must be given to every decision made by the composer. The mixing of modes in a multimodal assignment requires students to negotiate the manner in which the modes are put together. The arrangement of the modes impacts delivery. Delivery is not only the means, a blog, website or Youtube for a video essay, used to deliver a message, but the arrangement of the modes that reflect how the message is constructed. Delivery can’t be separated from arrangement. The NCTE statement recognizes that “Certain conventions of design are more effective than others for visual, aural, or multimodal texts,” and as a result “teachers will need to become more informed about these conventions because they will influence the rhetorical and aesthetic impact of all multimodal texts.” Design relies, in part, on arrangement. This does not call for composition instructors to teach all elements of design, but it does require the field to understand the role, and impact of arrangement in design.

Arrangement can be the conventions of design that instructors must be aware of, and incorporate into their teaching. The multimodal assignment brings in elements of remixing, which demonstrates the ways in which arrangement and delivery can’t be separated. According to Palmeri (2012), “the critic would strive to sort art works into genres and periods, the remixer would seek to creatively recombine disparate materials--to make a new composition by juxtaposing samples from radically disparate artistic traditions and periods” (p. 13). Through remixing, the genres are not separated by movements, but are arranged together to deliver the message of the composer. Arrangement and delivery can’t be separated. Delivery is ineffective and unsuccessful if arrangement is not given equal attention as content. The shifts in technology bring renewed attention to the rhetorical canon of delivery. If the reader and writer have moved from the page to the screen, then the multimodal assignment that seeks to move the field beyond alphabetic text only needs to reflect the importance of delivery in the visual world society finds itself immersed.

Yancey (2004) addresses the shift in public writing “the members of the writing public have learned-in this case, to write, to think together, to organize, and to act within these forums...” (301), and this observation of Yancey supports the importance of delivery. For the public to recognize and interact within these forums, then the writing must be delivered to them in a form, and forum they understand. Technological advances, and their inclusion into the daily lives of students, account for their place in composition classes. For students to make use of the networks that the Internet, and social media have created for them, they need to know how to write specifically to them. This isn’t only about content anymore, although content is, and always will be an important, if not the most important, element of composition. However, due to the visual nature of multimodality, and remixing, arrangement and delivery move up the hierarchy in importance. The reason for this is not just the technological advancements, but the social nature of the networks created. Arroyo (2012) discusses participatory composition, and the connectedness of students that alters composition classes. If, as she writes, “the commands of our online world relentlessly promote participation, encourage collaboration,” then students must also know how to deliver their work in the best, or most effective way possible to promote that continued collaboration and participation. Hocks had similar thoughts on participation as a result of the networks created by the Internet. According to Hocks (2003), writers “engage in what Porter calls "internetworked writing"-writing that involves the intertwining of production, interaction, and publication in the online classroom or professional workplace as well as advocating for one’s online audiences (12)” (631). The network technology creates forces rhetoric and composition to rethink delivery.

Delivery, in this sense, seems simple as addressing or appealing to the intended audience, but with the screen replacing the page, delivery becomes more complicated. The screen, as a visual and now interactive technology, requires students in composition classes to be aware of which method of delivering a multimodal assignment is most effective, but also how their modes should be arranged so that they are understandable, and appealing to their audience. These elements would not be addressed in composition classrooms if the field remained entrenched in alphabetic text, and without continuous shifts and advancements in technology there would be little need to move away from alphabetic text and towards multimodal compositions, or similar assignments that promote the development of multiple literacies of our students. Numerous scholars attempt to provide a theoretical and practical framework for instructors in the field of rhetoric and composition. It is clear that in the work of some their approach is influenced by different understandings and hierarchy of learning objectives, and in others that the focus is on the theory that should inform instructors. However, whether their differences are subtle, or starkly different, it is generally easy to see where shifts in technology, and uses of technology influence not only what assignments we teach, but what elements should be taught that can go ignored in alphabetic text compositions.

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