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MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WEB
Visual Depiction, Identity, and the Writing Program

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A depiction is never just an illustration. . . . [I]t is the site for the construction and depiction of social difference.
—Gordon Fyfe and John Law

There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet[.]
—T. S. Eliot

Information technology is identity technology.
—Sherry Turkle

And so. It's always that fairy-tale thing with the mirror. You gaze at the shiny surface. It caters to your ego, whispering that *YOU* are the center of the universe, the fairest of all. The most handsome. It reflects your very best self. That is, until one day it tells you something you've secretly feared: one day you are no longer the fairest. You have been supplanted. Or so you think. You are a composition teacher. You see a different pedagogy smiling out from that darn mirror. Or so you think. You see your fair self being blocked out, overshadowed, cast into oblivion by a change in regime, a pedagogical approach that threatens to discard you and your epistemology as easily as yesterday's antiquated fashions. And the person responsible for that new image you see?—the WPA. Or so you think.

The ideas in this chapter began with two problems interspersed by one question. The first problem: a range of unexpectedly adverse reactions to a writing program's newly constructed mission statement, goals, objectives, and outcomes. My question in response: "Why are these programmatic definitions being resisted?" As the former WPA, I was bewildered by such reactions since a committee with representatives

from major departmental constituencies had collaboratively constructed our writing program's pedagogical ethos. At first I wanted to write off all the fuss as a conservative resistance to change. After all, the program had never before been described or mapped out in this way, so wanting to preserve the past was a natural tendency. But I realized that such a dismissive reaction to this discord would never lead to any further understanding, much less to any constructive problem solving or programmatic direction.

Admittedly, one of the more difficult situations for WPAs to occupy is the position of "other" or "outsider"—perhaps even "dictator"—that is invariably foisted upon most administrators, even us congenial WPAs. I am accustomed to being one of the faculty, a member of a collaborative group of peers working to sustain and strengthen a department or program. In fact, I question whether being a WPA necessarily entails being distanced as the person "in charge" rather than being accepted as a spokesperson for a group.[1] But WPAs new to the business might find themselves ostracized without their own doing. This distancing constitutes the second problem that gave rise to this chapter's ideas.

After repeatedly reviewing our program's Web site, I gradually began to wonder if the two problems could and should be traced to the medium used to display these goals: the World Wide Web. Not only the medium, I thought, but also the primary characteristic of this medium, visuality, might be a major factor contributing to the discord. Online documents are hybrid, multimodal texts, equal parts words and images, as visual as they are textual. World Wide Web documents are "visual" in ways that traditional texts are not: online digital texts are invariably marked by graphic elements and images. This multimodality differs just enough from codex texts so that it more easily triggers a variety of readings, some that could bounce up against inherited cultural practices. So the Web site as object, instead of the instructors, could hold the key to solving the puzzling problem. Gunther Kress does say that "[a] particular kind of object gives insight into complex social practices and into their individual ramification" (2000, 190). Our online construction had bifurcated, reflecting not only the program but assuming the characteristics of a visual reflection of self. In other words, "Depictions mark the point where a process of production gives way to a range of effects" (Fyfe and Law 1988, 1). Our product did just that.

As the process of creation gives way to effects, and as language and images merge in the visual space of an online Web document attempting to depict a writing program's identity, something strange takes

place. Depiction is—like reflection—never a simple, straightforward act: "Depiction, picturing and seeing are ubiquitous features of the process by which most human beings come to know the world as it really *is* for them. The point is not that social life is guaranteed by some shared visual culture, neither is it that visual ideologies are imposed on individuals. Rather, it is that *social change is at once a change in the regime of representation*" (Fyfe and Law 1988, 2; original emphasis). Depictions, especially when they mirror change, offer a different sense of self that could be as shocking as seeing oneself bald.

Looking into a mirror is rarely a psychologically simple act. Whether or not we see the "truth" can be debatable. The silvery reflection is problematic, literally and figuratively mercurial, sometimes showing only the strengths we want to see, sometimes drawing on subconscious insecurities, fears, and suspicions. Sometimes when we view depictions not intended to be reflections of the self, they become transformed in the mind's eye nevertheless: the images work unintentionally and subconsciously like a mirror. So an additional problem of depictions (especially obvious for those on the World Wide Web) is that, like any artwork or text, they leave their creators to live in the world independently and to endure others' interpretations.

Mixed reactions to a set of writing program goals, objectives, and outcomes depicted in the specific context of a technological medium present an interesting opportunity for analyzing the range of rhetorical skills needed to "read" and understand such a multimodal text. Approaching this problem of resistance from the angle of identity negotiation theory, multiliteracies, visual culture theory, and definitions of power provides a way to locate the source of the problem; then to analyze why it might occur in any writing program shifting pedagogical focus and administrative styles; then attempting, as a result of this change, to embrace the discord between competing pedagogies, the previous and the incoming. Underestimating the full range of rhetorical skills, both verbal and visual, needed for today's multimodal texts obviously affects the reading. A multimethodological, postmodern approach drawing on visual rhetoric and visual culture theories may help to isolate the problem and reveal why it occurred.

The visual portrayal of a writing program's identity, I argue, often falls victim to being misperceived or misinterpreted by one particular group being portrayed visually: the program's instructors. Representations on the World Wide Web, displayed on a monitor's vertical position (instead of as horizontal, less personally charged codex pages) can be interpreted

as a reflection of power if the representations are seen as mirror reflections of self. What viewers cannot actually perceive is the construction process, an interactive dialogue resulting in much debate, then final consensus about programmatic focus. The construction process of a democratic, collaboratively created group identity, however, may be impossible to convey—as Fyfe and Law suggest above. Implementing and supporting such an identity, moreover, is especially difficult in a departmental culture where members have been acculturated and programmatically socialized by a previous pedagogy and unaccustomed to a group ethos constructed via a democratic, process-constructed identity, instead of being faced with an institutionally imposed, hierarchically delineated class structure and a previous culture devoted to finding fault and highlighting shortcomings.[2]

As Fyfe and Law explain, the embedded dynamic I never anticipated in my new WPA naiveté is that

> [a] depiction is never just an illustration. It is the material representation, the apparently stabilised product of a process of work. And it is the site for the construction and depiction of social difference. To understand a visualisation is thus to inquire into its provenance and into the social work that it does. It is to note its principles of exclusion and inclusion, to detect the roles that it makes available, to understand the way in which they are distributed, and to decode the hierarchies and differences that it naturalises. (1988, 1)

While I saw a neutral illustration, my colleagues sensed that the program's site depicted a difference between them and me, a difference that emerged simply by virtue of their belief that it existed. So to begin understanding the depth and complexity of the reaction to our programmatic depiction, I based my analysis, in part, on Fyfe and Law's definition. I also drew on identity negotiation theory to help think about ways to overcome the social differences embedded in the visualization.

In his book about identity negotiations in writers' workshops, Robert Brooke explains that students' writing improved when they understood the different roles available to them as writers, not simply the role of student-writing-to-please-the-teacher. Brooke's analysis led me to think about identity negotiation in terms of WPAs and faculty teaching in their programs and to use identity negotiation as a way of analyzing and understanding the problems that arose.

Brooke explains "identity negotiations" as a term that "highlights the development of the self within a complex arena of competing social forces" (1991, 12). Brooke locates the main stress as

a tension between social and internal understandings of the self. In any given context, a person's bearing, past, and behaviors imply that the person is a given sort of individual, but this implied identity may or may not correspond to the person's internally felt self. The problem of identity formation, thus, is how to deal with this ever-present distance between implied and felt identity. (1991, 12)

In the case of our pages, the distance between the implied and felt identities was too great for viewers to process without more help from me, the administrator, in bridging the gap. One way of anticipating potential problems or resolving them before they occurred could have been to identify the gap as best as possible before presenting an identity that could be misinterpreted as an exercise of power. The problem was that the instructors had been conditioned to see hierarchy even if no hierarchy was intended. They were accustomed to seeing the WPA as someone exercising traditional types of power as control instead of recognizing collaborative committee work as a sign that our program was on its way to becoming a collaborative web of equal colleagues. The problem is also that I brought to the hierarchically formed culture a competing or alternative cultural notion: equality rather than power exercised from above, a program perceived as collaborative rather than dictatorial.

PROVENANCE

Before the year 2002, the Expository Writing Program at my previous university had no program description, arguably no internal identity its instructors could assume, and absolutely no *online* presence or public, social face to present to its own students, the department, the university, and other writing programs across the country. What it did possess as a "unifying feature" was an assessment tool unsatisfactory to many of its instructors: a semi-holistically graded final exam for all sections of first-semester composition. Even now, I have file drawer after file drawer full of previous tests, students' exams, norming papers, and breakdowns of final class grades given by instructors in a given term. This assessment tool was epistemologically antithetical to the one I hoped would become the foundation for our revised program. It was punitive in that a WPA could use it to reprimand instructors for grading outside of a prescribed "norm," and it gave us no information whatsoever about how our program was in fact both reaching and teaching our students.

The first step toward revamping this tool and thus the entire program began with visits of assessment consultants from other university writing

programs. During the academic years 2001–03, in our first-stage effort to provide internal program coherence and social visibility, a subcommittee of the Expository Writing Committee in the English Department began drafting a mission statement, goals, objectives, outcomes, and an assessment rubric based on our desired outcomes for both classes in our first-year writing sequence. We designed a set of statements intended specifically for posting on the Web as one of the university's accreditation agencies mandated. In fact, any hard copy of these statements at this point in time must be run off from the Web. That this programmatic statement was conceived of, designed, and intended for Web viewing affects the way it "lives" in the world and the way we need to think about the reactions to it.

In addition, traditional ways of viewing assessment complicated the already current-traditional, hierarchical foundations on which the program had rested. As Brian Huot explains, assessment's roots lie in progressive social action, a move "to disrupt existing social order and class systems (Hanson 1993)" (2002, 7), but this process has, in our educational system, come to represent the opposite:

> [A]s we all know, assessment has rarely delivered on this promise. Instead, assessment has been used as an interested social mechanism for reinscribing current power relations and class systems. (2002, 7)

Composition studies itself "exacerbated" assessment's negative, hierarchical reputation, Huot argues, by inadvertently relinquishing theoretical control of testing designs. Doing so allowed a sort of vacuum to open, with businesses rushing to fill the void—businesses lacking the same pedagogical values and viewpoints as teachers in the field:

> One of the results of composition's avoidance of assessment issues has been that major procedures for assessment like holistic scoring were developed by testing companies based upon theoretical and epistemological positions that do not reflect current knowledge of literacy and its teaching. . . . Constructing an agenda for writing assessment as social action means connecting assessment to teaching. . . . Instead of envisioning assessment as a way to enforce certain culturally positioned standards and refuse entrance to certain people and groups of people, we need to use our assessment to aid the learning environment for both teachers and students. (2002, 7–8)

No wonder our program's faculty read their webbed identity within the revised program assessment as yet another means of imposed, top-down gatekeeping. Previous assessment practices had caused instructors to worry

about measuring up individually to a punitive set of standards. Assessment measuring a program's success rather than an individual instructor's pedagogical failing had not previously existed in this program.

THE VISUALIZATION'S SOCIAL WORK

Our visual documents bore the social work of representing a clear programmatic focus that included a range of workable pedagogies to our accrediting body, the university, other writing programs, the English Department, all instructors who teach composition for us, and most of all the community of our current and potential students. In other words, we wanted to make clear the overall writing program culture supporting each and every individual class. An identifiable, coherent writing program mission statement, goals, objectives, outcomes, and rubric for each of our first-year writing courses, we felt, would reveal to prospective students, their parents, and their high school teachers what they could expect from university-level writing courses. Presenting what we felt was a clear picture of our writing program's culture, we hoped to demystify our program and the two classes: students could view these Web pages and understand what they should learn and what level of work they could expect. Unfortunately, many students entering the university often feel that first-year courses will simply repeat the writing instruction they received in high school. Many therefore attempt to test out of first-year classes, not understanding what cognitive skills such university-level classes entail. And so these students often fail the department's proficiency tests. If our visualization did its social work, perhaps entering students would understand that testing out of first-year composition would require more than a narrative or a superficial five-paragraph essay.

The program's visualization also needed to do the social work of helping instructors new to teaching at our institution understand and conceptualize where the program expected first-year writing classes to aim. In addition, we hoped to give instructors who had been teaching for years in the previous rather formless program a better sense of programmatic coherence plus a view of the range of teaching activities possible with clear programmatic goals and outcomes.

The programmatic visualization, furthermore, would show members of the university community what they could expect of those students who had completed our first-year courses.

Finally, the visualization would show the state board of higher education and our accrediting agency the complete epistemological foundation undergirding the outcomes we used to assess our program.

ENG 101
GOALS
&
OBJECTIVES

Learning to write well at the college level is a complex endeavor. Building upon what students learned in high school, the first year writing sequence at SIUE is designed to help students in that complex endeavor of becoming college writers by providing quality instruction in a theoretically grounded program. In that regard, we maintain six goals that should be met in English 101, the first course in that sequence. Students who participate actively in their own education, invest in the writing process, and engage in dialogue about their writing can expect to meet the following goals with some measure of success.

This document is designed to communicate those goals to students, parents, faculty, administrators, and others interested in the first year writing program at SIUE. While we have tried to make these goals accessible to the general reader, terms such as "rhetorical strategies" and "discourse community" have rich and complex meanings to professional writing teachers, meanings that cannot necessarily be fully articulated to the general public in this brief document.

Underneath each goal, we offer objectives—or strategies—that individual teachers may use to facilitate students in reaching these goals. Instructors may employ additional pedagogically sound objectives as they see fit.

In addition, each goal is designed to foster one or more of SIUE's College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) "Desired Characteristics and Capabilities of Graduates." These desired characteristics reflect the college's and university's commitment to the intrinsic value of a well-rounded undergraduate education.

Figure 1

In retrospect I can see that we intended this document both to acculturate and socialize all groups intended as its audience. But for some instructors, socialization can be interpreted as an insidious attempt at mind control rather than a map of available options.

PRINCIPLES OF EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

We intended no exclusion. We aimed, rather, at including groups from the most immediate—our students—to the more distant—state accrediting agencies and the Council of Writing Program Administrators. But the move from a hierarchy to a collaborative community could neither automatically eradicate long-existent feelings of exclusion and a reading

of our visual documents as gatekeeping tools nor keep instructors from interpreting the visualization as forcing them to comply with unwanted change. In addition, our visual document could have contained exclusionary elements that we never consciously intended, but that appeared obvious once the document took shape. Our document could have reflected, and did, epistemological practices that often set composition instructors apart from the other fields represented in a traditional English department, in particular many literature faculty. The pages also catered to those who understand the problems of assessment versus those who had never attended the assessment workshops offered by our outside consultants. It most certainly excluded those who use the composition courses to train English majors, as opposed to those who don't. Instructors who keep abreast of current composition practices were also partly the readers for these pages as opposed to those who had taught the first-year sequence in exactly the same way for decades. Finally, the pages clearly embraced those who welcome program change versus those who do not or will not.

DETECTING ROLES THE VISUALIZATION MAKES AVAILABLE

A webbed version of our mission, goals, objectives, and outcomes—in the context of this program previously lacking a strong identity, let alone a webbed depiction—shows us something important about the complex identities and social practices existing with a writing program: that viewers could not envision the various roles available to them—actually the variety of pedagogies included—and the freedom instructors have to construct a composition course growing from their own strengths but moving toward programmatic outcomes. The goals and objectives so carefully crafted by committee, therefore, somehow became distorted reflections when perceived by this group—images of imagined inadequacies in a program that now seemed to threaten these instructors' job security, teaching abilities, and essentially their pedagogies. The revised program as portrayed on the Web asks only that instructors heed the goals of each class and work toward the stated outcomes. And although I grit my teeth when saying this, instructors can even draw on literature. As long as they realize the writing courses are not introductions to literary study and research, and as long as they do not become sidetracked by close readings of texts for the purpose of literary analysis, even a literary path toward course outcomes is possible.

Not being able to envision the roles available, instructors imagined only one, a role antithetical to whatever others they had assumed before.

Goal #1: Students will gain an understanding of rhetorical strategies and processes of analyzing and composing a variety of print, visual, and digital media.
  Related Objectives:
• Work with texts and learn to interpret, incorporate, and evaluate them
• Explore the multiple facets (ideological, social, cultural, political, economic, historical) of issues and use writing to construct informed, critical positions about these topics
• Use various technological tools to explore texts
• Encourage the use of multi-sensory engagement in [sic?] texts [and in writing assignments?]

This goal and its related objectives are designed to foster the development of the following "Desired Characteristics and Capabilities of Graduates":
• communication
• critical thinking
• problem solving and framing
• knowledge
• citizenship
• life-long learning

Goal #2: Students will gain a meta-awareness of their own development as writers
  Related Objectives:
• Engage in peer-reviewing activities
• Participate in self-assessment activities, i.e. evaluate individual's own writing assignments based upon assignment criteria

This goal fosters this CAS "Desired Characteristic":
• self-development

Figure 2

Two mundane parallel situations occurred to me as I was trying to explain the complex challenges to identity caused by seeing one's self clothed in strange pedagogical garb. The first is a pair of identical twins I once knew. One or the other would invariably tell her sister she hated the outfit which that sibling was wearing and wished that this sibling would never wear it again. Part of the reason for the disapproval arose

from seeing the other as a mirror of the self. The disapproving twin insisted the other change her clothing because identity was so closely involved: "I don't like the way 'you' look" translated as "I don't like the way 'I' look."

The situation is especially easy to understand in the case of twins: each sees herself when she looks at her twin, sees herself dressed in a way she has not chosen. What the twins had trouble recognizing was that the other's appearance presented only one way of dressing out of a myriad of choices. Likewise, what my department's instructors could not see was that the programmatic reflection they perceived had room for many identities.

I am also reminded of a TV program that occasionally mesmerizes me. The program is called *What Not to Wear*. The point of this program is to transform an unfashionably clad, often dowdy-looking person into someone trained to use clothing to highlight strengths. A mirror plays a big part in every transformation: the hosts use the mirror to convince the chosen subjects how unflattering and often inappropriate their current wear is for their ages, body types, and professions. During the course of the program, the two hosts present sketches of styles that are more flattering, more contemporary, and more professional. Once the hosts convince the "subject" to try on items resembling those in the sketches and to remain open-minded while "trying anything," these subjects begin to see themselves differently in the mirror and actually like their newly garbed selves. They have moved from preferring an unflattering self-reflection to one that emphasizes its strengths and presents a more pleasing social self.

Of importance in this different attitude toward the self reflected back from the mirror is the guidance the hosts provide and the way they tailor their suggestions for each individual. Perhaps, then, in making a truly radical programmatic change, a WPA needs to do similar, more individual work with a program's instructors—showing how that person can try on various pedagogical roles the program is now making available, showing how these roles can be more flattering, pedagogically contemporary as well as satisfying, and socially professional.

Even the mere mention of attention to technology, for instance, has encountered an especially strong resistance from instructors who claim that difficulties scheduling composition classes in computer classrooms makes the goal of attention to technology unreasonable. Instead of seeing our online text as an affirmation of the work we all do and feeling encouraged to aim for incorporating technology in writing classes, many

interpreted the mention of technology as intimidating, a picture of personal shortcomings and flaws, a mandate to use technology "or else."

UNDERSTANDING THE WAYS IN WHICH ROLES ARE DISTRIBUTED

WPAs may need to help program instructors understand how a different administrative style would distribute roles differently from previous styles. Moving from one epistemological position to another, in this case, from one grounded in current-traditional rhetorical philosophy to social epistemology is difficult because universities and departments have traditionally rested on current-traditional distributions of roles. In a university and department perpetuating such a hierarchical structure, instructors nonetheless may approach their own teaching as collaborative processes, and may believe their students should work together to arrive at a level of knowledge more sophisticated than one could attain working alone; when working within a broader university context, however, they revert to current-traditional ways of thinking.

Sharon Crowley's definition of current-traditional pedagogy is rather enlightening when applied to a WPA's administrative "style" instead of an instructor's classroom pedagogy. In the following passage, I have used strikethroughs on Crowley's original words, and then have substituted the terms "administrative style," "writing program," or "instructors" for the words "pedagogy," "discourse," and "students":

> Current-traditional ~~pedagogy~~ [administrative style] is conservative in the ordinary sense of that term insofar as it resists changes in its rules and preserves established verbal traditions and institutional lines of authority. Current-traditionalism preserves traditional social and academic hierarchies insofar as ~~students~~ [instructors] are taught to observe without question rules of ~~discourse~~ [the writing program] that were constructed long before they entered the ~~academy~~ [profession or department] and to submit their native ~~grapholects~~ [identities] to ~~grammar and usage~~ [programmatic] rules devised by a would-be elitist ~~class~~ [administration]. Current-traditional ~~pedagogy~~ [administrative style] is ~~teacher~~ [administrator]-centered: the ~~teacher~~ [administrator] dispenses information about the rules of ~~discourse~~ [the writing program] and evaluates the ~~students'~~ [instructors'] efforts in accordance with those rules. ~~Students~~ [Instructors] themselves are constructed in current-traditional ~~rhetoric~~ [administrative style] as potentially unruly novices whose work needs to be continually examined and disciplined. (1998, 218)

Well, no wonder I encountered such resistance. If I read my newly "edited" definition, I can see clearly what the instructors in my program "saw" when they looked at the document we produced:

Current-traditional administrative style is conservative in the ordinary sense of that term insofar as it resists changes in its rules and preserves established verbal traditions and institutional lines of authority. Current-traditionalism preserves traditional social and academic hierarchies insofar as instructors are taught to observe without question rules of the writing program that were constructed long before they entered the profession or department and to submit their native identities to programmatic rules devised by a would-be elitist administration. Current-traditional administrative style is administrator-centered: the administrator dispenses information about the rules of the writing program and evaluates the instructors' efforts in accordance with those rules. Instructors themselves are constructed in current-traditional administrative style as potentially unruly novices whose work needs to be continually examined and disciplined.

No matter that we constructed the document collaboratively: viewers embedded in a program founded on a current-traditional administrative style, especially as reflected in the holistic common final with its implications for teaching skills and working within a program's "rules," could not adjust to a different style just because I told them to.

Somehow I need to demonstrate to these instructors, and help them understand, that the roles available to them were not ones I had mandated from on high but were rather varied ones that I considered to be distributed on an equal plane, one not ever being "better" than another. In a hierarchically organized program, the roles available automatically stack up so that some have more status than others, an obvious organization along lines of social classes. Tenured full professors occupy the top position and part-time staff and graduate students occupy the bottom rung of the departmental ladder. Those who have experienced hierarchically distributed roles, however, find themselves hard-pressed to recognize, then understand, that roles need not always be set up hierarchically. In a dialectic, collaborative environment, roles are equal—resting on the same plane rather than stacked vertically. The voices of those occupying all roles are equally important.

A dialectical program built upon a social-epistemic philosophy places language and dialogue, not an administrator's rules, at the program's heart. It builds upon James Berlin's view of social-epistemic rhetoric as "a political act involving a dialectical interaction engaging the material, the social, and the individual writer, with language as the agency of mediation." A social-epistemic administrative style privileges dialectical engagement, believing that a writing program, like a rhetoric, is "an historically specific social formation that must perforce change over time." Believing in change would, according to Berlin, "mak[e] possible

reflexiveness and revision as the inherently ideological nature of rhetoric [and I would add, a writing program] is continually acknowledged" (1988, 488). For a writing program operating from a social-epistemic ideology,

> [T]he real is located in a relationship that involves the dialectical interaction of the observer, the discourse community (social group) in which the observer is functioning, and the material conditions of existence. . . . Knowledge . . . is an historically bound social fabrication rather than an eternal and invariable phenomenon located in some uncomplicated repository—in the material object or in the subject or in the social realm, . . . and the subject is itself a social construct that emerges through the linguistically circumscribed interaction of the individual, the community, and the material world. . . . (488–489)

Easier said than done, perhaps, but maybe easier once I understood what competing epistemologies lay beneath the identities peering forth from the mirror of program definitions.

DECODE THE HIERARCHIES AND DIFFERENCES IT NATURALIZES

Such a nonhierarchically focused program does not mean, of course, that hierarchies would cease to exist for its administrator and instructors. By working with the desired characteristics of students graduating from the College of Arts and Sciences, we do not mean to suggest that we are overlooking the differences between our program and that college or the place we as a program occupy within the hierarchy of the college. A WPA would need to point out that the writing program is still embedded in these overarching hierarchies within and beyond the university. Indeed, while the program itself would be aimed at flattening hierarchical differences, the program and its instructors as a whole still need to be conscious of the outlying hierarchies. Despite the fact that such differences would, hopefully, gradually disappear from the program, some still will exist: (1) the university will always demand program accountability and (2) the state will always hold the university accountable.

In explaining the influence of the visual on our notions of "structures of meaning and interpretation and on the epistemic and institutional frameworks that attempt to organize them" (1998, 15), Irit Rogoff presents the field of visual culture. Analyzing the situations of writing programs in these terms, namely, focusing "on the centrality of vision and the visual world in producing meanings, establishing and maintaining

aesthetic values, gender stereotypes and power relations within culture" can help us to see our situation as simply "an arena in which cultural meanings get constituted" (14), not an unchangeable situation, and not a situation bound eternally by tradition.

A writing program—that is, its instructors and its administrator—are situated in a world where educational administration is still hierarchically oriented. This vertical line running from the state to the university, the college, the writing program, and its administrator as well as instructors marks a difference between classes that has actually been naturalized: we take for granted that we must report to "higher" authorities. But these power relations are ones simply produced by the educational culture; they are not necessarily natural.

> It is this questioning of the ways in which we inhabit and thereby constantly make and remake our own culture that informs the arena of visual culture. . . . [T]he field is made up of at least three different components. First, there are the images that come into being and are claimed by various, and often contested histories. Second, there are the viewing apparatuses that we have at our disposal that are guided by cultural models such as narrative or technology. Third, there are the subjectivities of identification or desire or abjection from which we view and by which we inform what we view. . . . I am obviously focusing here on the reception rather than the production of images and objects or environments. . . . (Rogoff 1998, 18)

Rogoff stresses that as a field of knowledge, visual culture helps us to analyze our cultural situations: "To be able to assemble a group of materials and a variety of methodological analyses around an issue that is determined out of cultural and political realities rather than out of traditions of learned arguments, seems an important step forward in the project of reformulating knowledge to deal responsibly with the lived conditions of highly contested realities, such as we face at the turn of this century in the West" (23).

ANALYZE THE WAYS IN WHICH AUTHORSHIP IS CONSTRUCTED OR CONCEALED

Authorship was constructed collaboratively and indicated clearly on the pages: committee members are named. However, some instructors who viewed the site seemed to feel that single authorship (i.e., mine) was being somehow concealed, if I judge by questions about the pages that began with "Why do *YOU* want. . . . " As I explained above, moving from consider-

ing the pages as traditionally singly authored to the actual collaboratively authored ones they were can be difficult, depending upon the degree to which instructors' psyches are embedded with current-traditional notions of administration. The chart below depicts the visual disjunction between what the committee portrayed and what appeared to some readers:

What the Program's Site Displays:	What Those Viewing It See:
• Collaboratively Constructed Document	• Singly Authored Document
• Processual Program Focus	• Static Program Focus
• Program Focus as a Developing Map	• Program Focus as Repressive Dogma
• Suggestions for New Methodologies	• Disapproval of Previous Methodologies
• Assessment of Program's Effectiveness	• Assessment as Evaluation of Instructors
• Multifaceted Pedagogy	• Unilateral Pedagogy
• WPA as Facilitator, Guide, Dialogist	• WPA as Autocrat

Rogoff makes the point above that analyzing the ways visuality has shaped a culture actually shifts focus to the viewer, to the way a document is received rather than on itself and its production "in substituting the historical specificity of that being studied with the historical specificity of he/she/they doing the studying."

> In order to effect such a shift without falling prey to endless anecdotal and autobiographical ruminating which stipulates experience as a basis for knowledge, we attempt to read each culture through other, often hostile and competitive, cultural narratives. This process of continuous translation and negotiation is often exhausting in its denial of a fixed and firm position, but it does allow us to shift the burden of specificity from the materials to the reader and prevents us from the dangers of complete dislocation. Perhaps it might even help us to understand that at the very moment in which historical specificity can provide liberation and political strength to some of the dispossessed, it also imprisons others within an old binary structure that no longer reflects the conditions and realities of their current existence. (1998, 24)

The competing cultures that would produce the visual discrepancy I have been discussing come from focusing on the document rather than on the viewer, on supposed administrative motives rather than on the individual instructor and, actually, the liberties afforded each instructor.

In ENG 102, students will continue to build upon the skills and knowledge developed in ENG 101, as outlined in the ENG 101 Goals & Objectives statement. Each ENG 102 goal is also designed to foster one or more of SIUE's College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) "Desired Characteristics and Capabilities of Graduates." These desired characteristics reflect the college's and university's commitment to the intrinsic value of a well-rounded undergraduate education.

Goal #1: Students will gain an understanding of elements of formal argumentation.
　　Related Objectives:
- Examine accepted methods of academic argumentation
- Read critically a variety of argumentative texts in order to discuss claims and issues from those readings
- Evaluate academic arguments for logical effectiveness, validity, and soundness
- Explore the ways in which argumentation is used in the discourse of various disciplines
- Examine and analyze peers' written arguments for the effective use of structures of academic argument, avoidance of logical fallacies and other errors in reasoning, and the ethical use of sources

This goal and its related objectives are designed to foster the development of the following "Desired Characteristics and Capabilities of Graduates":
- critical thinking
- problem solving and framing
- knowledge

Figure 3

PERCEIVE THE WAYS IN WHICH THE SENSE OF AUDIENCE IS REALIZED

As we created the content for our pages and discussed ways in which that content could be conveyed, we understood that our documents would have multiple audiences: the program's current instructors and its students, the parents of these students, new graduate TAs, and future instructors new to our program. We also hoped for an audience in the

university community so that we could show colleges and departments across campus what we were trying to accomplish in our writing classes. Finally, we wanted to show our accreditation agencies that we considered our assessment to be systemic—that is, based on our program's fundamental beliefs, rather than superficially added on and conducted apart from the way we taught our classes. However, instructors viewing the site had so much trouble distinguishing between a current-traditional and social-epistemic structure that they forgot about multiple audiences and instead imagined themselves as the sole audience.

As the chair of the committee, I expected a certain amount of resistance to our now-focused writing program from more distant groups like our administration, and/or our state accrediting agency, or the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). Naively, I expected the pages as a picture of program identity to work to empower its instructors, especially a program that had been in need of clarification and leadership by a composition professional. I thought that having a "clear" picture of what we were working toward in our writing classes plus shifting assessment to programmatic assessment (away from a competitive and punitive common final) would lay the groundwork for our instructors perceiving themselves and the program as a stronger, more mature endeavor. But instead we encountered a great unwillingness to identify with the program as presented and an inability to understand that the program and its assessment tool were not focusing on individual instructors and individual students as we examined the program in order to strengthen it.

In all seriousness, I now realize our site needed instructions for "reading" it, or understanding its visuality. A critical examination of visual documents includes the ability to perceive the social context surrounding the creation of a document rather than having the "document" work as a reflection of one's own cultural background and baggage. In a very insightful essay discussing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the controversy surrounding its construction, Marita Sturken makes several astute observations about the ways we tend to "see." Her analysis might be applied in this situation, one that is albeit smaller in scale and importance. Seeing the visual represented as an architecturally constructed space can help us realize a difference between space as constrictively state mandated or space as liminal.[3]

Sturken analyzes the Vietnam Veterans Memorial by using the concept of a screen, "a surface that is projected upon; it is also an object that hides something from view, that shelters or protects" (1998, 163).

The screen and the mirror both allow projections as they are viewed. In the memorial's case, some of its first viewers "read" the architectural construction in coded ways that projected, then revealed, their particular cultural biases:

> The criticism leveled at the memorial's design [i.e., horizontal, polished black granite cut into the earth] showed precisely how it was being "read" by its opponents, and their readings compellingly reveal codes of remembrance of war memorials [i.e., vertical white stone erected for distant viewing]. Many saw its black walls as evoking shame, sorrow, and dishonor and others perceived its refusal to rise above the earth as indicative of defeat. Thus, a racially coded reading of the color black as shameful was combined with a reading of a feminized earth connoting a lack of power. Precisely because of its deviation from traditional commemorative codes—the design was read as a political statement. (1998, 167)

In much the same way that viewers described above projected their own codes onto the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, viewers of our program's goals and outcomes projected their only understanding of administration onto the site as they read it and interpreted the documents as a political statement of power from a program administrator.

Unfortunately, traditional notions of power will always complicate the ways audiences read such a programmatic document. While we did envision the audience as multiple and complex, we believed most would be grateful for the direction and mapping we provided and thought that the cultural contexts of the site should be obvious to all viewers. We never fully understood the degree to which some would see it representing traditional lines of power: repressive rather than dialogic and interactive. Cheris Kramarae and her colleagues remind us that "most classical definitions of power treat it as static rather than processual" (1984, 11). But they believe, and I agree, that we can conceptualize power in other interactive ways more consistent with a social-epistemic philosophy:

> Interest in presenting power as interactive and all discourse as hierarchical has lead Foucault, among others, to set forth an an[a]lysis of power as internal to all relationships, not "held" or exercised by individuals but, rather, developed through interaction in a multiplicity of relationships. Power, in his analysis, is not a limitation of freedom, not a possession, not a control that can be stored or a system of domination exercised by an individual or group over another individual or group. Rather, power comes from below as well as above, in a shifting relationship of force and resistance. It is not merely

outcomes
101

The following outcomes for ENG 101 reflect the governing assumptions of the English Composition Program as well as the ENG 101 Goals & Objectives set forth by the program.

It is important to note that as students move beyond English 101, "their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, students' abilities not only diversify along disciplinary and professional lines but also move into whole new levels where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge" (Writing Program Administrators Outcomes Statement). It is our desire that students continue developing as writers long after they leave English 101, that they continue to be life-long writers in their academic, civic, and professional lives. English 101 is simply the starting point.

Invention
- Purpose of the essay is clear and appropriate to the assignment.
- Introduction engages the reader and creates interest.
- Essay maintains interest by the creative choices made in content selection.

Arrangement
- Organization is effective in developing and supporting a thesis.
- Introduction includes an "essay map" (forecasting statement) and/or a clearly stated thesis.
- Discussion paragraphs present a coherent, logical case in support of the thesis, with appropriate rhetorical strategies, examples, definitions, and explanations.
- Essay concludes smoothly and powerfully.

Style
- Language, content, and persona are appropriate to subject, audience, and purpose.
- Essay exhibits sophisticated control of language and syntactic structures.

Conventions
- Essay uses Edited American English and includes features of other dialects only when they serve particular rhetorical purposes.

Figure 4

negative or repressive, but also positive and implicit in the constitution of discourse and knowledge. (Kramarae, Schulz, and O'Barr 1984, 12)

Power can be dialogic, "processual" rather than "static," an invitation rather than a decree. To keep from ending up feeling battered and paralyzed by positions that others may project upon them, WPAs may need to hold serious discussions with their faculty members over questions of writing program identity and differing concepts of power.

This discord was also exacerbated by the appearance of the Web pages themselves: in many ways they resemble PowerPoint slides, bullets and all. Edward Tufte argues that "PowerPoint is entirely *presenter-oriented*, and *not content-oriented*, *not audience-oriented*" (2003, 4; original emphasis). So in our case, our visual presentation on the World Wide Web may have distorted the way one of our audiences received the information. Not analyzing the rhetoric behind the presentation software, I neglected to figure out that

> [t]he metaphor behind the PP cognitive style is *the software corporation itself.* That is, a big bureaucracy engaged in *computer programming* (deeply hierarchical, nested, highly structured, relentlessly sequential, one-short-line-at-a-time) and in *marketing* (fast pace, misdirection, advocacy not analysis, slogan thinking, branding, exaggerated claims, marketplace ethics). (Tufte 2003, 11)

Tufte continues to stress the way PowerPoint emphasizes power: "The pushy PP style imposes itself on the audience and, at times, seeks to set up a dominance relationship between speaker and audience. The speaker, after all, is making *power points with bullets to followers.* Such aggressive, stereotyped, over-managed presentations—the Great Leader up on the pedestal—are characteristic of hegemonic systems" (2003, 11). Web presentations may differ enough from PowerPoint presentations to leave open a possibility for dialogue rather than monologue. Nevertheless, I unwittingly invited an audience to interpret our visualization as the dictate of a new hegemonic system.

I am not arguing, ultimately, that visual, multi-mediated texts in particular trigger the problems discussed above while codex texts do not. My point is rather that considering the visuality of our document helped me approach the problem from angles not commonly used to study the work and the problems WPAs encounter. Considering identity negotiation, visual culture, and the parallels between administrative styles and pedagogical epistemologies helped me to understand the problems better. Emphasizing the visuality of our program's Web site and perceiving the ways it would be received by an audience accustomed

to traditional notions of power, then analyzing our presentation within arenas of visuality helped unearth possible—and now quite understandable—motives for the mixed reactions to what we intended as a simple picture of the program. Surrounded by current-traditional cultural baggage, our simple picture morphed into a complex mirror, a screen for projecting various and sundry self-concepts. Tim Peeples lists the various metaphors used to conceive of writing program administration, metaphors ranging from management and collaborative research all the way through to plate tectonics, plate twirling, marketing, and film directing (2002, 116). Peeples asks, "Why do we take these metaphorical journeys? For many reasons. . . . [T]hey give us new eyes for seeing the work we do, and in so doing, often expose parts of our work to which we have become blind" (116). Peeples's own metaphoric language alluding to blindness, seeing, and framing actually points to the importance of vision—in all the various permutations of that word—as continually of importance to WPAs.

> Each new [metaphoric] conception also re-frames our work, defamiliarizing its landscapes so we can become more aware of them. Additionally, each new conception takes steps towards a theory of writing program administrations and opens doors to theorizing new or revised administrative practices. (116)

In our postmodern world, anticipating a document's reception is difficult. Our document, without our intent, turned into a mirror. And as Margaret Atwood so aptly and wryly observes, "mirrors are crafty" (1976). Indeed, it seemed to me that every possible meaning of the word "crafty" colored the way our document was viewed. Some saw it as a deceitful, tricky edict, sly in its presentation of our program, and cunning in the way it appeared to undermine instructor freedom. The committee constructing it, however, believed the document to be crafty in that it was put together with special skill, much discussion, and an analytic dexterity that incorporated outcomes describing programmatic freedom rather than constriction.

So considering notions of the visual may help WPAs find direction after serious bouts of discord. But then again, who can say? Ours is, as the new saw goes, a postmodern world.