THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COMPUTERS AND WRITING CONFERENCE 2022

Edited by
Christopher D. M. Andrews
Chen Chen
and Lydia Wilkes

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COMPUTERS AND WRITING CONFERENCE, 2022

Proceedings of the Computers and Writing Conference

Series Editors: Chen Chen and Lydia Wilkes

The *Proceedings* publish peer-reviewed articles based on presentations from the annual Computers and Writing Conference. The WAC Clearinghouse makes the *Proceedings* widely available through free digital distribution. The publisher and the series editors are committed to the principle that knowledge should freely circulate and have embraced the use of technology to support open access to scholarly work.

Other Books in the Series

Chen Chen and Lydia Wilkes (Eds.), *The Proceedings of the Annual Computers and Writing Conference, 2019*

Chen Chen, Kristopher Purzycki, and Lydia Wilkes (Eds.), *The Proceedings of the Annual Computers and Writing Conference, 2018*

Cheryl E. Ball, Chen Chen, Kristopher Purzycki, and Lydia Wilkes (Eds.), *The Proceedings of the Annual Computers and Writing Conference, 2016-2017*

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COMPUTERS AND WRITING CONFERENCE, 2022

Edited by Christopher D. M. Andrews, Chen Chen and Lydia Wilkes

The WAC Clearinghouse
wac.colostate.edu
Fort Collins, Colorado

The WAC Clearinghouse, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523

© 2023 by Christopher D. M. Andrews, Chen Chen, and Lydia Wilkes. This work is released under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.

ISBN 978-1-64215-186-2 (PDF) | 978-1-64215-187-9 (ePub)

DOI 10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862

ISSN 2643-7376

Produced in the United States of America

Copyeditors: Brandy Dieterle, Ashanka Kumari, and Christopher D. M. Andrews
Designer: Mike Palmquist
Series Editors: Chen Chen and Lydia Wilkes

The WAC Clearinghouse supports teachers of writing across the disciplines. Hosted by Colorado State University, it brings together scholarly journals and book series as well as resources for teachers who use writing in their courses. This book is available in digital formats for free download at wac.colostate.edu.

Land Acknowledgment. The Colorado State University Land Acknowledgment can be found at https://landacknowledgment.colostate.edu.

Contents

Acknowledgments . . . vii

"Pandemic Pedagogy" as a Framework for DIY Professional Development . . . 3
Theresa M. Evans

Towards More Humane Technology in the Online and Hybrid College Composition Classroom . . . 15
Amber Foster

"Speaking" Their language: Understanding the Perspective of Multilingual Learners through a Student-Centered Video Creation Project . . . 23
Joyce Meier and Cheryl Caesar with Juhua Huang, Ky Chimrak, Apichaya Thaneerat, and Nadiah Mohamed Hasno

Improvisational Scenographies: Identity, Ideology, and Community-Based Algorithmic Moderation . . . 35
Adam Padgett

Assigning and Assessing Creative and Digital Literacies . . . 53
Rochelle Rodrigo and Teresa Davis

Intersecting Rhetorical Velocity & Antiracism as Strategies for the Creation of University Crime Notifications under the Clery Act . . . 71
Jason L. Sugg

A Series of Design(ed) Tensions: Reclaiming Space for Faculty Agency in Curriculum Development . . . 83
Ashlyn C. Walden and Meaghan C. Rand

Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank everyone who reviewed papers for the *Proceedings* for their service to the Computers and Writing community: Ann Shivers-McNair, Caddie Alford, Cruz Medina, Crystal VanKooten, Jessie Borgman, Jialei Jiang, Jianfen Chen, Jiaxin Zhang, José Cano, Karen Lunsford, Kristi McDuffie, Laura Gonzales, Mai Nou Xiong, Nuppor Ranade, Peter Brooks, Ryan Shepherd, Sara West, Shelley Rodrigo, Steve Holmes, Wendi Sierra, Yeqing Kong, and Zhaozhe Wang.

Much appreciation goes out to Cheryl Ball and Mike Palmquist for their ongoing support and leadership, without which the *Proceedings* would not be possible.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COMPUTERS AND WRITING CONFERENCE, 2022

"Pandemic Pedagogy" as a Framework for DIY Professional Development

Theresa M. Evans, Miami University (Ohio)

This article uses pandemic pedagogy—four professional and pedagogical themes developed by Sheppard (2021)—as a framework to describe the teaching experience and professional development of a non-tenure-track continuing instructor during the pandemic: The four themes include revised workloads, misguided mandates for technology use, personal and professional well-being, and the pedagogies of logistics. Layered within this framework—to suggest how shifting expectations and circumstances affected motivation toward teaching and professional development—is a model used in research on teacher and faculty motivation: The Achievement Goal Approach, developed by Butler (2014) and used by Daumiller et al. (2021) to research faculty motivation during the pandemic. The Achievement Goal Approach model is based on faculty motivation to develop competence, be perceived as competent, avoid appearing incompetent, or get through the day with minimal effort (Butler, 2014; Daumiller et al., 2021). Rather than present one motivator as a single comprehensive identifier for an individual instructor, this article reflects on which motivator was most significant for a particular instructor for each pandemic pedagogy theme. The article concludes with a discussion of pandemic fallout and a summary of the instructor's pandemic pedagogy strategies.

If professional development for contingent online faculty was scarce before 2020, then the pandemic did not suddenly usher in a new era of abundance when all faculty were required to teach online. The environments in which learning would take place were being dictated by administrations, with professional development mostly limited to learning how to use Zoom and test-proctoring software. Institutions were so focused on how to deliver courses to students that they failed to consider how instructional models and policies would affect faculty workloads and the personal safety of faculty (Wooten, Fitzpatrick, Fernandez, Goldenthal, & Matthews, 2022). Non-tenure-track faculty were especially at risk, given their lack of a voice in faculty governance and the tendency for their labor and expertise to be rendered invisible during decision-making about pandemic policies (Wooten, Fitzpatrick, Fernandez, Goldenthal, & Matthews, 2022).

 DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862.2.01

Advocating for contingent professional and technical writing instructors in online environments, Melonçon (2017) argued that professional development is about more than learning how to teach online: "It is also an issue of adequately preparing students to enter complex, technologically mediated workplaces, as well" (p. 269). The disruption caused by COVID-19 heightened the complexity—and controversy—of technologically mediated workplaces both inside and outside of higher education. Early on, Skallerup Bessette, Chick, and Friberg (2020) noted myths and misperceptions about online education, resulting from the move to remote instruction in the early days of the pandemic. More than a year later, McClure (2021) argued that the ongoing pandemic had created a crisis of staff and faculty burnout that resisted quick fixes.

Professional development was the least of the worries for contingent faculty. At my institution, more than 150 Visiting Assistant Professor (VAP) positions were eliminated for Fall 2020. Formerly invisible, now they were simply gone, making their labor suddenly visible to every department trying to get courses covered. A long-time VAP, I had just been "converted" to a continuing non-tenure-track line starting with the 2019-20 school year and felt fortunate to still be employed, even though my modest raise was effectively cancelled out when my course load was raised in Fall 2020. My renewed sense of precarity left me feeling that my only choice was to acknowledge that positionality, take charge of my own limited domain, and let the chips fall where they may. Walton, Moore, and Jones (2019) defined positionality as a "way of conceiving subjectivity that simultaneously accounts for the constraints and conditions of context while also allowing for an individual's action and agency. In other words, positionality asserts that the meaning of identity categories (such as race and gender) are not essential but rather are fluid and contextual" (p. 63). In a pandemic context, precarity came to define more than job-insecure non-tenure-track faculty: It came to define all faculty struggling to cope with remote instruction, higher workloads, and constant challenges to physical and mental health.

DIY professional development is digital activism in an era of continually shifting expectations and circumstances, which includes being continually asked to do more. In this article I use *pandemic pedagogy*—four professional and pedagogical themes developed by Sheppard (2021)—as a framework to describe my teaching experience and professional development during the pandemic. First, I examine how revised "workload considerations for faculty and students" (Sheppard, 2021, p. 62) have played out since the pandemic officially began. Next, I describe resisting misguided mandates in favor of "pedagogy-driven instead of technology-driven online teaching" (Sheppard, 2021, p. 64). Following that I discuss "personal and professional well-being

in teaching online" (Sheppard, 2021, p. 67) as a struggle to balance self-care, teaching, and continued professional development. Finally, I describe the "pedagogies of logistics" (Sheppard, 2021, p. 68), the ever-expanding labor required to manage the day-to-day administrative tasks of teaching.

This is an anecdotal account of my experience as a non-tenure-line assistant teaching professor at a traditional bricks-and-mortar residential campus, where the undergraduates are almost all between the ages of 18 and 22. To describe my attitude toward shifting expectations and circumstances, I added a second framework used in research on teacher and faculty motivation, the Achievement Goal Approach as defined by Daumiller et al. (2021):

> The most prominent model in this line of research distinguishes between learning approach (e.g., striving to develop competence), performance approach (e.g., striving to be perceived as competent), performance avoidance (e.g., striving to avoid appearing incompetent), and work avoidance (e.g., striving to get through the day with little effort) goals. (p. 2)

Butler (2014) developed the Achievement Goal Approach model, noting that research usually focused on student motivation and arguing that teacher motivation was also worthy of study. Daumiller et al. (2021) used the Achievement Goal Approach model to categorize faculty motivation during the pandemic, based on overall faculty perceptions of the shift to online instruction as a threat or positive challenge. More specifically, they measured what percentage of faculty were motivated to develop competence, be perceived as competent, avoid appearing incompetent, or get through the day with minimal effort (Daumiller et al., 2021).

Rather than present each motivator as a single comprehensive identifier for an instructor, I used the categories to examine my own multiple motivations for responding to pandemic teaching workloads, administrative mandates, isolation, and course administrative tasks.

My first instinct was to claim that I embraced pandemic pedagogy from a Learning Approach, and I still believe that I fit that category overall. I saw the pandemic shift as a challenge, even a noble cause, to takes risks, pursue knowledge, and reinvent myself as a professional; however, that attitude was also moving me toward the Performance Approach, which aligned with my motivation to demonstrate competence, to make clear to my students and administrators that I knew what I was doing and that I was confident in my online teaching expertise. To perform competence sometimes meant I had to resort to Performance Avoidance. After all, who wants to be perceived as incompetent? Then again, I also fit into the Work Avoidance category be-

cause there just was not enough time in the day and professionals do need to prioritize. The following reflection of my experience follows the four pandemic pedagogy themes, along with the most prominent Achievement Goal Approach—the specific motivator—that influenced my response.

Reconsidering Tasks for Myself and My Students: Work Avoidance

In addition to an increased course load, Fall 2020 also brought an unpredictable teaching environment. The VAP layoffs led to my teaching assignment changing at the last minute, leaving me to scramble to set up a different course. The plan for face-to-face instruction changed to online, then back to face-to-face after five weeks, with social distancing and masking mandates in place. Many students had decided to be off campus that semester, with the changes affecting only the 25 percent of my students who were on campus and also willing to meet in a classroom. We ended up back online by the end of the semester as Covid cases rose and dorms went into quarantine.

Pandemic policies on taking courses for credit were expanded to alleviate student stress. Students were allowed to switch to that option well into the semester, which I discovered only when some students suddenly stopped working on the collaborative project, creating additional stress for those left shouldering the work for a grade.

Faculty were expected to accommodate absences, by not penalizing absences and by helping students catch up. I had already anticipated such considerations adding to instructor workload; as a result, my Work Avoidance tactic was to design my course site as an online asynchronous course. The resources were there, the class activities were visible, so students could keep up if they chose.

Not all of the extra feedback—and none of the grading—could be delegated to peer response or covered as whole-class instructor response. This left me rethinking what activities were necessary. I revised activities so that they clearly related to the writing projects, so that students could see the value of them. I removed unnecessary activities to avoid giving off any hint of "busy work," which also helped reduce disagreements. I could no longer afford the time or emotional bandwidth required to engage in negotiations about missing, late, or partially completed assignments.

Sheppard (2021) stated, "a critical take-away in thinking about the workload of teaching online is that instructors need to develop intentional, manageable approaches that attend to both student learning and instructor well-being" (p. 64). As an experienced online instructor teaching during

the pandemic, my biggest challenge was coping with a higher workload with the same resources. During the first year of the pandemic, I had a tendency to over-extend myself and stress out from the anxiety of all that had to be done, which led to a blur of days muddled through or lost due to excruciating headaches. My attitude eventually shifted from Learning Approach to Work Avoidance: prioritizing what was worth doing and deciding what could be let go. Christine Miserandino's story "The Spoon Theory" describes rationing spoons as a metaphor for prioritizing the limited resources a disabled person must use to get through the day: "When you are healthy you expect to have a never-ending supply of 'spoons.' But when you have to now plan your day, you need to know exactly how many 'spoons' you are starting with" (Miserandino, 2013). Healthy individuals have more spoons, but not a never-ending supply. Unhealthy workloads can be disabling because they force us to "borrow" from tomorrow's spoons, which is unsustainable.

Resisting Mandates that Get in the Way of Teaching: Performance Approach

My classes are oriented toward small group activities, but I had gone to enough Zoom training sessions over the summer to recognize that Zoom breakout rooms could be anxiety-provoking and unproductive without clear instructions and enough time for discussion. In most sessions, by the time everyone awkwardly introduced themselves, we had usually lost track of the task, running out of time before being whisked back into the main room, where we also lost track of the people we had just met. Instead, I scheduled weekly 30-minute small-group Zoom sessions that both resisted and accommodated the policy requiring synchronous online classes. Even then not all groups meshed and not all students willingly participated. Peck (2021) argued, "Just because a technology affords interaction does not mean interaction will occur, and instructors need to consider ways to actively promote inter-learner dialogue to reduce transactional distance in video environments, especially as this teaching modality becomes more prevalent" (p. 28). A videoconference session is not a classroom and does not allow for impromptu out-of-instructor-earshot conversations to happen and for relationships to develop from regular proximity to the same people. Also, teaching students who are motivated to take an online course is different from teaching students who have no choice but to take the course online.

The "hyflex" approach was encouraged when hybridized and socially distanced on-ground classes returned in Spring 2021. I was opposed to it and not only because the WiFi was unpredictable in the classrooms assigned to

me: As a virtual participant in hyflex professional development workshops, I had noticed that on-site participants seemed to be interacting with each other mostly through their laptops. Obviously, that was the only way they could also interact with the virtual participants, but it just seemed to me that masking and social-distancing policies had somewhat diminished the experience of being "face to face." I also recognized my own discomfort with trying to tackle too many modes at once: If required on-site class meetings were to be successful under these new and unfamiliar conditions, then my focus needed to be on the students in the classroom.

Recording synchronous sessions was also encouraged, which makes sense only if the session is mostly lecture. My classes are activity-based and nothing is added by recording them, except to infringe on the privacy of students who attended the session. I did allow students to Zoom in their team members for collaborative work and team conferences. I did keep Discussion forums available and visible for absent students, so they could participate real time or later. I provided short videos—either created or curated—as I have always done for online classes.

Back to "normal" in Fall 2021 meant that online teaching was taboo again—except for when students could not or did not want to come to class. Instead of adding some online and hybrid versions of courses for students who wanted them, on-ground courses were imposed on students—and faculty—who did not feel safe coming to the classroom. Even more ironic is that such mandates negatively affected students who did come to class, students who had to deal with low participation from some of their peers, along with less attention from distracted instructors, who were accommodating students who could not come to class or chasing down students who had gone missing.

Sheppard (2021) argued, "While Zoom and other synchronous technologies can certainly support specific pedagogical goals,…decisions about whether or not to use them should be based on an instructor's teaching goals and learning outcome" (66). Remote instruction via Zoom seemed reasonable for faculty who had not been using the LMS or had not previously taught online—and for students who had never taken online course. Mandatory synchronous sessions were a fast, convenient solution because, as Reisman (2020) notes, "Zoom doesn't require much curricular redesign. Teachers can essentially keep doing their quasi-Socratic, one-to-many lecture teaching the way they always have" (para. 14). I did not run my classes that way, and I was not going to start simply because synchronous sessions were mandated. My motivation could be categorized as a Performance Approach, a desire to demonstrate my competence in an area where I was more expert than those issuing the mandates.

Redefining Personal and Professional Well-being: Learning Approach

I was motivated by a Learning Approach to keep myself sane, fulfilling institutional expectations to stay current in the field in ways that also served me. When I had the chance, I presented and published. When workshops and webinars were offered on campus, I signed up. I completed our institution's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion certificate program, which was abruptly put on hiatus in Spring 2020 and restarted in the fall. All of these virtual activities expanded my knowledge about online instruction, digital composition, social justice, and the state of higher education, as they increased my competence and expanded my network of colleagues on campus and beyond. I also had a lot of stress headaches. Yes, I did overextend myself at times, but I never felt isolated.

During the 2020–2021 academic year, I actively participated in The Leading Change Institute, a year-long project piloted at my institution, which focused on imagining solutions to the problems facing higher education. The program required an application process, a significant investment of time for in-depth reading, and regular virtual meetings with invited speakers. From August 2020 through May 2021, I attended 22 information sessions, webinars, and workshops, learning about every facet of what makes a university work and what role the university plays in the larger society.

GSOLE (Global Society for Online Literacy Educators) became a welcome focus of collegial interactions—all virtual. Having joined executive board in July 2019 as secretary, I began a term as treasurer in July 2020. Not only did GSOLE provide me a year's worth of Zoom experience prior to the pandemic, but it also helped me nurture collaborative working relationships with colleagues beyond my own institution. GSOLE allowed me to stay up to date on effective pedagogy for hybrid and online literacy and also to contribute to those conversations.

Briefly, from a personal standpoint, I am fortunate that having grown children meant that child care did not complicate my day-to-day activities; however, elder care, especially the shutdown of nursing facilities during COVID-19 did prove to be an added source of stress.

Sheppard (2021) stated, "While half of our survey respondents had prior experience teaching some of their courses online, many of them wrote about the sense of disconnection when all of their courses went online" (p. 67). Although I am a more experienced online instructor, I usually teach online in the shorter winter and summer sessions when most students are away from campus—and only rarely during Spring and Fall semester. Yet my concern in Fall 2020 was that I would feel isolated from colleagues, not from students.

Every Tuesday and Thursday during Fall 2020 I spent five hours meeting with students in small-group Zoom sessions—sixteen meetings per week to accommodate students in four sections of technical writing.

Pedagogies of Logistics as a CYA Strategy: Performance Avoidance

Reworking assignment prompts to make them shorter and clearer, reworking presentations to better explain concepts, and reworking LMS pages to meet accessibility guidelines sometimes felt like a form of procrastination to avoid tasks like feedback and grading; however, I did not have much lead time in between semesters for planning. That year I taught a 4:1:4:2 schedule, with no break at all between Winter Session, Spring Semester, and Summer Session.

Although keeping records and continually reworking my course materials was a CYA move that kept me from looking incompetent, those activities also helped me to strategize better, identify problems sooner, and feel less overwhelmed. This non-instructional aspect of pedagogy gave me the confidence to take control of my courses and to cope with the unusual teaching contexts and increasingly unusual student behaviors.

Absences could not be penalized, but I kept track of them anyway, in case those absences affected student performance. If students missed too many synchronous meetings, I contacted them through the LMS platform and gave them a deadline to respond. If they failed repeated attempts to contact them, I dropped them from the course before their grade would affect their GPA. During Spring 2021, when we were back on campus in a hybrid course format, I followed the same policies, with a slight addition: If a student demonstrated concerning behavior or went missing, I dutifully completed the official letter of concern to the dean of students. I wrote more of these letters that semester than I had written in the previous seven years at the institution.

Much of my student email correspondence included the response, "I hope you feel better soon." Monitoring absences was complicated because each course section became two sections to accommodate social-distancing mandates, with each partial section meeting once per week. Masks made it difficult to recognize students, while resistance to masks made for some uncomfortable moments.

Not all students who needed them had official accommodations, which meant that ensuring accessibility was complicated without knowing how to help. Accessibility for everyone in terms of making classroom and learning-platform environments accessible to everyone is a big theme today and one I agree with; however, it takes a lot of time to implement, a lot of time to

learn about, and a lot of getting it wrong before getting it right. Wood (2017) notes that the burden for requesting accommodation is on the individual, but that accommodation also creates "pedagogical fallout" (p. 269), which challenges our "assumption of normativity" (p. 269). For example, most accommodation requests I receive are for extended time for testing, but I do not give timed tests or require timed writing—and that decision is partly due to logistics: How would I provide accommodation without revealing who falls outside the "norm"? Wood (2017) has argued, "one way (not *the* way) to increase accessibility in composition classrooms is to rethink our conceptions of time" (p. 267), especially in ways that are more suited to the tasks we ask students to complete. Rethinking our conceptions of space is another way to increase accessibility, to consider how we use physical and digital spaces in synchronous and asynchronous time.

Sheppard (2021) defined "pedagogies of logistics" (p. 68), as the necessary but ever-expanding labor required to manage the day-to-day administrative tasks of teaching, especially "logistical planning and student correspondence" (p. 68). My attitude toward administrative tasks that required following procedures and keeping records could be characterized as Performance Avoidance, a desire to avoid looking incompetent. Sending out reminders, responding to emails, and keeping track of absences and missing assignments felt like Performance Avoidance because these tasks were not directly related to teaching.

Conclusion

During the 2021–2022 school year, when most classes were back on ground, there was no back to normal. Some students had no clear concept of what an on-ground college class used to look like because they started college during the pandemic. Delivery platforms have changed and also what counts as necessary knowledge about writing. For example, virtual collaboration and presentation used to be what happened simply because the course was taught online; now even web-enhanced on-ground courses focus on those skills. The expectation that students would be writing and accessing the LMS from a computer has shifted to the expectation that students are often working via their smartphones. I have to think about messaging in terms of push notifications because I can no longer count on students to log into the LMS to find out what's due or to actively check their email. My course materials are expected to be accessible, so I have to think differently about creating them, in ways I never had to before. I can no longer expect that students will come regularly to an on-ground class, so web-enhanced on-ground courses must be designed to allow students to keep up, even if their absences multiply beyond what used to get them dropped from the course.

In this article I have responded to the call from Sheppard (2021) "to document this [pandemic] experience and the significant impact it has had on composition instructors and their pedagogies" (p. 60). That response used the Achievement Goal Approach (Butler, 2014) as a way to examine my attitudes toward pandemic pedagogy as threats or positive challenges.

I have been through times of crisis in work contexts before, and I know that the promised end point of a crisis can be a vanishing horizon. Sometimes the promise of rewards for persistence vanish as soon as the crisis passes or the unprecedented becomes the new normal. McClure (2021) suggested the latter may already be happening: "There's a pervasive frustration that leaders didn't learn any lessons from last year. It's almost as if last year didn't happen at all, or leaders are exercising a sort of selective amnesia about the trauma of the last 18 months" (p. 6). The pandemic is just the latest round of challenges to higher education, although the most significant in recent years, more significant than the Great Recession, declining birthrates, and student loan defaults. Despite these challenges, crisis mode cannot be sustained long term or become the new normal. The pushback is coming—it may already be here. There are no spoons left to give.

If I could summarize my pandemic pedagogy right now, it might look something like this:

- **Define**: the parameters of the course, the assignments, the agenda for meetings, the expectations of students and faculty
- **Drop**: busywork assignments, unreasonable attendance and deadline policies, unrealistic expectations for individual feedback
- **Design**: course sites to be simple and redundant and accessible, messages to include links to assignments, assignments to include links back to the module, structure that helps students be responsible for their learning
- **Delegate**: feedback to peers, scheduled reminders to the LMS, instruction to curated and student-produced resources
- **Discuss**: feedback in real time as much as possible
- **Defend**: against impositions on personal time and perceived incompetence by keeping good records, maintaining composure, waiting to respond

This tidy list might look different going forward, depending on how higher education evolves or devolves because pandemic pedagogy is digital activism in an era of continually shifting expectations and circumstances that include conflicting messages about accommodation and resilience. Pandemic pedagogy is realizing that nobody else knows what they are doing either, and nobody else is coming to the rescue, so the only option is to take charge and figure it out.

References

Butler, Ruth. (2014). What teachers want to achieve and why it matters: An achievement goal approach to teacher motivation. In P. W. Richardson, S. A. Karabenick, & H. M. G. Watt (Eds.), *Teacher motivation: Theory and practice* (pp. 20–35). Routledge.

Daumiller, Martin, Rinas, Raven, Hein, Julia, Janke, Stefan, Dickhäuser, Oliver, & Dresel, Markus. (2021). Shifting from face-to-face to online teaching during COVID-19: The role of university faculty achievement goals for attitudes towards this sudden change, and their relevance for burnout/engagement and student evaluations of teaching quality. *Computers in Human Behavior, 118*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106677.

McClure, Kevin R. (2021, September 27). Higher ed, we've got a morale problem—and a free t-shirt won't fix it. *EdSurge*. https://www.edsurge.com/news/2021-09-27-higher-ed-we-ve-got-a-morale-problem-and-a-free-t-shirt-won-t-fix-it

Melonçon, Lisa. (2017). Contingent faculty, online writing instruction, and professional development in technical and professional communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 26* (3), 256–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2017.1339489

Miserandino, Christine. (2003). The spoon theory. https://butyoudontlooksick.com/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/

Peck, Kimberly Fahle (2021, December). Anyone? Anyone?: Promoting inter-learner dialogue in synchronous video courses. *Computers and Composition, 62*, 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2021.102671

Reisman, Sorel. (2020, August). Viva la revolucíon? *Computer, 53*(8), 71–73. https://doi.org/10.1109/MC.2020.2993622

Sheppard, Jennifer. (2021). Pandemic pedagogy: What we learned from the sudden transition to online teaching and how it can help us prepare to teach writing in an uncertain future. *Composition Studies, 49*(1), 60–83.

Skallerup Bessette, Lee, Chick, Nancy, & Friberg, Jennifer C. (2020, May 1). 5 myths about remote teaching in the COVID-19 crisis. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/5-myths-about-remote-teaching-in-the-covid-19-crisis/?cid2=gen_login_refresh&cid=gen_sign_in

Walton, Rebecca, Moore, Kristen. R., & Jones, Natasha. N. (2019). *Technical communication after the social justice turn: Building coalitions for action*. Routledge.

Wood, Tara. (2017). Cripping time in the college composition classroom. *College Composition and Communication, 69*(2), 260–286.

Wooten, Courtney Adams, Fitzpatrick, Brian, Fernandez, Lourdes, Goldenthal, Ariel M., & Matthews, Jessica. (2022). Drown[ing] a little bit all the time: The intersections of labor constraints and professional development in hybrid contingent faculty experiences. *Academic Research and Artistry, 6*, Article 3. https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/alra/vol6/iss1/3/

Towards More Humane Technology in the Online and Hybrid College Composition Classroom

Amber Foster, University of Southern California

This paper responds to demand for more empathetic, "kinder" (Denial, 2019) educational technology for the online and hybrid college composition classroom. I point out the gap between scholarship on best practices for technology-mediated writing instruction and the capabilities of extant instructional technologies such as Zoom. I argue that these technologies, even with sound pedagogical practice, can inhibit student engagement and work against efforts to foster empathy and build effective learning communities. By so doing, I call for more "humane" technology that centralizes empathy in the process of creating more inclusive and engaged learning environments.

Introduction: Composition and Human Connection

College composition courses thrive on human connection. For decades, research into the best practices for technology-mediated instruction has pointed to student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction as fundamental to fostering student engagement and building community, particularly within asynchronous courses whose rates of attrition tend to be higher than with in-person, synchronous, or hybrid modalities (Bawa, 2016). In their study of online courses, Joanne Dolan, Kevin Kain, Janet Reilly, and Gaurav Bansal (2017) pointed to the "three presences" required to maintain student engagement: teaching, or teacher-to-student interaction; social, or the "deliberate interaction between individuals with shared interests or goals" (p. 50); and cognitive, or a student's reflective engagement with the course, their peers, and their own learning processes. The authors ultimately advocated for increased emphasis on cognitive presence, acknowledging as they do the difficulty involved in keeping students "present" while online.

The answer to how we go about creating these three presences within online and hybrid courses may lie with "digital empathy" or "concern and caring for others expressed through computer-mediated communications" (Terry & Cain, 2016, p. 1). Emerging scholarship in this field suggests that teaching digital empathy can reap considerable rewards, including improvements to student engagement, active listening, and teamwork, in addition to the more far-reach-

DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862.2.02

ing cognitive and social benefits of empathy as a life skill (Chen, 2018). Put simply, students need to care on an emotional level to learn—to be invested not only in their own learning, but in the learning of others. Likewise, they need to feel that the instructor is invested in them as human beings, not solely as machines tasked with producing academic content. As Judith V. Jordan and Harriet L. Schwartz (2018) noted, "connection is so essential to our wellbeing and to our very survival that the brain is wired to respond in the same way and in the same place to social exclusion as it does to life-threatening physical pain" (p. 26). Empathy is especially crucial in more "active" learning environments such as college composition classrooms, where the emphasis is on collaboration and discussion (praxis) rather than passive absorption of course content.

Yet we must also acknowledge that "empathy" is a contested term. While usually framed as "putting oneself in another's shoes," the process of empathy-building is complicated by our positions of power within educational and social hierarchies, due to characteristics such as rank, race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, or health. As Michalinos Zembylas (2017) explained, "Empathetic identification with the plight of others . . . is not a sentimental recognition of potential 'sameness'—you are in pain and so am I, so we both suffer the 'same'—but a realization of our own common humanity, while acknowledging asymmetries of suffering, inequality, and injustice" (p. 182). We may not ever be able to fully put ourselves in each other's shoes, but it is through that delicate negotiation between self and other that classroom communities are built. A more useful term might be what Judith V. Jordan and Harriet L. Schwartz (2018) called "radical empathy," a concept that emerged out of the study of relational cultural theory. In that educational model, the learning experience moves away from one-way transmission of knowledge towards two-way "relatedness and responsiveness to one another and the desire to engage in growthful relationships" (p. 26). In contrast with traditional notions of empathy that ask one to understand the other, radical empathy is mutually transformative, requiring "deep learning and acknowledgement of the power of relationship where both people experience growth" (p. 27). Although the authors are primarily focused on the instructor-to-student relationship, other scholars have called for empathetic concern that is culturally responsive (Warren, 2014), a means of furthering ongoing efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion within higher education.

More Technology, More Problems

The challenge, as I see it, is the disconnect between the best practices for online writing instruction, discussed above, and the capabilities of current learning technologies such as Zoom. In fact, this presentation emerged out of my concern over the lack of meaningful interaction I was seeing in my

classes, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. My own experience of disconnect wasn't due to lack of training or support for online instruction. Like many instructors, the pandemic led me to redesign my writing and critical reasoning courses for better implementation in a remote learning environment. I made netiquette policies on my syllabus to encourage active, camera-on participation; I created interactive activities that relied heavily on Zoom breakout rooms and Google Docs; I held individual conferences where I checked in with both students' writing and wellbeing.

All the same, as the pandemic wore on, more and more students became what Galit Wellner (2021) nicknamed "Zoombies"—a word that invokes both "Zoom" and "Zombie," or "a metaphor to indicate a strange behavior of zoomed participants, whose 'digital body' in the form of a Zoom conversation box exists, but is empty and silent" (p. 2). It might be easy to place the blame for this phenomenon on the stressors of the pandemic, but like Wellner and others, I started to question to what extent the technologies I was using were contributing to the problem. I wasn't convinced that either Zoom or Blackboard—my university's go-to instructional technologies—could generate the digital empathy necessary to achieving learning outcomes within my seminar-style composition courses.

My experience is not unique. In a recent article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* Beth McMurtrie (2022) surveyed higher education faculty and students, reporting back on widespread "student disconnection." Students aren't showing up or tuning in, a trend she attributes to various factors, including pandemic-induced social anxiety and widespread burnout amongst both faculty and students. She also highlighted the common perception that classroom technologies such as Zoom can heighten feelings of disconnection. She wrote that "some faculty members who responded to *The Chronicle* believe that students' study skills atrophied in the transition to remote learning, especially in high school. Workloads were often lighter. Deadlines became fluid. Discussion happened asynchronously or not at all. Students entered college, they believe, expecting more of the same" (para. 33). This perceived decline in student engagement could be partially attributed to lack of faculty resources such as training and technical support, given how few universities were prepared for a sudden shift online.

The irony of the situation is that the exigencies of the pandemic, not to mention ongoing declines in working conditions for composition teaching faculty (the majority of whom are non-tenure-track or adjuncts already overburdened with teaching and service), leads to maximum burnout at a time when our cognitive and emotional presences are most needed. And, in my experience, instructors are far more likely to blame themselves for the problem of student disconnection, rather than the technologies hastily adapted in a time of crisis.

The Trouble with Tech

The question, therefore, is not only "are we using technologies the right way?" but also "are we using the right technologies?" Many instructors, including myself, lament the difficulties involved in teaching in online or hybrid modalities, despite the supposed benefits of synchronous-over-asynchronous instruction (even assuming unlikely, ideal conditions in which all students have equal access to the requisite technology, a quiet workspace, and high-speed Internet).

A growing body of scholarship points to the limits of what current technologies can do, or what educator Susan D. Blum (2020) referred to as the "human-technology semiotic mismatch" (para. 22). Blum argues that the teacher-centered framework on Zoom does not allow for the ebb and flow of natural conversation, given that only one speaker can talk at one time. She added that "all the communicative signs that embodied humans rely on are thinned, flattened, made more effortful or entirely impossible. Yet we interpret them anyway" (para. 16). We cannot, as sundry anthropological research informs us, accurately "read" social cues (gestures, facial expressions, body language) on video conferencing platforms. Moreover, as John C. Sherblom (2010) pointed out, social cues in synchronous online classes can be misread or exaggerated, leading to discourse that "perpetuate[s] stereotypic impressions and inferences about social status, class, gender, race, and ethnicity" (pp. 500–501). In some cases, as Krystle Phirangee and Alesia Malec (2017) asserted, efforts to build online communities may result in an increase in feelings of social isolation and disconnection in students whose "dominant identity does not fit with the group" (p. 169). In this way, instructional technologies may unintentionally exacerbate existing social biases.

Educational technologies are not neutral tools (Strate, 2012); rather, they are social constructions designed to meet specific social needs. As critical code scholar Ruha Benjamin (2019) pointed out, social biases are built into the code of our technologies, often in ways unintended by their creators. Benjamin calls this "default discrimination," finding that "social and legal codes, like their byte-size counterparts, are not neutral; not are all codes created equal. They reflect particular perspectives and forms of social organization that allow some people to assert themselves—their assumptions, interests, and desires—over others" (p. 77). If we are to address systemic inequalities within technology-mediated instruction, therefore, we must re-examine the technologies we are using and ask ourselves if they are doing what we want them to do; namely, facilitating the empathetic human connections necessary to create inclusive classroom communities.

Moving Forward

The COVID-19 crisis may (hopefully) be coming to a close, but hybrid and online instructional modes are here to stay. In spite of nostalgic calls to return to a fully in-person instructional model, the cat, as they say, is out of the bag; the shift towards technology-mediated instruction in higher education was well underway before the onset of the pandemic, given the fact that online courses are cheaper for universities, more convenient and flexible for students, and less reliant on faculty labor. *Harvard Business Review* writers Sean Gallagher and Jason Palmer (2020) claimed this change is "long overdue," noting that

> After a decade of growth in postsecondary alternatives, including 'massively open online courses' (MOOCs), industry-driven certification programs, and coding bootcamps. This moment is likely to be remembered as a critical turning point between the 'time before,' when analog on-campus degree-focused learning was the default, to the 'time after,' when digital, online, career-focused learning became the fulcrum of competition between institutions (para. 3).

In the neoliberal university, technology-mediated instruction is a win-win—a way of meeting consumer/student demand with supply, thus increasing the "price and value" (para. 2) of higher education.

As dismaying as that perspective might be for those of us more occupied with the business of educating our students than the business of higher education, we cannot ignore the demand for online and hybrid educational models. Although administrators often claim that students desire a return to full in-person models, others view hybrid learning as a means of addressing systemic inequities within higher education. In her analysis of the mixed reactions to the return to in-person instruction, Adrienne Lu (2022) found that

> some students . . . want their colleges to make hybrid learning permanent. They argue that scaling up remote learning during the pandemic made higher education more accessible — not only for students with disabilities and the immunocompromised, but also commuter students, those balancing schoolwork with jobs, and students with caregiving responsibilities — and helped to protect vulnerable faculty members" (para. 7).

It stands to reason that some courses are well suited to online learning, and many instructors and students will welcome the flexibility of being able to work from home at a time when commuter costs, and cost of living, continue to rise.

That said, we must remain alert to institutional shortcuts and cost-saving measures that could negatively impact student engagement and quality of instruction. As history scholar Catherine Denial (2019) asserted, efforts to build "kinder" pedagogy—teaching methods that reimagine the instructor-student relationship as more collaborative and compassionate—are often hampered by financially-driven institutional imperatives. As Denial explained, "To extend kindness means recognizing that our students possess innate humanity, which directly undermines the transactional educational model to which too many of our institutions lean, if not cleave" (para. 18).

Not all hope is lost, however. Educational technology markets are competitive, and many universities, including mine, have begun considering alternatives with more advanced social functions. At the same time, technology providers are responding to growing cultural anxiety over how our technological devices socially engineer our behavior. For example, Tyler Harris, the Google Design Ethicist behind the Netflix documentary *The Social Dilemma,* founded The Center for Humane Technology, a group that advocates for designing technologies that resist the attention economy, reduce digital distractions, and privilege user wellbeing, or "time well spent." Although their efforts center on social media, we could apply a similar critical gaze to educational technologies such as Zoom. It's possible that better technologies exist already, or could exist, if developers and educators worked together to design software to better meet the needs of a changing higher education landscape. My own future research will work towards articulating the principles of humane technology, considering how instructional technologies could be created, or adapted, to better foster empathy and human connection within online and hybrid college composition classrooms.

Additionally, while we wait for old learning technologies to evolve and new technologies to emerge, those of us involved in faculty training and mentoring can demonstrate the best practices for fostering student engagement and building community with the technologies we currently have at our disposal. We can continue to get involved in faculty governance and resist administrative pressure to enact cost-saving measures that negatively impact student learning. We can work with administrators to re-evaluate existing learning management systems and consider alternatives that will allow us to teach with digital empathy in mind. In this way, we have the potential to move towards more human-centered educational technologies that will help us resist the dehumanizing forces of the post-pandemic, technology-mediated university.

References

Bawa, Papia. (2016). Retention in online courses: Exploring issues and solutions—A literature review. *SAGE Open, 6*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015621777.

Benjamin, Ruha. (2019). *Race after technology: Abolitionist tools for the New Jim Code*. Polity.
Blum, Susan D. (2020, April 22). Why we're exhausted by Zoom. *Inside Higher Ed.* https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/04/22/professor-explores-why-zoom-classes-deplete-her-energy-opinion.
Chen, Cheryl Wei-yu. (2018). Developing EFL students' digital empathy through video production. *System*, *77*, 50–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.01.006
Denial, Catherine. (2019, 15 August). A pedagogy of kindness. *Hybrid Pedagogy*. https://hybridpedagogy.org/pedagogy-of-kindness/.
Dolan, Joanne, Kain, Kevin, Reilly, Janet, & Bansal, Gaurav. (2017). How do you build community and foster engagement in online courses? *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, *151*, 45–60. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20248.
Gallagher, Sean, & Palmer, Jason. (2020, September 29). The pandemic pushed universities online. The change was long overdue. *Harvard Business Review*, https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring-minds/the-pandemic-pushed-universities-online-the-change-was-long-overdue.
Jordan, Judith V., & Schwartz, Harriet L. (2018). Radical empathy in teaching. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, *153*, 25–35. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20278.
Lu, Adrienne. (2022, 11 April). Some colleges are ending hybrid learning. Students are pushing back. *Chronicle of Higher Education.* https://www.chronicle.com/article/some-colleges-are-ending-hybrid-learning-students-are-pushing-back
McMurtrie, Beth. (2022, 5 April). A 'stunning' level of student disconnection. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-stunning-level-of-student-disconnection
Phirangee, Krystle, & Malec, Alesia. (2017). Othering in online learning: an examination of social presence, identity, and sense of community. *Distance Education*, *38*(2), 160–172. https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2017.1322457
Sherblom, John C. (2010). The computer-mediated communication (CMC) classroom: a challenge of medium, presence, interaction, identity, and relationship. *Communication Education, 59*(4), 497–523. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2010.486440
Strate, Lance. (2012). If it's neutral, it's not technology. *Educational Technology*, *52*(1), 6–9. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44429982
Terry, Christopher, & Cain, Jeff. (2016). The emerging issue of digital empathy. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, *80*(4)58, 1-4. https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe80458.
Warren, Chezare A. (2014). Towards a pedagogy for the application of empathy in culturally diverse classrooms. *Urban Review, 46*(3), 395–419. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-013-0262-5
Wellner, Galit. (2021). The Zoom-bie student and the lecturer: Reflections on teaching and learning with Zoom. *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*, *25*(1), 153–161. https://doi.org/10.5840/techne2021121132
Zembylas, Michalinos. (2017). In search of critical and strategic pedagogies of compassion: Interrogating pity and sentimentality in higher education. In P. Gibbs (Ed.), *The pedagogy of compassion at the heart of higher education* (pp. 173–187). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57783-8_12

“Speaking” Their language: Understanding the Perspective of Multilingual Learners through a Student-Centered Video Creation Project

Joyce Meier and Cheryl Caesar, Michigan State University

With Juhua Huang, Ky Chimrak, Apichaya Thaneerat, and Nadiah Mohamed Hasnol, Michigan State University

This chapter describes three educational videos made by a highly collaborative student-faculty team that examined varying pedagogical challenges faced by multilingual, international learners at our university. The project originated several years ago, after discussions in a two-year faculty learning community led two participating professors to propose and then receive a grant to form a team that would examine such issues from a distinctly student-centered perspective. The ensuing videos have served as aids in faculty workshops and regional conferences, and as an ongoing digital resource on our university website (iteach.msu.edu). Each video presents a scenario that surfaces multilingual students' perspectives in response to a different instructional move; the videos then ask the teacher-viewer to identify the problem that is being portrayed; finally, each video proposes an array of pedagogical solutions. Overall, the project exemplifies the affordances of digital writing: through the team's choice of video as the most effective means by which to communicate multilingual student concerns to faculty and, through its unplanned adaptive response to the pandemic, collaboratively meeting and co-creating its products online.

Since the 1950s, many U.S. universities have witnessed a steady growth in enrollment by international students, with a surge in 2009 and the first-ever decrease in 2019 (Israel & Batalova, 2014).[1] The phenomenon has brought opportunities as well as challenges to faculty who are unaccustomed to working with this cohort. In *International Educator*, Marian Kisch (2014) identified a variety of such

1 The authors also wish to thank Claudia Lim, the undergraduate team member whose work was so invaluable in the creation of videos two and three, and of Yuyang Cai, the team member whose personal experience and video skills were so central to the creation of video one.

 DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862.2.03

issues, including different cultural attitudes toward plagiarism and intellectual property, difficulties adapting to group work, lack of necessary English skills, and unfamiliarity with common cultural references (pp. 44-45).

This paper describes how a team of undergraduate students and university faculty responded multimodally to the dramatic increase in the numbers of international (and multilingual) students at their institution—a 5 to 8% increase yearly over an eight-year span, or 40% growth from 2008-2018 ("International," n.d.)—until the overall population of international students represented one in every 13 students, and comprised as much as 80% of the students in their first-year writing courses, especially the WRA 1004/0102 Preparation for College Writing (PCW). For a variety of reasons—including the pandemic and visa restrictions, along with anti-Asian sentiment in the U.S.—these numbers are currently down, but at the time this project launched, the institution was engaged in numerous initiatives, as it attempted to respond supportively to this student population. The two teachers engaged in the project described here, for example, participated in a two-year program where they, along with four other teachers and two administrators, met monthly to actively reimagine the learning goals and curriculum of PCW; eventually, course goals were reframed to center the mostly multilingual students' languages and cultures as sites of inquiry and resources for learning. One of these teachers, along with another from the original group, subsequently participated in a two-year university learning community that discussed how to better support the university's international student population and, currently, one of these two instructors also facilitates another such group that encompasses both faculty and staff, especially advisors and administrators. Relevant to this paper, these various initiatives also evolved into the formation of a faculty-student team that has been creating videos that describe and address specific challenges a multilingual student may face; they have also been facilitating faculty workshops for teachers on- and off-campus. This evolution has not always been easy, though, as team members (both students and faculty) graduated and/or moved to other institutions, and then the pandemic occurred, which necessitated that the project move online.

Currently, the team utilizes both online and in-person modalities and consists of two faculty along with four undergraduate students who come from diverse countries (Thailand, Malaysia, China and, most recently, Ghana), and have different majors (mathematics, supply chain, communication, and geography). The two current faculty members are both white, U.S.-born, middle-aged and middle-class females, but they bring to the table extensive experience with other languages and cultures. One, born into a family of Polish immigrants, grew up in a bilingual household and has taught writing to university students in Harbin, China. The other has lived and taught EFL in

Europe (France, Italy, and the Republic of Ireland) for 25 years, and earned her doctorate at the Sorbonne. Both instructors are familiar with the experience of being "other" or outsider in professional and educational settings, and both are strongly committed to ongoing work in support of international, multilingual students at Michigan State University.

The videos themselves originate from primary sources: the faculty experiences of teaching EFL/ESL and writing to multilingual learners (along with their participation in multiple university groups addressing similar issues) as well as the undergraduate students' own experiences as international, multilingual students studying in the U.S. Additionally, there is secondary research (as shared and discussed among the team members) on the specific topic examined in each video. Titled "Why won't they understand my lecture?" the first video depicts multilingual international students struggling to understand their economics professor's U.S.-centric cultural reference of football—a scenario that imaginatively re-configures the *actual* experiences of one of our team's former members, an undergraduate student from China. In considering this scenario, the team's two faculty members theorized the concept of the "double learning": that is, the learning the multilingual students had to do, the discipline-specific economics lesson of the supply/demand curve, *and* the corresponding "lesson" of fluctuating offensive and defensive lines in football. This first video also drew on insights garnered from the team's shared reading and discussion of the general challenges international students face in making cultural adjustments when they study abroad (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Lee, 2008; Yeh & Inose, 2010), as well as Anthony Robins' (2010) discussion of the "learning edge momentum," which analyzed how students build new knowledge most effectively in relationship to what they *already* know and understand. Similarly, the team's next two videos ("Why won't they talk?") and ("Why won't they write grammatically?") were based both in the team's own experiences (both teachers' and students') and in their shared discussion of relevant scholarship. Drawing on Xuan Zheng (2010) and Ozgur Yildirim (2017), for instance, the second video unpacks the purported "silence" of international students in U.S. classrooms, as it portrays the ways in which instructors might contribute to this seeming non-participation: e.g., the speed at which the teacher speaks and the limited time they give students to read (much less process) articles assigned for in-class discussion. Instead, our video suggests that teachers intentionally scaffold class material and provide readings ahead of class-time so that *all* students can more fully participate. In turn, the third video portrays the not-atypical dilemma of the international student who receives a paper back from his (presumably U.S.) instructor: full of line-by-line red marks and exclamation points. The video then surfaces the students' baffled, disappointed response to the paper, along with some

of the more common grammatical "interferences" of home languages (like Mandarin and Arabic) that may emerge in international and/or multilingual students' writing, and it cautions instructors against writing assessments that are too prescriptively grammatical. The video's points are based on the work of translingual scholars like Suresh Canagarajah (2016) and Min-Zhan Lu and Bruce Horner (2013), who argued for classroom recognition of the porous and rhetorically shifting aspects of languages and languaging rather than an adherence to absolute standards, as well as the recommendations of ESL scholars who support formative, strategic writing assessment and a "don't grade what you don't teach" pedagogical approach (Brown, 2012).

All three videos are now available both on the university's iteach.msu.edu website and on *YouTube*, thus serving as an ongoing resource for faculty campus-wide and beyond. This paper describes the team's working processes, its artistic choice of video as a tool, and the nature of the team's online collaboration, as necessitated by the pandemic.

Why Video?

In deciding how to best deliver international students' perspectives to faculty audiences, the team chose video—a modality which communicates its contents through picture, animation, sound, music and voice, as well as "just text." For some time now, teachers in both ESL and composition/rhetoric have incorporated multimodal forms into their teaching (Hafner, 2014; Johnson & Arola, 2016; Lauer, 2002; Laverick, 2012; Stille & Prasad, 2015; Takayoshi & Ittersum, 2018; Wyosocki et al., 2019; Yi et al., 2020). Remix projects, as our own first-year writing program names them, can be potent as a form of expression for multilingual learners, especially those for whom English is the second (or third or fourth) language. Multimodality allows such students to make their ideas and experiences visible outside of written text; it creates space for multilingual students to express what they otherwise might not be able to articulate in language. Such a perspective aligns with Canagarajah's (2016) notion that "people [in the communicative process] use all the resources at their disposal … such as objects, gestures, and the body, for meaning-making" (p. 450). Language is only one aspect of the meaning-making process; the multimodal, as Christopher A. Hafner (2015) argued, may permit a greater range of voices than does a "pen-and-paper assignment" (p. 504).

Moreover, as Xiao Tan and Paul Kei Matsuda (2021) asserted, integrating multimodality into first-year writing can enrich *teacher* development as well. Tan and Matsuda argued that despite pedagogical challenges, multimodal projects helped the teachers in their study challenge traditional notions of literacy, as they "sought opportunities for professional development, bridged

teaching and their daily literacy practices, and negotiated with existing policies and dominant discourses" (p. 1199). Not surprisingly, a multimodal project now makes up at least one of the five projects assigned in our regular WRA 101 course, and many teachers integrate multimodal aspects into the others (for example, inviting the students to incorporate visuals into their written texts). In PCW, the emphasis on multimodality is even stronger and, indeed, informs the course learning goals, along with an asset-based view that explicitly centers students' languages and cultures as "sites of inquiry and resources for learning" (Learning Goals, n.d.). As our group came together, drawing on the potential of video for teacher development seemed only natural.

Yet while the team agreed on video as the means to make visible the in- and out-of-classroom challenges that both teachers and students were describing, the original concept involved making videos that would essentially record various professors' approaches, vis-a-vis interviews, to the teaching of multilingual students. Further discussion with the students on the team, though, suggested the limits of that method, because it did not seem able to capture the *students*' perspectives. Over time, and through multiple discussions, the team developed the idea of making videos that would portray the issue at hand from the *students*' side, before turning to possible pedagogical solutions. Yet the team also recognized that it lacked actors who could portray the problem scenarios (the two students involved were not sufficient for the scripts under consideration). So the original group evolved the idea of employing cartoons instead. Its goal was to incorporate multimodality into our own research-teaching project, as a tool for "teaching the teachers," and for making more visible the stories of challenge that our students were describing to us. Thus, through its medium of cartoon video, the team was able to yoke the frustrations expressed by the teachers (as in: "Why won't they understand my lectures?") to the actual experiences of the students, as they described them. The intent was to use the videos to surface the concerns of this latter group (i.e., students) and to make these more visible to the former group (the frustrated teachers). Furthermore, the cartoon (rather than acted) mechanisms deployed by our video-making team lent an intentionally playful (rather than just critical) tone to each video's "lesson," and thus, made each video's often challenging message more palatable to its imagined teacher-viewer. As one of the initial student team members put it, the cartoons were designed so as to "not offend."

In choosing video as a form, the team was also influenced by its understanding of the power of this medium to enhance empathy among observers. Robert Shelton and Elyse D'nn Lovell (2018), for instance, claimed that just watching a 30-minute TedX talk increased empathetic concern and perspective-taking on the part of the viewers (community college students). Daniela Hekiert, Magdalena Igras-Cybulska, and Artur Cybulska (2021) described a

study in which video was used to convey the perspectives of student "out-groups" in responding to a particular scenario; the videos unpacked and explained the students' cultural misunderstandings, so that the video observers could "see" where the students were "coming from." Hee Jun Choi and Minwha Yang (2011) incorporated video as a tool in Korean teacher education and claimed that video was more effective than text in its ability to present authentic situations in problem-based instruction that enhanced empathy on the part of the viewer. Such examples suggest the power of video in engendering empathy in viewers, and its possibilities for teaching about others who differ from ourselves.

According to research by Stephan Schwan and Roland Riempp (2004), interactive dynamic visualizations allow the users to adapt form and content to their individual cognitive skills and needs, but are especially potent if they can be interactive; thus, we have embedded our videos into interactive pedagogy sessions for teachers, so that audience members have ample opportunity to engage with the material and to reflect on their viewing experience. Even on the university Teaching Commons website (iteach.msu.edu), we intentionally placed the videos within a larger context of activities: what we call pre-flective questions that set up the problem that each video shows and post-reflective questions that give the teacher-learner the opportunity to try out and think through the implications of what they have learned, in terms of their own pedagogy. Logan Fiorella et al. (2020) argued that when learning from narrated video lessons with complex diagrams, students benefit most from viewing dynamically generated drawings and then verbally explaining what they have learned. The videos provide something similar for our faculty audiences—whether these participants engage asynchronously in the online version in iteach.msu.edu or synchronously through one of our faculty workshops—because the pedagogy workshops in which they are set give faculty participants the opportunity to discuss the ideas being suggested. The audiences not only receive the suggestions and tips listed by text (part 2 of the video), but they also bring away the whole concept and understanding of the problem from the storytelling section (part 1). Thus, vis-à-vis story, the videos create empathy first, and then cognitively engage the viewer in considering solutions to the scenarios thus presented.

Overall then, and in our view, video has been a highly effective tool to communicate the international student perspective and to immerse the audience in a specific student's plight. Our team believes that while watching the video, the professor-audience can visualize and connect with another side of the classroom—the side of the international student that they might not otherwise be aware of—and they can thus better understand answers to the question "Why won't they…?" Thus, we see this project itself as an example

of digital activism, as it gives voice to its student participants. From the start, the project has engaged multilingual students in naming and describing their own learning challenges at our institution; once agreed upon by the team, each problem is then researched and discussed, as the team collaboratively begins to brainstorm and whiteboard a working script, along with illustrations. Two of our student members tend to do more of the research and writing; the other two are more visually inclined, and propose, often through drawings, the images that end up in the video. The teachers contribute the most at each video's end, as they help suggest pedagogical solutions to the issues thus raised.

How Video

In its three or so years of existence, the team has faced (and resolved) numerous challenges: the leave-taking of key members (some of whom graduated or took jobs elsewhere) and the seeking of funds (which then had to be strategically managed, stretched, or renewed, to accommodate project needs). But perhaps its biggest challenge was the pandemic, which necessitated virtual collaboration. No sooner had the group effectively reconstituted itself with new members had then the pandemic struck. Whereas our former meetings (and the opportunities to collectively brainstorm, whiteboard, and transform our discussion of pedagogical challenges into video format) had taken place in-person, the next two years involved online "gatherings" at odd hours of the day and night (e.g., 9 PM and on weekends), especially designed to accommodate the schedules of our student collaborators who were participating from as far as 12 time zones away. Following the co-created scripts, the student and professor team members asynchronously would record their oral contributions to the video and then upload these to the course site we had created in D2L, our institution's learning management system. When "outside" voices were needed—for instance, the voices of the U.S. professor and the U.S. student in video 2—other writing colleagues and even family members were recruited. Meanwhile, one of the Thai students, Plagrim (Apichaya), who was especially adept at drawing, would post her cartoon illustrations in D2L, so that in turn Claudia, our Indonesian team member with video expertise, could piece together the sound recordings and cartoon images to make the videos. The team also used both D2L and Google folders to house multiple other activities related to the project: the various iterations of brainstorming and scriptwriting; notes on the related scholarly articles (which team members took turns reading and summarizing); and PowerPoint drafts for each of the virtual presentations and workshops that the team gave. In this way, the project became a story of video-making over wide distances, of international collaboration across continents.

Overall, the team members have been fiercely collaborative—so much so that it is now sometimes hard to tell where one individual's contribution ends and another's begins. In fact, each of the challenges the team has faced—whether that be locating a new teammate with specific skills, or engaging in new research (most recently, in the specific challenges international students face in online classes—our next video's topic) is resolved *by* the team itself, through its bi-weekly problem-solving and brainstorming sessions. Scripts, articles, and meeting notes tend to be co-written, with all members typing into a shared Google doc. Perhaps most significantly, though, the majority of meetings are run by the students themselves, who tend to rotate the role of facilitator, so that all may lead. When we returned to being in-person, the team discussed at length the problem of how to afford attendance at the Computers and Writing 2022 conference, ultimately deciding that only one professor and two of the four students could attend in-person, while the other professor and the remaining two students would participate virtually. Interestingly enough, though, the team recently reversed this money-saving strategy, when it voted to raise the student hourly reimbursements from $10 to $15 an hour, rightly arguing that the recent acceptance of a related scholarly article in *Young Scholars in Writing* constituted evidence of the students' enhanced research and writing skills that warranted better pay.

Conclusion

As constituted, the three videos now live in the world, and in fact, have taken on lives of their own. The students have presented their work, including the videos, at MSU's Learning Abroad Conference, Diversity Research Showcase (where they won an award), Social Justice Art Festival, and two Undergraduate Research and Arts Fora (where they also received an award). The postings on YouTube and the Iteach.msu.edu web site allow for ongoing asynchronous viewing and reflection by faculty both on- and off-campus. Synchronously, the videos are now integrated into virtual and in-person training with new teachers in MSU's writing and ESL programs. The team's two current faculty members, along with the students as their course schedules permit, have shared the videos in regional and national conferences (e.g., Accessible Learning and THAT camp-MSU, the Michigan College English Association and the Minnesota Writing and English, and most recently, Computers and Writing). In each case, audience members have indicated that they find the videos—along with the accompanying comments of our student team who participates as much as possible—to be both illuminating and instructive. While we have yet to record and code audience responses in a systematic way (that is another step for the team in its future), we postulate that the videos

are particularly effective because they demonstrate, and in the least offensive way possible, the classroom from the *students*' perspectives—thus surfacing ecologies and responses that might not otherwise be visible. In this regard, the contributions of the stellar student members of our team have been invaluable. Overall, our project demonstrates what can happen when we not only listen to, but foreground, the voices and experiences of our multilingual, international students. Scholars have tended to do this in the past vis-a-vis data gathered from the students (for instance, through surveys, focus groups, and interviews), and then report out their findings in academic journals. Our move is to incorporate video as well, which has the capacity to reach a broader audience, and with more immediate and powerful effect.

References

Brown, Dan. (2012). The written corrective feedback debate: Next steps for classroom teachers and practitioners. *TESOL Quarterly*, *46*(4), 861–867.

Canagarajah, Suresh. (2011). Translanguaging in the classroom: Emerging issues for research and pedagogy. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *2*, 1–28.

Canagarajah, Suresh. (2016). Crossing borders, addressing diversity. *Language Teaching, 49*(3), 438–454.

Choi, Hee Jun, & Yang, Minwha. (2011). The effect of problem-based video instruction on student satisfaction, empathy, and learning achievement in the Korean teacher education context. *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education Research, 62*(5), 551–561.

Fiorella, Logan, Stull, Andrew T., Kuhlmann, Shelbi, & Mayer, Richard E. (2020). Fostering generative learning from video lessons: Benefits of instructor-generated drawings and learner-generated explanations. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *112*(5), 895–906. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/edu0000408

Hafner, Christopher A. (2014). Embedding digital literacies in English language teaching: Students' digital video projects as multimodal ensembles. *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(4), 655–685.

Hechanova-Alampay, R., et al. (2002). Adjustment and strain among domestic and international student sojourners: A longitudinal study. *School Psychology International*, *23*(4), 458–474. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034302234007

Hekiert, Daniela, Igras-Cybulska, Magdalena, & Cybulski, Artur. (2021). Designing VRPT experience for empathy toward out-groups using critical incidents and cultural explanations. In *IEEE International Symposium on Mixed and Augmented Reality Adjunct (ISMAR-Adjunct)* (pp. 506–207). https://doi.org/10.1109/ISMAR-Adjunct54149.2021.00122

"International Studies & Programs." (n.d.). Office for International Students and Scholars Statistical Report. Retrieved April 11, 2022, from https://oiss.isp.msu.edu/about/statistical-report/

Israel, E., & Batalova, J. (2021, January 14). International students in the United States. *Migration Information Source*. Migration Policy Institute.

Johnson, Lucy A., & Arola, Kristin L. (2016). Tracing the turn: The rise of multimodal composition in the U.S. *Res Rhetorica*, *3*(1), 98–104.
Kisch, Marian. (2014). Helping faculty teach international students. *International Educator, November/December,* 44–47. https://www.nafsa.org/professional-resources/publications/helping-faculty-teach-international-students
Lauer, Janice. (2002). Rhetoric and composition studies: A multimodal discipline. In Christina Russell McDonald & Robert L. McDonald (Eds.), *Teaching writing: Landmarks and horizons* (pp.121–33). Southern Illinois University Press.
Laverick, Erin Knoche. (2012). Internationalizing campuses through rhetoric, writing, and multimodal compositions. *Computers and Composition Online*, http://cconlinejournal.org/Laverick/
Learning Goals. (n.d.). First-Year Writing. *Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Culture*. MSU. Retrieved April 10, 2022, from https://wrac.msu.edu/learning-outcomes/
Lee, Jungeun. (2008). *Stress and coping experiences of international students with language barriers during the acculturation process*. University of Florida.
Lu, Min-Zhan, & Horner, Bruce. (2013). Translingual literacy, language difference, and matters of agency. *College English*, *75*(6), 582–607.
Meier, Joyce, & Caesar, Cheryl. (n.d.). Teaching multilingual learners: an introduction to translingual pedagogy. *#iteachmsu Commons: For MSU educators*. Michigan State University. Retrieved April 11, 2022, from https://iteach.msu.edu/pathways/248/playlist
Multilingual Learner's Team, MSU (2021, Sept. 26). "Why Won't They Talk?" [video]. *YouTube*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cojeiIhpQXI&t=2s
Multilingual Learner's Team, MSU (2022, March 23). "Why Won't They Understand My Lecture?"[video]. *YouTube*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpF5_da3DFY&t=3s
Multilingual Learner's Team, MSU (2022, Jan. 11). "Why Won't They Write Grammatically?"[video]. *YouTube*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpF5_da3DFY&t=3s
Robins, Anthony. (2010). Learning edge momentum: A new account of outcomes in CS1. *Computer Science Education*, *20*(3), 37-71.
Schwan, Stephan, & Riempp, Roland. (2004). The cognitive benefits of interactive videos: Learning to tie nautical knots. *Learning and Instruction*, *14*(3), 2004, 293–305. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2004.06.005
Shelton, Robert, & Lovell, Elyse D'nn. (2018). Community college student-researcher discovers classmates' increased empathy levels viewing TEDx talk video. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 43*(3), 237–241. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2018.1456377
Stille, Saskia, & Prasad, Gail. (2015). "Imaginings": Reflections on plurilingual students' creative multimodal works. *TESOL Quarterly, 49*(3), 608–621.
Takayoshi, Pamela, & Ittersum Derek Van (2018). The material, embodied practices of composing with technologies. In Jonathan Alexander & Jacqueline Rhodes (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of digital writing and rhetoric* (pp. 84–94). Routledge.
Tan, Xiao & Matsuda, Paul Kei. (2021). Integrating multimodality into first-year composition: Exploring issues of L2 writing teachers' agency. *Journal of Global Literacies, Technologies, and Emerging Pedagogies, 7*(1), 1198–1222.

Wyosocki, Rick, Udelson, Jon, Ray, Caitlin E., Newman, Jessica S. B., Matravers, Laura Sceniak, Kumari, Ashanka, Gordon, Layne M. P., Scott, Khirsten L., Day, Michelle, Baumann, Michael, Alvarez, Sara P., & DeVoss, Dànielle Nicole. (2019). On multimodality: A manifesto. In Santosh Khadka & J. C. Lee (Eds.), *Bridging the multimodal gap* (pp. 17–29). Utah State University Press.

Yeh, Christine J. & Inose, Mayuko. (2010). International students' reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly, 16*, 15–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951507031000114058

Yi, Youngjoo, Shin, Dong-Shin, & Cimasko, Tony. (2020). Multimodal composing in multilingual learning and teaching contexts. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 47*, 1–6.

Yildirim, Ozgur. (2017). Class participation of international students. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(4), 94–103.

Zheng, Xuan. (2010). Re-Interpreting silence: Chinese international students' verbal participation in U.S. universities. *The International Journal of Learning*, *17*(5), 451–463.

Improvisational Scenographies: Identity, Ideology, and Community-Based Algorithmic Moderation

Adam Padgett, University of Nevada, Reno

In recent years, there has been growing attention in the field of composition and rhetoric on the subject of algorithmic critique and online aggression. This paper contributes to this research by examining a viral internet meme as a case study. The meme features a private individual whose image was captured without his awareness or consent and turned viral. This study focuses on two Reddit boards to show how the identity of this individual was constructed by human and non-human actors. I go on to show how digital discourse is not simply mediated by mechanical tools, but rather improvisational scenes where the human and non-human actors are susceptible to mutual transformation. Ultimately, I argue that scholars should consider the fuller scenography of digital discourse in order to study how to best respond to these discourses, possibly rupture online aggressions, and attune ourselves to circumstances both within and beyond our control.

Over the last decade, there has been growing attention in composition and rhetoric toward content moderation and online aggression. Of course, moderating speech online is a tall order. It is resource intensive (Gillespie, 2018) and often politically complicated (Potts et al., 2019; Richter, 2021; Trice et al., 2019; Tufekci, 2013). Rather than disengagement (i.e., "don't feed the troll"), some scholars suggested actually *engaging* online aggression to defuse hate and humanize digital subjects (London et al., 2019; Milner, 2013; Poland, 2016; Reyman & Sparby, 2019; Sparby, 2017). Much of this work is located in composition pedagogies where students are taught to better understand the digital rhetorical scene in order to respond to hostile discourses with careful, rhetorically attuned engagements (DeLuca, 2019; Gruwell, 2017; Richter, 2021) or to resist potentially bad actors by strategizing our compositions for circulation (Ridolfo & DeVoss, 2009; Sheridan et al., 2012).

However, everyday modes of surveillance (i.e., picture-taking) have complicated digital scenes of harassment. In a genre Lauren Cagle (2019) has called "strangershots," everyday surveillances stand to capture our embodied, offline selves and reproduce them in online spaces to be ridiculed without our awareness. I argue then, as online and offline life become more interconnected, stu-

DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862.2.04

dents and scholars should prod the full material *scenography*—the field of technologies, practices, objects, people, bodies, times, digital/non-digital places, institutions, etc.—of discursive spaces in order to better evaluate, analyze, and criticize how systems moderate and condition discourse. I join Leigh Gruwell (2017) in arguing that teacher-scholars "should embrace a political, ecological approach to public writing that recognizes publics as the result of the interactions between multiple texts and actors over time and that attends to the ways in which power relations alternately shape, constrain, and enable those texts and actors." More than just mediation, I argue that content moderation involves a wider improvisational scenography of memes and meme-practices[1] that performatively structure digital life. To show what I mean, I use a case study to examine how an individual, who had his picture taken without his knowledge or consent, was publicly ridiculed as a viral meme. Scholars have argued that by analyzing a digital interface, students are better able to see the connection between their online identities and their offline lives (Frost, 2011; Selfe & Hawisher, 2004; Sparby, 2017). I further this thinking by arguing that, by prodding the full scenography, students will be better positioned to "see" and attune themselves to the relationship between computers, digital humans, and the offline bodies that make up digital publics.

Before examining the case study, I'd like to first explore how surveillance has complicated the classical concept of *kairos* to better explain what I mean by an improvisational scenography in digital spaces.

Improvisation and the Problem of *Kairos*

The classical concept of *kairos* is a difficult one to pin down. However, it is more or less understood as leveraging the optimal moment for rhetorical action. In antiquity, the mythical figure of Kairos is depicted as a muscular, winged figure, holding a set of scales, with one finger surreptitiously weighting one side of the scale (Hawhee, 2004). Theologian Paul Tillich attributes a divine quality to *kairos*, which James Kinneavy finds interesting but ultimately rejects (as cited in Thompson, 2000). However, I am not so sure these divine qualities of *kairos* should be so readily dismissed. That is, upon entering into a network, we are subjected to a variety of (in)visible forces. Rational strategizing for where our compositions might travel, or its *rhetorical velocity*, becomes increasingly difficult (Ridolfo & DeVoss, 2009). For instance, a culture of surveillance—where our picture could be taken without our consent or where algorithms co-construct digital experience—poses complications for our sense of timing or appropriateness. In

1 By which I mean, the digital practices (such as picture-taking, commenting, sharing, retweeting, etc.), similar to what Sparby (2017) called "behavioral memes."

other words, there are imperceptible figures monitoring our activities with a finger on the scale.

Reflecting on Georgian conceptions of *kairos* and improvisation, Dale Sullivan (1992) wrote, "If we accept Gorgias' claim that logos is a powerful lord [...] we can surmise that he believed that inspiration would occur during impromptu speech" (p. 325). That is, good rhetors attune themselves to the *logos* of the moment. Similarly, E.C. White (1987) defined *kairos* as a dynamic moment that requires adaption and improvisation on the part of the rhetor, qualities that do not necessarily presuppose rational forethought. In a field of distributed agency, networked actors routinely operate improvisationally, *in the moment*, relying on a reflexive knack for generating compelling and persuasive compositions—the kind of attunement Quintilian (1921) referred to as "a certain *mechanical knack*, which the Greeks call *ἄλογος τριβή* [*alogos tribe*]" (10.7.11, my emphasis). Instagram users, for instance, capture images (opportune moments) and publish them with hashtags, and friend groups, circulating those pictures, form improvisational community engagements (Potts et al., 2019) subject to their own times and (digital) places. In other words, social media natives know a good Instagram moment when they (non) teleologically encounter one.

However, to reduce mechanical knack to an irrational improvisation might be the wrong approach. Online, algorithms enable a far more calculated adaptation to change. According to John Wild (1941), Plato makes a distinction between *techne* (understanding a procedure) and *tribe* (meaningless repetition).[2] However, Quintilian also argued, "what is irrational in itself will nevertheless be founded on reason" (10.7.12).[3] An attunement for complex rhetorical situations is not entirely irrational, *per se*. However, what algorithms bring to the table are calculated procedures based upon user input. A machinic[4] improvisation, in this way, has an investment in rationality and performance, in flexibility and adaptability, for what the moment has to offer, especially as the circumstances of the moment change—in other words, a computational, hyper-rational leveraging of *kairos*. As Bruno Latour (1994, 2002) has argued, technology is not merely a mediating force. It mutually transforms the human into a fundamentally different agent. A platform's interface, for instance, embeds values (Gallagher, 2020; Selfe & Selfe, 1994) and

2 See Porter (2009).

3 See Holcomb (2001).

4 I derive the word "machinic" largely from Deleuze and Guattari (1987): "We think the material or machinic aspect of an assemblage relates not to the production of goods but rather to a precise state of intermingling of bodies in a society, including all the attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgamations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another" (p. 90).

co-construct thoughts and actions (Cagle, 2019; Gallagher, 2020; Johnson-Eilola, 1997). In this way, algorithms have effectively bridged the gap between *doxa*[5] and *kairos*; not only do algorithms produce probabilistic calculations of *doxa*, but the calculation itself actually co-constructs the *doxic* temperature in the room. In this way, algorithms may well have taken out the mysteries of the "fortune of the moment," as Quintilian said, in favor of hyper-rational, improvisational calculation (10.7.32).

As we will see in this case study, online discourse often emerges through an interplay of irrational (hasty human input) as well as hyper-rational improvisations (computational, algorithmic logics that arrange user content). That is, humans and machines mutually transform the other in a complex, call-and-response improvisational scene, a scene of visible and invisible partners that that attune actors to the rhythms of the discourse. I argue, then, that defamiliarizing ourselves with these ambient partners by studying them better positions rhetors to possibly rupture these *doxic* rhythms by working through and with these rhythms.

The Case Study

Methods

This paper tells the story of a viral internet meme dubbed, "hipster in the park"—an image (Figure 1) surreptitiously taken of Christopher Hermelin, an MFA student at the New School, sitting in the New York City High Line Park with a typewriter resting anachronistically atop his lap. The image quickly turned viral across a number of platforms. While a bit dated, I focus on this case because of the large amount of available data in two separate, but very similar, boards that generated considerable attention. Reddit is a useful platform for researchers because it provides *some* access to its algorithm's sorting logic, a system they refer to as "karma." If users approve of content, they can "upvote" it. If users disapprove, they can "downvote" it. The net votes generate a karma point total—ostensibly incentivizing good behavior. In order to craft a clearer narrative of improvisational scenes, I conducted a sentiment analysis of these two boards. I coded every comment according to the following types: 1) comments clearly ridiculing Hermelin, 2) comments defending or sympathizing with Hermelin, 3) on-topic comments that were neither ridicule or sympathy, 4) off-topic or unintelligible comments, and finally 5) comments posted by Hermelin himself under the handle "cdhermelin." These data points

5 As many scholars have pointed out, *doxa* is a complex concept that doesn't always involve negative connotations like "sustaining the status quo" or "persuading via low-hanging fruit." However, I use it here as it is commonly understood as simply "public opinion."

are my interpretation of the intention of comments, a methodology with obvious limitations.[6]

In analyzing these two boards and the broader scenography, we are able to observe how improvisational actors work together to create discursive scenes and use these insights to offer a fuller understanding of the moderating forces that promote (or don't promote) any kind of behavior.[7]

"Spotted on the Highline"

Originally posted to the NYC subreddit (r/nyc) on August 18, 2012 as, "Spotted on the Highline," Figure 1, which shows Christopher Hermelin, worked its way onto Reddit's front page. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, Redditors reacted to this image with a variety of pejoratives, including: "fucking hipster," "I have never wanted to fist fight someone so badly in my entire life," "pathetic," or "asshole."

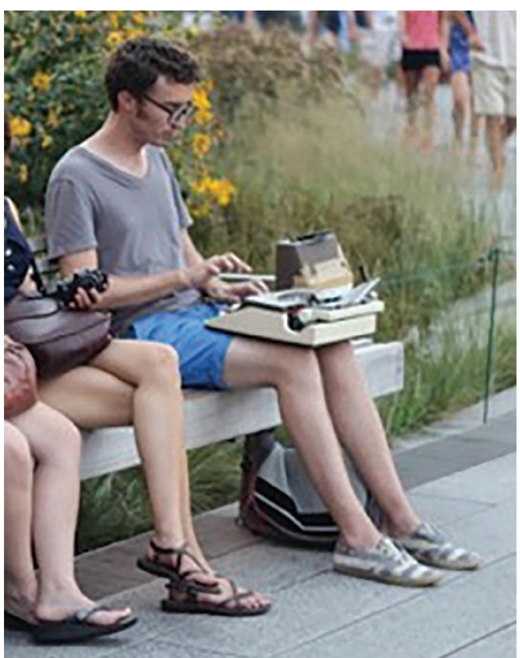

Figure 1. Original image from "Spotted on the Highline…"

6 An email-interview I conducted with Hermelin, which included his informed consent for participating in a case study, received IRB approval at the University of South Carolina.

7 In a larger study, I also draw from other publicly available information, which includes radio interviews with Hermelin, a published article he wrote about his experience, and my own email-interview with him. For this short paper, I am largely focusing on the behaviors strictly associated with these message boards.

As is the case with Internet photos, context is often flattened and meaning is derived from common cultural assumptions about the individuals featured in them (Milner, 2013; Phillips, 2015). In this case, the picture apparently shows an individual taking retro-culture to an extreme. The fuller context reveals, however, that Hermelin was story busking for passersby in High Line Park, a project dubbed, "The Roving Typist" (Cersosimo, 2014). According to her account, carlaas (the photographer and original poster) hadn't seen Hermelin's context-crucial sign. On the discussion board, she writes, "yeah I didn't see [Hermelin's busking sign], unfortunately. I was just walking fast and I took that picture." That is, she improvisationally composed and circulated the image before she missed out on the opportunity. As soon as the image was published, the Reddit board generated a flurry of activity, Redditors working together, riffing off one another, through a discourse of affirmation: agreeing on and reproducing Hermelin's identity through cultural in-jokes, collective back-patting, and dogpiling.

After becoming aware of this discussion board, about 24 hours later, Hermelin intervened by participating in the discussion under the handle cdhermelin. He wrote,

> This is a surprisingly angry thread!
>
> This is a picture of me. The angle obscures the sign on my typewriter case, which says, "Stories composed while you wait. Sliding scale, donate what you can." …
>
> I bring nice paper, envelopes, and some stamps onto the High Line and write stories for people. I started it because I like writing flash fiction, and I like talking to people, and while I could hand-write them, the typewriter is more eye-catching, and a lot more fun. And my hands don't get as tired. I write a story in about 7-10 minutes, and if people would like to ask for specific themes or characters or situations, they are more than welcome.
>
> You can follow me on twitter: @rovingtypist. I go out to the High Line once a week or so.
>
> (and for those who mentioned it, I did indeed have an iPhone with me. AND an iPad. But those don't really matter for what I was doing.)
>
> (Oh, and someone mentioned they saw me in Starbucks - I would never do this inside a cafe. Typewriters are super loud.)
>
> ("Spotted on the Highline," +142 karma points)

Hermelin's post seems to have been somewhat successful, netting by far the most karma on the board (see Figure 4). In my email interview with him,

Hermelin told me, "This was about me as a writer as much as it was about me as an image. I wanted to make sure that my reputation as a writer and a good-natured person shone through in my responses to the attention." So, it's clear Hermelin was interested in preserving, or at least co-authoring, the kind of identity he'd cultivated for himself. As the data in Table 1 illustrates, a good deal of the on-topic commentary was ridicule. So, the exigence for his intervention was certainly merited.

Table 1. Types of comments in the "Spotted on the Highline" Reddit board

"Spotted on the Highline" **Original post: August 18, 2012**		
	Number of Comments	
Ridicule	59	27.31%
Sympathy	33	15.28%
Neither	20	9.26%
Off-topic	87	40.28%
cdhermelin	17	7.87%
Total	216	

His intervention may have, indeed, had a notable impact on the cultural makeup of the Reddit board, or what Sparby (2017) called a "rupture" in the memetic behavior of the board's collective identity. Figure 2 illustrates some measure of this change. It's worth noting, however, that the slight uptick in sympathy is largely correlated to Redditors interacting directly with Hermelin on the discussion board.[8]

The more significant data point is, however, the 77% drop in ridicule rather than the moderate uptick in sympathy. That is, after learning more information about the real-world context, it was no longer fun to ridicule the picture on the High Line. Counter to assumptions about how algorithms construct echo-chambers, the algorithm invited heterogeny. However, I think it's wrong to say that the algorithm simply mediated the discussion. Rather, in this improvisational scene, the algorithm was susceptible to the comments just as the comments were susceptible to the algorithm. Figure 3 shows the board's hourly activity by comment type. As we can see, Hermelin's intervention occurred a little more than halfway through the lifespan of the discussion—time enough to rupture the doxic and kairotic rhythms and enable the actors to mutually transform the other.

8 The board generated about 218 total comments; I only had access to 216. Two comments were marked as "[deleted]."

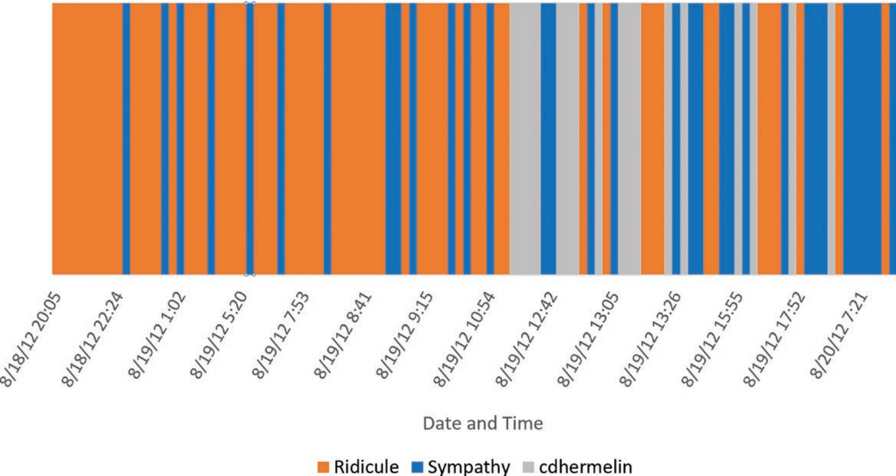

Figure 2. A histograph of the "Spotted on the Highline" Reddit board, showing a shift of comments of ridicule declining in favor of comments of sympathy after cdhermelin's intervention.

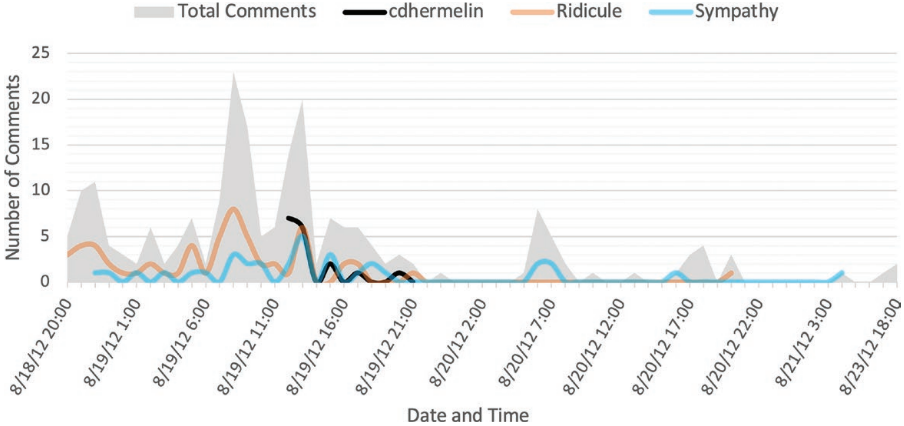

Figure 3. A chart of the "Spotted on the Highline" Reddit board, showing the trends of the types of comments throughout the life of the discussion board.

While much of the purely mean-spirited ridicule was punished with negative karma and clever attempts at ridicule were nevertheless rewarded, the board was open to change. It was adaptive, performative, and in situ (Rule, 2019)—in a word, improv. Figure 4 compares each comment's total karma points, color-coded by comment type. By analyzing the discussion board by karma points, we can observe this kind of performative adaptability.[9]

9 While users can no longer comment or vote on these boards, the total karma points continually fluctuate by a few points to obscure the actual totals to thwart would-be "cheaters"

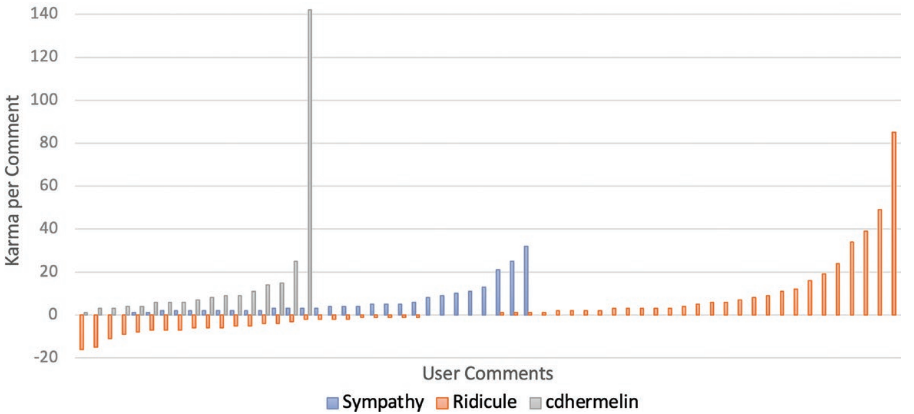

Figure 4. A bar chart of the "Spotted on the Highline" Reddit board, showing the amount of karma each comment received, arranged and color-coded by comment-type. All the comments coded as ridicule collectively netted +229 karma points, the comments of sympathy collectively netted +192 points, and Hermelin's total comments netted +273 points.

Hermelin's intervention was largely successful because it entered a field that shifted values from "hipster culture is annoying" to "passion projects are cool," largely due to his and other affirmative engagements—a "yes-and" logic.

Research in online aggression finds power in engaging (thereby rupturing) aggression rather than ignoring it—eschewing the "don't feed the troll" advice (London et al., 2019; Milner, 2013; Milner & Phillips, 2018; Phillips, 2015; Poland, 2016; Sparby, 2017). Cagle (2019) described a Reddit case involving a Sikh trans woman, Balpreet Kaur, who had her picture taken and published to Reddit without her awareness. Her image was met with anti-Muslim (even though she was Sikh) and anti-trans ridicule. In response, Kaur engaged the Reddit board, explaining her faith and "how it shapes her outward appearance" (p. 68). Consequently, Redditors praised her openness and the original poster apologized for the whole ordeal. However, the takeaway here isn't necessarily that if only people had a little more context the internet would be a friendlier place (although, that observation is true). Rather, the key takeaway is the broader scenography. As Whitney Phillips (2015) wrote, "trolling behaviors [...] are imbricated in the same cultural systems that constitute the norm—a point that casts as much aspersion on the systems themselves as it does on the trolls who harness and exploit them" (p. 115). While cultural logics of trolling certainly include misogyny, transphobia, and islamophobia

that might want to manipulate or game the karma totals. So, the karma value of a comment is always inexact. Regardless, this data still gives us a general snapshot of the climate of the discussion board.

(or anything-non-cis-white-Christian-o-phobia), logics and values are also embedded in the human and non-human actors within a material scenography. Assumptions about picture-taking, about publicity/privacy, and ridicule/dehumanization are entrenched within everyday digital tools. Humans react, reflexively, with the tools available to them. Algorithms both adapt to and co-construct discourses based on user input and probability. In other words, an improvisational scene operates on this "yes-and" logic, a scene that is dynamic, performative, and, especially in the presence of surveillance technologies, irreducible to singular agents or events.

Contrasting this discussion board with the next one will further illustrate this kind of improvisational susceptibility and the limits of effectuating change.

"You're not a real hipster until..."

Emerging five months later, the much more active, "You're not a real hipster until…" discussion was posted to the Funny (r/funny) subreddit with the same image as the previous board but with full meme-text reading, "YOU'RE NOT A REAL HIPSTER UNTIL YOU TAKE YOUR TYPEWRITER TO THE PARK" (Figure 5). Unlike the first board, the central premise of the meme is explicitly stated on the image.

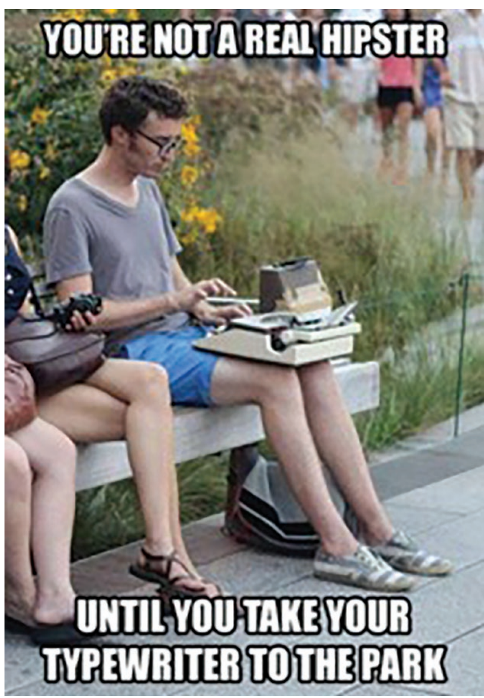

Figure 5. Meme that emerged later in subsequent Reddit boards.

As Table 2 indicates, the overall sentiments of these two discussion boards are quite similar when we compare the total number of comments by comment type. (It is important to note, however, that the sympathy in this latter discussion board was slightly inflated by a user named Semajal, a person who apparently met Hermelin on the High Line and was determined to defend him. Semajal wrote a total 12 sympathetic comments, constituting about 20% of the sympathy on the board.)

Table 2. Comparing the types of comments in the "Spotted on the Highline" to the types of comments in "You're not a real hipster until…" Reddit boards.

"Spotted on the Highline" Original post: August 18, 2012		
	Number of Comments	
Ridicule	59	27.31%
Sympathy	33	15.28%
Neither	20	9.26%
Off-topic	87	40.28%
cdhermelin	17	7.87%
Total	216	

"You're not a real hipster until…" Original post: January 19, 2013		
	Number of Comments	
Ridicule	76	19.49%
Sympathy	60	15.38%
Neither	81	20.77%
Off-topic	163	41.79%
cdhermelin	10	2.56%
Total	390	

Further, given some of the obvious differences (different users, time/date, subreddits, etc.), these two discussions are also strikingly similar in terms of content. Users relied on the same basic cultural logics in order to participate and generate attention. However, by analyzing the karma of individual comments, these two boards tell slightly different stories. For example, comparing a few of the nearly identical comments on the two boards, we can see a notable difference in how the ridicule on these boards was handled per the karma system (Table 3). Compared to the "Spotted" board, ridicule was rewarded with significantly more karma than was sympathy.

On both boards, but especially on this one, a culture of one-upmanship developed (not uncommon on social media). Like the first, the discursive field was largely defined by how well the participants played together, riffing off one another, and maintaining the call-and-response style of engagement. The most clever attempts at ridicule seemed to garner the most karma points. Mean-spirited comments that bordered on threats of violence—punching him in the face, smashing his typewriter, etc.—also gained a lot of traction. In this latter board, the total karma of all ridicule added up to +1146, the sum of sympathy was +588, and the sum for all Hermelin's comments added up to +80.

Table 3. A comparison of karma points of similar comments all by different Redditors in different Reddit discussion boards.

"Spotted on the Highline"	"You're not a real hipster until..."
"So when will the Sumerian clay tablets be resurfacing the streets of hipster nyc?" (+37 karma points)	"Pfft. How mainstream. I write on wet clay, then bake it." (+435 karma points)
"I don't know why anyone is defending this guy, it's clear he's doing it for attention" (-2 karma points)	"He clearly wants attention for being all hipster and edgy." (+6 karma points)
"Some days, I really want to be a bully." (-5 karma points)	"It's because of these guys that bullying is so hard to stop." (+5 karma points)
"Clack clack clickety clack clack click click clack clack KA-DING clackety clack clack pause clack clack claketty clack clack. Clack." (+3 karma points)	"clack clack clack clack clack CLACK clack DING! Clack clack clack clack clack clack..." (+17 karma points)

Figure 6 shows dramatic differences in how types of comments were rewarded and punished by the karma system. Interestingly, some of the sympathy on this board was actually punished with negative karma. In fact, the lowest rated comment read, "dear diary today i got 41 internet points for assuming another person was a bad person with negative qualities based on their appearance and interests simply because they differ from mine" (-27 points). This user came to Hermelin's defense, criticized a point system that incentivized bad behavior, and was consequently punished by that very point system. In other words, these users failed to rupture the discursive rhythms.

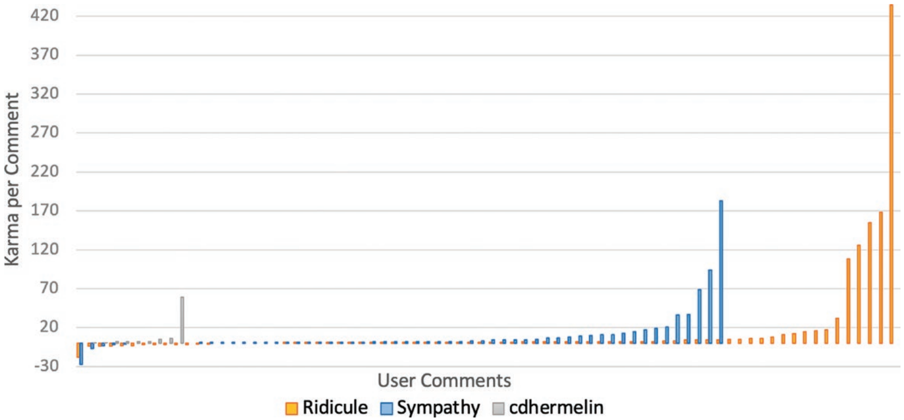

Figure 6. A bar chart of the "You're not a real hipster until..." Reddit board, showing the amount of karma each comment received, arranged and color-coded by comment-type.

Like the first board, Hermelin attempted an intervention. However, he seemed to have had far less of an impact this time around. He wrote,

> Hey y'all! This is me!
>
> Thanks for all the nice things that you said here - some people already mentioned, but this is from a project I do around NYC. I write stories while you wait (it takes about 5-7 minutes) on small pieces of paper. It's not summer anymore, though, so I haven't gone out in a while. Typing is difficult when your fingers are cold...
>
> You can follow me, @cdhermelin, or my typing project, @rovingtypist.
>
> And some of my other short fiction is up here [a link to a creative/professional website].
>
> (You're not a real hipster until…, +55 points)

For a discussion board that accrued more than 390 comments, Hermelin's +55 karma points seems paltry compared to the +145 he earned in the much less active "Spotted" board. This could be for a number of reasons. For one, cdhermelin entered this conversation while its activity was already trending downwards, as the following chart shows (Figure 7). Also, some of the earliest comments were mean-spirited and so were at a temporal advantage in terms of generating more karma and being prioritized at the top, thereby better positioned to set the discursive tone. Despite the efforts of Hermelin and a few altruistic Redditors, once the improvisational rhythms of the scene built enough momentum, it would be very difficult to turn things around and generate rupture.

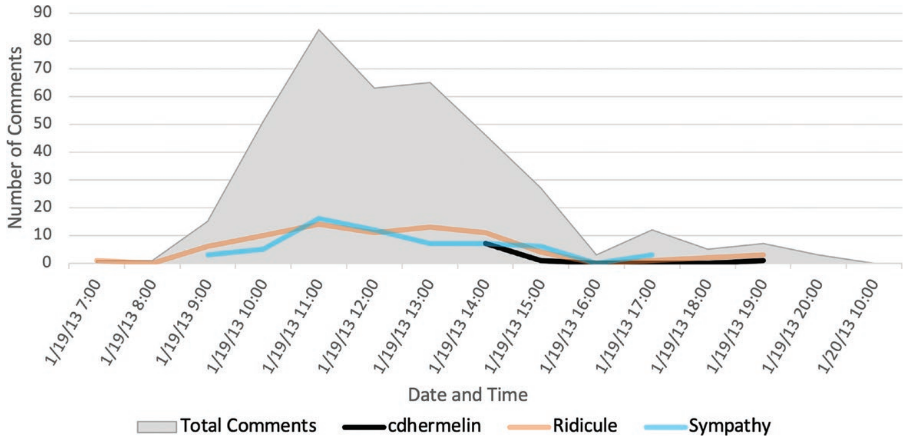

Figure 7. A line chart of the "You're not a real hipster until…" Reddit board, showing the trends of the types of comments throughout the life of the discussion board.

Of course, timing isn't the only explanation for the board's stubborn resistance to change. For instance, the second Reddit board was posted to the r/funny subreddit, a community whose key value, perhaps, foreclosed on the possibility of sincerity. Additionally, the meme that spurred the second board included the full meme-text, inscribing the basic premise of the board (one of ridicule). Also, the r/funny subreddit is significantly more popular than the earlier r/nyc subreddit. The broader social media scene isn't to be left out either. That is, the second board emerged following the meme's pre-existing virality on other platforms. So, many users may have been primed by seeing an earlier iteration of the image and/or with prior acceptance of cultural commonplaces about "hipsters" and retro-culture. So, in this second board, with more users mobilized, a more stable feedback loop emerged, bolstered by the algorithm's ranking system, and had little opportunity for minority voices to rupture the scene.

Conclusions

We gain a few insights through this kind of analysis of online communities and memes in general. First, we are able to better see how algorithms sort content, and how rhetors could perhaps learn to (ethically) leverage these kinds of systems for rhetorical ends (Brock & Shepherd, 2016). Second, researchers (especially students) are better positioned to critique the systems that moderate/mediate online discourse (Beck, 2015; Noble, 2018; Reilly, 2020, 2021; Selber, 2004; Toscano, 2011;) and perhaps even acknowledge our own complicity/participations within these systems. But third, I think it's worth conducting this kind of analysis to observe precisely what it does not give us clear insight into. In consideration of new materialist and actor-network frameworks, this kind of study helps to decenter a compositional event. That is, an online discursive space is irreducible to any singular post, moderation system, or platform. As we are increasingly entangled within these complex webs of relations, it becomes even more important to defamiliarize ourselves with the improvisational partners we are entangled with on a digital scene.

Much has been written lately on how to improve online discourse. Trice et al. (2019) have demonstrated the importance of affirming community values rather than strictly rules-based moderation,[10] and Ritcher (2021) has shown

10 In my case study, the discussion boards predate Reddit's "rules" page feature for subreddits, and it is unlikely that there were clearly codified rules posted to these respective subreddits. For example, the current rules of r/nyc include no photos of people without permission. The r/funny subreddit have rules against reposts, hate speech, or harassment. So, assuming these rules would be enforced, it is unlikely that this meme would have gained this much traction on these subreddits if it had been created/published today. However, that is not to say that it couldn't appear on another subreddit that does not have these restrictions. Ryan Shepherd (2020) for instance points out how, while some communities are moderated, cen-

how communities can enable productive agonisms through metadiscourse. While this research offers great insight into moderation practices, rhetors should also attend to the full scenography of a digital space, questioning models of conscious discursive participation (i.e., Hermelin's embodied participation by sitting on the park bench; carlaas's instinctive knack for spotting a viral moment; the Redditors' susceptibility to the algorithm's mechanical improvisation) and acknowledging the distributed agency of objects (i.e., the camera, the algorithms, or even the typewriter) and environments (i.e., the public park and infrastructures of interconnected surveillance tools). In a surveillance economy where bodies can be non-autonomously recruited into unanticipatable contexts, improvisation reanimates the figure of Kairos holding a finger to the scale. In this way, however, my study does not constitute a how-to. Rather, it underscores the rhetorical power of improvisational scenographies—an interplay of distributed agents, relations, and ambient forces—that hopefully encourages rhetors to attune themselves to circumstances both well-within and also well-beyond their control.

References

AutoModerator. (n.d.). Reddit. Retrieved May 9, 2022, from https://www.Reddit.com/wiki/automoderator

Beck, Estee N. (2015). The invisible digital identity: Assemblages in digital networks. *Computers and Composition, 35*, 125–140. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2015.01.005

Brock, Kevin. (2019). *Rhetorical code studies: Discovering arguments in and around code*. University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.10019291

Brock, Kevin, & Shepherd, Dawn. (2016). Understanding how algorithms work persuasively through the procedural enthymeme. *Computers and Composition, 42*, 17–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2016.08.007

Cagle, Lauren. (2019). Surveilling strangers: The disciplinary biopower of digital genre assemblages. *Computers and Composition, 52*, 67–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2019.01.006

Cersosimo, Mark. (2014). The roving typist. [Video file]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vwszw-ZXH20

Cheney-Lippold, John. (2017). *We are data: Algorithms and the making of our digital selves*. New York University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1gk0941

Crawford, Kate. (2016). Can an algorithm be agonistic? Ten scenes from life in calculated publics. *Science, Technology,* & *Human Values, 41*(1), 77–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243915589635

Deleuze, Gilles, & Guattari, Félix. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. (Brian Massumi, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.

sored, or banned, new communities pop up all the time and are, therefore, extremely difficult to moderate.

DeLuca, Katie. (2019). Fostering phronesis in digital rhetorics developing a rhetorical and ethical approach to online engagements. In Jessica Reyman & Erika M. Sparby (Eds.), *Digital ethics: Rhetoric and responsibility in online aggression* (pp. 231–247). Routledge.

Frost, Erin A. (2011). Why teachers must learn: Student innovation as a driving factor in the future of the web. *Computers and Composition, 28*(4), 269–275. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2011.10.002

Gallagher, John R. (2020). The ethics of writing for algorithmic audiences. *Computers and Composition, 57*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2020.102583

Gillespie, Tarleton. (2018). *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media*. Yale University Press.

Gruwell, Leigh. (2017). Writing against harassment: Public writing pedagogy and online hate. *Composition Forum, 36*.

Hawhee, Debra. (2004). *Bodily arts: Rhetoric and athletics in Ancient Greece*. University of Texas Press.

Hermelin, Christopher. (2013). I am an object of internet ridicule, ask me anything. The Awl. https://www.theawl.com/2013/09/i-am-an-object-of-internet-ridicule-ask-me-anything.

Hermelin, Christopher. (n.d.). The roving typist. Retrieved 9 August, 2021, from https://rovingtypist.com.

Holcomb, Chris. (2001). "The crown of all our study": Improvisation in Quintilian's institutio oratoria. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 31*(3), 53–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/02773940109391206

Hutchinson, Les, & Novotny, Maria. (2018). Teaching a critical digital literacy of wearables: A feminist surveillance as care pedagogy. *Computers and Composition, 50*, 105–120. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2018.07.006

Johnson-Eilola, Johndan. (1997). *Nostalgic angels: Rearticulating hypertext writing*. Ablex Publishing.

Latour, Bruno. (1994). On technical mediation: Philosophy, sociology, genealogy. *Common Knowledge, 3*(2), 29–64.

Latour, Bruno. (2002). Morality and technology. (C. Venn, Trans.). *Theory, Culture & Society, 19*(5–6), 247–260. https://doi.org/10.11r77/026327602761899246

London, Tabitha M., Crundwell, Joey, Eastley, Marcy B., Santiago, Natalie, & Jenkins, Jennifer. (2019). Finding effective moderation practices on Twitch. In Jessica Reyman & Erika M. Sparby (Eds.), *Digital ethics: Rhetoric and responsibility in online aggression* (pp. 51–68). Routledge.

Milner, Ryan M. (2013). FCJ-156 hacking the social: Internet memes, identity antagonism, and the logic of lulz. *The Fibreculture Journal, 22,* 61–91.

Milner, Ryan, M., & Phillips, Whitney (2018). The internet doesn't need civility, it needs ethics. *Vice*. https://www.vice.com/en/article/pa5gxn/the-internet-doesnt-need-civility-it-needs-ethics

Noble, Safiya. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. New York University Press.

Phillips, Whitney. (2015). *This is why we can't have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture*. MIT Press.

Poland, Bailey. (2016). *Haters: Harassment, abuse, and violence online*. Potomac Books.
Porter, James. (1998). *Rhetorical ethics and internetworked writing*. Ablex Pub.
Porter, James. (2009). Recovering delivery for digital rhetoric. *Computers and Composition, 26*(4), 207–224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2009.09.004
Potts, Liza, Small, Rebekah, & Trice, Michael. (2019). Boycotting the knowledge makers: How Reddit demonstrates the rise of media blacklists and source rejection in online communities. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 62*(4), 351–363. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2019.2946942
Quintilian. (1921). *Institutio oratoria* (4 vols). (H. E. Butler, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
Reilly, Colleen. (2020). Digital literacies and online surveillance. In Estee Beck and Les Hutchinson (Eds.), *Privacy matters*. (pp. 17-35). Utah State University.
Reilly, Colleen. (2021). Reading risk: Preparing students to develop critical digital literacies and advocate for privacy in digital spaces. *Computers and Composition, 61*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2021.102652
Reyman, Jessica. (2013). User data on the social web: Authorship, agency, and appropriation. *College English, 75*(5), 513–533.
Reyman, Jessica, & Sparby, Erika M. (2019). Introduction: Toward an ethic of responsibility in digital aggression. In Jessica Reyman & Erika M. Sparby (Eds.), *Digital ethics: Rhetoric and responsibility in online aggression* (pp. 1–14). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429266140
Richter, Jacob D. (2021). Writing with Reddiquette: Networked agonism and structured deliberation in networked communities. *Computers and Composition, 59*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2021.102627
Ridolfo, Jim, & DeVoss, Dànielle Nicole. (2009). Composing for recomposition: Rhetorical velocity and delivery. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy, 13*(2). https://kairos.technorhetoric.net/13.2/topoi/ridolfo_devoss/intro.html
Rule, Hannah J. (2019). *Situating writing processes*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2019.0193
Selber, Stuart. (2004). *Multiliteracies for a digital age.* Southern Illinois University Press.
Selfe, Cynthia L., & Hawisher, Gail E. (2004). *Literate lives in the information age*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410610768
Selfe, Cynthia L., & Selfe, Richard J. (1994). The politics of the interface: Power and its exercise in electronic contact zones. *College Composition and Communication, 45*(4), 480. https://doi.org/10.2307/358761
Shepherd, Ryan P. (2020). What reddit has to teach us about discourse communities. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 24(2), https://kairos.technorhetoric.net/24.2/praxis/shepherd/
Sheridan, David M., Ridolfo, Jim, & Michel, Anthony J. (2012). *The available means of persuasion: Mapping a theory and pedagogy of multimodal public rhetoric*. Parlor Press.
Sparby, Erika M. (2017). Digital social media and aggression: Memetic rhetoric in 4chan's collective identity. *Computers and Composition, 45*, 85–97. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2017.06.006

Spotted on the Highline. (2012, August 18). Reddit. https://www.Reddit.com/r/nyc/comments/ygfv7/spotted_on_the_highline/

Sullivan, Dale L. (1992). Kairos and the rhetoric of belief. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 78*(3), 317–332. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639209383999

Thompson, Roger. (2000). Kairos revisited: An interview with James Kinneavy. *Rhetoric Review, 19*(1–2), 73–88. https://doi.org/10.1080/07350190009359279

Toscano, Aaron. (2011). Using I, robot in the technical writing classroom: Developing a critical technological awareness. *Computers and Composition, 28*(1), 14–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2010.12.001

Trice, Michael, Potts, Liza, & Small, Rebekah. (2019). Values versus rules in social media communities: How platforms generate amorality on Reddit and Facebook. In Jessica Reyman & Erika M. Sparby (Eds.), *Digital ethics: Rhetoric and responsibility in online aggression* (pp. 33–50). Routledge.

Tufekci, Zeynep. (2013). Not this one: Social movements, the attention economy, and microcelebrity networked activism. *The American Behavioral Scientist, 57*(7), 848–870. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213479369

What is karma? (n.d.). Reddit. Retrieved May 9, 2022, from https://Reddit.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/204511829-What-is-karma-

White, Eric Charles. (1987). *Kaironomia: On the will-to-invent*. Cornell University Press.

Wild, John. (1941). Plato's theory of techne: A phenomenological interpretation. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1*, 255–293.

You're Not a Real Hipster Until…. (2013, January 19). Reddit. https://www.Reddit.com/r/funny/comments/16vlkc/youre_not_a_real_hipster_until

Assigning and Assessing Creative and Digital Literacies

Rochelle Rodrigo and Teresa Davis, University of Arizona

This paper shares data from a professional growth and research project about incorporating Adobe Creative Cloud applications into undergraduate courses across the curriculum. As part of this project, we adapted student learning outcomes from the ISTE Standards for Students and performance criteria and indicators from the AACU Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric, converting them into can-do statements articulating various creative and digital literacies. As part of the study instructors and students reflected upon the can-do statements in relation to their work. Although faculty and students did align on how much multimodal assignments might support students achieving some of the creative and digital literacies, there were also significant differences. This paper shares the various creative and digital literacies both faculty and students perceived as relevant and concludes that faculty should not only provide students with assignment outcomes but also any creative and digital literacy goals.

Plenty of writing studies scholars agree that teaching multimodal composition is important, usually in support of teaching rhetorical concepts (Ryerson, 2016). Undergraduate students, along with companies like Adobe and Canva, argue that instructors across the disciplines should assign multimodal projects as a way to improve their creative and digital literacies (e.g., EDUCAUSE, 2018). Needless to say, just as agreeing upon definitions of rhetoric and rhetorical concepts can be messy, agreeing upon the definitions and descriptions of creative (e.g., Lee & Carpenter, 2015; Miller, 2015) and digital literacies (e.g., Adams Becker, Pasquini, & Zentner, 2017) is a contested arena as well. Even when faculty are provided lists, objectives, or outcomes to help describe, identify, and measure creative and digital literacies, they should map specific literacies to specific multimedia[1] projects and their scaffolded academic modules or units. In other words, what creative and digital literacies are college instructors emphasizing when they assign multimodal projects? What creative and digital literacies do the students assigned those projects think they are learning? This paper shares the results of data collected from faculty

1 Although the field of Writing Studies tends to privilege the word *multimodal* (Ryerson, 2016), we used *multimodal* and *multimedia* interchangeably with the faculty workshop and study participants.

 DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862.2.05

and students about the creative and digital literacies that are being emphasized in multimodal projects.

Context

In Spring 2019, one of the authors was awarded funds from Adobe and the University of Arizona (an Adobe Creative Cloud Campus) to design and deliver workshops to help faculty across the disciplines design and assign multimodal projects. We held workshops in Summer and Fall 2019 and the first half of Spring 2020. We collected implementation and usage data from both faculty and students in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. One of our research questions was about how both faculty and students understood and experienced the impact of multimedia assignments on their creative and digital literacies.

Methods

We collected study data from 11 faculty and 32 students across a variety of disciplines, courses, and course levels. All of the courses that the faculty and students reported and reflected upon were undergraduate level. Faculty developed their own assignments and grading criteria; there was no alignment across the assignments. Faculty also had a variety of different multimodal assignments of which we loosely grouped into video, image editing, and web categories. The image editing assignments (three faculty and eight student participants) included fake social media posts, digital posters, and infographics. The web categories (two faculty and 11 student participants) were predominately websites (esp. eportfolios) and blogs. We grouped the one instructor who assigned an audio, podcasting assignment in the video group (six faculty and 12 student participants). The student participants are not necessarily representative of all of the faculty participants (for example, there are no student participants who completed the podcast assignment, and we have one student participant who mislabeled their instructor and we are unable to connect them with the correct instructor data).

In our IRB approved study, we prompted faculty to complete two surveys. The first faculty survey prompted them to share course and assignment information (e.g., syllabus, assignment prompts); we asked them to rate how much their multimodal assignments would help students with various creative and digital literacies. In the second survey faculty were prompted to reflect upon the implementation of their assignments. We prompted student participants to complete two surveys; one at the end of the term that paralleled the faculty survey in reflecting upon how the multimodal assignments helped creative and digital literacies. They were also sent follow-up surveys to see if they were

still being assigned multimodal assignments in future terms. The survey data explores faculty and student perceptions of the emphasis and engagement with creative and digital literacies.

To develop our list of creative and digital literacies, we adopted and slightly adapted the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU, 2022) "Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric" and the International Society for Technology in Education's (ISTE, 2022) "ISTE Standards: Students." In other words, we worked from already developed and vetted learning outcomes instead of trying to construct our own. We adapted them by revising their materials into a list of can-do statements that would be easier for both faculty and students to understand (Table 1 and Table 2). Second language educators have used can-do statements as a method for helping young learners better understand learning objectives so that they might more accurately evaluate their own abilities (Brown, Dewey, & Cox, 2014, p. 264). In short, converting learning outcomes into can-do statements is about making learning outcomes student facing and, hopefully, easier to understand.

In the surveys, faculty and students were asked how much the multimodal assignments helped students achieve each can-do statement:

- Student sentence starter: I feel like the multimedia assignments in this class helped me to...
- Faculty sentence starter: I assigned the multimedia assignments for this class to help students to...

Participants were provided the following options from which to select an answer:

- To an Extremely Large Extent
- To a Large Extent
- To a Moderate Extent
- To a Small Extent
- Not at all

The data shared in this paper focus on the comparisons between the faculty's and students' perceptions of how helpful the multimodal projects were in supporting student improvement of the various creative and digital literacies.

Data

Faculty and student participants rated the assignment support of nineteen Creative Literacies Can-Do Statements (Table 1) and twenty-four Digital Literacies Can-Do Statements (Table 2). The results shown in Tables 1 and 2 compare answers across all faculty and all students as well as both groups as broken down by the video, image editing, and web assignment categories.

Creative Literacies

Compared to faculty, students perceived a lot more emphasis across all the creative literacies; at least 50% of student participants claimed the multimedia projects helped them achieve all 19 creative literacies can-do statements (Table 1).

Table 1. Creative Literacies: All Faculty & All Students

Can-Do Statements	Faculty (n=11)	Faculty %	Students (n=32)	Students %
... successfully reproduce examples or samples. (AC1)	2	18.18%	20	62.50%
... adapt an example or sample to fit the needs of my situation or requirements. (AC2)	1	9.09%	19	59.38%
... create an entirely new project, solution, or idea that appropriately addresses a specific problem or situation. (AC3)	7	63.64%	24	75.00%
... evaluate my own creative processes and products using project- and context- appropriate criteria. (AC4)	3	27.27%	23	71.88%
... try new approaches when completing an assignment or other project. (TR3)	8	72.73%	27	84.38%
... to take risks when completing an assignment or other project. (TR4)	8	72.73%	18	56.25%
... consider and reject less acceptable approaches to a problem's solution. (SP2)	1	9.09%	18	56.25%
... develop a logical, consistent plan while solving a problem. (SP3)	2	18.18%	18	56.25%
... articulate the reason for choosing a problem's solution. (SP4)	0	0.00%	17	53.13%
... recognize the consequences of my problem's solution. (SP4)	1	9.09%	17	53.13%
... identify alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas. (EC1)	4	36.36%	19	59.38%
... provide an unbiased explanation of alternative, divergent, or contradictory perspectives in my own projects or solutions. (EC2)	1	9.09%	19	59.38%
... consider, critique, and/or adopt alternative, divergent, or contradictory perspectives in my own projects or solutions. (EC3/4)	3	27.27%	21	65.63%

Can-Do Statements	Faculty (n=11)	Faculty %	Students (n=32)	Students %
... organize and present a collection of available ideas or solutions. (IT1)	4	36.36%	26	81.25%
... recognize existing connections among and across a collection of available ideas or solutions. (CST1)	7	63.64%	19	59.38%
... connect ideas or solutions in novel or unique ways. (CST2)	7	63.64%	23	71.88%
... analyze and synthesize a collection of available ideas or solutions into a coherent whole. (CST3)	7	63.64%	20	62.50%
... create a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product for a specific problem or situation. (IT3/CST4)	7	63.64%	23	71.88%
... extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses the boundaries of specific problems or situations. (IT4)	7	63.64%	18	56.25%

Note: The data for the table includes both the count and the percentage of participants who answered "To a Large Extent" and "To an Extremely Large Extent" for each of the prompts. Cells that are light green in color include percentages from 50%–74.99% and those in light yellow are 75% or above. The letters and numbers after each can-do statement align with the specific dimension and scale component of the original AACU "Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric."

Over 50% faculty identified eight of the different creative literacies can-do statements, with none of the statements reaching over 75% agreement from the faculty (Table 1). Over 75% of the students rated three of the can-do statements, highlighting the assignments were helping students to:

- create an entirely new project, solution, or idea that appropriately addresses a specific problem or situation (75.00%);
- try new approaches when completing an assignment or other project (84.38%); and
- organize and present a collection of available ideas or solutions (81.25%).

Over 50% of the faculty agreed with the students on multimodal assignment support for creating an entirely new project and trying new approaches; however, only 36.36% of the faculty rated organizing and presenting a collection of ideas as being developed in the multimodal project.

Three of the three faculty who assigned image editing projects perceived the project helped students with five different Creative Literacy Can-Do statements (Table 2).

Table 2. Image Editing Faculty agree on Certain Creative Literacies

Can-Do Statements	Image Editing Faculty (n=3)	Image Editing Faculty %	Image Editing Students (n=8)	Image Editing Students %
... try new approaches when completing an assignment or other project. (TR3)	3	100.00%	5	62.50%
... to take risks when completing an assignment or other project. (TR4)	3	100.00%	3	37.50%
... connect ideas or solutions in novel or unique ways. (CST2)	3	100.00%	4	50.00%
... create a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product for a specific problem or situation. (IT3/CST4)	3	100.00%	2	25.00%
... extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses the boundaries of specific problems or situations. (IT4)	3	100.00%	1	12.50%

The potential problem arises with the fact that less than 40% of the students agreed that assignments were helpful achieving three of the statements. In total, over 50% of the faculty who assigned image editing rated the assignments helpful towards eight of the statements and 50% of the students found the assignments supporting only seven of the statements. There were only three creative literacies can-do statements that over 50% of both the faculty and the students rated the assignments as supporting students to:

- create an entirely new project, solution, or idea that appropriately addresses a specific problem or situation;
- try new approaches when completing an assignment or other project; and
- connect ideas or solutions in novel or unique ways.

There was a bit more alignment between faculty and students who worked with web assignments. 50% of both groups rated the web assignments supporting the same nine Creative Literacy Can-Do statements. And, unlike the disconnect with the faculty emphasizing certain creative literacies with the image editing and the students disagreeing, at least one (50%) of the faculty assigning web projects agreed with the over 75% of the students who rated the web assignments helping to achieve four creative literacies can-do statements (Table 3).

Table 3. Web Assignment Faculty and Students Generally Align on Certain Creative Literacies

Can-Do Statements	Web Faculty (n=2)	Web Faculty %	Web Students (n=11)	Web Students %
... try new approaches when completing an assignment or other project. (TR3)	1	50.00%	11	100.00%
... organize and present a collection of available ideas or solutions. (IT1)	1	50.00%	9	81.82%
... connect ideas or solutions in novel or unique ways. (CST2)	1	50.00%	9	81.82%
... create a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product for a specific problem or situation. (IT3/CST4)	1	50.00%	9	81.82%

We see a much larger disconnect with the faculty and students who worked with video assignments. Over 75% of the students rated the video assignment helping achieve every single creative literacies can-do statement, except for "extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knoswledge that crosses the boundaries of specific problems or situations;" and, that was still rated highly by 66.67% of the students (Appendix A). Over 50%, none above 75%, of the faculty who assigned video projects only rated the assignment supporting eight of the nineteen creative literacies can-do statements (Appendix A).

Across the four categories of comparative analysis (all faculty and students and then the breakdown of the three assignment types), there are three creative literacies can-do statements that were rated more highly supported by over 50% of both faculty and students, the same three that rated highly for the image editing assignments. Five more creative literacies can-do statements were rated highly, only missed being above 50% in one of the assignment type categories:

- to take risks when completing an assignment or other project;
- recognize existing connections among and across a collection of available ideas or solutions;
- analyze and synthesize a collection of available ideas or solutions into a coherent whole;
- create a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product for a specific problem or situation; and
- extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses the boundaries of specific problems or situations.

Finally, there is one Creative Literacies Can-Do statement that no faculty member rated as supported by the multimodal assignments: articulate the reason for choosing a problem's solution.

Digital Literacies

As with the creative literacies, the student participants were more likely to rate the multimodal assignments helping them achieve the majority of the digital literacies can-do statements (Table 4).

Table 4. Digital Literacies: All Faculty & All Students

Can-Do Statements	All Faculty (n=11)	All Faculty %	All Students (n=32)	All Students %
... identify and use technologies to achieve my personal learning goals. (ELa)	3	23.08%	25	80.65%
... reflect upon my use of technology to achieve my personal learning goals (ELa)	3	23.08%	20	64.52%
... use technology to customize my learning environment. (ELb)	4	30.77%	21	67.74%
... use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves my practice and learning. (ELc)	3	23.08%	20	64.52%
... choose, use, and troubleshoot current technologies. (ELd)	4	30.77%	21	67.74%
... use my current knowledge of technologies to explore new and/or emerging technologies. (ELd)	7	53.85%	22	70.97%
... cultivate and manage my digital identity and reputation across various digital technologies and environments. (DCa)	1	7.69%	17	54.84%
... engage in positive and safe behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices. (DCb)	3	23.08%	18	58.06%
... engage in legal and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices. (DCb)	1	7.69%	17	54.84%
... understand and respect the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property. (DCc)	4	30.77%	17	54.84%

Can-Do Statements	All Faculty (n=11)	All Faculty %	All Students (n=32)	All Students %
... manage my personal data to maintain digital privacy and security. (DCd)	1	7.69%	15	48.39%
... be aware of data-collection technology used to track my navigation online. (DCd)	0	0.00%	14	45.16%
... know and use a deliberate design process for generating ideas, testing theories, creating innovate artifacts or solving problems. (IDa)	1	7.69%	19	61.29%
... select and use digital tools to plan and manage a design process. (IDb)	3	23.08%	22	70.97%
... evaluate the affordances/strengths and constraints/weaknesses of different options when selecting between technologies. (IDb)	2	15.38%	18	58.06%
... develop, test, and refine prototypes as part of a cyclical design process. (IDc)	1	7.69%	12	38.71%
... be comfortable with uncertainty or ambiguity during a design and/or problem-solving process. (IDd)	5	38.46%	16	51.61%
... persevere through challenges and constraints during a design and/or problem-solving process. (IDd)	6	46.15%	20	64.52%
... choose the appropriate digital platforms and technical tools for meeting the goals of a specific problem or situation. (CCa)	4	30.77%	24	77.42%
... create original works. (CCb)	8	61.54%	26	83.87%
... responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations. (CCb)	6	46.15%	18	58.06%
... communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects (such as visualizations, models, or simulations). (CCc)	7	53.85%	22	70.97%
... publish or present content that adapts the message and medium for a specific audience. (CCd)	7	53.85%	22	70.97%
... publish or present content that customizes the message for a specific medium. (CCd)	7	53.85%	23	74.19%

Note: The letters after each Can-Do statement align with the specific category and numbered standard of the original "ISTE Standards: Students."

There were similar parallels in the comparisons across the assignment types. Again, over 50% students completing the video assignments perceived

all of the digital literacies can-do statements, except for "evaluate the affordances/strengths and constraints/weaknesses of different options when selecting between technologies," as being supported by the video assignment (Appendix A). The four digital literacies can-do statements that all three image editing faculty rated the assignments helping, were only rated by just above 50% of the students as helpful (Table 5). Over 75% of the image editing assignment students, however, highly rated assignments supporting four different can-do statements, with two the assignments only emphasized by one faculty member (Table 5).

Table 5. Image Editing Assignment Faculty and Students Somewhat Align on Certain Digital Literacies

Can-Do Statements	Image Editing Faculty (n=3)	Image Editing Faculty %	Image Editing Students (n=8)	Image Editing Students %
... identify and use technologies to achieve my personal learning goals. (ELa)	1	33.33%	6	75.00%
... use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves my practice and learning. (ELc)	1	33.33%	6	75.00%
... choose the appropriate digital platforms and technical tools for meeting the goals of a specific problem or situation. (CCa)	2	66.67%	6	75.00%
... create original works. (CCb)	2	66.67%	6	75.00%
... responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations. (CCb)	3	100.00%	4	50.00%
... communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects (such as visualizations, models, or simulations). (CCc)	3	100.00%	4	50.00%
... publish or present content that adapts the message and medium for a specific audience. (CCd)	3	100.00%	5	62.50%
... publish or present content that customizes the message for a specific medium. (CCd)	3	100.00%	4	50.00%

The web assignment faculty and students were also similarly mis-matched in their alignment across the various statements.

When comparing results from all students and faculty across all four comparison categories, there were four digital literacies can-do statements over 50% agreed that the multimodal assignments supported students to:

- create original works;
- communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects (such as visualizations, models, or simulations);
- publish or present content that adapts the message and medium for a specific audience; and
- publish or present content that customizes the message for a specific medium.

Except in one category group, over 50% of participants across the comparison categories found multimodal assignments helping students to:

- use my current knowledge of technologies to explore new and/or emerging technologies; and
- persevere through challenges and constraints during a design and/or problem-solving process.

Finally, no faculty member rated multimodal projects as helping students "be aware of data-collection technology used to track my navigation online."

Discussion

This study provides us with a list of creative and digital literacies that both the faculty and student participants found being supported while assigning and completing multimodal assignments. Obviously this is a small number of faculty and student participants, therefore, it is inappropriate to generalize based on this data (especially in relation to claims about the importance of specific literacy descriptions and statements). However, there are still some useful takeaways:

1. Multimedia assignment prompts need to include learning outcomes, or goals, for both content as well as creative and digital literacies.
2. When working on video assignments students feel their creative and digital literacies are greatly taxed and expanded; faculty need to acknowledge and account for students' perceptions.
3. Faculty appear to undervalue the critical thinking work associated with creative projects.
4. Faculty do not appear to take responsibility for the legal, ethical, and security issues associated with working in digital environments.

Three of these takeaways assume some changes faculty might make when assigning multimedia projects.

First, the results of this data emphasize the need for faculty to explicitly articulate the learning objectives and goals for their assignments. And whereas

most instructional design practitioners and many pedagogy scholars emphasize that instructors need to clearly articulate learning objectives for assignments, this study demonstrates that instructors might also want to identify learning goals as well. Identifying goals that are above and beyond the course content, like creative and digital literacies, can be difficult (Jahnke, Haertel, & Wildt, 2017). Therefore, if we argue that we should assign multimodal projects to help students develop creative and digital literacies, instructors who assign multimodal projects should help students understand the importance, or lack thereof, of specific creative and digital literacies emphasized, taught, or assumed in a given assignment. Fodrey and Mikovits (2020) suggested similar ideas about prompting faculty to understand and think about genre and discourse community when they facilitated a WAC workshop that promoted designing multimodal projects. Asking faculty to articulate assignment objectives above and beyond the content related ones, like rhetorical, creative, and digital literacies, especially what students will be held accountable upon assessment of the project, will help students better target their efforts and labor.

Second, emphasizing specific creative and digital literacies is especially important with video assignments. Students made clear that working on video assignments pushed their learning across a wide variety of both creative and digital literacies (Appendix A). Faculty assigning videos should take this into account while planning for student workload and anxiety associated with a video assignment. Students are surrounded by examples of professional, highly polished, and amateur video production quality. It is ethically problematic to not explicitly articulate expectations, specifically learning and assessment criteria, especially with students who have little to no video production experience.

Third, it appears that faculty do not think working with multiple media supports students' critical and creative thinking. Of all the creative literacy can-do statements, zero or only one faculty participant emphasized had to do with selecting, testing, choosing, appropriate solutions or answers from multiple perspectives (Table 1). Even one of the digital literacy can-do statements only emphasized by one faculty member also prompted using "a deliberate design process for … solving problems" (Table 4). We imagine one reason this lack of emphasis on the critical engagement with the projects' content might be because many faculty, especially those new to assignment multimedia projects, develop remix assignments (e.g., Seeley, 2020). If this is the case, many faculty might believe the critical and creative thinking associated with the content is already happening in the alphabetic text assignment and the remix prompt is just repackaging the students' thinking.

Finally, no faculty emphasized that their assignments helped students to "be aware of data-collection technology used to track navigation online." Except for the design process can-do statement mentioned above, the other

digital literacy can-do statements only one faculty member identified as emphasized in their projects connected to issues around digital ethics, privacy, and security. Even the can-do statement that emphasized digital ethics, articulated that issue in relation to students engaging in "social interactions online or when using networked devices." Although legal scholar and privacy expert Solove (2021) argues that it is impossible for individuals to take responsibility for managing their own digital privacy, he does claim that institutions do need to take responsibility. And, we'd argue, instructors are representative of the educational institution and should try to help educate and facilitate students' privacy and security while working on required assignments. Especially if multimedia assignments prompt students to use technologies not vetted through an institution's legal team, helping students manage their digital privacy is critical. Campus instructional designers or educational technologists should be able to help faculty with this issue.

Being more explicit with students about the creative and digital literacies being emphasized in any one assignment is a relatively easy fix for a faculty member. Although constructing assignments that more explicitly teach and protect students' privacy in digital environments might take more work, it's the right thing to do and many campuses have assigned faculty and staff with the knowledge to help.

References

Adams Becker, S., Pasquini, L. A., & Zentner, A. (2017). *2017 digital literacy impact study: An NMC horizon project strategic brief*, *3*(5). https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED588801

American Association of Colleges and Universities. (2022). *VALUE rubrics - Creative thinking.* https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics/value-rubrics-creative-thinking

Brown, N. Anthony, Dewey, Dan P., & Cox, Troy L. (2014). Assessing the validity of can-do statements in retrospective (then-now) self-assessment. *Foreign Language Annals, 47*(2), 261–285. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12082

EDUCAUSE. (2018). *The EDUCAUSE almanac for undergraduate student and technology survey, 2018*. https://library.educause.edu/resources/2018/8/the-educause-almanac-for-undergraduate-student-and-technology-survey-2018

Fodrey, Crystal, & Mikovits, Meg. (2020, July 16). Theorizing WAC faculty development in multimodal project design. *Across the Disciplines, 17*. https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2020.17.1-2.04

International Society for Technology in Education. (2022). *ISTE standards: Students*. https://www.iste.org/standards/iste-standards-for-students

Jahnke, Isa, Hertel, Tobias, & Wildt, Johannes. (2017). Teachers' conceptions of student creativity in higher education. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 54*(1), 87–95.

Lee, Sohui, & Carpenter, Russell. (2015, December 28). Creative thinking for 21st century composing practices: Creativity pedagogies across disciplines. *Across the Disciplines, 12*. https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2015.12.4.12
Miller, Donna L. (2015). Cultivating creativity. *The English Journal, 104*(6), 25–30. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24484423
Ryerson, Rachael. (2016). Multimodal composition in *Kairos*: A rhizomatic retrospective. *Kairos, 20*(2). https://kairos.technorhetoric.net/20.2/reviews/ryerson/index.html
Seeley, Sarah. (2020). The remix pairing: Writing assignments that support instructional alignment and student satisfaction. *Currents in Teaching and Learning, 12*(1), 34–42. https://webcdn.worcester.edu/currents-in-teaching-and-learning/wp-content/uploads/sites/65/2022/05/Currents-Volume-12-Issue-01-Fall-2020.pdf
Solove, Daniel J. (2021). The myth of the privacy paradox. *The George Washington Law Review, 89*(1), 1–51. http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3536265

Appendix A: Video Assignments

Can-Do Statements	Video Faculty (n=6)	Video Faculty %	Video Students (n=12)	Video Students %
Creative Literacies				
... successfully reproduce examples or samples. (AC1)	2	33.33%	9	75.00%
... adapt an example or sample to fit the needs of my situation or requirements. (AC2)	0	0.00%	10	83.33%
... create an entirely new project, solution, or idea that appropriately addresses a specific problem or situation. (AC3)	4	66.67%	11	91.67%
... evaluate my own creative processes and products using project- and context- appropriate criteria. (AC4)	2	33.33%	10	83.33%
... try new approaches when completing an assignment or other project. (TR3)	4	66.67%	10	83.33%
... to take risks when completing an assignment or other project. (TR4)	4	66.67%	9	75.00%
... consider and reject less acceptable approaches to a problem's solution. (SP2)	0	0.00%	9	75.00%
... develop a logical, consistent plan while solving a problem. (SP3)	0	0.00%	10	83.33%
... articulate the reason for choosing a problem's solution. (SP4)	0	0.00%	10	83.33%
... recognize the consequences of my problem's solution. (SP4)	0	0.00%	10	83.33%

Can-Do Statements	Video Faculty (n=6)	Video Faculty %	Video Students (n=12)	Video Students %
... identify alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas. (EC1)	2	33.33%	10	83.33%
... provide an unbiased explanation of alternative, divergent, or contradictory perspectives in my own projects or solutions. (EC2)	1	16.67%	11	91.67%
... consider, critique, and/or adopt alternative, divergent, or contradictory perspectives in my own projects or solutions. (EC3/4)	2	33.33%	11	91.67%
... organize and present a collection of available ideas or solutions. (IT1)	2	33.33%	11	91.67%
... recognize existing connections among and across a collection of available ideas or solutions. (CST1)	4	66.67%	9	75.00%
... connect ideas or solutions in novel or unique ways. (CST2)	3	50.00%	9	75.00%
... analyze and synthesize a collection of available ideas or solutions into a coherent whole. (CST3)	4	66.67%	10	83.33%
... create a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product for a specific problem or situation. (IT3/CST4)	3	50.00%	11	91.67%
... extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses the boundaries of specific problems or situations. (IT4)	3	50.00%	8	66.67%
Digital Literacies				
... identify and use technologies to achieve my personal learning goals. (ELa)	2	33.33%	10	83.33%
... reflect upon my use of technology to achieve my personal learning goals (ELa)	3	50.00%	9	75.00%
... use technology to customize my learning environment. (ELb)	2	33.33%	8	66.67%
... use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves my practice and learning. (ELc)	3	50.00%	9	75.00%
... choose, use, and troubleshoot current technologies. (ELd)	4	66.67%	9	75.00%
... use my current knowledge of technologies to explore new and/or emerging technologies. (ELd)	6	100.00%	10	83.33%

Can-Do Statements	Video Faculty (n=6)	Video Faculty %	Video Students (n=12)	Video Students %
... cultivate and manage my digital identity and reputation across various digital technologies and environments. (DCa)	1	16.67%	8	66.67%
... engage in positive and safe behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices. (DCb)	2	33.33%	9	75.00%
... engage in legal and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices. (DCb)	1	16.67%	8	66.67%
... understand and respect the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property. (DCc)	3	50.00%	10	83.33%
... manage my personal data to maintain digital privacy and security. (DCd)	1	16.67%	8	66.67%
... be aware of data-collection technology used to track my navigation online. (DCd)	0	0.00%	7	58.33%
... know and use a deliberate design process for generating ideas, testing theories, creating innovate artifacts or solving problems. (IDa)	0	0.00%	6	50.00%
... select and use digital tools to plan and manage a design process. (IDb)	2	33.33%	8	66.67%
... evaluate the affordances/strengths and constraints/weaknesses of different options when selecting between technologies. (IDb)	1	16.67%	5	41.67%
... develop, test, and refine prototypes as part of a cyclical design process. (IDc)	0	0.00%	6	50.00%
... be comfortable with uncertainty or ambiguity during a design and/or problem-solving process. (IDd)	3	50.00%	6	50.00%
... persevere through challenges and constraints during a design and/or problem-solving process. (IDd)	4	66.67%	7	58.33%
... choose the appropriate digital platforms and technical tools for meeting the goals of a specific problem or situation. (CCa)	1	16.67%	10	83.33%
... create original works. (CCb)	6	100.00%	10	83.33%
... responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations. (CCb)	4	66.67%	7	58.33%

Can-Do Statements	Video Faculty (n=6)	Video Faculty %	Video Students (n=12)	Video Students %
... communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects (such as visualizations, models, or simulations). (CCc)	5	83.33%	9	75.00%
... publish or present content that adapts the message and medium for a specific audience. (CCd)	4	66.67%	8	66.67%
... publish or present content that customizes the message for a specific medium. (CCd)	4	66.67%	11	91.67%

Intersecting Rhetorical Velocity & Antiracism as Strategies for the Creation of University Crime Notifications under the Clery Act

Jason L. Sugg, East Carolina University

This article intersects rhetorical velocity and antiracism as strategies in the crafting and dissemination of timely warnings under the Clery Act. Timely warnings often take the form of crime notifications and are disseminated through a variety of localized and third-party technology platforms. Campus communities continue to struggle over the equitable use of suspect race descriptions that may reinforce stereotypes of communities of color, and messages are often created by default police text-crafters driven by compliance and police discourse conventions, thus crossing aspects of police rhetorics and positionality. This article engages Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss' (2009) notion of rhetorical velocity as "a strategic approach to composing for rhetorical delivery" for the "strategic theorizing for how a text might be recomposed" (Ridolfo & DeVoss, 2009, n.p.) by an audience, as well as why, how, and to what helpful or harmful rhetorical ends. Key takeaways are considerations for an antiracist approach to crafting Clery Act notifications and anticipating the rhetorical velocity of crime notifications and their impacts on communities of color.

Since the 1990 passage of the Jeanne Clery Act, universities still struggle with compliance. Among other things, the Act requires universities to notify the community of potential safety threats, and requires institutions receiving federal funds to have a policy, practices, and mechanisms to distribute crime information to the campus community (Lee & Good, 2016; Hanson & Irwin, 2019; Lathom-Staton et al., 2020). These notifications are often pushed out as "timely warnings" required for certain crimes (Sweeney, n.d.). The matter of timely warnings is the focal point in this paper, and the term "crime notification" will be used as the context of the type of timely warning being discussed.

When an institution becomes aware of a crime covered under The Clery Act, it formulates a message to inform the community. This information generally includes the time, date, location, crime, and often a suspect description. In instances where race descriptions are noted, concerns are sometimes voiced by students of color about the vagueness of race descriptions, which

 DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862.2.06

challenges their use as objective information. A description may only include race, gender, and perhaps generic clothing descriptors that may describe a population rather than a person, thus focusing negative perceptions on a group. For example, a crime notification description found within my university email stated: "*Victim's* [*sic*] *reported the suspect as being a black male, 5'10 and skinny armed with a gun*" (ECU Alert, 2020). While intentions were good, one can see how this is problematic. These concerns may be deepened by findings (Lee & Good, 2017; Latham-Staton et al., 2020) that students indeed heed Clery information and may adjust their perception of risk based on that information. Communities of color express concern that using race as an identifier, absent individualized characteristics, spotlights that community and perpetuates racial stereotypes.

Crime notifications reach tens of thousands of users. Once delivered, a university has no control over message appropriation, including that some appropriations may fortify negative, race-based perceptions. Rhetorical strategies that include social justice and antiracism are important to ensuring that members of the community are protected from social and systemic negative impacts of race characteristic association. Following Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss' (2009) articulation of rhetorical velocity as a strategy for rhetorical delivery, this project seeks to intersect rhetorical velocity with antiracism to locate guidance in creating compliant, socially-just crime notifications.

Campus Racial Experience

The complaint of disparate treatment on college campuses by people of color is not new. Julie Ancis, William Sedlacek, and Jonathan Mohr (2000) noted that people of color were more susceptible "than their White counterparts to experience pressure to conform to racial and ethnic stereotypes regarding their academic performance and behavior" (p. 182). This finding is still relevant and reflected by other research (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003; Walker, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Mwangi et al., 2018; Pelfrey, Jr., Keener, & Perkins, 2018). Ancis, Sedlacek, and Mohr (2000) also noted that "specifically, African American students experienced greater racial–ethnic hostility; greater pressure to conform to stereotypes; less equitable treatment by faculty, staff, and teaching assistants; and more faculty racism than did other groups" (p. 183). Landon D. Reid and Phanikiran Radhakrishnan (2003) offered that research demonstrates that students of color perceive campus climate more negatively than white students. Students of color perceive that they are treated differently both as "racial minorities but also as students" (p. 272), suggesting both social and institutional disparate treatment.

Public internet searches reveal university crime notification data nation-wide. They are often housed on university police webpages. One will find very vague suspect descriptions as well as more detailed descriptions. Vague race descriptors may cause feelings of marginalization that are now perpetuated via institutional texts disguised as compliance. Ancis, Sedlacek, and Mohr (2000) called attention to the fatigue that is accumulated by marginalization, noting that "continual exposure to a hostile educational climate, marked by racial tension and stereotyping, may adversely influence the academic achievement and psychological health of students of color" (p. 183). Structures that marginalize communities within society do not stop at universities. Campuses are connected to these systems and structures (Mwangi et al., 2018), especially institutional power. This is a power that Daniel Solorzano, Miguel Ceja, and Tarra Yosso (2000) noted communities of color don't benefit from, and instead are only subjected to. Communications that are institutionally created demonstrate institutional and rhetorical power. Chrystal A. Mwangi et al. (2018) aptly noted that while "White peers can ignore this connection or remain at arm's length from societal racial issues, for Black students the issues happening in society are a racial mirror of what is happening on their campuses" (p. 469).

Racist and prejudiced undertones on campus are historical, even in campus media platforms. In his book *Black Software* (2020), Charlton McIlwain recounted a story by Derrick Brown, who attended Clemson University in the late 1980s, noting that:

> Whenever something would happen on campus, they would always run the same composite sketch in the school newspaper. And that person was always obviously a person of color, obviously male, and obviously the same person. I'm not joking! It was always the same drawing. (p. 26)

This complaint persists, but with technology that sends texts instantaneously. Crime notifications often feel similar to Mr. Brown's story—a person of color with a generic clothing description. Unlike Mr. Brown and his friends, who were able to challenge these depictions by removing stacks of newspapers (McIlwain, 2020), students of color today cannot challenge stereotypes from instantaneously distributed texts.

The notion of associating race with crime is an extension of negative stereotyping based on what Ted Chiricos, Ranee McEntire, and Marc Gertz (2001) suggested is "modern racism" where one's race is used as a proxy for danger (p. 335), such as the stereotype of associative crime with the Black community. Similarly, Bela Walker (2003) noted:

> Nonwhite skin is seen as an indicator of criminality as well as justifiable cause for police persecution. Perception of crimi-

> nality in minority populations then alters the general opinion of the public and affecting eyewitness testimony, already notoriously malleable and unreliable. (p. 679)

Mwangi et al. (2018) reiterated Walker's (2003) argument; their study participants "discussed their race being associated with fear" (p. 462), and that the racial climate on [PWI] campuses is often characterized by subdued racism such as microaggressions. More recent confirmations of campus climate perceptions (Mwangi et al., 2018; Pelfrey, Jr., Keener, and Perkins, 2018) demonstrated a continuance of Reid and Radhakrishnan's (2003) and Susan R. Rankin and Rankin Reason's (2005) findings that students of color voiced a more negative view of campus racial climate than white students. To combat this, institutions must challenge dominant narratives and "have social justice as a central core value, that inform the strategic approach that runs through the fabric of the institution" (Rankin & Reason, 2005, p. 59). Using race in crime notifications is challenging because, as Walker (2003) noted, "race becomes not one of many characteristics, but instead *the* [original emphasis] defining characteristic employed" (p. 664). Walker (2003) suggested that once a racial identifier has been attached, deviation from that characteristic is unlikely and other characteristics may be overlooked.

Rhetorical Velocity

Rhetorical velocity is "a strategic approach to composing for rhetorical delivery. It is both a way of considering delivery as a rhetorical mode, aligned with an understanding of how texts work as a component of a strategy" (Ridolfo & DeVoss, 2009, n.p.). Ridolfo and DeVoss (2009) elaborated that strategic approach should include the consideration of *how* a text "might be recomposed (and *why* it might be recomposed) by an audience, and how this recomposing may be useful or not to the short- or long-term rhetorical objectives of the rhetorician" (n.p.). Rhetorical velocity relates to our concept of velocity—the speed and distance of a text across an audience. Seth Long and Ken Fitch (2019) offered that rhetorical velocity is also "direction-aware" (p. 176), resulting in a rhetorical vector. If outside forces are able to memorialize a text, the author loses the original agency and text circulation "often lacks the logic of directionality" when recomposed (Long & Fitch, 2019, p. 176). At that point, the author has no control over circulatory direction. In the case of crime notifications, the speed is instantaneous and multi-directional in its original frame.

Crime notifications are designed for consumption and interaction. They ask the audience to engage in safety-related behaviors. One study (Lathom-Staton et al., 2020) found that up to 70% of students heeded timely warn-

ings, indicating crime information was taken seriously. Because of opportunities for textual interaction, rhetorical velocity and antiracism may ensure that information is less likely to be contextually appropriated. The desire is to engage helpful information, not information that places communities of color under additional surveillance. Thus, a major concern for communities of color is that vague suspect descriptions only add volume to negative stereotypes. Recomposition of texts may manifest in audience members who use descriptions to fortify their own stereotypes of communities of color.

Jonathan Bradshaw (2018) noted that "rhetoricians in the field of circulation studies have likewise been arguing that rhetors have to account for the delivery and circulation of their material" (p. 480). With Clery, rhetoricians are held accountable for compliance and little else. Institutions should be held accountable for rhetorical impacts created by their agents. In the circulation of texts, speed and reach are "core points of focus" (Bradshaw, 2018, p. 480). These points are useful for text circulation research, such as crime notifications; not just for compliance, but also for socially just messaging and audience.

A concern of rhetorical velocity is that recompositions of the message, like crime notifications, have the potential to be memetic. These messages originate from a place of power and are delivered en masse (Sparkes-Vian, 2019) and engage the audience. With text dissemination, a university should expect a certain amount of negative appropriation from the audience. A university should make it easy to recompose safety information but should want difficulty in recomposing something negative, such as racial stereotypes.

Police Rhetorics and Text Creators

The crafting of crime notifications often falls to police because of logistical convenience. Pelfrey, Jr., Keener, and Perkins (2018) suggested "law enforcement agencies must balance public safety and negative perceptions" (p. 245); however, this is an incomplete view of the responsibilities of maintaining that balance with Clery because compliance with Clery Act is a *university compliance* matter regardless of using police as the text-creators. Police text-crafters are entangled with *police rhetorics*, particularly language. I define police rhetorics as the systems of symbols, discourses, and practices, either actual, essentialized, or rhetorical, commonly associated with the policing profession and which locate meaning and understanding within policing contexts. Such systems include knowledge, language, symbols, practices, and other observable phenomena that convey contextual understanding, especially rhetorically. Such rhetorical positionality is particularly impactful on discourse practices because of institutionalized power that is projected within the policing field. In other words, police text-crafters prioritize their discourse over institutional or social.

Using police as text-crafters places rhetorical velocity and antiracism at a disadvantage because expedience and compliance are prioritized. Text-creators must craft crime notifications that include information about the crime, in a "timely" manner (Sweeney, n.d.). Because of Clery's vague requirement for "timeliness," decisions must be made quickly about information included in messages sent to tens of thousands of people. Pelfrey, Jr., Keener, and Perkins (2018) noted that institutions have significant "discretion in the timing and information included in crime alerts, including the perpetrator descriptors" (p. 244). Institutions feel pressure to rely on discretion to be "timely."

Police text-creators are more concerned about the pressures of compliance than matters of rhetoric and social justice. It is not because they don't care, they just aren't engaged in conversations on these topics as it relates to crime notifications. In the police mind, the message will only be recomposed as a benefit and other contexts—like race descriptions—will be ignored if the audience finds no value. This is a faulty view that diminishes rhetorical velocity and antiracism strategies. It connects to what Cauthen (2010) pointed out as a difference between "rules versus relationships" (p. 23) as representative of legal expectations versus moral ones. Those creating these texts often lean on industry or organizational language. Texts often align with what Cauthen (2010) associated as an "epistemological feature" (p. 33) of legal language—the "preference for the abstract over the specific, for the nuances of legal rules over those of human relationships" (Cauthen, 2010, p. 33). Crime notifications are often driven by epistemological features, not by human relations.

While many researchers have focused on racial climate and use of race in timely warnings (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Chiricos, McEntire & Gertz, 2001; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003; Walker, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Pelfrey, Jr., Keener, & Perkins, 2018), or on Clery compliance (Hanson & Irwin, 2019) and audience reception and behavior (Lee & Good, 2017; Hasinoff & Krueger, 2020; Latham-Staton at al., 2020), one area open for research is text-creators. Text-creators are institutionally empowered with text-creation decisions; humans who must ensure compliance. Text-creators have substantial discretion in Clery messaging (Pelfrey, Jr., Keener, & Perkins, 2018) and though text-creators have policies, they control text-creation. Researching audience responsiveness, best practices, and racial climate is an incomplete rhetorical framing. Text-creators are not conduits, but often have control over the only accessible information. Rhetorical velocity calls for strategy to consider how and why a text is recomposed, so text-creators should understand their rhetorical positionality. If text-creators are more concerned about the compliance functions of text-crafting, then this suggests there is little focus on rhetorical contexts.

This idea is further complicated when the text-creator is a police officer. Police officers, while they understand sensitivities of race and social justice

concepts, may default to using policies and practices. It is, as noted by Steven Katz (1992), Aristotle's deliberative rhetoric that is "concerned with decision and action" (p. 259). Clery is a matter of efficient compliance, not a matter of rhetoric or justice, because compliance is what officers are tasked with. Katz (1992) also noted that Aristotle "seems to collapse all ethical questions" in deference to expediency with deliberative rhetoric, but Clery doesn't have to be that way (p. 260). Expediency can be disrupted by creating room for conversations about ethical justice outside of strict compliance.

Antiracist Strategy: A Challenge for Institutions and Individuals

Ridolfo and DeVoss (2017) articulated pedagogical challenges and suggested a new challenge to "teach students not only the content of argumentation, but to provide them with the ability to trace how conversations emerge, traverse across media, and are amplified by state and non-state actors" (p. 66). This is also a challenge for institutions and their agents in text creation. Institutions need to engage, educate, and practice antiracist efforts when creating crime notifications. Ridolfo and DeVoss (2017) also asked what text-creators can "discern about the trajectory, velocity, origin, and distribution of messages" (p. 66). They argued that "one may understand and analyze the rhetorical velocity of a piece of digital rhetoric based on its short- and long-term positive, negative, and neutral rhetorical consequences in relationship to the originating author(s) and their intentions" (Ridolfo & DeVoss, 2017, p. 66). Although "institutional support for diversity is conveyed in a number of ways, including organizational rhetoric like mission and diversity statements" (Rankin & Reason, 2005, p. 46), it must be supported by demonstrative activities. Creating a more positive racial climate would be aided by changing practices to establish equity in areas where equity either doesn't exist or is floundering (Mwangi et al., 2018). This includes adjusting policies that support Clery compliance and through policies and practices that are supported by antiracism.

Rankin and Reason (2005) noted that survey respondents favored educating perpetrators of [racial] harassment on their mistakes. What if the perpetrator is the institution? Can the same educational processes take place via the pedagogical challenges noted by Ridolfo and DeVoss (2009)? Fischer (2009) noted that students "do not need to believe in the veracity of these stereotypes in order to be affected by them. In fact, they need only to be aware of the stereotype and for that stereotype to be pertinent to a domain which they care about" (pp. 20-21). Even if they don't believe the stereotype, an audience's recomposition of an institutional text can still be impactful.

Bradshaw (2018) argued that both slow and viral circulations in strategizing text require attention to ethics, noting that "an ethical approach to speed and reach helps us understand these elements as composed of cultural and attitudinal elements that are not easily submitted to metrics" (p. 496). Cultural and attitudinal elements are not easily measured; however, they are detected when voices speak out. Bradshaw's (2018) call for an ethic using slow circulation challenges the ethic of expediency. The aim of slow circulation is "to transform long-standing institutions and material conditions but to do so through a theory of persuasion that foregrounds community, persistence, and continuance over the strength of individualized arguments or momentary persuasion" (Bradshaw, 2018, pp. 496–497).

Slow circulation focuses on *why* some messages linger, rhetorically speaking. In the case of crime notifications, slow circulation questions if the use of race in crime notifications causes racial stereotypes to linger. Therefore, timely warnings should not sacrifice an ethic of slow circulation for expediency. Institutions can reduce the threat of stereotyping which impacts communities of color "through their hyperawareness of their race/ethnicity when placed in a position in which their performance could be judged as confirming or disconfirming a negative stereotype" (Fischer, 2009, p. 20). Clery's "timely" standard should include minimizing harm to community members.

A Way Forward: Campus Conversations

In the spring of 2021, I was invited to a conversation about race descriptions centered on the question of better addressing race descriptions, the intent of which was moving forward with two goals: meeting Clery compliance and maintaining social justice. It was generally agreed upon that suspect descriptions should be included when possible. Pelfrey, Jr., Keener and Perkins (2018) stated what the concern was for us—the mixed value in using race descriptors because "inclusion of perpetrator/suspect descriptions in the crime alert is intended to maximize public safety. Race descriptors may have negative consequences through the repetition of minority suspect information" (p. 245). We agreed that specific, individualized descriptions must be included when race was used in order to push back against the harm done by vague descriptions.

There is no magic formula. Some universities require a minimum number of descriptors before they include race. Other universities refrain from using race at all. Based on our conversations, perhaps the way to query this is not whether or not race should be used, but if the description is *sufficiently individualized that it reasonably describes a person rather than a population*. If the answer is no, then race should probably not be used as an iden-

tifying factor—it contributes no value. This is more subjective than other metrics, however it can meet compliance and allow text-creators to engage in thoughtful rhetoric.

While institutional authority informs text creation, this conversation queries moral authority. Bjola (2018) contended that normative and strategic moral authority serve as power resources to challenge negative appropriations. Moral authority as a strategy addresses questions of harm and if the harmed party has standing to engage in counter-intervention (Bjola, 2018). Communities of color have the moral authority to challenge stereotypes. Text creators have the moral authority to aid those communities. They have institutional power to make textual decisions and improve rhetorical and practical results. My hope is that these conversations help surface more social justice-driven ideas in institutional messaging. Ciszek's (2016) postmodern perspective of public relations may be helpful. In this perspective, the goal may not be "finding agreement or 'reconciliation' between an organization and its publics" (Ciszek, 2016, p. 316), but rather finding that disagreement and tension can be embraced to allow changes in practices based on dissensus.

One take-away for universities is a practical one. Universities should regularly evaluate their crime notification processes when describing characteristics of populations, especially marginalized populations. Are those descriptions thoughtfully crafted, or are they vague and possibly contributing to stereotyping people of color? To echo Walker (2003), timely warnings should "construct such descriptions out of a more narrowly construed framework" (p. 679) to describe individuals, not populations. Inquiring with text-creators for their perceptions of their texts, how they believe the messages are received, and especially how they understand rhetoric and rhetorical impacts of crime notifications is important. This would provide insight into how those text-creators understand their role and the power of information and context that they have, both literally and figuratively, at their fingertips.

References

Ancis, Julie R., Sedlacek, William E., & Mohr, Jonathan J. (2000). Student perceptions of campus cultural climate by race. *Journal of Counselling & Development, 78*(2), 180–185. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2000.tb02576.x

Bjola, Corneliu. (2018). The ethics of countering digital propaganda. *Ethics & International Affairs, 32*(3), 305–315. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0892679418000436

Bradshaw, Jonathan L. (2018). Slow circulation: The ethics of speed and rhetorical persistence. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 48*(5), 479–498. https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2018.1455987

Cauthen, Randy. (2010). *Black letters: An ethnography of a beginning legal writing course*. Hampton Press.

Chiricos, Ted, McEntire, Ranee, & Gertz, Marc. (2001). Perceived racial and ethnic composition of neighborhoods and perceived risk of crime. *Social Problems, 48*(3), 322–340. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2001.48.3.322

Ciszek, Erica L. (2016). Digital activism: How social media and dissensus inform theory and practice. *Public Relations Review, 42*(2), 314–321. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2016.02.002

ECU Alert. (2020, July 15). Off-Campus Crime Notification [E-mail to the author].

Fischer, Mary J. (2009). A longitudinal examination of the role of stereotype threat and racial climate on college outcomes for minorities at elite institutions. *Social Psychology of Education*, *13*(1), 19–40. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-009-9105-3

Hanson, Hayley, & Irwin, Ben. (2019). Keep up with legal requirements involving Clery Act campus alerts. *Campus Legal Advisor, 20*(2), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1002/cala.40101

Hasinoff, Amy A., & Krueger, Patrick M. (2020). Warning: Notifications about crime on campus may have unwanted effects. *International Journal of Communication, 14*(1), 587–607.

Katz, Steven B. (1992). The ethic of expediency: Classical rhetoric, technology, and the Holocaust. *College English, 54*(3), 255–275. https://doi.org/10.2307/378062

Latham-Staton, Sarah, Henley, Tracy, Reysen, Stephen, & Green, Raymond J. (2020). The Clery Act and student behavior: An empirical consideration. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 58*(4), 430–436. https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2020.1740718

Lee, Jeffrey Mark, & Good, Donald W. (2017). The Clery Act: Student awareness and perceptions of effectiveness at a public university and a private college in East Tennessee. *Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education, 12*(2), 1–8.

Long, Seth, & Fitch, Ken. (2019). Digital surveillance of gang communication: Graffiti's rhetorical velocity between street gangs and urban law enforcement. In James Ridolfo & William Hart-Davidson (Eds.), *Rhet Ops: Rhetoric and Information Warfare* (pp. 170–180). University of Pittsburgh Press.

McIlwain, Charlton D. (2020.) *Black software: The internet and radical justice, from the Afronet to Black Lives Matter*. Oxford University Press.

Mwangi, Chrystal A. George, Thelamour, Barbara, Ezeofor, Ijeoma, & Carpenter, Ashley. (2018). "Black elephant in the room": Black students contextualizing campus racial climate within US racial climate. *Journal of College Student Development, 59*(4), 456–474. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2018.0042

Pelfrey, Jr., William V., Keener, Steven, & Perkins, Michael. (2018). Examining the role of demographics in campus crime alerts: Implications and recommendations. *Race and Justice, 8*(3), 244–269. https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368716675475

Rankin, Susan R., & Reason, Robert Dean. (2005). Differing perceptions: How students of color and white students perceive campus climate for underrepresented groups. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(1), 43–61. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2005.0008

Reid, Landon D., & Radhakrishnan, Phanikiran. (2003). Race matters: The relation between race and general campus climate. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 9*(3), 263–275. https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.9.3.263

Ridolfo, Jim, & DeVoss, Dànielle Nicole (2009). Composing for recomposition: Rhetorical velocity and delivery. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy, 13*(2), https://kairos.technorhetoric.net/13.2/topoi/ridolfo_devoss/velocity.html

Ridolfo, Jim, & DeVoss, Dànielle Nicole. (2017). Remixing and reconsidering rhetorical velocity. *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric, 7*(2/3), 59–67.

Solorzano, Daniel, Ceja, Miguel, & Yosso, Tara. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *69*(1–2), 60–73.

Sparkes-Vian, Cassian. (2018). Digital propaganda: The tyranny of ignorance. *Critical Sociology, 45*(3), 393–409. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920517754241

Sweeney, Kristen. (n.d.). *The Clery act*. Clery Center. Retrieved December 9, 2022, from https://www.clerycenter.org/the-clery-act

Walker, Bela August. (2003). The color of crime: The case against race-based suspect descriptions. *Columbia Law Review, 103*(3), 662–688. https://doi.org/10.2307/1123720

A Series of Design(ed) Tensions: Reclaiming Space for Faculty Agency in Curriculum Development

Ashlyn C. Walden and Meaghan C. Rand, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

This article will discuss tensions involving a large-scale university-supported curriculum design project for online course development that ran counter to what we know are common practices in online writing instruction. In discussing how stakeholders involved were at odds with the goal of the project, we hope to generate discussion about how best to advocate for truly collaborative professional development and curriculum design opportunities in OWI and our institutions at large. Special consideration will be given to the tensions that can sometimes arise between the institution's need for efficiency and the well-researched practices of online writing/literacy instruction.

Introduction: The Invisible Labor We Carry

As writing instructors, we understand that designing a tech-mediated course that meets the needs of students while also accomplishing explicit curricular goals necessitates a certain amount of invisible labor. Whether tasked with teaching from a standard template or given carte blanche to develop our curriculum and deliverables, we spend countless hours revising, learning platforms, and running scenarios for how the class will work in practice. It's a necessary part of the job. Scholars have long acknowledged that such invisible labor is a critical, time-consuming necessity in writing instruction which should prepare students for the various composing situations they may encounter, particularly within digital infrastructures (Ball & Kalmbach, 2010; McKee & DeVoss, 2013; Rice, 2007; Selfe, 2005). Further complicating such invisible labor are the varied experiences, preferences, and needs our students bring with them, meaning that our course design must actively include accessibility options to minimize barriers (Borgman & McArdle, 2019; Coombs, 2010; CCC, 2013; CEUD, 2014; Dirksen, 2012; Foley & Ferri, 2012; GSOLE, 2016; Gos, 2015; Hitt, 2018; Mahaffey & Walden, 2019; Oswal & Melonçon, 2014). As if the quantification of technology skill sets, professional development opportunities, and sheer workload volume weren't enough, labor experts remind us of the institutional pressures of automated educational

 DOI: https://doi.org/10.37514/PCW-B.2023.1862.2.07

models which posit a cost-effective, labor efficient method of "grading" writing, and templated course models which essentially allow for "any" teacher to drop in and run the course (Issacs, 2016; Schnell, 2016). These conditions as a backdrop, we wanted to discuss our experience in a curriculum design project as a way to recognize the invisible labor tensions that we felt.

The Past is Tense: Online Course Design in the Writing, Rhetoric, & Digital Studies Department

To situate our story, we wish to give a brief history of our department. Shortly after becoming an independent writing program, we moved from a two-course first-year writing sequence to a one-course model. Most of our students would take a newly-designed hybrid 4-credit first-year writing course (three hours a week face-to-face, and one online asynchronous writing studio hour). This move in 2015 was the start of our shift to hybrid and online writing courses in our program, which continued to gain traction even prior to the pandemic when we achieved departmental status in Fall 2019.

Concurrently, the university also adopted a stance that more faculty should be trained in online teaching and strongly promoted the Quality Matters curriculum, though other homegrown departmental training programs were permissible. Given our need to develop online studio work and train faculty, two of our faculty experts in Online Writing Instruction (OWI) designed and delivered an in-house OWI course integral to raising issues about student engagement, accessibility, and collaboration. Our work as a department cultivated a strong identity in terms of what effective online instruction can look like, as many of our faculty members became active members and leaders of professional organizations and working groups such as GSOLE and the OWI Standing Groups.

So begins our tale of a series of unfortunate contradictions in online course redesign—a place where issues of faculty agency, invisible labor, institutional pressures, and course accessibility meet. Our goal is to generate meaningful discussions that underscore "[...] such labor is often a moving target that is never truly done and requires continual learning" (Rodrigo & Romberger, 2017, p. 68). Though Rochelle Rodrigo and Julia Romberger's (2017) work made visible the labor of program technologists often called upon to complete such responsibilities beyond their scholarly and teaching roles, we found ourselves in a similar predicament when offered an opportunity through our institution's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Initially, it seemed this endeavor would grant us a certain amount of cultural capital in our annual reviews, allowing us to speak directly to curricular development

as a scholarly process of making pedagogically-informed technology and digital design choices; this work was more than an act of service. On a purely practical level, as contingent faculty, we were motivated by what appeared to be compensation for service work that so often isn't valued in the same way as other professional responsibilities (Rodrigo & Romberger, 2017). The truth is our story is not novel. Tensions between subject matter experts and institutional services like CTLs are long-established and fraught with disagreements which make the exploration of individual anecdotes and possible solutions—like ours— that much more important. In our case, three distinct tensions emerged: conflicting expectations of workflow, completing end goals, and differing tech options for faculty and instructional designers (IDs) (Figure 1). Despite the somewhat grim landscape we have painted, we want to be clear that we would like to highlight that the retelling of our collaborative work gave us the opportunity to consider spaces for activism, particularly for faculty agency in participatory course design.

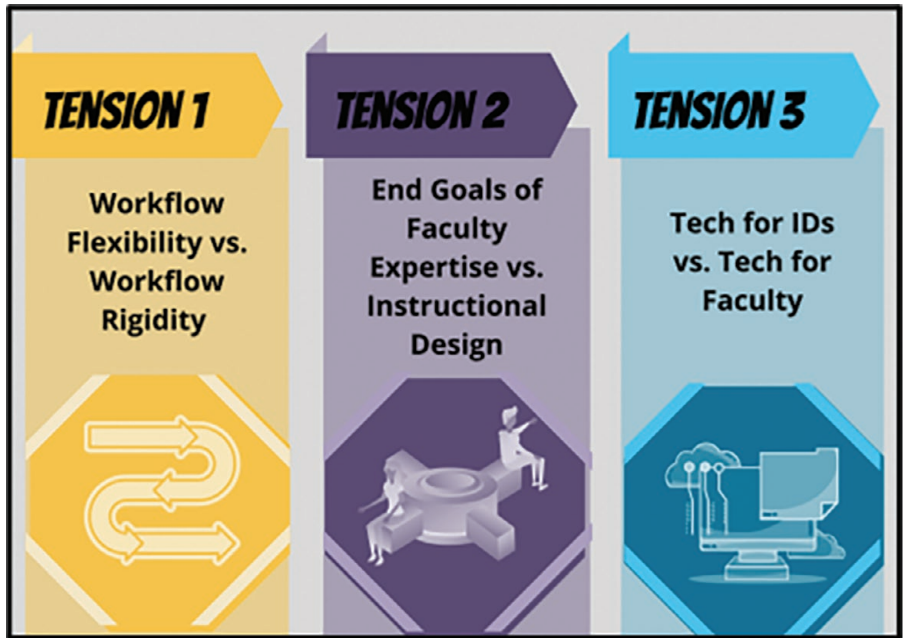

Figure 1: Three distinct tensions we felt: Workflow flexibility, end goals, & availability of tech

Tension 1: The Bad Beginning of Workflow

Though many of us in the department felt well-positioned to teach online courses when March 2020 shifted us into unknown territory, the truth is

most of our implementation during this shift was triaged. Wanting to improve upon our missteps, April 2020 presented us with an opportunity: we could secure funding through our university's Center for Teaching and Learning's university-level initiative to create scalable online course offerings. This opportunity would allow us to revise an existing course and collaborate with an ID, as well as be paid for our labor, which research from education technology (Chen & Carliner, 2021; Richardson et al., 2019) indicated helps build partnerships between faculty subject matter experts and university instructional designers. The enticement of compensation for faculty course designers coupled with the promise of support from an ID couldn't be ignored, though expectations were still nebulous when we agreed to participate. We submitted WRDS 2101: Advanced Writing, Research, and Critical Analysis for redesign, a broad introductory course initially designed to be a writing-intensive course for students wanting more writing support or for transfer students who did not otherwise take our first-year writing course, in addition to potentially drawing students into the minor or major. From Spring 2020 until January 2021, we waited for more information about the requirements of our participation in this program, and when we did receive our contracts in Spring 2021, we were quite surprised at what we saw. Noticeably absent was information on time commitment, expectations of curricular alignment, and design. Information was more focused on how the institution would own the resources we would create and our department would need to teach the course for at least a two-year time commitment, because as Rochelle Rodrigo and Christina D. Ramírez (2017) noted, "In addition to using 'certified' master courses for quality and consistency, institutions that use teams to develop online courses will not want the institutionally compensated labor of all the team members wasted by not reusing the course" (p. 317). Issues of intellectual property and ownership of developed course materials aside, we both still felt encouraged that the work we would complete Insert Figure would be directed by our needs as disciplinary experts in curricular design, accessibility, OWI, and digital composing. Wrong again.

Expertise, as it were, didn't ultimately matter. We mistakenly assumed that the support offered by the CTL would mirror a problem-posing approach rather than a banking model of curriculum development (Freire, 2000). Revealed in small stages, our work required us to take a CTL-designed Canvas onboarding course and two Quality Matters courses prior to actually building our course with an instructional designer (ID) each week over the summer. This process was difficult for several reasons, but one of the biggest tensions was that our design process was not linear. We found ourselves hurrying up to slow down, working with limited or contradictory information, and constrained by institutional gatekeeping requirements in order to be compensated.

The resulting workflow was three versions of the same course to appease different stakeholders:

- One version of the course shell followed the CTL's expectations. These parameters were determined mostly by the ID working within a set of constraints informed by QM. This was also the only iteration where the use of DesignTools was permitted, meaning the other versions of the course were built primarily using HTML code to address design constraints and accessibility issues.
- The second shell was designed so it could be easily understood by another faculty member in our department. In short, there was some flexibility in terms of assignment design and execution so other faculty members could adjust the work to fit their needs. When we realized that the required timeline did not reflect ours, we began to see this project as a way to provide professional development for other faculty in our department who primarily teach FYW and who might want to teach this course in the future. As a new department, we have to initiate ways of providing opportunities to develop curricula for our new major, and our work was one means of doing so.
- Finally, version three was a development course that would be copied over and taught in two different iterations of the Fall 2021 course taught by Ashlyn Walden. These assignments/resources/activities had additional elements such as due dates, models, examples, and rubrics which would be easy for the students to follow when engaging with the course synchronously or asynchronously.

Though technically required to create our original assignment in the QM Canvas development site, we instead chose to build our course assignments in the version of the course that Ashlyn would teach, then work backward to fulfill the expectations of our contract. As subject area experts on accessibility and writing studies curricular design, it was simply not possible for us to follow through with this lock-step program design; this was a space for activism, a place where we could assert our agency in participatory course design.

Tension 2: The Austere Academy of Competing Goals

One of the most confounding tensions to us was the difference in the end goal of this program. From an institutional point of view, once these courses were launched, the belief was that any teacher could pick up the course shell and teach it, devoid of context or pedagogical grounding. While there are proponents of an online templated course shell model, as Rodrigo and Ramírez (2017) discussed in the professional development and training of

new instructors in technical and professional communication, this "one size fits all" or "plug and play" model does not reflect the disciplinary practices of online writing instruction (Gibson & Martinez, 2013; Gos, 2015; Mahaffey & Walden, 2019; Oswal & Melonçon, 2017; Rice, 2015). Teaching writing online differs from teaching other disciplines; not every online instruction practice works for every discipline. And while the discipline of writing studies recognizes the highly collaborative and time-consuming nature of writing, issues of intellectual property, privacy/surveillance, labor efficiency, and disciplinary expertise were highly disconcerting.

In short, according to our contract, the university "owned" the course designed with our intellectual property because we used university resources (Canvas, DesignTools, the CTL, and the use of a university instructional designer) to create it, and we were not notified of our right until we felt we were too involved to back out of the project. Lisa Melonçon (2017) discussed the problematic nature of intellectual property rights in online course development, particularly for contingent faculty, who face the tension of compensation for their work, noting, "They may not be obvious professional development issues, but conditions of labor and ownership of materials are, indeed, concerns of professional development because, with adequate knowledge about their rights, contingent faculty can make more informed decisions about where they work, what work they do for what pay, and what conceptual and practical coursework they prefer not to give away" (p. 260). This idea of ownership, like so many other aspects of our work together, was not immediately transparent when we began this work; it wasn't until we had already completed onboarding training, two QM courses, and began our own course mapping that we had any sense of the proprietary issues ahead. And given the fact that we had already spent so much time developing our course through required training, we were much less apt to abandon our work at that stage. We were doing this work because it would make the course design better and more accessible to students. "It'll work. We will find our way" became our mantra.

Tension 3: The Slippery Slope of the Tech Available

Yet, as we attempted to "find our way," it became abundantly clear that university messaging versus faculty expertise were at cross-purposes. From an institutional perspective, templated Canvas models across disciplines were preferred as concerns had been raised about students' inability to navigate the widely diverse usage across courses. While well-intentioned in terms of access, such moves give the LMS a lot of power in terms of both course design (because Canvas, like any platform, has preferred pathways of use) and

surveillance (data analytics in terms of use, missing assignments, time spent on individual assignments or pages). For example, within the Canvas LMS, one can view the level of a student's participation in terms of a star rating system, which highlights page views, number of assignments completed, late, or missing, and total hours spent on the course site. In theory, a student may be flagged as low to medium participation because of data points such as page views or total time on the site, but the grade and quality of the work may be entirely different. Such analytics may be devoid of context in terms of access issues such as stable broadband internet access, a relatively up-to-date computer, or any number of other accessibility issues that a given student may be experiencing. Even more troubling is the fact that it isn't immediately clear how the data analytics may be used outside of an institutional context particularly when LMS accounts may also be linked to email, social media, or other third-party integration tools (Lynch, 2017; Marachi & Quill, 2020; Rubel & Jones, 2016).

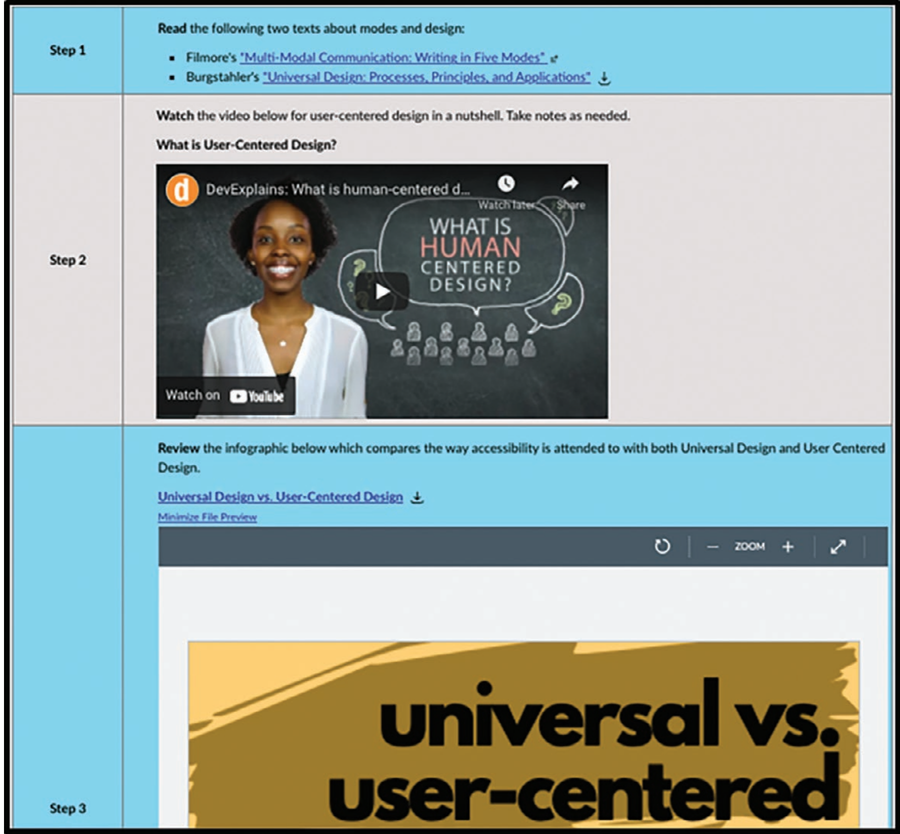

Figure 2: Studio: Universal vs. user-centered design (teacher created)

While there are certainly serious issues with student and instructor privacy in terms of data analytics, it is also true that many third-party tools also have the potential to make our course design labor much more efficient, something that we were in desperate need of while working on this project.

DesignTools, a plug-in available to IDs on our campus, significantly cuts down the labor of making the course accessible (e.g., negates the need for HTML coding snippets, background coding, etc.). As of this writing, this is only available to instructors within the individual course that is partner-built with an ID at our institution.

In Figure 2, Universal Design advocates for developing assignment instructions and resources that account for a potential tolerance for error, have easily perceptible information, and are simple and intuitive to use (CEUD, 2014). Averting potential errors is accounted for by the alternating row colors and embedded videos or PDF files; students can watch or view the resources and choose to enlarge the resources to full screen without ever leaving Canvas. The choice of the table to break up steps in a process and being able to use the resources within the Canvas site without navigating away are key features of a simple and intuitive design. Adding alt text to tables, which is a must in terms of assistive technology like screen readers, provides for equitable use. (Please Note: Alt text cannot be seen in this screenshot of the studio, but it does exist within the course itself.) Highlighting the important information was completed by center-aligning text, using bolded text for key instructional details, and underlining for active hyperlinks only.

The CTL-reviewed version of the studio, built in consultation with the ID, included some important UD features while ignoring others. A table, bolded content, underlined active hyperlinks, and one video embedded resource accounts for potential user error, making the studio simple and intuitive to navigate through and emphasizing imperative information. Yet, the lack of alternating colors, centered step headings, lack of alt text with the table labeling, and missing embedded document resources may cause accessibility issues for some readers, while still abiding by the Quality Matters rubric. This theme of Quality Matters was persistent throughout the prerequisite training courses and during the course development phase. At every step of the process, we were required to take QM courses, produce a course design that was QM certifiable, and acquiesce design control to the ID, which was both challenging and frustrating.

This process ran counter to our preferred working style, all the while receiving reassurances that faculty expertise and agency were central to the course design mission. After completing the course, we listened to a sales pitch about why we should have our courses QM certified to bolster the number of certified courses the university offers.

This table contains steps and instructions for this activity	
Step	**Instructions**
Step 1	**Read** the following two texts about modes and design: ▪ Filmore's "Multi-Modal Communication: Writing in Five Modes" ▪ Burgstahler's "Universal Design: Processes, Principles, and Applications"
Step 2	**Watch** the video below for user-centered design in a nutshell. Take notes as needed. **What is User-Centered Design?** DevExplains: What is human-centered d... Watch later Share WHAT IS HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN? Watch on YouTube
Step 3	**Review** the infographic below which compares the way accessibility is attended to with both Universal Design and User Centered Design.

Step 4	**Process what you've learned.** Consider responding to the questions below in a reflection. **If you do write a reflection, be sure to save it somewhere as a writing sample for your portfolio at the end of the semester.**
	▪ What points of overlap and difference do you see in the two readings?
	  ▪ Explain **one example** of how they are similar.
	  ▪ Explain **one example** of how they are different.
	▪ How do you see the **5 Modes** informing/working with the concepts of **Universal Design?**
	▪ What concepts or applications do you see yourself using for your portfolio from the **5 Modes? User-Centered Design? Universal Design?** Why are these significant choices for you?

Figure 3: Studio: Universal vs. user-centered design (ID created)

While QM does have some merits in terms of visibility and standardization, it does not seem a logical fit for online writing course development, particularly with respect to accessibility. As it stands now, QM does have one standard devoted to accessibility and usability, but the course objectives and goals of the training still privilege understanding QM foundational concepts, linear curricular development, understanding the challenges of online courses for disabled users, and describing an institution's accessibility and disability policies (Quality Matters, 2022). Yet, as much research in accessibility, technical/professional communication, and online writing/literacy instruction point out: accessibility in terms of course development should be at the forefront of our design and curricular goals (Borgman & Dockter, 2018; Cargile Cook & Grant-Davie, 2005; Gibson & Martinez, 2013; Hitt, 2018; Gos, 2015;

McLeod, 2007; Mahaffey & Walden, 2019; Oswal & Melonçon, 2017). This is a place for disciplinary agency, and more importantly, as we seek to become a more equitable institution, we must find ways of better developing online courses to support student success beyond the traditional checklist measures or templated course design.

The Future is Perfect: Activism Within, and Sometimes in Spite of, Constraints

The design of this program afforded us an opportunity to work together, and in the end, we created something stronger than what one of us could do alone. This fact was a bright spot in an otherwise frustrating process. We revised the current course in terms of content but also focused on designing to center accessibility, including creating multiple access points to course material, instructor video explanations of assignment sheets, homework, etc., and did so working within Canvas's limitations. We immediately recognized that instructional design divorced from content negatively impacts the user experience. This is a problem that needs more discussion and problem-solving.

Our experience has been that activism in higher education stems from recognizing that the institution's motives often differ from faculty's motives and through finding spaces where faculty can demonstrate their expertise given the constraints of workload, divergent value systems, and job security. Activism is seeing how tensions can be addressed and ideally resolved in ways that are not exploitative to the labor involved in creating great work. Activism in faculty labor issues, particularly for contingent faculty, promotes visibility and acknowledgment of the many hours it takes to create a thoughtful design providing a meaningful experience for students. We appreciate that there was funding allocated to this curriculum development program, and to be paid for the labor we were already planning to do was a motivating factor in our participation. More professional and curriculum development programs such as the one we describe here have potential if faculty disciplinary expertise and disciplinary habits of mind are centered in the conversation as opposed to assuming each discipline interacts with online course design in the same way or in a linear way. Had we been part of the early conversations about what this program could do, then we would have not worked under the assumption that we did not have instructional design experience. We could have significantly reduced labor and improved communication among all parties.

For activist curriculum development to occur, we need:

1. To center the expertise of writing instructors,

2. For faculty development specialists to welcome more flexibility in curriculum design, and
3. Administration to advocate for time, space, and fair compensation for design work for faculty.

Recommendations

If instructional support and subject-matter experts are afforded opportunities to co-construct effective instructional design, the potential for activism is tangible. Research in instructional design (Chen & Carliner, 2021; Richardson et al., 2019; Xie et al., 2021) highlights the importance of collaboration between instructional designers and subject matter experts, even in the face of constraints, so long as all parties have clear communication and expectations. Effective collaboration has tangible impacts for student learning when IDs and subject matter experts can focus on “humanizing pedagogy” (Xie et al., 2021), especially as we see continued impacts of the pandemic on student learning. Yuan Chen and Saul Carliner (2021), in their analysis of research on the instructional designer-subject matter expert dynamic, identified five factors that negatively impact this dynamic: “lack of clarity on the role of the instructional designer, ineffective communication, heavy workload, concern for academic autonomy, and ambiguity of status” (p. 486). All these factors were at play in our experience to some degree and easily could have been rectified with more understanding and open communication on both sides.

There are many stakeholders in large-scale redesign projects who need to recognize the material conditions of the labor of curriculum redesign. To avoid the repetition of the pandemic-era triage method of online course design, upper-level administration such as provosts and college deans can think more strategically about budget and resource allocation for curriculum development projects. Sometimes decisions made for the sake of top-down efficiency aren’t always the most effective. Perhaps redirecting funds to the faculty first and allowing them to create online courses—with collaboration and support from centers for teaching and learning and other professional organizations outside of their institution—that reflect best practices in their discipline would have more investment and engagement from the expert faculty who do this work often and without recognition or financial support.

Writing instructors who participate in university-sponsored online course design need to advocate for discussions where there is space for research-based best practices in online writing instruction and to show where OWI and QM principles diverge. QM is not a cure-all. Administrators and faculty development specialists in centers for teaching and learning should involve subject-area experts in the design of these development programs, seeing where faculty

are at and what support they need instead of mandating blanket requirements that decrease the efficiency of the task. IDs should seek input from the instructors who are teaching this material every day *before* decisions are made and not after. Providing flexibility in instructional design support and support tailored to the needs of the subject-area experts, such as expertise in design for accessibility in online courses, would be helpful (Chen & Carliner, 2021; Xie et al., 2021). WPAs and department chairs need to think about the ways in which all parties can benefit from these types of programs and support faculty, in particular contingent faculty, in pursuing opportunities where they are both paid for their labor and valued for their expertise. Ultimately, we believe that our experience reveals an area where activism is sorely needed.

References

Addressing Accessibility & Usability: Standard 8 (2022). Quality Matters. https://www.qualitymatters.org/professional-development/workshops/higher-ed-standard-8

Ball, Cheryl E., and Kalmbach, James, Eds. (2010). *RAW: (Reading and writing) new media*. Hampton Press.

Borgman, Jessie, & Dockter, Jason. (2018). Considerations of access and design in the online writing classroom. *Computers and Composition, 49*, 94–105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2018.05.001

Borgman, Jessie, & McArdle, Casey. (2019). *Personal, accessible, responsive, strategic: Resources and strategies for online writing instructors*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/PRA-B.2019.0322

Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD). (2014). How to make accessible documents. http://universaldesign.ie/Products-Services/Customer-Communications-Toolkit-for-the-Public-Service-A-Universal-Design-Approach/Digital-and-Web-Based-Communication-Systems-and-Services/How-to-make-accessible-documents/

Chen, Yuan, & Carliner, Saul (2021). A special SME: An integrative literature review of the relationship between instructional designers and faculty in the design of online courses for higher education. *Performance Improvement Quarterly, 33*, 471-495. https://doi.org/10.1002/piq.21339

Conference on College Composition and Communication. (2013). A position statement of principles and example effective practices for online writing instruction (OWI). http://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/owiprinciples

Conference on College Composition and Communication. (2011). A policy on disability in CCCC. http://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/disabilitypolicy

Coombs, Norman. (2010). *Making online teaching accessible: Inclusive course design for students with disabilities*. John Wiley & Sons.

Dirksen, Julie. (2012). *Design for how people learn* (2nd ed). New Riders.

Foley, Alan, & Ferri, Beth A. (2012). Technology for people, not disabilities: ensuring access and inclusion. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 12*(4), 192–200. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2011.01230.x

Freire, Paulo. 1921-1997. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
Global Society of Online Literacy Educators (GSOLE). (2016). Mission statement. https://www.gsole.org/about
Gibson, Keith, & Martinez, Diane. (2013). From divide to continuum: Rethinking access in online education. In K. Cargile Cook & K. Grant-Davie (Eds.), *Online education 2.0: Global questions, evolving, adapting, and reinventing online technical communication* (1st ed., pp. 197–211). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315231471.
Gos, Michael W. (2015). Nontraditional student access to OWI. In Beth L. Hewett & Kevin E. DePew (Eds.), *Foundational practices of online writing instruction* (pp. 315–352). The WAC Clearinghouse; Parlor Press. https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2015.0650.2.10
Hewett, Beth L., & DePew, Kevin E. (Eds). (2015). *Foundational practices in online writing instruction*. The WAC Clearinghouse; Parlor Press. https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2015.0650
Hitt, Allison. (2018). Foregrounding accessibility through (inclusive) universal design in professional communication curricula. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly, 81*(1) 52–65. http://doi.org/10.1177/2329490617739884
Isaacs, Emily J. (2016). First-year composition course redesigns: Pedagogical innovation or solution to the 'cost disease'? In Nancy Welch & Tony Scott (Eds.), *Composition in the age of austerity* (pp. 51–64). Utah State University Press. https://doi.org/10.7330/9781607324454.c003
Lynch, Collin F. (2017). Who prophets from big data in education? New insights and new challenges. *Theory and Research in Education, 15*(3), 249–271. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878517738448
Mahaffey, Cat, & Walden, Ashlyn C. (2019). #Teachingbydesign: Complicating accessibility in the tech-mediated classroom. In K. Becnel (Ed.), *Emerging technologies in virtual learning environments* (pp. 38–66). IGI Global. http://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-7987-8.ch003
Marachi, Roxana, & Quill, Lawrence. (2020). The case of Canvas: Longitudinal datafication through learning management systems. *Teaching in Higher Education, 25*(4), 418–434. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1739641
McKee, Heidi A., & DeVoss, Dànielle Nicole., Eds. (2013). *Digital writing assessment and evaluation*. Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press.
McLeod, Susan H. (2007). *Writing program administration*. Parlor Press; The WAC Clearinghouse. https://wac.colostate.edu/books/referenceguides/mcleod-wpa/
Melonçon, Lisa. (2017). Contingent faculty, online writing instruction, and professional development in technical and professional communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 26*(3), 256–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2017.1339489
Oswal, Sushil K., & Melonçon, Lisa. (2014). Paying attention to accessibility when designing online courses in technical and professional communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 28*(3), 271–300. https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651914524780

Oswal, Sushil K., & Melonçon, Lisa. (2017). Saying no to the checklist: Shifting from an ideology of normalcy to an ideology of inclusion in online writing instruction. *Writing Program Administration, 40*(3), 17.

Rice, Jeff. (2007). *The rhetoric of cool: Composition studies and new media*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Rice, Rich. (2015). Faculty professionalization for OWI. In Beth L. Hewett & Kevin E. DePew (Eds.), *Foundational practices of online writing instruction* (pp. 389–410). The WAC Clearinghouse; Parlor Press. https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2015.0650.2.12

Richardson, Jennifer C., Ashby, Iryna, Alshammari, Ali Nazil, Cheng, Zui, Johnson, Brian S., Krase, Terri S., Lee, Daeyeoul, Randolph, Anthony E., & Wang, Huan-huan. (2019). Faculty and instructional designers on building successful collaborative relationships. *Education Technology & Research Development, 67*, 855–880. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-018-9636-4

Rodrigo, Rochelle, & Ramírez, Cristina D. (2017). Balancing institutional demands with effective practice: A lesson in curricular and professional development. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 26*(3), 314–328. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2017.1339529

Rodrigo, Rochelle, & Romberger, Julia. (2017). Managing digital technologies in writing programs: Writing program technologists & invisible service. *Computers and Composition, 44*, 67–82. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2017.03.003

Rubel, Alan, & Jones, Kyle M.L. (2016). Student privacy in learning analytics: An information ethics perspective. *The Information Society, 32*(2), 143–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2016.1130502

Schell, Eileen E. (2016). Austerity, contingency, and administrative bloat: Writing programs and universities in an age of feast and famine. In Nancy Welch & Tony Scott (Eds.), *Composition in the age of austerity* (pp. 177–190). Utah State University Press. https://doi.org/10.7330/9781607324454.c012

Selfe, Richard. (2005). *Sustainable computer environments: Cultures of support in English studies and language arts*. Hampton Press

Xie, Jingrong, A, Gulinna, Rice, Mary F., & Griswold, Deborah E. (2021). Instructional designers' shifting thinking about supporting teaching during and post-COVID-19. *Distance Education, 42*(3), 331–351. https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2021.1956305

PROCEEDINGS OF C&W 2022

This book includes selected proceedings from the 2022 Computers and Writing conference, exploring topics in digital rhetorics, multimodal composition, and pedagogies. Contributions engage the 2022 conference theme, Practicing Digital Activisms, using a variety of theoretical, pedagogical, and research-based approaches familiar to scholars of digital rhetorics, multimodal composition, and closely related fields.

Chen Chen (she/her) is Assistant Professor of Technical Communication and Rhetoric at Utah State University. Her research focuses on advocacy and resistant rhetorical practices by marginalized communities as civic and tactical technical communication in transnational contexts.

Lydia Wilkes is Assistant Professor of English and Writing Program Administrator at Auburn University. She studies intersections of rhetoric, violence, and writing in public spaces.

Christopher D. M. Andrews is Associate Professor in the English Department at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. His research explores programmatic issues in writing studies and technical communication, rhetorics of technology, and how people use digital networks to learn and professionalize.

Series Editors
Chen Chen and Lydia Wilkes

The WAC Clearinghouse
Fort Collins, CO 80523
wac.colostate.edu

ISBN 978-1-64215-186-2
ISSN 2643-7376