

Why teach a fish to swim? A design-based research study incorporating social media into  
the professional writing curriculum to shape professional practice and identity

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## **Abstract**

### **Why teach a fish to swim? A design-based research study incorporating social media into the professional writing curriculum to shape professional practice and identity**

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Research has found that professional communicators are not prepared for the challenges that social media presents and face a number of barriers due to a lack of social media knowledge and skills. Correspondingly, higher education has failed to include enough social media and online content to provide learners with the necessary skills for professional practice. Furthermore, the neoliberal objective to shape a flexible workforce has engendered a new form of professionalism that tasks individuals with developing an incorporated branded self. Within the framework of the higher education curriculum, social media can perform two roles for learners: foster workforce competences and provide an authentic community of practice to commodify their brand. The issue for educators is that no comprehensive studies have fully examined the incorporation of a social media component into a professional writing course, identifying the barriers, skills, and processes that facilitate or foster the professionalization of the tools for learners and enable them to use these technologies both appropriately and strategically. This dissertation employed a design-based research methodology to systematically study how to design an effective learning environment for the integration of social media technologies and addressed the following research questions:

- What problems might educators face when integrating social media practices into the curriculum?

- How can social media technologies facilitate professional identity formation to bridge the transition from the everyday practices of learners to professional practices?

The study spanned the time period 2012-2016 and involved the developing, testing, investigating, and refining of a yearlong professional writing course, which included the tools, curriculum, activities, software, and theoretical constructs for the course design (Reeves, 2006, p. 58). The results indicated that students lacked agency on social networks and required guidance when articulating modes of online authenticity. The final iteration of the course design effectively produced a virtual community of practice, as measured through learning analytics, and provided a means to shape professional social media practices and foster professional identity.

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And to all cowgirls in the sand: *Is this not the way it seems?*

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## **Chapter 1: Justification of the Problem**

*Cows are caught by their horns; people are caught by their tongues.*

David Foster Wallace gave a notable commencement speech in which he related the following tale: “There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, ‘Morning, boys. How’s the water?’ And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes ‘What the hell is water?’” This tale relates to my dissertation in the sense that those who are young often believe they own social media because they are contemporaneous to it. And while most users can upload and download online content on social networks, many lack the sophistication to produce high-quality digital content and the appropriate strategies for sharing it. Arguably, one could say youth might be immersed in social media, but are they conscience of its potential to improve their future lives? For this reason, perhaps, teaching a fish to swim could actually make sense, particularly if in so doing, learners not only inform professional social media practices, but also a professional identity, and in this respect, attain what I will call a *mobility* skillset (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. *Pisces natare docem* (Adapted from an illustration by Antonia Novakovich)

In a global survey of over 3,500 executives, McKinsey (2013) found that among the most frequently used tools in corporate communication were social media technologies; for example, companies were using social technologies to interact with 38% of their customers and 50% of all external business partners (p.37). McKinsey also noted, “As in the previous two surveys, 90 percent of executives whose organizations use social technologies report some kind of measurable business benefit from this use with employees, customers, and business partners” (p. 37). Concerning in the survey, many corporate executives reported a number of risks associated with social media use, including the following: leaking confidential information, risk of inappropriate sharing of intellectual property, distracted employees, employees posting content that reflects negatively on the company, and inappropriate discussions using social technologies, and only 6% of the executives reported no concerns regarding the risks.

Social media is defined more specifically than web 2.0 as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Heinlein, 2010, p. 61). Greenhow (2011) noted that the space is inherently designed as social and is used by individuals for a number of purposes, including personal, entertainment, and professional ones and mediated through networks and digital devices (p. 140). Greenhow noted: “Admittedly, the lines among social media and web 2.0 tools, or “web apps,” are blurred. Broadly, social media encompasses (a) social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, (b) media sharing sites, such as YouTube and Flickr, (c) creation and publishing tools, such as wikis and blogs, (d) aggregation and republishing through RSS feeds, and (e) remixing of content and republishing tools” (Greenhow, 2011, p. 140). Recently, Carr and Hayes (2015) provided a definition of



social media that avoids the complications of identifying specific tools, which focuses more on the process that the tools engender: “Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others” (p. 7).

A number of studies have also reported on the growth of social media practices among news organizations (Messner, Linke, and Eford 2012; Phillips, 2012). For example, Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013) observed that news organizations are increasingly searching for ways to use social media to “promote and distribute content, for the live covering of events” and other practices, fueling the need for professional communicators with social media training. Moreover, Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013) observed that a substantial measure of a journalist’s brand is based on the strength and scope of their social media network, which works to build credibility (p. 371).

### **Identifying Professional Practices of Social Media**

Research has indicated that social media’s practice is often misrepresented by professionals (Diga & Kelleher, 2009, DiStaso, McCorkindale, & Wright, 2011; Tench et al., 2013: 56–57). For example, Moreno, Navarro, Tenchb and Zerfass (2015) surveyed more than 2,710 communication professionals on the use of social media and discovered that respondents who were strong users of social media had the “perception that social media tools, stakeholders and gatekeepers were very important for the communication function and for their organizations” (p. 250). However, in actuality, the practitioners in question displayed rather moderate capabilities regarding skills and knowledge of social media in a professional context (Moreno et al, 2015). Their findings corresponded to Zerfass et al.’s 2013 study of the European Communication Management data that

confirmed stronger use of social media correlated with more confidence regarding competences. Moreno et al noted that their findings support the results from numerous other studies that have been conducted in the field: strong users of social media often exaggerate its importance.

Among public relations professionals, research has revealed varying rates of social media practice (Lariscy et al., 2009; Porter et al., 2001; Robson & James, 2011; Wright & Hinson, 2012, 2013). Moreno et al (2015) claimed that at this point and time: “it is beyond dispute that public relations professionals have largely embraced social media” (p. 346). An analysis of professional articles promoting social media revealed that 66% assumed that the value and importance of social media is unquestioned (Moreno et al, 2015). Even though its presence and practice is undisputed, its value and impact has been questioned. Taylor and Kent (2010) asked the following question: “Given all of the claims about the power of social media made by the profession, what types of evidence can quantitatively support these claims?” (p. 440) and found the answer: Very little evidence exists regarding the efficacy of social media. Thus, Taylor and Kent (2010) argued there is a discrepancy in what the field is saying about the potential of social media and evidence to prove the argument. Three years later, Wright and Hinson (2013) reported that measures of social media success were actually being based on the volume of messages and not the outcome or communication impact.

Professional practice, for the most part, has failed to fulfill social media’s relational potential (Kennedy & Sommerfeldt, 2015, p. 34). A number of studies have found that organizations are using social media to disseminate information rather than engage interactively with users (DiStaso, McCorkindale, & Wright, 2012; Li & Bernoff, 2011; Paine, 2011). Researchers have identified that using social media strategically is,

and continues to be, a challenge for practitioners Organizations are also failing to use social media technologies effectively to build and maintain public relations (Kent, 2013; Taylor & Kent, 2010). Moreno et al (2015) discovered that the bulk of social media use was actually “operational” in nature, i.e. the opening of accounts and uploading and delivery of web content, rather than “strategic” in nature, i.e. concerned with branding and trend analysis. In sum, among professionals, social media practice is problematic due to its being misrepresented, misunderstood, and underutilized.

Additionally, Taylor and Kent (2009) found that the bulk of information published, which advocated social media use, contained minimal reflection regarding the negative risks and issues (p. 213). Correspondingly, Kent (2013) also maintained that practitioners have ignored the negative effect of social technologies: the technologies that were meant to connect practitioners to audiences have had the opposite effect, an alienating effect. In addition, they claim, the bulk of social media research in public relations is disguised advertising. They voiced concern that without any evidence that social media is effective or any practice-based evidence as to what works and does not work for professional practice, young professionals, from lack of experience, most likely believe that the articles promoting social media, how to employ it and its importance, contain facts (p. 440). They feared that after reading professional literature promoting social media, students are likely to believe that they are now ready to use social media as public relations experts (p. 440). An even worse case scenario would be for educators to use that advertised material to inform the instructional design of a social media component in the curriculum.

Research has revealed a new concern with respect to the large number of practitioners who are not prepared for the challenges that social media presents and who

face a number of barriers due to a lack of social media knowledge and skills (Lariscy, Avery, Sweetser, & Howes, 2009; Macnamara, 2010). Congruently, Zerfass, Sandhu and Young (2007) reported the main barrier to public relations performance was due to a shortage of “employees with the necessary skills to handle new communication challenges posed by social software”. Macnamara (2010) discovered a number of case studies that revealed “communicators are using social media and social networks in naive and even deceitful ways, causing considerable harm to the reputations of their organizations and their brands” (p. 24). Moreno (2015) observed, “[A] lack of policies and guidelines on social media content, a lack of training and support provided to staff engaged in social media in most organizations, and a lack of social media strategies in organizations were found, which are inconsistent with the knowledge levels and role claims of PR and corporate communications practitioners” (p. 245). While some researchers believe that perhaps practitioners can self-educate (Kitchen & Panopoulos, 2010; Robson & James, 2011), a number of social media experts have described collecting analytics and drawing insights to create a social media strategy as the most important skill. They warn against recklessly (i.e. self educating) entering the arena of social media, due to the disastrous consequences that can unfold when employing an inappropriate strategy (DiStaso & McCorkindale, 2012; Paine, 2011).

Additionally, social media technologies have transformed traditional fields of communication. Depicting the changing landscape of journalism in the digital age, Utesheva, Simpson and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2015) contend that journalism has shifted from a linear presentation of “truth” to “a pastiche of perspectives (i.e., versions of realities, with no ultimate ‘truth’)”; this transformation has led to changes in the identities of readers as prosumers contributing to the formation of news (p. 11). They claim that

the evolution of actors and identities should be understood through a relational perspective, in the sense that “nothing can be removed from the broader network of relations” (p. 13). Since nothing and no one exists in isolation, they argue that the digital technologies that have disrupted journalism will inevitably instigate major disruptions to individual and organizational communication practices globally (p. 13). Thus, research into the professional practice and training of social media benefits not only educators and learners, but also practitioners in the field.

### **Academia’s Failure to Effectively Incorporate Social Media Technologies**

Considering the number of challenges that educators face when attempting to unravel the unfolding character and complexity of social media practice, the benefits and risks of its practice, it is not surprising that many educators are resisting its incorporation. Since the 1990’s researchers have been concerned about the failure of professional communication courses to integrate communication technologies in the curriculum; Wardrope and Bayeless (1999) reported that professional writing curricula were falling behind; in particular, they observed, “Writing is an important component of the business communication course, but effectively utilizing technology for communication may be even more critical to business success for students” (p. 39-40).

More than twenty-five years later, the curriculum continues to resist technology in favour of traditional modes of communication. Moshiri and Cardon (2014) conducted a nationwide study of 166 business communication courses to determine present trends on how business communication is being taught in higher education and one somewhat surprising finding was the limited number of courses that offered significant coverage of social media (p. 32). Moshiri and Cardon (2014) reported, “Memos and letters continue to be the forms of written assignments more common than online discussion, blogs,

wikis, and other social tools” (p. 32). Moshiri and Cardon voiced concern that instruction was not including enough social media and online content to provide learners with the necessary skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce (p. 32). They noted that a number of articles in the Associated Business Communication journals had focused on the types of social media projects that could be incorporated into the curriculum rather than the issues that might occur when doing so (Cardon & Okoro, 2010; Crews & Stitt-Gohdes, 2012; Dyrud, 2011, 2012; Knight, 2012; Li, 2012; McEachern, 2011; Melton & Hicks, 2011; Meredith, 2012). For example, Moshiri and Cardon noted, there are a number of issues to consider: what are the criteria to determine the compatibility and relevance of tools, what are the barriers to performance, and what strategies can business communication instructors utilize to gain competence in social media and an understanding of how to choose appropriate pedagogies for introducing it (p. 323).

Wenger and Owens (2012) reported that broadcasters and journals are now hiring web writers whose main job responsibility includes composing content for the web on multi media social platforms; competences listed for this position include web/multi-media skills, posting to social platforms, previous experience, strong writing, and nonlinear editing. The need for employees with strong web skills, including social media technologies, according to Brian Bacco, vice president for Hearst Television, trumped experience; thus, graduates with writing for the web skills who are able to perform on numerous social platforms are more desirable than applicants who have work history (Wenger & Owens, 2012, p. 21). Wegner and Owens interviewed recruiters and noted that social media skills and blogging is now included on all of their job descriptions (p. 15). Correspondingly, Wenger and Owens (2012) reported, “For educators, there is no doubt that instruction in the area of social media and mobile aps will need to

increase”. They recommended that academic research into the usage and best practices for social media would serve both the profession and the academy (p. 21). Thus, this study aims to incorporate a research-based approach to the design of a social media component for a generic professional writing course, one which considers what social media content should be included, the barriers to performance, and the appropriate pedagogies to incorporate the tools.

### **Understanding the Social Media Practices of Undergraduates**

A number of studies have reported that the integration of social media into the curriculum is problematic for a number of personal reasons (Burhanna et al, 2009; Carr & Hayes, 2013; Friesen & Lowe, 2012; Vance, 2012). One concern regarding the use of social media according to Burhanna, Seeholzer and Salem (2009) is that not only are learners clear about their beliefs regarding the separation of education and social spaces, they also have concerns regarding privacy issues (p. 531). Students use Web 2.0 tools primarily for entertainment and perceive the primary function of Facebook as being relational and incompatible with academic work (Junco, 2012; Madge et al., 2009). Furthermore, Jones et al. (2010) discovered that, while a majority of today’s students make common use of downloading and uploading materials, very few actually contribute to blogs or wikis or interact in virtual worlds” (p. 731). Additionally, a number of researchers have concluded that in spite of being users of technology, students rarely participate in sophisticated uses of web 2.0 (Burhanna et al, 2009; Corrin, Lockyer & Bennett, 2010; and Jones et al, 2010). While most users can post content to Facebook, tweet messages on Twitter, and contribute to a blog or an online forum, producing high-quality content presents a challenge to the majority of users and requires the same high level writing skills that are used offline (Terras, Ramsay, & Boyle, 2015, p. 13). Even

more importantly, research has found that some online practices require a new form of literacy, a merging of traditional and new literacy skills, identified by Greenhow and Gleason (2012) as “twitteracy; thus the ability to form an online community on Twitter has become an essential employability skill. Additionally, participation on social networking platforms, such as LinkedIn, is often necessary to attain employment (Terras, Ramsay, & Boyle, 2015).

Wilson et al (2013) noted, “With rising vocational expectations of higher education, universities are increasingly promoting themselves as preparing students for future professional lives” (p. 1222). Within the framework of higher education, social media can then perform two roles for learners, beyond serving as a means to foster workforce competences; participation on social networks can also serve to shape the professional identity of learners prior to graduation (Benson, Morgan, and Filippaios, 2014; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009; and Wilson, 2013). Accordingly, Benson, Morgan, and Filippaios (2014) reported that while “better-connected people do better in life,” new graduates are not prepared for social career management. Incorporating a structured approach to professionalism through the curriculum provided students with a means to build social capital. The challenge for educators is that research has not been fully explored with respect to the process of building curriculum for professional identity formation on social networks; Greenhow, Robelia and Hughes (2009) recommended that educational research focus on the possible risks and benefits of emergent online identity development and questions of online identity in general. Online networking can be used to build social capital, but since today’s undergraduates mostly use online networks for personal reasons, Benson et al deemed that educators have a role in helping students foster emergent online identities.



## **Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Professionalism**

The use of digital technology in education is also being “framed against long-standing and entrenched terms of struggle over the distribution of power” (Selwyn & Facer, 2014, p. 491). Selwyn and Facer (2014) observe, “Academic work is now being carried out that focuses explicitly on the fact that digital technologies are implicated deeply within unequal relations of power elsewhere in education and society” (p. 491). The prevailing ideology driving this focus is the libertarian belief of the primacy of the individual (Foucault, 1972), an ideology that largely draws on John Locke’s theory on control for action coming from within the individual and the organization of society on merit, resulting in themes of personal responsibility and self-management, with limited intervention from the state. This libertarian belief system has not only been highly adaptable and resilient; it has become a powerful social imaginary with deeply embedded political values, shaping educational policy for the past four decades, and has led to a marketization of education in the form of a business model approach as opposed to education’s traditional role model as serving and acting as a public good (Selwyn, 2013; Hyslop-Margison & Naseem, 2010; and Jensen & Prieur, 2015).

One concern is that the neoliberal agenda’s objective is to shape a flexible workforce, available for work on demand or contract labour without providing costly traditional job security and perks and benefits. Even though neoliberal ideology frames markets as being left alone to self regulate, in practice, governing structures serve to restore the power of capital elites and shape flexible labour markets based on vast inequalities and opportunities for social mobility. This form of governance enacted “via our hearts and minds and the technologies of neoliberalism closes down dissent and the perception of alternatives”, and many researchers argue that it is not possible to resist

neoliberalism without being, in effect, a neoliberal subject (Archer, 2008; Beck & Young, 2005, p. 193; Davies & Petersen, 2005; and Jensen & Prieur, 2015). For example, Doran (2014) noted that social technologies are broadly advertised as freedom devices: “tools to be used to achieve and maintain the individual liberty of the neoliberal subject” (p. 63), while actual usage entails the increasing legitimization of surveillance and social control. Thus, Doran observed, “The neoliberal citizen is thus a paradoxical figure; at once “free” – that is, self-managing and autonomous – while at the same time subject – and subjugated – to a governmental power that regulates and manages conduct through the strategic deployment of such freedom (p. 68).

Furthermore, Beck and Young (2005) have identified an emergence of a “new kind of professionalism” one with tenuous ties to academic learning objectives, but encompassed with strenuous ties to real world practices (p. 193). Beck and Young (2005) observed that the implications of neoliberalism and the introduction of generic skills into the curriculum has had a far-reaching impact on professional identity as older forms of knowledge-enabled professionalism and academic identities are replaced by a less stable professional identity formation (p. 193).

This new form of professional identity has emerged as a response to the end of standard work arrangements and traditional loyalty between business and workers and is based on the widely held belief that one’s personal career can be shaped through the same branding tactics used by large corporations (Vallas & Cummins, 2015). Vallas & Cummins (2015) warned that the potency of personal branding discourse has begun to solidify in ways that makes avoidance nearly impossible; from tomes to consulting and coaching services to social media platforms, the need to reinforce self promotion is ubiquitous and leads to what is described as the “incorporated” self and internalization of

the neoliberal imaginary of “market-based logics” (p. 11).

Adams (2012) contends, “professionalism can marginalize collectives of people – sometimes quietly, sometimes overtly, sometimes unknowingly” (p. 336).

Consequently, graduates emerging in this new economy must have the requisite self-promotional skills to attain social mobility. Fournier (1999) described this professionalism as a disciplinary logic, encompassing knowledge, conduct, and control. Professionalism acts as a means of control, and becomes an important tool in the shift in work organization to an economic culture that values flexible strategies of capital accumulation. The flexibilization of the workforce relies on individualization, “the process by which the identity of human beings is made an object of reflexivity and intervention” (Jensen & Prieur, 2015, p. 3). Under this form of professionalism, individuals must take responsibility for identity as they are removed from being collectively categorized (p. 3). Correspondingly, Jensen and Prieur (2015) identified contemporary labour markets as having seen a new focus on the personal traits and characteristics of individuals, particularly encompassing social skills, where the success of individuals depends on their individual competitiveness and ability to commodify the personal (p. 6).

Furthermore, Patsarika (2014) identified a key element of modern capitalism as being one that demands the individual embraces mobility as a condition for progress and develops the capacity to continuously adapt to changing economic and social circumstances through self-exploration with an entrepreneurial mindset (p. 534). One of the implications of this neoliberal model is that education has taken the responsibility of moving past the traditional boundary of the classroom to encompass the professional world; thus students participating in education must navigate different identities, between

the personal identity, the here-and-now one, and the “in-the-make” professional (Patsarika, 2014, p. 527). For individuals who are learning to commodify their brand, social media networks and technologies can provide authentic communities of practice to foster this form of neoliberal professional identity. Not only does this practice help young learners seek and secure employment; it also provides evidentiary practice regarding the use of social media skills that can later be transferred to corporate communication and branding.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Social media is an established professional practice among a broad range of professional communicators; however, research reveals that social media practices are not prevalent in many higher education professional writing courses; furthermore, the andragogy to incorporate a social media component in the professional writing curriculum has not been well established in the literature. Compounding the issue is the problematized nature of social media technologies. The issue for educators is that no comprehensive studies have fully examined the incorporation of a social media component into a professional writing course, identifying the barriers, skills, and processes that facilitate or foster the professionalization of the tools for learners and enable them to use these technologies both appropriately and strategically.

This dissertation employed a design-based research methodology to provide a systematic study on how to design an effective learning environment for the integration of social media technologies in a professional writing course in order to shape social media competences and foster professional identity. The study examined in three phases the psychological, social and cognitive factors impacting performance on social networks and addressed the following research questions:

- What problems might educators face when integrating social media practices into a professional writing course for multi-majors?
- How can social media technologies facilitate professional identity formation to bridge the transition from the everyday practices of learners to professional practices?

The study focused on the redesign of a university level general writing course, with the aim of developing a learning environment that would successfully integrate social media practices, and facilitate appropriate social media skills development and professional identity formation.

Amiel and Reeves (2008) noted that frequently educational technologies have failed to deliver in terms of impact on educational outcomes (p. 29-30). They believe that traditional investigative methods, such as predictive research, provide insufficient guidance regarding the use of such tools in educational settings (p. 30). Moreover, Reeves, Herrington, and Oliver (2005) found, “Many researchers continue to conduct studies that principally seek to determine the effectiveness of the delivery medium, rather than the instructional strategies and tasks” (p. 96).

Amiel and Reeves suggest that our basic understanding of technology needs to shift and focus not just on the hardware, but also “on the complex interactions of human, social, and cultural factors” (p. 30). They further contend: “Indeed it would be idealistic to expect significant and transferable results from a one-time study of a technological intervention. Using iterative cycles of design and re-design allows for the investigation of these critical variables and limitations, generating more transferable and useful results” (p. 35). The objective of conducting design-based research is to solve complex problems in educational practice and advance knowledge regarding the process of designing and

developing learning environments (van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney, & Nieveen, 2006). Due to the complexities surrounding the practice of social media, a design-based research methodology was selected, allowing for a more careful and cautious exploration of the learning environment.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

*He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.*

This chapter covers the selection of literature for the review, followed by a discussion of the following topics: the pedagogy of professional communication, core social media competencies, and the conceptualization of learners, digital practices, and social media technologies, and theories on online identity formation. Next, the chapter introduces the theoretical frameworks applied to the learning environment and course redesign, including transference theory as it pertains to developing an expertise in writing, situated learning through communities of practice, and fostering professional identity formation through virtual communities of practice. Lastly, the chapter presents a draft of design principles that influenced the course redesign.

### **Selection of Literature for the Review**

In alignment with the needs of design-based research, the search was ongoing and expansive in order to fine-tune the principles for guiding the design of an appropriate learning environment. van den Akker (1999) noted that in a design-based research literature review “a more intensive and systematic preliminary investigation of tasks, problems, and context is made, including searching for more accurate and explicit connections of that analysis with state-of-the-art knowledge from literature” (p.7). Thus, the literature review for this study not only includes an analysis of the problem and identification of gaps in the research (Gay, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1999), but an expanding search of the principles for drafting the design (Van den Akker, 1999).

A number of relevant articles, dissertations, and texts were selected via a keyword search in seven databases covering the period from January of 2013 until August of 2015. The seven databases searched are ERIC (Cam-bridge Scientific Abstracts), JSTOR Education, Wilson Web (Education Index Retro), Sage Full-Text Collection, PsycINFO (EBSCO), ProQuest, and Google Scholar. Searches related to teaching and learning



included the following terms in a number of permutations: expertise, knowledge, reflexivity, higher education, writing, composition, communication theory, professional writing, professional communication, transference, mental models, instruction, instructional design, affordance, technological determinism, communities of practice, experiential learning, deliberate practice, blended learning, educational technology, and reflective practice. In addition, searches related to social media and learning in higher education, included the following terms: higher education, college, university, training, social media, social network sites, web 2.0, Facebook, YouTube, Secondlife, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, wikis, ICT, interactive communication technologies, professional identity, virtual communications of practice, curriculum and social media as well as a number of additional tools and key words. Searches related to the study's methodology included permutations of the following terms: higher education, design-based research, action research, mixed methods, and innovation. A number of articles were culled from each search result and further searches involved snowballing from sources cited in relevant articles. A final search involved perusing the indexes of a number of prominent communication journals for recent articles. A total of 200 plus articles were retained for the study prior to the first iteration of the study. Subsequent iterations of the study required additional comprehensive reviews of the literature; thus the literature review process was ongoing and extensive.

### **Literature Review**

Within multi-major professional writing programs, students learn to bridge the gap from academic writing to professional writing, from writing to please an instructor to professional writing to persuade an audience. Social media skills have become a common job requirement and practice for many professional communicators across the

field (Beethman and Sharpe, 2007; Goodman, 2006; McKinsey), 2013; Messner, Linke, & Eford, 2013; Morena, Navarro, Tenchb & Zerfasc, 2015; and Phillips, 2012). The field itself is defined rather broadly; for example, in the *Cambridge Manual of Expertise*, Kellogg (2006) identified a number of professionals that participate: “Journalists, novelists, screenwriters, poets, technical writers, and authors of everything from scientific tomes to cookbooks are only the beginning of the list of professional writers” (p. 389). In addition, a number of other professionals have a strong writing component associated with their position; including, professors, engineers, and managers. Hayes and Flower (1980) reported that aspiring professional writers must be apt at tackling ill-structured problems. Kellogg (2006) observed that the tasks of professional writing are so ill-structured and varied that often the skillsets among the specific domains within the field do not overlap (p. 389); thus instruction often entails the development of multiple goals often described in general terms (Simon, 1973; Kellogg, 2006 p. 389).

### **Pedagogy of Professional Writing**

Thus, writing pedagogy often focuses on shared elements among professional writers and professionals who write. To further complicate the pedagogy, professional writers, journalists, novelists, screenwriters, poets, technical writers have skill sets that are not consistently matched (Kellogg, 2006, p. 390). For example, three of the professional writing fields have identified key competences for communicators: The International Association of Business Communications, the Public Relations Society of America lists a number of field competencies and the Society for Technical Communication. See Table 1 for a list of the core competences advocated by the professional boards.

Table 1. Core Competencies Listed by Professional Communication Boards

Society for Technical Communication	International Association of Business Communications	Public Relations Society of America
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project planning</li> <li>• Project analysis</li> <li>• Content development</li> <li>Organizational design Review and editing</li> <li>• Visual communication</li> <li>Content management</li> <li>Production and delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication ethics</li> <li>• Communication research and analysis</li> <li>• Communication strategy and engagement</li> <li>• Communication measurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of and current issue in public relations</li> <li>• Business literacy</li> <li>• Ethics and law</li> <li>• Researching, planning, implementing, and evaluating programs</li> <li>• Crisis communication management</li> <li>• Using information technology efficiently</li> <li>• Media relations</li> </ul>

The broad definition of the field and vast array of competences has proven challenging when developing curriculum for professional writing programs that seeks to serve a broad range of special interests under the auspices of a generic program. Generic professional writing programs serve both professional communicators and professionals

who communicate; thus looking toward actual corporate communications practices and practices in related fields such as journalism and public relations can inform the writing curriculum. Absent from all of the boards is social media literacies.

Kellogg (2006) identified six common or overlapping expertise or skillsets required of professional writers:

- **Problem solving.** Due to the ill-defined structure of writing expertise, problem solving is a necessary skill, in terms of demonstrating the ability to represent content and rhetorical problems (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991).
- **Language use.** Professional writers need to achieve a high level of competency with language to activate verbal associations and representations for the reader (Sadoski & Pavio, 2001). Kintsch also observed that language can trigger the reader's long-term memory representations by relating to what a reader already knows and stimulate the construction of new ideas. The reader requires a "deep comprehension" of a text, which requires the reader to construct a mental representation of the text and further integrate this representation with other acquired knowledge (Kintsch, 1998). Kellogg noted, "Professional writers aim to engage the reader in such deep comprehension" (p. 391).
- **Managing cognitive load.** Writing places demands on working memory because the task requires writers to temporarily maintain a number of mental representations when prewriting, constructing sentences, and reviewing work (Kellogg, 2006, p. 392). Hayes & Flower (1980) observed that composition was like "a very busy switch-board operator trying to juggle a number of demands on her attention and constraints on what she can do" (p. 33).
- **Domain specificity.** As noted, writing expertise is domain dependent; thus a

professional writing expert in one domain might perform like a novice in another domain (Carter, 1996).

- **Rapid access to long-term memory.** When domain-specific expertise and knowledge is acquired, writers are able to avoid the constraints on working memory that prevent novices from writing effectively or efficiently (McCutchen, 2000).
- **Relationship of the readership.** Professional writers hone messages to meet the requirements of a specific audience; this skill requires the expert to maintain three representations in working memory simultaneously (Traxler & Gernsbacher, 1992). Kellogg (2006) described the following process: “First, ideas must be formulated and held long enough to translate them into sentences. Second, the actual meaning of the sentences produced thus far must also be read and comprehended by the author. Third, the author ought to try to read the text from the perspective of the potential reader” (p. 395). The key element, according to Kellogg, is for the writer to perceive the text as the reader would understand it. A study documenting how writers anticipate readers’ responses found that the expert writers pose rhetorical questions to engage the reader, made direct references to the reader when sharing knowledge, and used second person pronouns (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). The main difficulties writers face when crafting knowledge for readers are employing too much jargon and providing poor technical documentation (Hayes & Flower, 1986). Furthermore, Duffy, Curran, and Sass (1983) reported that professional writers when hired to improve document clarity often fail, demonstrating how difficult it is for writers to relate to the reader’s point of view. In addition, writers are often asked to write for multiple audiences (Kellogg, 2006, p. 396).
- ***Managing the Emotional Challenges*** Brand (1989) observed that the emotional

demands of writing are equal to the cognitive ones (Brand, 1989). Expert writers know how to self-regulate emotions and behaviour and stay on task (Kellogg, 2006, p. 395).

Writing expertise is developed over decades and goes through three stages: knowledge-telling, knowledge-transforming, and knowledge-crafting (Kellogg, p.20). Kellogg (2006) describes the third stage of writing, “knowledge-crafting” as the final progression to expertise in writing (p. 7), and a central factor in reaching this stage is the use of deliberate practice (Kellogg, 2006, p. 8). With deliberate practice, the writers must be effortful, intrinsically motivated and have practice tasks within reach of their abilities and be provided timely feedback (Kellogg, 2006, p. 8). At this stage, the author is able to imagine the reader and his response to the text while at the same time conceptualizing the author and text. Research has also found that writing is incentivized when performed in the context of a professionally relevant task domain (Kellogg, 2006; Johnstone, Ashbaugh, & Warfield, 2002). Kellogg argues that knowledge transformation cannot take place without domain specific learning and training due to the heavy load writing demands on executive attention (p. 21).

### **Identifying Core Competences for a Social Media Course Component**

The next step for researchers and educators becomes identifying the essential social media competences that solve a number of the problems associated with professional social media practice and tailor them to a generic professional writing course. Moreno, Navarro, Tenchb and Zerfassc (2015) surveyed more than 2,710 communication professionals on the use of social media and found that five of the most important social media communication tools used by professionals: social networks (73.1%), online videos (66.9%), mobile applications (59.1%), microblogs (54.5%), and

photo sharing (47.5%). In addition, Moreno et al (2015) found two key skills or approaches to social media usage, operational and strategic. The operational approach involved the setting up of social media profiles and posting of content, whereas the strategic approach was concerned with developing tactics for its practice with clearly defined goals; thus, a social media course component should include both approaches.

Taylor and Kent (2009) advocated for fostering the same skills that have been identified by the Professional Bond: Public Relations Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: writing skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, a good attitude, the ability to communicate publicly, and initiative” (p. 213). This requires the pedagogical approach to encourage the transference of already acquired professional writing skills to the new skills domain of social media writing. Additionally, they noted the problem with blog credibility is that few bloggers check their facts or cite the source of information that they republish in their blog (p. 440). Thus students should also be taught the importance of presenting credible and balanced information, using evidentiary-based reasoning and citing outside sources.

And finally, Benson, Morgan and Filippaouis (2014) observed, “Our research suggests that despite students’ prolific use of SNS, they do need education regarding effective engagement with SNS” (p. 524) and identified the following professional social media skillsets for undergraduate students:

- Be made aware of privacy and security issues, along with email and online comment etiquette.
- Understand the concept of online social capital and use of this for internships, placements and volunteering.

- Understand how to research organizations and job roles online, and a critical analysis of SNS information to aid job search.

All three of these skillsets shape and foster a professional online identity. Social media practice, the ability to produce content for Web 2.0 online environments and participate, requires a number of media literacy skills (Terras, Ramsay, & Boyle, 2015). Jaros (2014) reported that a “bottom up” iterative approach leading the learner from familiar and local personal practice to the wider professional or trans-disciplinary context, using a reflective, personal-interest driven approach rather than a mechanic one, might produce scaffolding to produce personal satisfaction and improve future employment prospects” (p. 5).

### **Defining Digital Literacy Practices**

Literacy practices include not only the literacy activity, but also its texts, the patterns of behavior surrounding it, and the attitudes and values that inform it (Tusting, Ivanič, & Wilson, 2000, p. 213). Bhatt (2012) observes, “Digital literacy practices involve a higher level of complexity than traditional print literacies in the sense that readers can interact with the text and participate in its production” (p. 291). This understanding of literacy is derived from the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement with a theoretical foundation in Bakhtin’s construct of language as being dialogic, socially constructed and contextual (Heath, 1983; Scribner & Cole, 1981); and views literacy as more than the decoding and encoding signs, but rather as a social performance (Bhatt 2012, p. 290). Early approaches to digital literacies focused on the technical skills and competencies required to use the tools (Wilber, 2010, p.2); however NLS has led to an understanding of the complexity of the relationships surrounding the use of digital tools and the social competencies that function within participatory cultures and their



shared values (Bhatt, 2012). What has emerged since this distinction in literacy practices, traditional versus digital, is described by Warschauer (2009) as a “digital ubiquity” that has altered the nature of both literacy and educational practice, removing the boundaries of the classroom and merging the public and private into a shared space, shifting how we communicate (Gee, 2010).

Clark (2010) claims, “Although students may be immersed in the culture of Web 2.0, they are not immersed in a way that fully engages the complexities of our new techno-order” (p. 33). She argues that the challenges for educators are to blend what we already know about composition studies and collaborative learning to digital learning (p. 33). Clark (2010) concludes, “We need to work to help the profession embrace digital rhetoric not as a fad, but as a profound shift in what we mean by writing, by literacy, and by cultural communication” (p. 35). Social media network sites provide ecology for learners to shape digital literacy skills in a manner that simultaneously develops social competencies. “Digital ubiquity” as described by Mark Warschauer (2009) is altering the landscape of traditional literacy practice as practiced by formal education; however, there remains a gap between what educators are delivering to students in the form of competencies and the ones sought by the workplace and learners (Frost 2011). Erin Frost (2011) argued that the “legitimization of media relevant to students also lets students know that their work is relevant; moreover, they often find a tangible connection between their personal and academic lives empowering, especially when they have been allowed to seek that connection on their own” (p. 275).

Web 2.0 represents a literacy shift from publishing to participation; studies have found that the typical student is a consumer unless forced to do otherwise (Jones et al, 2010; Kennedy et al, 2010; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). Kennedy et al (2010) reported

that advanced technology users, users who have a number of gadgets and express themselves online frequently, are in the minority and rudimentary technology users, and users who have an understanding of technology but who rarely participate online interactively, make up the bulk of current students (p. 339). Jones et al. (2010) discovered that while a majority of today's students make common use of downloading and uploading materials, very few actually contribute to blogs or wikis or interact in virtual worlds" (p. 731).

### **Theorizing Social Media Technologies**

Technological determinism is a belief system or theory that provides materiality or technology with a strong causal role in the sense that differing technologies provoke specific forms of practice (Leonardi & Barley, 2010, p. 4). In contrast, social constructivists argue, "Organizational change emerges out of an ongoing stream of social action in which people respond to the technology's constraints and affordances, as well as to each other" (Leonardi & Barley, 2010, p. 5). There is no guarantee that learners will adopt a new technology since the adoption of a new technology is dependent on the users' attitudes and beliefs and their ability to perceive a utility (Leonardi & Barley, 2010). Researchers have also found that this perception of utility is more social than individual in the sense that affordance is created through conversation surrounding the technology (Leonardi & Barley, 2010). Leonardi and Barley (2010), surmise, "Thus, adoption is a collective rather than an individual process that stands apart and may sometimes be divorced from the technology's physical capabilities" (p. 10). Additionally, according to the researchers, social construction does not cease once users adopt the technology, as the technology's perceived constraints and affordances continue to determine patterns of use (p. 11).

Furthermore, while the technology or materiality exists independently, the

affordances and constraints are almost entirely dependent on sociality (Faraj & Azad, 2012; Robey, Raymond, & Anderson, 2012). Leonardi (2013) contends that people can seek a diverse number of goals from any particular technology, and each learner might perceive a technology as affording or constraining action (p. 70). This is an important factor for developing effective instructional design since technology will not determine action so much as the perception of the technology will determine action for each learner or organization. If learners perceive that a technology offers no affordances for action, the technology will constrain their ability to carry out organizational goals (Leonardi, 2013).

The issue of how to integrate social media is far more complex than simply having students open an account and post content, as this practice is based on a rather limited operational approach to its potential use. Furthermore, Amiel and Reeves (2008) observed, “Technology is not a product and instead is a process: tools are merely a product of a technological system” (p. 32). When integrating social media into the curriculum, instructional designers must understand how social networks operate, what artefacts they produce, and what problems they are solving, and be mindful of the benefits and risks associated with this practice.

Furthermore, Young and Hinesly (2014) noted that it’s more essential to understand basic business communication principles than keep up-to-date with the latest communication channels such as social media. The key element that educators must recognize in the current “social media landscape” is the affordance or “underlying communication utility” that each social media platform offers and to apply this utility to authentic challenges facing organizations. Social media as a platform does not shape learning or communication, but offers a mode of delivery and number of affordances,

both positive and negative for communication. For the purposes of this study, the underlying assumption regarding technology is not one of technological determinism or the belief that technology shapes learning or practice (Jones, 2001). Nor does it closely align with sociomateriality, a rebuttal to technological determinism, which argues that technology is inextricably intertwined with the user in the sense that “the social and the material are considered to be inextricably related — there is no social that is not also material, and no material that is not also social” (Orlikowski, 2007, p. 1437). Moving beyond sociomateriality is the concept of the social construction of technology, which understands technology as “a consequence of practice” (Oliver, 2011, p. 380).

A number of studies have reported on the introduction of social media competencies into coursework (Alon & Herath, 2014; Faraj, 2009; and Lewis & Rush, 2013; Meredith, 2012; Young & Hinsely, 2014). For example, Young and Hinsely (2014) taught a course that involved introducing social media functionalities for communication that takes place in a business setting. Lewis and Rush (2013) developed a Twitter-based community of practice and found it a useful tool to develop professional identity in higher education (p.11). And Alon and Hearath (2013) incorporated social media into a business course to provide students with experiential learning, which involved country branding. Current practices and understandings of social media technologies provide an opportunity for researchers and educators to contribute systematic and grounded studies on the pedagogy and practice of social media (Meredith, 2012; and Greenwald, 2010). As Selwyn (2011) has noted, “Indeed, one of the most disappointing aspects of academic work in this area—especially from within the field of ‘educational technology’ studies—is a general failure to think carefully about the social nature of digital technology” (p. 82).

When integrating social media technologies into the curriculum, educators must consider the technology in terms of the consequences of practice (or communication objectives) that are driving the development of the technology and its applications, and in this sense, adheres to the principles of communication and pedagogy of writing more so than the tool itself as a product. Practice on social media is not about what the technology can achieve, but what the user can achieve through the technology. As Young and Hinesly (2014) observed, “Social media specialists may be well versed in the technological inner workings of the social media platforms, but their real expertise is in understanding how to create virtual social movements” (p. 430-431).

### **Conceptualizing Identity in the Digital Age**

The Latin root for *identity* is *idem*, which means “the same”. However, when the term identity is applied to the individual, the term no longer carries one single meaning, rather, according to Aresta et al (2015) “it is characterized by its multiplicity of meanings and applications” and can be used to understand the ways in which individuals see and reveal themselves to others (p. 71). Researchers have identified two categories of the personal self: the “now” self and the “possible” self (Markus & Nurius, 1986; and Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). The self has been further problematized with the “now” self being fragmented in two halves: the internalized notion of the self and the projected version comprised of “the characteristics and signals that individuals choose to share in order to reveal a part of themselves to others” (p. 72). See Figure 2. This figure reveals how learners conceive and reveal their identity.

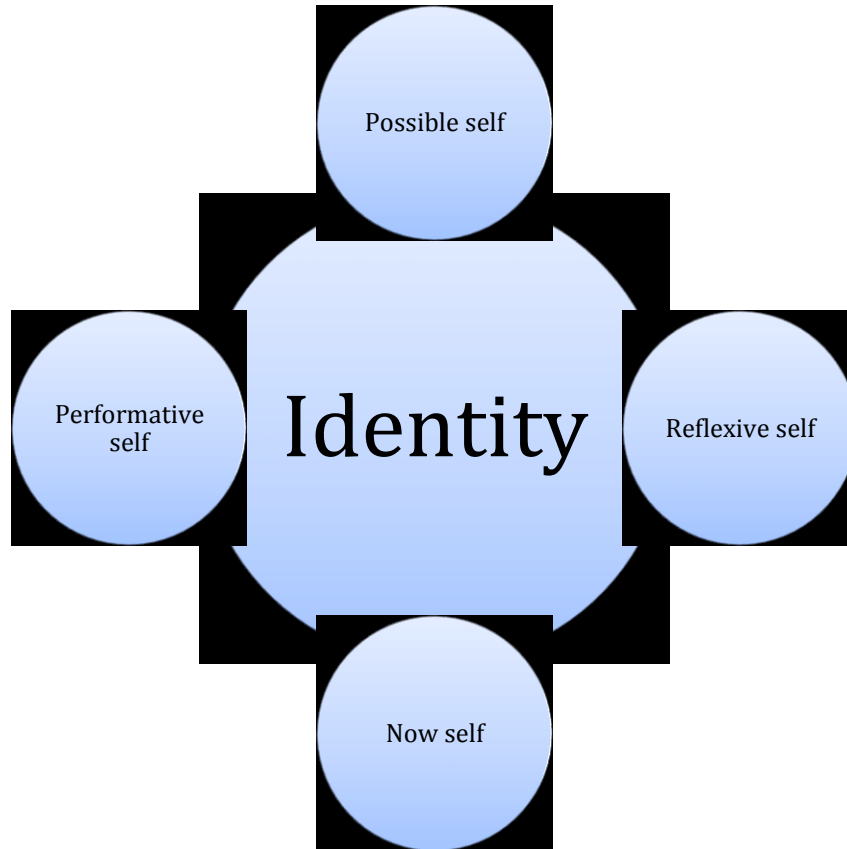


Figure 2. The now and later, inner and outer self

Identity, thus, is the outcome of a self-reflexive and performative process (Greenhow, Robelia & Hughes, 2009). As a process, self-esteem, self-efficacy, continuity, distinctiveness, belonging, and meaning influence the construction and reconstruction of identity (Batory, 2014; and Vignoles, 2011). In addition to the motivational basis for identity, Batory (2014) argued that identity is shaped by internal and external dialogue (p. 363). Individuals struggle between the need for a unique identity and the need to identify with others (Buckingham, 2008). Online identity can be understood as a continuum of information referred to and published by the individual that validates the self (Aresta et al, 2015), including, for example, profiles (boyd, 2008; Cover, 2012; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009), content (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Costa & Torres, 2011; Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes,

2009; Zhao et al., 2008), and authenticity (Buckingham, 2008b; Childs, 2011).

**The role of technology in the formation of personal identity.** In the digital age, technology has permeated our world in unexpected ways and has become not only the source of our identity (Slack & Wise, 2005); it has also become society (Castells, 2007; Nagy & Koles, 2014). Online participation has become ubiquitous and practically compulsory among youth (Marwick and Boyd, 2014; Robards, 2014). Livingstone, Mascheroni and Murru (2014) observed that negotiating a balance between uniqueness and the need for identification with others results in “a dialectic between the staging of a performance, framed by social conventions and particular codes of self-representation, and the reflexivity developed through expected or actual feedback from audiences” (p. 2). Identity performance on social networks is dependent on the conception of public and private and the audience imagined by the subject; and through interaction, individuals develop a personal consciousness of their identity (Aresta, Pedro, Santos, & Moreira, 2014; boyd, 2006; Buckingham, 2008). Thus far, identity research has emphasized the significance of personal space for the “disembedded, multi-affiliated individual negotiating identity and transitions in a fluid, uncertain world” (Robards and Bennett, 2012); however, Hodkinson (2015) found that users, youth in particular, “traverse a multitude of networked spaces, both public and private” (p. 11). Aresta et al (2015) reported that when individuals find that they can build a self that can be edited and deleted at will, the differences between physical and virtual realities and the positive and negative implications of maintaining an online self attains great importance (p. 70). See Figure 3. This figure illustrates the multiple ways identity can be performed in networked space.

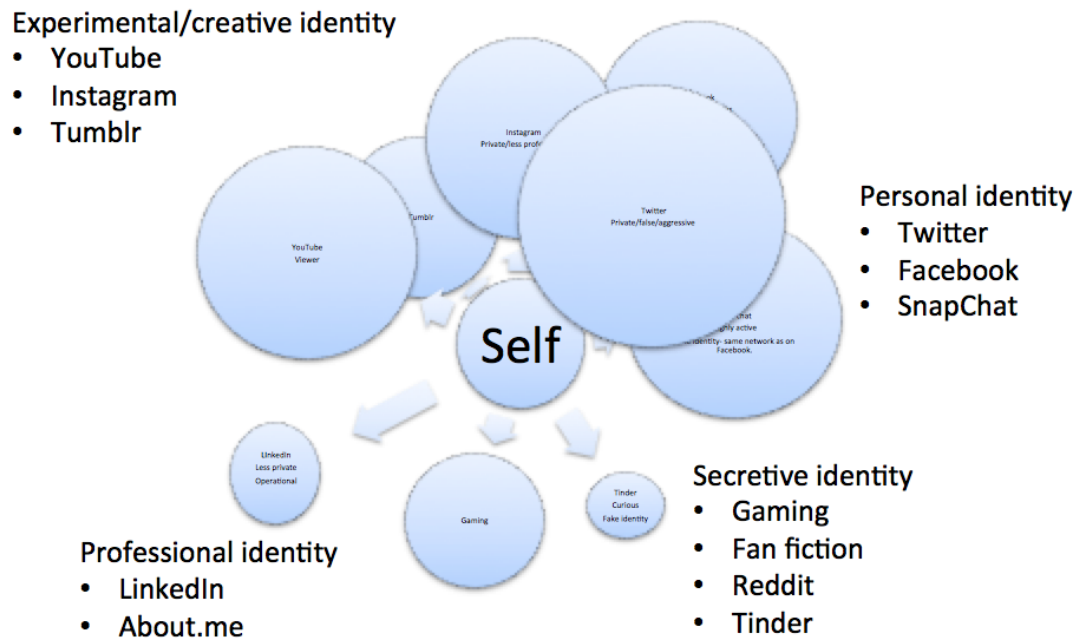


Figure 3. Using public and private networked space to perform identity

**How social media performance and privacy shape identity.** Aresta et al (2015)

organized reputation building into three subcategories: the demonstration of skills and competencies, visibility and exposure, and reputation scaffolding to connecting institutions (p. 78). Based on the Online Identity Analysis Model developed by Aresta et al (2013), identity from a personal perspective is based on the following factors: digital representation, privacy management, and reputation (p. 77). Accordingly, Aresta et al (2015) identified ‘Privacy Management’ as how individuals manage their online self, or selves, involves three factors: 1) the registration process, involving single or multiple e-mail accounts and usernames to manage each identity or performed self, 2) contact management or the organization of contacts according to the online space where they are performing, and 3) context management, the publication of content and/or republishing of content between various online spaces (p. 78).



However, Terras, Ramsay, and Boyle (2015), found that many online users were unconcerned that the Internet is a public forum. Users that were concerned took a number of approaches to safeguard privacy with privacy settings and through the falsification of personal details (Son & Kim, 2008). Conversely, Hodkinson (2015) reported that social media users were demonstrating an increasing awareness of privacy issues. For example, the Pew Internet Research Project reported in 2012, that among Facebook users, only 14% had public profiles, whereas 60% had friends-only profiles, and 25% had friends-of-friends only profiles (Hodkinson, 2015, p. 8).

**The influence of personal identity on professional identity.** boyd and Elison (2008) defined social networks as systems designed to foster socialization through the exchange of information in order to establish personal and/or professional relationships. White (2008) identified two types of social media users, visitors and residents. Visitors see the Internet and social networks as tools for solving tasks and have no desire to interact and formulate identity (White, 2008). Conversely, residents are users whose identity extends into online spaces and who utilize the space to build relationships and construct social, academic, and professional dimension of their identity (White, 2008). As a result of social processes, online identity is never fully controlled by the individual (Aresta et al, 2015). Online presence is classified into three permeable categories: personal, professional and organization (Fraser, 2009). Personal presence involves interacting with friends and family and has the highest level of concern with regards to privacy and safety concerns (Fraser, 2009). Professional presence involves using networking sites to discuss professional and academic achievements, including the presentation of portfolios and involves issues related to reputation and credibility. And lastly, organizational presence involves the use of tools and platforms on the behalf of the employer to deliver

institutional information (Fraser, 2009, p. 74). See Figure 4. This figure illustrates how online presence is practiced within White's (2006) framework.



Figure 4. Categories of online identity

Aresta et al (2015) reported that individuals who want to maintain control regarding who can access the online dimension of their identity resort to strategies designed to avoid interaction among various online spaces designated as professional, personal and social (p. 76). Costa and Torres (2011) identified these online spaces “as the ideal place to encourage students to build a presence able to complement their academic and professional lives” and recommended that individuals “consider the construction of a reputation as one of the main advantages of creating and maintaining a stable identity, one that encompasses the different dimensions of their lives” (p. 76).

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for the study includes a combination of the following models: transference theory to examine the cognitive factors shaping the development of writing expertise; situated learning theory, in particular virtual communities of practice, to understand the process of transitioning from consumer of social content to producer within a professional community; and professional identity formation theory, a model for understanding the processes involved when making the transition from student writer to professional communicator.

### **Transfer Theory and the Development of Writing Expertise**

The first objective in a basic composition course is to have training transfer as a general skill to academic coursework in specialized academic contexts outside of the English department; thus, writing skills are considered a “tool domain” (Perkins & Salomon, 1989). In a review of two decades of transfer research, Perkins and Salomon (1989) observed, “It's worth noting that the very existence of tool domains that enhance thinking and learning in content domains, in itself, constitutes evidence for general cognitive skills of a sort” (p. 21). Perkins and Salomon postulate that when a student enrolls in a high-level course, they begin using weak methods or solutions from previous experience. Perkins and Salomon contend that what educators are missing is “the idea that local knowledge has great importance” (p. 22). Accordingly, transference is not the issue: “On the contrary, when faced with novel situations, people routinely try to apply knowledge, skills, and specific strategies from other, more familiar domains” (Perkins & Salomon, 1989, p. 22). To facilitate the modification of general skills, research indicates, “When general principles of reasoning are taught together with self-monitoring practices in varied contexts, transfer often is obtained. Perkins and Salomon report that

transference takes place under the following conditions: if learners are cued as to how problems resemble each other, familiarized with problem domains, provided examples that are supplemented with rules, preferably verbalized by the learners, and when learning takes place in a social context, such as peer teaching (p. 22). Thus, if complex literacy processes do not take place, transfer is unlikely to occur.

Perkins and Salomon (1989) proposed two methods for transfer, the “low road” transfer, which depends on extensive practice and automaticity and “high road” transfer, which depends on the thinker’s ability to abstract a principle (p. 25). Teich (1987) observed that within the writing tool domain there are essential elements that cannot be “relegated to the dimension of lateral transfer” such as “rhetorical structures, which reflect choices of ways to organize experience, to think, and to express ideas coherently for solving problems in a discipline” (p. 197).

A number of studies have established that classroom settings fail to transfer the skills that are required for practicing communication (Dias, Reedman, Madway & Par, 1999; Freedman & Adam, 1996; Henry, 2000; and Kramer-Simpson, Newmark, & Ford, 2015). Kramer-Simpson, Newmark, and Ford (2015) observed that the workplace for technical communicators differs significantly from the classroom in terms of values and task performance; for this reason, they argue, educators need to find ways for students to participate in communities of practice peripherally prior to graduation in order to foster mobility or participation in the workforce (p. 106). They argued, “These *real* impacts and audiences may facilitate legitimate peripheral practice for technical communication students within the classroom” (p. 109).

## **Communities of Practice**

Lave and Wenger's (1991) social theory of learning argues that social participation is at the center of the learning process. In this sense, community, according to Lave and Wenger (1991), is the social configuration defined by action, which occurs through discourse. They identify this learning environment where individuals are joined by relationships that share common practices and activities as "Communities of Practice" or (CoP), or individuals joined by relationships that share common practices and activities. CoP have been integrated into the learning theory of situated cognition, which claims that all human thought or knowledge is situated or adapted to the environment. Proponents of this theory believe that learning takes place during participation in a CoP (Driscoll, 2005).

Brent (2011) observed that while many educators doubt whether students can transfer writing skills from composition classes to neighbouring academic disciplines, they are even more doubtful that students can do so in the professional workplace (p. 397). Brent found "Situated learning suggests that highly context-dependent skills such as rhetorical performance are best learned—perhaps can only be learned—when learners are immersed in the real context in which such skills must be performed on a daily basis" (p. 40). Research has found that participation in a CoP leads to an accumulation of experience that leads to the development of expertise (Nistor et al, 2014; Paavola et al., 2004). Nistor et al (2014) observed that experts within a community of practice are involved in activities with a higher degree of difficulty and responsibility. Expert identity is the result of negotiations with other CoP members in the form of participation, the production of artefacts and dialogue (Nistor et al). Researchers have begun exploring virtual online communities to determine if models of CoP's can be applied to determine

roles and understanding of expertise (vCoP or virtual communities of practice).

Members can take on a number of roles within a community of practice, from peripheral participation to central participation as an expert within the community. Research has found that participation in a CoP among other researchers have discovered, “A CoP member’s expert status can be measured through social network analysis, determining a member’s so-called centrality, as defined by mathematical formulae expressing the relationships within the social network (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, & Labianca, 2009). In a quantitative research study, Nistor et al (2014) examined the potential of virtual communities to act as CoPs by employing Nestor’ (2014) model for virtual communities of practice. The sample included 133 participants with over 4000 interventions and almost 2000 messages and confirmed Nistor and Fisher’s (2012) theoretical model for vCoPs. Nistor et al were able to confirm a CoP in the vCoP setting, using learning analytics. The importance of this finding is that educators can now move past learning analytics as predictors of behaviour to utilizing learning analytics to understand ways to design instruction in vCoP that fosters expertise and ultimately identity.

Furthermore, Nistor and Fisher (2012) incorporated the concept of how identity in the CoP has both an individual and social component in the sense that the activity of the individual shapes social elements within the community. In a preliminary validation of their model Nistor and Fisher confirmed that domain knowledge predicts participation. See Figure 5 for an illustration of how vCoP shape and inform expert status. This graphic illustrates how a member’s role in a vCoP combined with domain knowledge and levels of participation and time spent in the community shape the development of expertise, which leads to the negotiation of a central role.

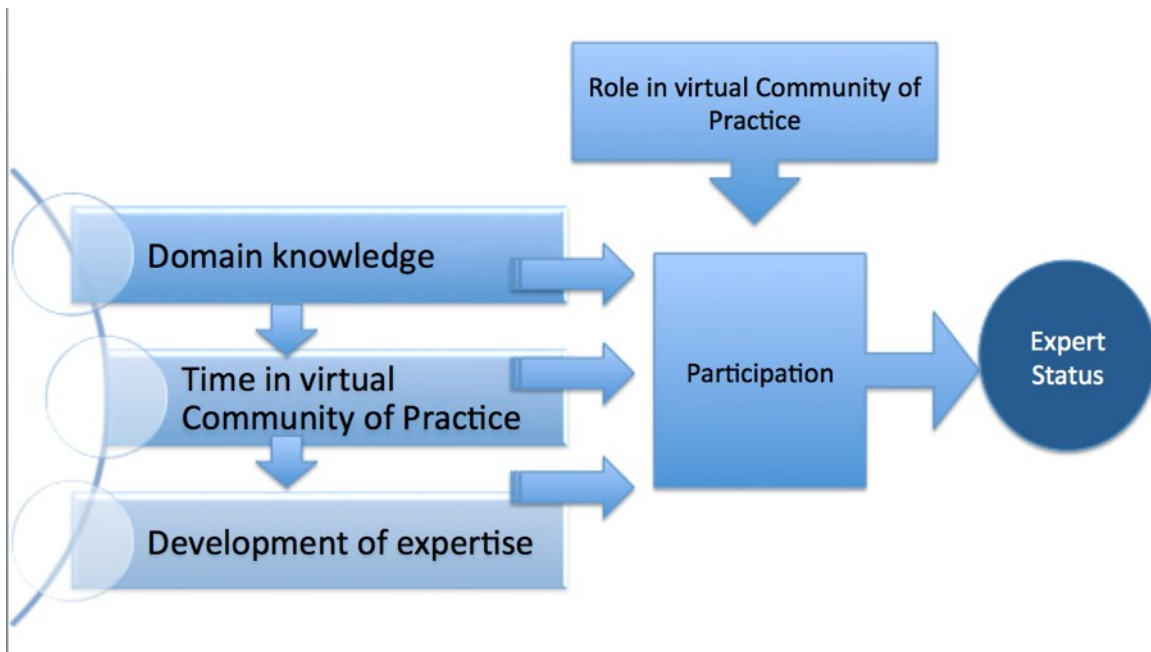


Figure 5. Framing virtual Communities of Practice (vCoP)

### **Professional Identity Formation through Participation in vCoPs**

Professionalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been transformed by the opportunities and constraints provided by a global economy. Evetts (2013) observed that increased complexities surround professionalism due to a wider accessibility to the Internet where expertise, itself, becomes more open to challenge. Furthermore, Adams (2012) has identified a permeation of professionalism into non-occupational domains and has made the case that professionalism now “requires a broader discursive formulation for understanding its material effects inside and outside of occupational categories” (p. 332). Fournier (1999) described professionalism as a disciplinary logic, encompassing knowledge, conduct, and control. Professionalism acts as a means of control, and becomes an important tool in the shift in work organization in an economic culture that values flexible strategies of capital accumulation. Adams contends, “professionalism can

marginalize collectives of people – sometimes quietly, sometimes overtly, sometimes unknowingly” (p. 336). O’Sullivan, Van Mook, Fewtrell, and Wass (2012) noted that integrating professionalism into the curriculum makes its importance transparent. Applying a virtual communities of practice model to shape our understanding of and practices on social networks, educators can find ways to both help learners develop expertise and foster professional identity.

Handly, Sturdy, Fincham and Clark (2006) addressed the issue of situated learning, which challenges cognitivists idealization of the classroom as a learning environment. In contrast to cognitivist learning theories, Handley et al observe, “Situating learning theory positions the ‘community of practice’ as the context in which an individual develops the practices (including values, norms and relationships) and identities appropriate to that community” (p. 643). Unlike constructivists who imagine the community will socially construct knowledge in a smoothly productive manner, situated learning theorists plan for conflict and variation of results: “Individuals bring to a community a personal history of involvement with workplace, social and familial groups whose norms may complement or conflict with one other” (Handley et al, 2006, p. 644). They developed the following model to demonstrate how identity is shaped through an individual’s participation in a number of communities of practice. See Figure 6.





Figure 6. Development of identity and social media practice through participation on social networks (Adapted from Hanley, 2006)

### Guiding Design Principles

This section proposes a number of design principles to guide the intervention; each principle was developed through the literature; subsequent interventions were provided. For each iteration, the instruments can be found in Appendix B and the course interventions can be found in Appendix C.

A design framework for a pedagogical model for meaningful learning based on an integrated network model was first introduced by Vahtivuori et al. (2003). This model poses that meaningful learning is a combination of the student’s learning process and expected outcomes. Barab and Squire (2004) stated that ‘design-based research suggests a pragmatic philosophical underpinning, one in which the value of a theory lies in its ability to produce changes in the world (p. 6); in this sense ‘the theory must do real work’

(Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, & Shauble (2003), p. 10).

The critical component of design-based research is the meeting of local needs and advancement theory (Barab & Squire, 2004; Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004; the Design-Based Research Collective [DBRC], 2003; Edelson, 2002; Wang & Hannafin, 2005); thus, design-based research practitioners strive to generate sound design principles for instruction (Wang and Hannafin, 2005). The nature of DBR is iterative and involves undergoing a number of cycles to revise and refine the design principles and learning environment (Barab & Squire, 2004; Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, & Schauble, 2003; Edelson, 2002; Wang & Hannafin, 2005). Moreover, a number of studies have observed that knowing how or why to use technologies are pedagogical issues and not technological ones (Kirkwood & Price, 2005; Price & Kirkwood, 2008). Thus, the underlying assumption when drafting design principles is that the manner in which the technology, particularly social network sites or social media, is applied must align with established learning objectives (Price & Kirkwood, 2011, p. 5). See Table 2 for the illustration of the alignment of learning objectives and design principles.

Table 2. Guiding Design Principles for First Iteration

Learning Objective	Design Principle	Intervention	Measured Outcome
Students should be able to use language effectively and tailor it to reach specific audiences.	<p>Approaches to effective learning should involve a pedagogical approach that is relational between teachers and students engaged in knowledge building in collaborative learning networks (Bolstad &amp; Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al, 2012; and Miller et al, 2008).</p> <p>A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe &amp; Tesch-Romer, 1993).</p> <p>Experiential learning provides learners with opportunities to practice authentic workforce skills (Boone, 2011; Hawtrey, 2007; Ramburuth and Daniel, 2010).</p>	<p>Publishing work online for a broader audience.</p> <p>Student presentations on craft.</p>	<p>Feedback from graded projects and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics</p>
Students should be able to manage emotional challenges associated with specific writing tasks.	<p>Situated learning, experiential learning, and deliberate practice should contribute to this learning objective. In addition, effective instructional design considers the impact of social interaction and psychological safety on knowledge development (Xu &amp; Yang, 2010).</p>	<p>Publishing course work online.</p>	<p>Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.</p>
Students will strive to establish expertise in one specific domain	<p>Within the pedagogy of writing, domain experts have an advantage over generalists. Their use of</p>	<p>Students will select one topic to write about the entire</p>	<p>Publication of coursework to a blog.</p>

area	long-term memory as working memory provides a critical advantage over novice writers (McCutchen, 2000).	course, and based on this interest, will join or found a blog to publish course projects.	
Students should master a number of genres for communicating information to specific audiences and present the genre using multi-modal literacies, i.e. instructions sets, features, reviews, profiles and interviews.	A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).	Course projects.	Graded projects
Students will practice and gain expertise managing cognitive load associated with mastering writing tasks.	Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).	Course projects.	Graded projects. Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.
Students will understand how to setup professional social media accounts and profiles.	Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).	Social media project.  In addition, a social media expert were invited as a guest lecturer to discuss proper online conduct and field questions.	End of year social media memo.
		Students were provided an election to forgo the social media component of the course and negotiate	

alternative projects that are socially interactive, yet perceived as being psychologically safe for the individual learner. See Appendix C for alternative project.

<p>Students were able to strategically use social media to build a social network and engage followers.</p>	<p>Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011).</p>	<p>Social media project</p>	<p>Feedback from interviews and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics End of year social media memo</p>
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<p>Students will gain an understanding of professionalism in their field and articulate ways of reaching professional standards and identity.</p>	<p>A number of studies have reported that e-portfolios to help learners reflect upon their achievements and plan for future growth (Price and Kirkwood, 2011; Herman &amp; Kirkup, 2008). Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).</p>	<p>Students will develop e-portfolios on a social platform to showcase course work and foster professional growth.</p>	<p>Graded e-portfolios</p>
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<p>Students will inform an online branded identity on social networks.</p>	<p>Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011). Innovative learning activities should be</p>	<p>Social media project.</p>	<p>Feedback from interviews and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics</p>
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designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).

Within this framework, new relationships consisted of the student as learner, and the instructor or teacher as facilitator (Bolstad et al, 2012). Benade (2014) observed that the instructor's "role is not to position the learner to absorb material, but to facilitate the conditions and opportunity for learners to critique and transform the material" (p. 342).

Furthermore, Alon and Herath (2014) reported that global corporations seek graduates who are able to use current technologies to solve real-world problems (p. 44). Experiential learning, "in which students experience a direct encounter with the phenomenon under study, reflect on that experience, draw general conclusions, and test their newly acquired knowledge through subsequent performance" (Boone, 2011, p. 2), is an effective means to establish technological skills (Boone, 2011). Effective instructional design for experiential learning has two dimension: (1) semi-structured, short projects requiring limited knowledge or (2) loosely structured experiential activities that are longer, more in depth and broader in scope (Hamer, 2000). Paul and Mukhopadhyay (2005) established that experiential learning is a form of pedagogy and should not be integrated as course content (p. 20). Experiential learning enables learners to become self-directed (Kolb & Kolb, 2006, p. 55).

Deliberate practice is another essential design principle incorporated into the course design. Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer (1993) identified the following characteristics of deliberate practice: striving to improve performance, intrinsic motivation, practice tasks within reach of the learner's current ability, feedback that

facilitates understanding of results, and frequent repetition” (p. 396).

For the first iteration, social media practices were encouraged as a more voluntary activity that would take place outside of the classroom. Students were encouraged to set learning objectives. King (2011) found evidence in their study of professional learning in voluntary and informal virtual communities that social media provided a feasible space for professional development (p. 44); the study also found a key theme of the importance for learners to demonstrate compassion and ethical awareness while interacting in virtual communities (p. 44). Xu and Yang (2010) reported, “Our results suggest that social interaction and psychological safety had a positive impact on knowledge development in student groups, and that this synergistic knowledge development enabled students to form complex mental models” (p. 223). Moreover, Rodriquez (2011) noted that employing social media activities in the classroom allows the “world to bear witness” and could plausibly pose a serious privacy concern for learners; furthermore, Rodriquez postulates that since “Google appears to be the search engine of choice and has long been mining user emails and search histories without widespread dissent”, the privacy issue might be a nonissue (p. 544). Rodriquez suggests that educators should provide a discussion of online privacy and policy for proper conduct (p. 544). Students benefit from blogging when the activity is designed for the wider context of the course (Price and Kirkwood (2011). Thus, the purpose of blogging or role of the blog should be defined to learners and meet specific learning objectives of the course.

Designing a course to effectively begin this process is challenging; even so, it’s essential to get the first course right since it is harder to accomplish in subsequent courses when curriculum content becomes more specialized and creates a heavier cognitive load on the learner and learning processes. Refer to Appendices B and C for instruments and

course artefacts. A design-based research methodology was selected as a framework for this research since it allows for multiple iterations of a design to examine the learning processes that are taking place, moving beyond the superficial testing of tools and specific interventions.



### **Chapter 3: Method**

*Anyone can criticize a house, not many can build one.*

This chapter covers the selection of the research methodology, course selection justification and criteria, participants, course description, review of design principles, integration of social media networks, overview of data collection, data analysis, and assuring credibility and trustworthiness.

### **Selection of the Research Methodology**

The study was conducted using a design-based research (DBR) methodology, which involves the developing, testing, investigating, and refining of the learning environment, including the tools, curriculum, activities, software, and theoretical constructs for the design (Reeves, 2006, p. 58). This section provides a theoretical framework for the study and includes a conceptualization of the pedagogy of writing, technology, digital practices, and the learner, followed by a theoretical model for learning based on a combination of transference theory, virtual communities of practice and professional identity formation.

Within the field of education technology, Hulme (2012) observed that technology is “breaking down traditional barriers separating academic research from teaching, work-based learning and informal learning” (p. 247-248). However, Amiel and Reeves (2008) noted that frequently educational technologies have failed to deliver in terms of impact on educational outcomes (p. 29-30). They believe that traditional investigative methods, such as predictive research, provide insufficient guidance regarding the use of such tools in educational settings (p. 30). Moreover, Reeves, Herrington, and Oliver (2005) found, “Many researchers continue to conduct studies that principally seek to determine the effectiveness of the delivery medium, rather than the instructional strategies and tasks” (p. 96). Amiel and Reeves suggest that our basic understanding of technology needs to

shift and focus not just on the hardware, but also “on the complex interactions of human, social, and cultural factors” (p. 30). They further reported: “Indeed it would be idealistic to expect significant and transferable results from a one- time study of a technological intervention. Using iterative cycles of design and re-design allows for the investigation of these critical variables and limitations, generating more transferable and useful results” (p. 35).

In addition, Grosbeck (2009) reported that educators, selecting technologies that are suitable for education, should consult with all educational actors, teachers, students, administrators and researchers (p. 481). And despite the fact that educators are meant to benefit from educational researchers, practitioners rarely participate in the research design process (Ameil and Reeves, 2008). Furthermore, Anderson (2005) observed that the absence of innovation in education is directly related to the absence of an effective research and development. Dominant models of educational research, such as correlative tools and the testing of an intervention in isolation fail to stimulate or sustain innovation (Bereiter, 2002). Accordingly, for education to rise to the challenges of networked learning innovation is necessary (Friesen & Anderson, 2004).

Anderson (2005) defined design-based research as “a method developed for conducting educational research that focuses on systematic development and evaluation of interventions in operating educational contexts” (p. 2). Accordingly, The Design Based Research Collective (2014) proposed that competent design-based research exhibits five characteristics: (1) designing learning environments and developing learning theory are interwoven, (2) the process of designing instruction and developing theory are enacted through iterations or cycles of design, enactment, analysis, and redesign, (3) initial designs are developed based on theories in the literature (4) the designs will

eventually lead to theories for practitioners, and (5) the process should also rely on the implementation of trusty and credible research methods (p. 5). The objective of conducting design-based research is to solve complex problems in educational practice and advance knowledge regarding the process of designing and developing learning environments (van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney, & Nieveen, 2006).

Unlike traditional research methods, design-based research “promotes the reflective and long-term foundation upon which such research can be undertaken (Ameil & Reeves, 2008, p. 37). In a meta-analysis examining ten years of design-based research methodology investigating ICT learning environments, Wang and Hannafin (2005) found strong supporting evidence that design-based research was a good methodological fit for evaluating instructional processes and developing theory. Even though MacDonald (2008) reported that design-based research was most likely the best fit research method for investigating CoP, Wang and Hannafin (2005) reported in their meta-analysis that CoPs in classroom settings have not been investigated using design-based research methodologies. Having educators and researchers cooperate in the early stages of research indicates a new direction in methodologies that promises to improve the value educational technology research (Ameil & Reeves, 2008). Ameil and Reeves (2008) contend, “This negotiation in turn can help eliminate the type of studies that investigate the “affordances” of devices for the sake of novelty” (p. 36). Thus, a design-based research methodology allowed for the thoughtful exploration and examination of web 2.0 tools in the context of educational settings (Grosseck, 2009).

This design-based research project took place at a Canadian university and entailed the redesign of a professional writing course. The redesign included the incorporation of digital literacies, social networks, and the fostering of professional

identity to meet the demands of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. The first iteration of the study addressed the following research questions:

- What problems might educators face when integrating social media into a generic introductory professional writing course for multi-majors?
- How can professional identity formation be facilitated through social media in order to bridge the transition from the everyday practices of learners to professional practices?

The first iteration was followed by two subsequent iterations; the second iteration addressed the sociological construction of social media practice and the third addressed the cognitive factors of the course design.

### **Course Selection, Justification and Criteria**

A cornerstone course offering of the Professional Writing Minor Program was chosen for the research study, Advanced Composition and Professional Writing, a six-credit yearlong course that provides students with an introduction to professional writing and begins the process of developing professional identity. Thus, this course has the greatest impact in the professional writing program because it offers ample time for learners to adapt to and adopt a number of new technologies. One of the goals of the redesign is to identify and bridge the gap between academia and professionalism.

Another goal is to identify barriers to performance and address them effectively in the course design. The final goal is to explore ways to incorporate social media into higher education in order to accomplish academic learning objectives and help learners attain core competencies in the field of professional writing. Moreover, a vital element missing in the course was digital literacy. The course focus was on 20<sup>th</sup> century

professional writing competencies, primarily focused on the written word with a notable absence of technology incorporation into the curriculum.

**Advanced composition and professional writing.** Prior to the redesign of the course, students completed the following assignments: autobiography, profile, interview, review, and feature article. Moreover, the course was taught employing paper draft workshops and a 20<sup>th</sup> century textbook published in the 1970's. Course work was shared with members of the draft workshop and instructor. Students were given permission to write on any topic and approached writing as generalists rather than developing a specific domain expertise. The course, as taught, did not include multimedia projects, online publishing, or social media.

**Published course description.** This course is intended for students already in control of the essentials of composition who wish to develop their ability to write effectively for professional purposes. Emphasis is placed on writing for specific audiences within a variety of rhetorical situations and on peer revision and editing in a workshop format.

**Structure of the course.** The yearlong course meets during the fall and winter semesters and includes 26 weekly meetings.

### **Intervention 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration**

The following course redesign is the first prototype of the course that incorporated a social media and professionalism component; its elements are derived from the literature review and subsequent design principles presented in the previous chapter. The instructor who was also the lead researcher designed the course environment.

**Course texts.** Texts for the course included a text on complex grammar and style and a text introducing non-media specialists to the rhetoric of multimedia.

- *Portfolios for Technical and Professional communicators.* Herb J Smith & Kim Haimes-Korm. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.  
*White space is not your enemy: a beginner's guide to communicating visually through graphic, web & multimedia design.* Kim Golombisky & Rebecca Hagen. Oxford: Focal Press, 2013, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.
- *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. Joseph M. Williams & Joseph Bizup. Boston: Longman P, 2010.
- *Writing for Multimedia and the Web*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Timothy Garrand. Oxford: Focal Press, 2006.

### **Course Projects**

**The following elements were incorporated in into the first iteration of the redesign exercise. New elements are labelled as such.**

- NEW: Autobiography – Students tailor this piece for the About Page on their e-portfolios
- NEW: Oral and visual presentation– Each student is assigned to present a chapter from one of the course textbooks. Oral presentations are a necessary competency for professional writers.
- NEW: Job application project, consisting of an updated resume and cover letter. The purpose of this project is to help students articulate competencies, understand the current job market, and develop customized learning objectives for the course. To complete an authentic project, students are encouraged to find jobs that they are qualified for and interested in and to apply.
- NEW: Visual resume – Multimedia alternative to the traditional paper resume.

- NEW: Editor part 1– Formal proposal letter to the instructor for an editor position on the course community website; students visualize and plan domain specific content for the course.
- Profile – This project involves intensive research and includes a library visit and lecture from a research specialist.
- Interview – Requires obtaining a consent form and following professional interview protocols
- Instruction set – Multimedia project using online comic strip software to present a visual rendition of a traditional instruction set.
- Feature article
- Review article
- NEW: Interactive multimedia project
- NEW: Weblog – in class prewriting exercises tailored to class projects.
- NEW: Editor Part II – publishing and managing a blog on the course community website
- NEW: Social media project – promoting publications on community blog, developing social networks and professional identity
- NEW: E-Portfolio – professional portfolio of writing samples from the course
- Participation – In-class work; including writing exercises, reading quizzes, participation, and class preparation.

**The integration of social media networks.** The course is designed to integrate class projects into real world activities by publishing them on a blog intended for and read by a larger community outside of the classroom. For this purpose, a community website was founded for the students enrolled in the professional writing program to provide them



with opportunities to share their work as professionals and experience an authentic Community of Practice. Google Analytics report 5,000 to 10,000 unique visitors follow links to the website monthly. At the beginning of the course, students are asked to select an area of the website to develop content expertise, by creating and publishing their course projects specifically for their section of the website. Course projects include: a profile, interview, review, feature article, and interactive web project. At the end of the course, students design an electronic portfolio to provide further evidence of their online and professional proficiency, one that incorporates projects from all relevant coursework that they completed while enrolled at the university. In addition, students were expected to publicize their work on a number of social media platforms. Refer to *Figure 7* for an overview of the course redesign. The course projects feed into three digital realms, a community website where the students act as editors, planning, producing, and publishing web content for a large number of readers; social media platforms, where their published course content is pushed and pulled through networks establishing a relationship of readers; and on their e-portfolios, which provide a digital portrayal of their professional accomplishments.

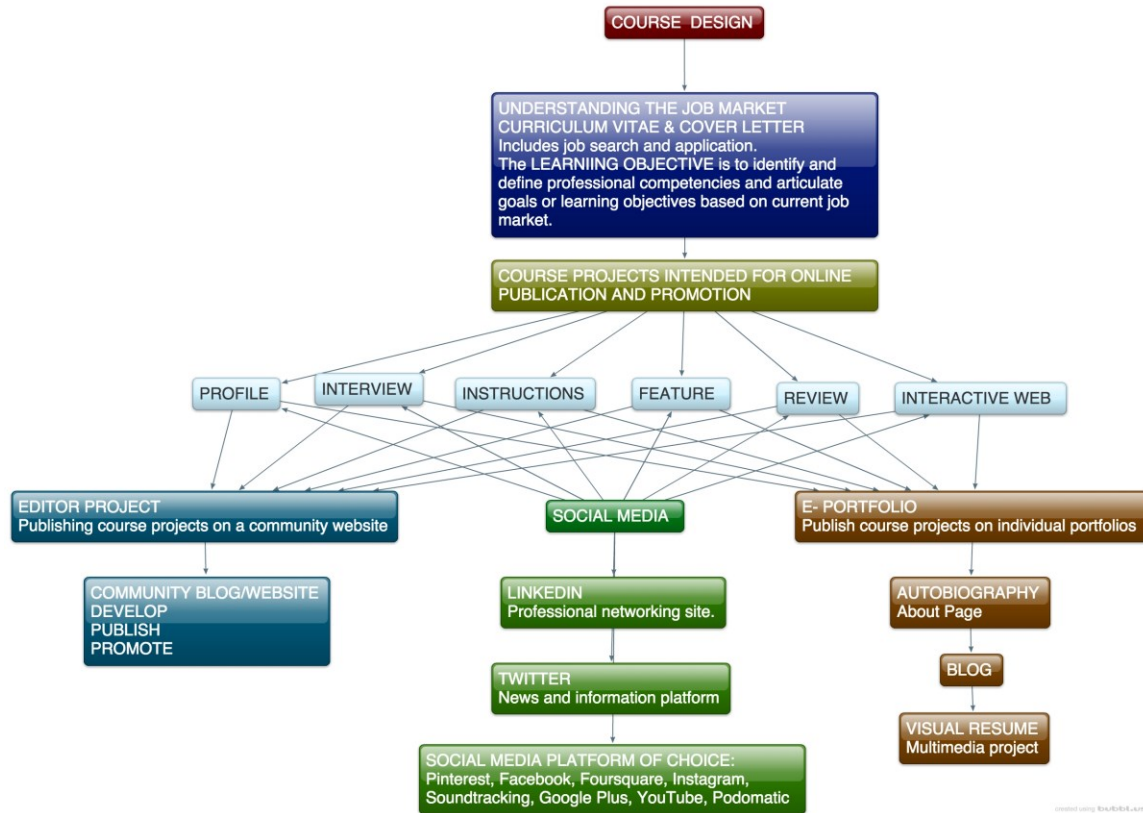


Figure 7. Outline of the course redesign

Students determined their level of participation in the social media project within parameters by designing equivalent projects that they are comfortable performing, and in this sense, negotiate how to fulfill course requirements; for example, by substituting paper submissions in lieu of publishing on blogs. In this sense, the course respected individual practices regarding social media. The course establishes an educational Community of Practice that respects differences and demands high levels of professionalism. Refer to *Figure 8* to observe the relationship of social network platforms utilized in the course redesign. Students were assigned to select a minimum of three platforms, including LinkedIn and Twitter. Their objective was to practice social writing and grow networks.

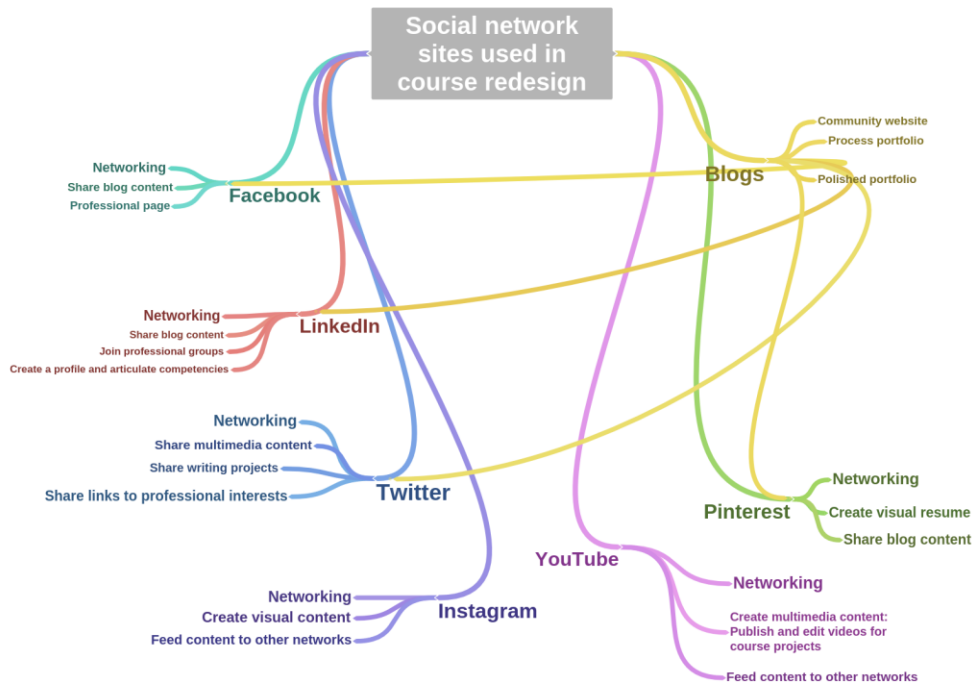


Figure 8. Social network sites used in course design.

The workflow of the course for each project entails the production of a first draft that is peer reviewed as many as two times for each manuscript in small group draft workshop sessions that take place on blogs. Next, students produce a final draft and publish it with an introduction to the piece that requires meta-cognition or an understanding of its production and current and future learning objectives. This is followed up with the publication of the piece on the community website and the promotion of the piece on social networks, utilizing the Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook accounts of learners and social media accounts associated with the website: Montrealites. The final step in the process was completing a reflexivity exercise on professionalism identity. The following week, students examined the results of their social media activity through Google Analytics. Examining readership of publications, in

terms of social sessions and demographics, facilitated learners' understanding of their emergent professional identities.

### **Overview of Data Collection**

Anderson and Shattuck (2012) reported the following conditions for DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH: (1) being situated in a real educational context, (2) focus on the design and testing of a learning environment, (3) use mixed methods data collection, (4) involve multiple iterations, (5) involve a collaboration between researchers and practitioners, (6) employ an evolving design that leads to practical design principles and grounded theory, and (7) have an impact on actual practice. Reeves (2006) elucidated the following process involving three phases for conducting design-based research:

- Preparing the experiment by clarifying learning objectives in a theoretical context.
- Testing the instructional design by collecting data in context in iterative cycles.
- Reflecting on the results, establishing design principles for instruction and establishing trust and generability in the findings.

*Figure 9* provides an overview of the entire duration of the design-based research study:

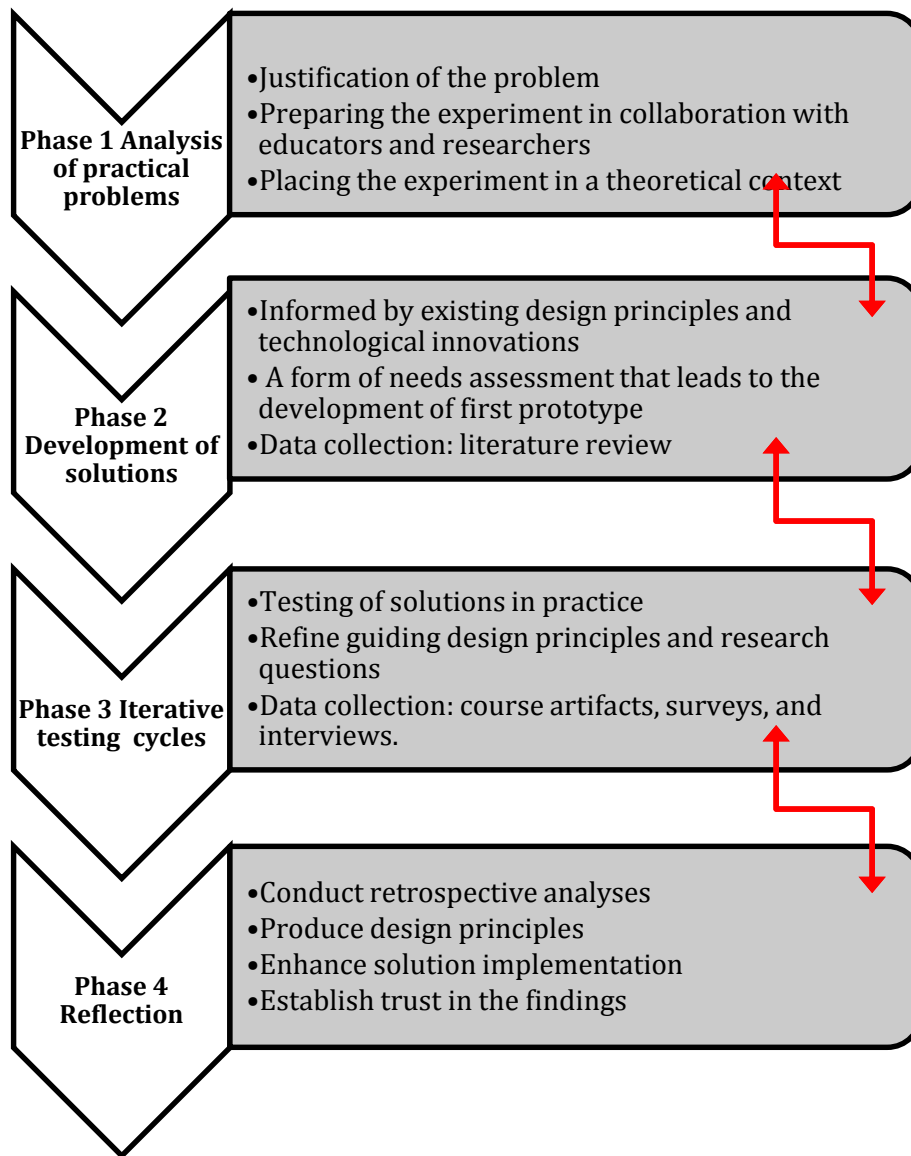


Figure 9. Phases and activities for conducting a design study. (Adapted from Reeves, 2006)

See Appendix B for instruments and Appendix C for course interventions.

**Revision of course design.** Design-based research on its own is not a pure methodology, but rather an approach to conducting research that utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods. Furthermore, this form of research avoids the isolation of specific variables and examines the process of instruction rather than the effectiveness of tools (Clark, 2001; Creswell, 2003; Herrington et al, 2007; van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney, & Nieveen, 2006). The research design is based on established theoretical

foundations and the goal of the research, to inform practice, centers around the establishment of design principles and guidelines for education practice (Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer & Shauble, 2003). Herrington et al (2007) observed, “The iterative nature of design-based research means that a single implementation is rarely sufficient to gather enough evidence about the success of the intervention and its affect on the problem situation”; however they also noted that “it is impossible to describe the nature of the second and subsequent iterations of the intervention, because they are so totally dependent on the findings of the first iteration”. For this reason, the design of the study, research questions, data collection process, and design principles and artefacts were refined in subsequent iterations.

**Revision of design principles.** At the end of each design iteration, based on the results of the data collection and further research into the literature, the design guidelines or principles for the course interventions were revised.

**Revision drafts of instructional artefacts.** At the end of each design iteration, instructional artefacts were revised based on feedback from data collection, journal notes made by the practitioner, and the subsequent revision of the draft principles guiding the course design; including such items, for example, as the course outline, projects, course procedure, and class activities.

**Follow-up survey of students.** Kramer-Simpson, Newmark, and Ford (2015) recommend that students be contacted well after the end of the course to determine the actual benefits of a classroom intervention rather than limiting research results to learning outcomes and perceived benefits at the end of course. For example, Wilson and Ford (2003) and Cook, Thralls and Zachary (2003) contacted Technical Communication graduate students for their perspectives post-graduation up to ten years late to determine

if as practitioners in the field they had been prepared for post-graduation careers. A follow up survey to the course was distributed to students who participated in the research study and include the following questions:

- Rate the overall quality of the course
- Rate the relevance of the course
- Ask students to report on where they are now professionally
- Ask students to describe the types of professional writing they are doing today and have done post graduation from the course

### **Assuring Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Barab and Squire (2004) noted that when “a researcher is intimately involved in the conceptualization, design, development, implementation, and researching of a pedagogical approach, then ensuring that researchers can make credible and trustworthy assertions is a challenge” (p. 10). Thus, prior to conducting the study, research ethics approval was granted by Concordia University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, the Office of Research. To maintain research ethical standards, in the absence of the instructor, a co-researcher was invited to the class to explain the research and distribute to and collect from students consent forms for participation in the study. An information letter providing a description of the research was attached to the consent form. At the meeting, participants were provided with the opportunity to give free and informed consent and made aware that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the duration of the research. In addition, the co-researcher collected all confidential data, including the survey and interview/questionnaire responses. The instructor did not view the responses until the end of the course after grades had been submitted. Moreover, the identity of the students is being kept confidential. It was further expressed to students

that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that their withdrawal would have no effect on their course grade.

Students were provided with the questions during class time and they were asked to email their responses to the co-researcher. In this way, their instructor had no knowledge of student responses to the questions and confidentiality was maintained. As it relates to addressing the issue of researcher's bias, first, "peer scrutiny of the research project" (Shenton, 2004, p. 67) was used to take care of the trustworthy issues of the qualitative data, as well as, the overall research design. Second, since the data for both the quantitative and qualitative methods was collected online, the co-researcher had no direct contact with students; therefore, it was less likely that they were affected by the possible biases of researchers. More detailed methodological information is reported in the method sections within the subsequent chapters. All iterations of the study provide a methodology section specific to that particular iteration, including a discussion of the instruments, participants, and procedures followed. In alignment with design-based research, a number of outside educators and researchers were also consulted throughout the study.



## **Chapter 4: Implementation of the First Iteration**

*He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin*

## Summary

Social media has become an established practice among a broad range of professional communicators; however, research indicates that it has yet to become a prevalent component in professional writing courses. Additionally, the competences surrounding social media practices and the pedagogy to incorporate such competences are not well established. Compounding this shortcoming is the problematized nature of social media technologies for learners as being a source of their personal identity; thus instructors must transform learners' everyday practices that inform their personal identity into professional practices that inform their professional identity. This study employed a design-based research study to explore the following questions: What problems might educators face when integrating social media practices into a professional writing course and how can social media technologies facilitate professional identity formation? A summary of evidence of the first iteration results indicated that introducing professional social media skills in higher education provoked a significant amount of resistance on the part of learners: character-based, technological, physical, and emotional barriers inhibited learner performance, with "fear" being an overwhelming factor for the majority of learners. This iteration also discovered an alarming gap between students' everyday practices on social networks and professional practice. Through course intervention, final results demonstrated a remarkable growth in terms of research participants' beliefs, engagement, insights and goals regarding the usage of social media and levels of professionalism.

## Introduction

To the unschooled, the Internet is often mistaken as a wilderness without laws; however, upon closer examination, society prevails and not only are there basic rules of netiquette, there are also key competencies or digital literacies that can be acquired, particularly in the field of professional communication. The question for educators is does today's digital native have a natural fluency with regards to this landscape or does this native require a civilizing apprenticeship? The digital native was first described by Marc Prensky (2001) in his seminal article "Digital natives, digital immigrants", which declared that the decline of education was based largely on its inability to adapt to the "new" students of today, those born in and after 1980, in the sense, that the new learners "think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (p. 1). Prensky reasoned that educators must embrace the language and style of the "new" students and adopt "future content" and, he emphasized, it's not solely about learning new information, but learning new ways to learn.

Conversely, a number of research studies examining Prensky's digital native paradigm have found no substantiating evidence supporting the existence of a homogenous digital generation (Burhanna, Seeholzer & Salem, 2009; Guo, Dobson, & Petrina, 2008; Jones, Ramanau, Cross, & Healing, 2010; Margaryan, Littlejohn, & Vojt, 2010; Thompson, 2013; Valtonen, Dillon, Hacklin, & Vaisanen, 2010; and Waycott et al, 2010). For example, Margaryan et al (2010) concluded that today's students might not be the "epitomic global, connected, socially-networked technologically-fluent digital natives"; the students in their study preferred "conventional, passive and linear forms of learning and teaching" (p. 439). In addition, Salajan, Schonwetter, and Cleghorn, (2010) in an experimental study design, found no distinctive differences between faculty and

students, natives and immigrants, corroborating previous findings by Waycott et al. (2010) and Guo et al. (2008). Moreover, Burhanna et al (2009) found in spite of being users of technology, “digital natives” rarely participate in sophisticated uses of web 2.0. Furthermore, Jones et al. (2010) discovered that “while a majority of today’s students make common use of downloading and uploading materials, very few actually contribute to blogs or wikis or interact in virtual worlds” (p. 731). Likewise Thompson (2013) examined the theory that digital natives “think and learn” in a distinctly different manner than their predecessors and could only substantiate with small to moderate correlations among digital characteristics, technology use patterns, and productive learning habits. Subsequently, Ng (2012) declared that the lack of empirical evidence for making the case for the existence of a digital native provides a cautionary tale for making any far-reaching generalizations concerning an entire generation (p. 1065).

Persuasively, Bennett et al. (2008) concluded, “It may be that there is as much variation within the digital native generation as between the generations” (p. 779) and made a “call for considered and rigorous investigation that includes the perspectives of young people and their teachers, and genuinely seeks to understand the situation before proclaiming the need for widespread change” (p. 784). Moreover, Corrin, Lockyer and Bennett (2010) discovered that due to the unreliability and inconsistency of students’ reported technology use, it became apparent “that methods of research into the factors around students’ use of technology to support their learning needed to delve further than the current survey-based methods have allowed” (p. 389). Thus, while this phase of the study begins with a preliminary survey measuring student current digital literacy practices and perspectives, it is followed by a more considered and rigorous qualitative investigation of learner’s behaviour. More specifically, the first phase of the study

addressed the following research questions:

- What problems might educators face when integrating social media into a generic introductory professional writing course for multi-majors?
- How can professional identity formation be facilitated through social media in order to bridge the transition from the everyday practices of learners to professional practices?

### **Method**

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to collect data. A six-credit yearlong advanced professional writing course was selected for the study as it provided ample time for learners to adapt to and adopt social networks and allowed for a thorough investigation of the intervention. The study included a convenience sample size of twenty-one participants who were enrolled in the course, consisting of third and fourth year university students, between the ages of 20 to 55 years, male and female, inclusive of both full-time and part-time students, enrolled in the professional writing minor program and taking the course as a mandatory requirement. Students majored in a wide range of fields; including, Mass Communication, Education, English as a Second Language, English Literature, Creative Writing, Geography, History, Political Science, and Journalism. While the instructor was the lead researcher on this project, in order to remove instructor bias, an outside researcher collected the consent forms, interview data, and participated as a second coder of the qualitative data.

**Participants.** Participants were chosen based on their enrolment in the course selected for the redesign and enrolment in the professional writing minor program. Reeves (2006) noted that the choice of participants relates to the goals of the study and the design

research study cannot be isolated from practice (p. 59). Reeves reported, “Most often, participants are students in the researcher’s (or cooperating practitioner’s) own practice, or teachers, parents, support personnel or other people involved in the educational community that is the focus of or context for the study” (p. 59). The students enrolled in the course and participants of the study were third and fourth year university students enrolled in the professional writing minor program who are taking the course as a mandatory requirement. The age range of the students enrolled in this course is normally between 20 to 60 years, primarily female, inclusive of both full-time and part-time students. Students attending the course consisted of international students from Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, national students from the western, middle and eastern provinces, and a composite of provincial Quebecois, inclusive of First Nation, Francophones (French background), and Allophones (English background). Students’ majors were from a wide range of fields; including Mass Communication, Education, English as a Second Language, English Literature, Creative Writing, Geography, History, Political Science, and Journalism.

### **Data Collection 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration**

The following data was collected during the first iteration:

- Social technology survey (See Appendix B: Instruments)
- Interviews on social media practices and objectives (See Appendix B: Instruments)
- Measure of the contribution of articles published on the community website as measured through Google analytics
- Twitter activity
- Course artefacts (See Appendix C: Course Artefacts)

- Instructor observations on significant events during the year, what worked and failed

Refer to *Figure 10* for a graphic representation of an overview of research protocols and of data collected by an outside researcher to eliminate bias. Research questions, guidelines for instruction, and methodology were refined each iteration to address the results of the previous iteration of data collection.

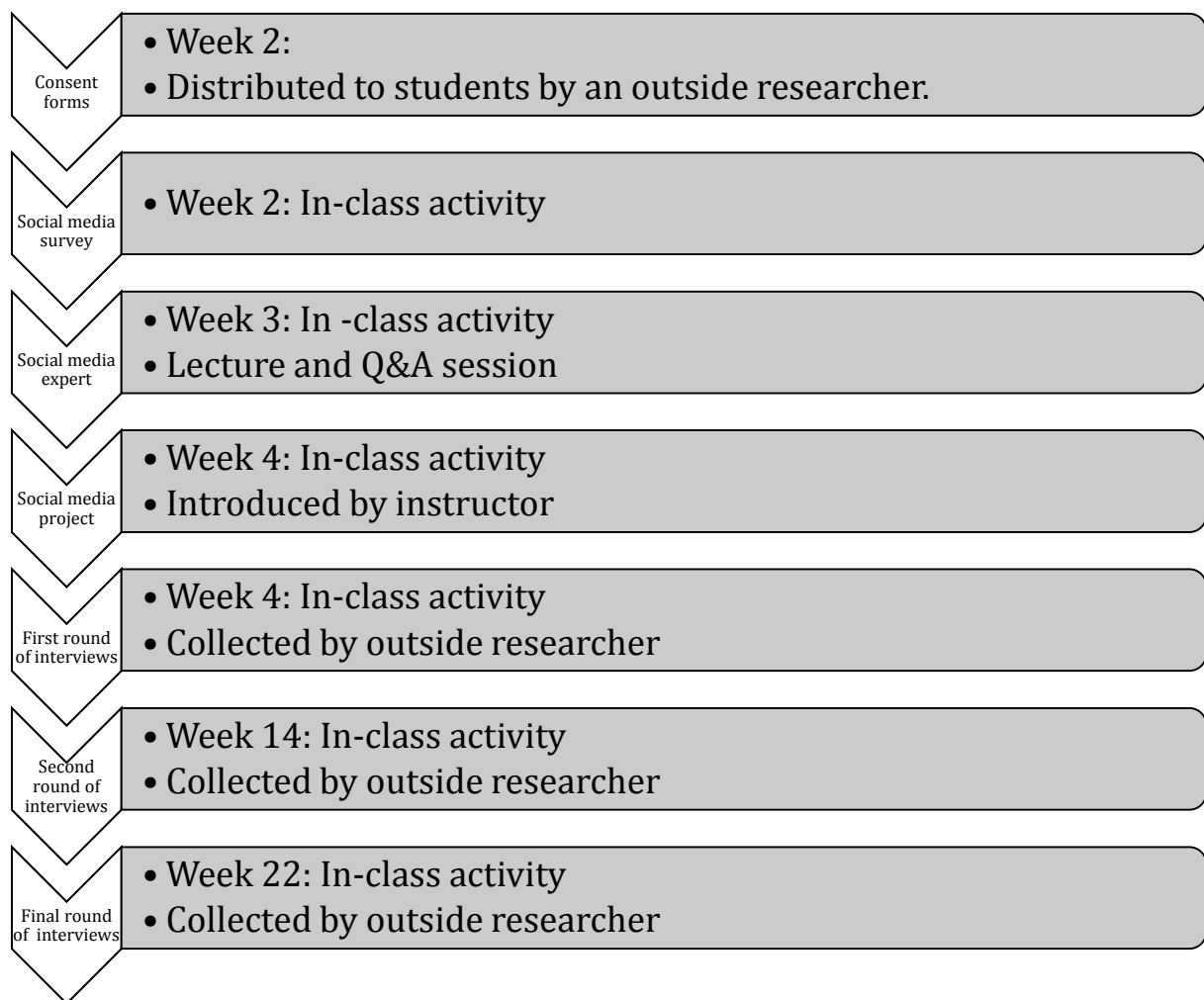


Figure 10. Summary of the first iteration of data collection

**Social media survey.** An online survey of students' current social media practices in terms of knowledge, participation, action, and beliefs was administered to the students at the beginning of the course. This survey provided quantitative information

regarding what social network sites the students are aware of, which ones they are members of, and the level of their participation. Further questions were designed to extrapolate on their general beliefs of their ability to manage social network sites. An analysis of the questionnaire was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Refer to Appendix B for the survey and interview questions. The instrument was based on Christensen and Knezek's (1999) stages of adoption for technology. The survey also examined the following findings from the literature:

- Kennedy, Judd, Dalgarno, and Waycott (2010) discovered that advanced technology users are in the minority and rudimentary technology users make up the bulk of current students (p. 339). This finding was also supported by Jones et al (2010) and Burhanna et al (2009). Students were surveyed about current social media practices.
- Kolikant (2010) found through student interviews that the Internet has hindered their learning capabilities (p. 1390); however, Kolikant et al. (2010) also reported that students who perceived the internet as disempowering and education as “irrelevant and lagging behind in technology” were less likely to apply themselves to their schoolwork (p. 1390). The survey examined students' beliefs regarding social media's role in education.
- A concern regarding the use of social media, according to Burhanna et al (2009), is that not only are students clear about their beliefs regarding the separation of education and social spaces, they also have concerns regarding privacy issues (p. 531). Students about their beliefs regarding social media risks and practices.

SPSS software was used to run descriptive statistics, frequencies and bar charts,



and Pearson correlation tests to determine possible relationships among a number of variables. In addition, data was collected through Google Analytics to measure the impact of student work published on the community website and the influence of social referrals from other social network platforms. This data provided more conclusive information regarding social media practices and was triangulated with the end of year social media memo and Twitter data to confirm self-reported data from the questionnaires.

**Questionnaires.** Next, three separate sets of open-ended qualitative questionnaires on social media were distributed to the students throughout the duration of the course; consisting of the following, a beginning of year set of interview questions, a midyear set of interview questions, and an end of year set of interview questions. This type of questionnaire design was chosen so that students can thoroughly express themselves and thereby provide more detailed information on their perceptions and usage of social media. Prior to students being provided with the first set of questionnaires, they were required to attend a lecture led by a social media expert who spoke to them about the professional usage of social media and the benefits of various social media networks.

The first questionnaire consisting of nine questions was distributed to students during the fall semester before they were actively involved with using social media for the course. The midyear questionnaire focused on learners' progress using social media, its relevance or lack thereof, problems in the past encountered using online networks. The final questionnaire queried the students about the progress made using social media professionally and problems encountered with building a social network, and asked them to specify their digital media strategy and future goals.

**Notes made by practitioner.** During and at the end of the design iteration, the

course instructor kept notes, elaborating on the successes and failures of the course design in terms of its impact on instruction and how subsequent draft principles and artefacts were modified. Confidentiality of students was stringently maintained and notes were limited to a discussion of the instructional design, because not all students participated in the study, and the instructor would not know which students were participating.

**Google analytics.** In addition data was collected through Google Analytics, which measured the social and technical analytics of student work published on the community website, Montrealites, and through Storify, an application that compiled a digital story of social media from a specific hashtag shared by course members.

### **Analyzing and Coding of Qualitative Data**

Questionnaires were examined for general themes and underwent a second process to identify more specific and common emerging themes. Throughout the process, both coders, the instructor and outside researcher, engaged in “memoing” (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). Memoing involved the recording of reflective notes and ideas about what is understood regarding about the data or how sense is made from it (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). Whenever discrepancies surface, coders reflected on the data, discussed and agreed upon the most appropriate category for the information, followed by an explanation to support the decision. This approach was adopted to increase inter-coder reliability Research is more trustworthy and credible when multiple coders are used and when high inter- and intra-coder reliability are obtained (Creswell, 2011). Coded data was used to answer the research questions and inform the redesign of the course.

## **Assuring Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Barab and Squire (2004) noted that when “a researcher is intimately involved in the conceptualization, design, development, implementation, and researching of a pedagogical approach, then ensuring that researchers can make credible and trustworthy assertions is a challenge” (p. 10). Prior to conducting the study, research ethics approval was granted. To maintain ethical standards, in the absence of the instructor, a co-researcher was invited to the class to explain the research and distribute to and collect from students consent forms for participation in the study. In addition, the co-researcher collected all confidential data, including the survey and interview/questionnaire responses. The instructor did not view the responses until the end of the course after grades had been submitted.

The following data was triangulated to confirm or revise interpretation of qualitative data and to adjust the course design:

- Measurement of the contribution of articles published (Google analytics)
- Measurement of social referral and conversions (Google Analytics)
- Twitter activity (as measured through course hashtags)
- End of year individual social media reports on reach and engagement
- Instructor observations on significant events during the year, what worked and failed
- Member checking

## **Results**

The results section answers each research question in depth by examining the data collected through the survey and subsequent interviews. Each research question is stated first, followed by an analysis and discussion of the results in relation to the question. All quotes included in-text are reported verbatim.

### **Barriers Encountered when Integrating Social Media**

The preliminary survey confirmed findings reported in a number of previous studies that the “digital native” does not consist of a homogenous group of learners (Salajan et al, 2010; Corrin et al, 2010; Waycott et al, 2010; Guo et al, 2008; Burhanna et al, 2009; Thompson, 2013; Valtonen et al, 2011; Jones et al, 2010; and Margaryan et al 2010). Accordingly, the survey data reporting on the digital literacy practices of students on social network sites portrayed a heterogeneous group of learners. Comparable to what Burhanna et al (2009) and Jones et al (2010) found, “digital natives” rarely participate in sophisticated uses of web 2.0 even though they spend a great deal of time engage in technology. In spite of the number of hours spent participating on networks, no student professed a strong belief regarding expertise or belief in having the ability to manage social media effectively. The other two areas that students reported a strong agreement on are the belief that social media promotes soft skills and professionalism and on measures of negative perceptions of social media, demonstrating that while students perceive its importance, they maintain, for the most part, a negative stance against its use. Thus, educators should not assume that “digital natives” possess a high degree of digital literacy competencies in spite of the amount of time spent on social networks.

The social media survey revealed a number of significant correlations with respect to reported beliefs surrounding social media practices and three core variables:

level of reported expertise, stage in the process, and interest in using social media. Refer to Table 3 for the results of the correlational analysis.

Table 3. Correlations Among Key Study Variables

<i>Variables Tested</i>	Level of perceived social media expertise	Stage in the process of social media expertise	Level of interest in using social media
Belief in the importance of social media	.606**	.408*	.774**
Belief that social media is a valuable communication skill	.317	.233	.335
Belief that social media develops communication skills	.346	.322	.400*
Belief that social media promotes the development of interpersonal skills	.172	.258	.128
Belief that social media enhances professional development	.603**	.544*	.567**
Belief that social media is intended for personal use	-.129	-.210	-.296
Belief that social media promotes social reputation	.314	.476*	.402*
Belief that social media is harmful to your reputation	-.404*	-.217	-.319
Belief that you have the ability to manage social media effectively	.466*	.451*	.533*
Belief that the costs of social media outweigh the benefits to professional reputation	-.285	-.277	-.153
Belief that social media is used to waste time	-.447*	-.500*	-.376
Belief that social media increase stress and anxiety	-.565**	-.705**	-.635**
Belief that the costs of social media outweigh the benefits to professional reputation	-.285	-.277	-.153

*Note: n = 27, p < .05\*; \*\*p < .01*

A significant positive correlation between the three core variables and a number of beliefs regarding social media: the belief in the importance of social media:  $r(27) = .606, .408, .774, p < .001$ ; the belief that you have the ability to manage social media effectively:  $r(27) = .466, .451, .533, p < .001$ ; the belief that social media enhances professional development:  $r(27) = .603, .544, .567, p < .001$ ; and the belief that you have the ability to manage social media effectively:  $r(27) = .466, .451, .533, p < .001$ ; between two core variables, stage in social media process and interest in social media, and the belief that social media promotes professional reputation:  $r(27) = .476, .402, p < .001$ ; and one core value, interest in social media and the belief that social media develops communication skills:  $r(27) = .404, p < .05$ ; . Thus, students who have a higher level of experience using social media and interest in using social media see its value as a professional development tool; conversely, students with minimal experience need to be convinced of its value to their lives. This group of learners presents the greatest challenge in terms of developing an effective instructional design.

Conversely, A significant negative correlation between the three core variables and a number of beliefs regarding social media was also reported: the belief that social media is used to waste time:  $r(27) = -.447, -.500, \text{ and } -.376, p < .05$ ; and the belief that social media increases stress and anxiety;  $r(27) = -.565, -.705, \text{ and } -.635, p < .001$ ; and between one core variable: level of perceived social media expertise and belief that social media is harmful to your reputation:  $r(27) = -.404, p < .05$ . Overall the sector of the student population that was not active on or familiar with social media expressed a more negative impression of the activity, and expressed little interest or willingness to participate on social networks, and presented a significant barrier to the integration and practice of social media in the higher education classroom. Regardless, we believe that

respecting the privacy concerns and beliefs of students with regards to social media practices is of utmost importance, particularly where the study took place, in Quebec, where such rights have been legislated.

Prior to students becoming actively involved in using various social media in their professional writing, qualitative data from the pre-social media questionnaire showed that they had significant concerns regarding their practices using various social networks. A number of barriers to social media were identified, including character-based barriers, skills-based, physical, and emotional barriers. Refer to *Figure 11* for examples of reported barriers to performance.



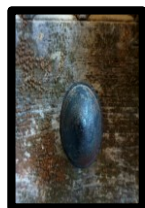
#### Character-based barriers

- Values face-to-face interaction
- Attached to classical modes of writing
- Private and inverted
- No motivation



#### Skills-based barriers

- Inability to obtain followers
- Negotiating the space between friends and strangers
- Lacks the ability to relate to others and communicate
- Needs education and general direction



#### Physical barriers

- Time
- No smart phone



#### Emotional barriers

- Vulnerable
- Alienated
- Anxious
- Disdain



## Figure 11. Identifying barriers to social media performance

Issues of privacy, determining what is appropriate and inappropriate communication and the impacts of social network interaction on their professional and personal lives were common concerns shared among most participants. More detailed responses related to barriers included, “needs general education and guidance and don’t know how to start”; “don’t know much about social network sites and fear ruining reputation”; “fear of exposure and alienation”; and “don’t know how to communicate with strangers or reach out”. Unfortunately, emotional barriers pose a formidable challenge for educators.

The most commonly reported barrier to performance on social network platforms was fear. Participants reported experiencing a number of fears regarding social media use; for example, students reported the following fears: “people seeing who you really are; your authentic or true self”, “sharing too much information makes you vulnerable because your privacy is at risk”, and “being rejected by others on social networks, can impact your professional and personal lives”. Such fears present a significant barrier to the integration of social networks in the classroom. Refer to *Figure 12* for a summary of fears expressed by participants in the study.



Figure 12. Summary of fears related to social media performance

In accordance with Xu and Yang’s (2010) and Rodriquez (2011) findings, social media presents significant challenges to levels of comfort and the psychological safety of learners. Contrary to Rodriquez’ (2011, p. 54) suggestion that privacy might be a nonissue for learners in the age of Google searches, it appears to have been a serious concern for participants enrolled in the course. A number of participants reported that they were reluctant to participate on social media networks due to the understanding that “everything said can be taken out of context”, and one can “boost or destroy their career”. Although many students possessed a level of reluctance to participate on social media networks, they were willing to make an attempt. As the course progressed, the majority

of students indicated that they were becoming “more interested in building connections and readers” and wanted more experience producing forms of social writing. Many of the purported fears are related to the emotional challenges that all writers face (Kellogg, 2006); and overcoming the fears transform them into desirable skillsets: establishing relevance, developing expertise (knowing), being reputable, creating original works and accepting critical feedback.

Within the field of professional communication, social media is a core competency (Beetham & Sharpe, 2007; McKinsey, 2013; Moshiri & Cardon, 2014; Phillips, 2012; and Wenger & Owens, 2012); thus students should be capable of utilizing social media platforms as basic field competency. Moreover, within the context of the classroom, social media can be incorporated to complement and improve the application and understanding of basic course content and a number of core writing skills as set forth by Kellogg (2006); including problem solving, language use, relationship of reader, managing emotional challenges, and domain specificity (Kellogg, 2006). For this reason, students were asked to reflect on social writing to determine if writing produced for social network platforms, as defined for the purposes of this research, can be differentiated from classical modes of persuasive writing and to understand how novice writers perceive this form of writing. Brodock (2012) defined social writing as “[c]ontent, primarily in written format, that is designed to be *optimal for social sharing*” (2012). Refer to *Figure 13* for a summary of learners’ perspectives on social writing.

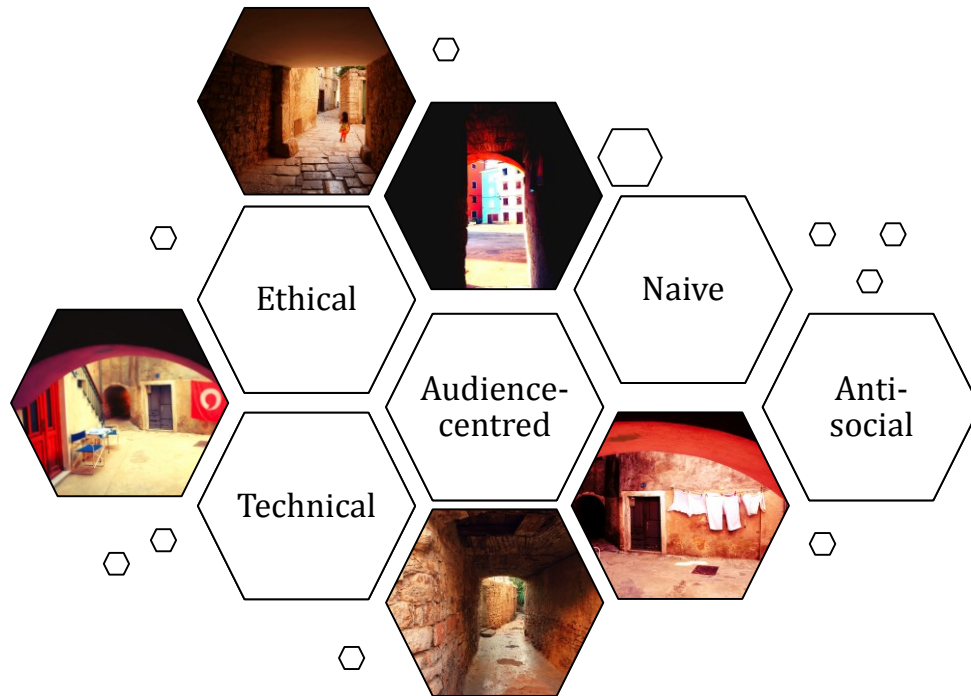


Figure 13. Summary of learners' perspectives on social writing

Social writing is a domain-specific writing practice requiring unique skillsets that thus far have not been adequately addressed in the literature of writing pedagogy; having students stipulate a definition allows for a theoretical foundation for its practice and a means to approach the task for participants. Students who identified key features of social writing as being ethical, audience-centered or technical proved ready and willing to explore the genre and improve skillsets within this domain; in contrast, students who held views that social media is the natural domain of their generation and easy to accomplish and those who took an anti-social stance resisted the incorporation of social media into the course design. Examples of each category of learner are provided in *Figure 14*.

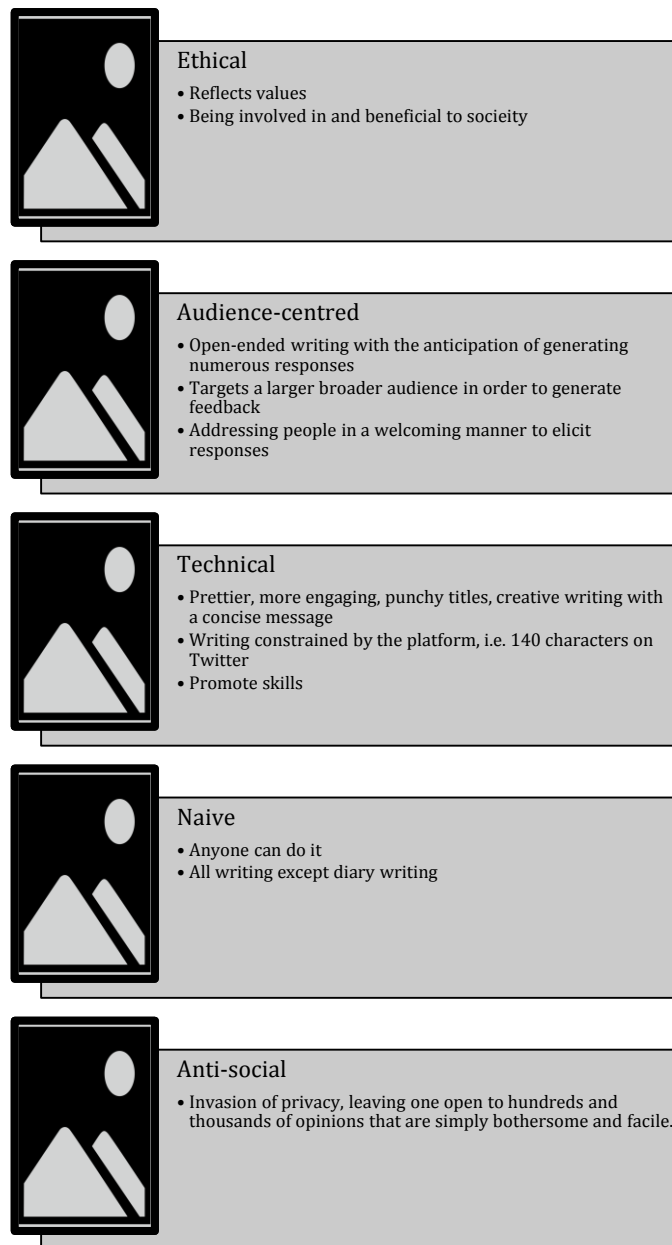


Figure 14. Categories of learners

A key feature of social writing, as identified by students, is that it's a reflective process, involving the creation of social media content that is fresh and concise for the

purpose of eliciting feedback while maintaining an ethical position. Caetano (2015b) found, “In some circumstances, reflexivity is the guiding principle of practices, but in many other situations, dispositions are the main explanatory factor” (p. 229). Disposition might aid in the transferences of skills that cross over into the social media domain, while reflexivity aids in fostering new practices. Ryan (2014) further expounds on this concept, “The ability to make effective choices that consider both the intentions of the individual and the conditions in which the writing is produced, is paramount in this conceptualisation of the writer” (p. 61). Ryan argues that the skill of a writer can be measured by how they incorporate and negotiate knowledge from previous contexts in a new environment (p. 61). The writing process, the “self-conscious” designing of text, is both reflexive and ultimately agentic (Archer 1995; and Ryan, 2014). Ryan further contends that 30 years of research on writing has proven that developing expertise as a writer is more complex than simple knowledge transfer and is closer to mediated learning that occurs through reflexive processes.

Participation on social networks was for the most part was rather anaemic and tentative and dropped off as the year progressed. Perhaps, the yearlong length of the course contributed to the drag in interest or perhaps the psychological barriers reported in the interview played a major role. Google Analytics as reported a clear drop in reach of the articles and sparse to none social network referrals contributing to website traffic. See *Figures 15 and 16*. The first figure illustrates the drop off in readership by years end and the second, the number of social referrals leading traffic to the website.

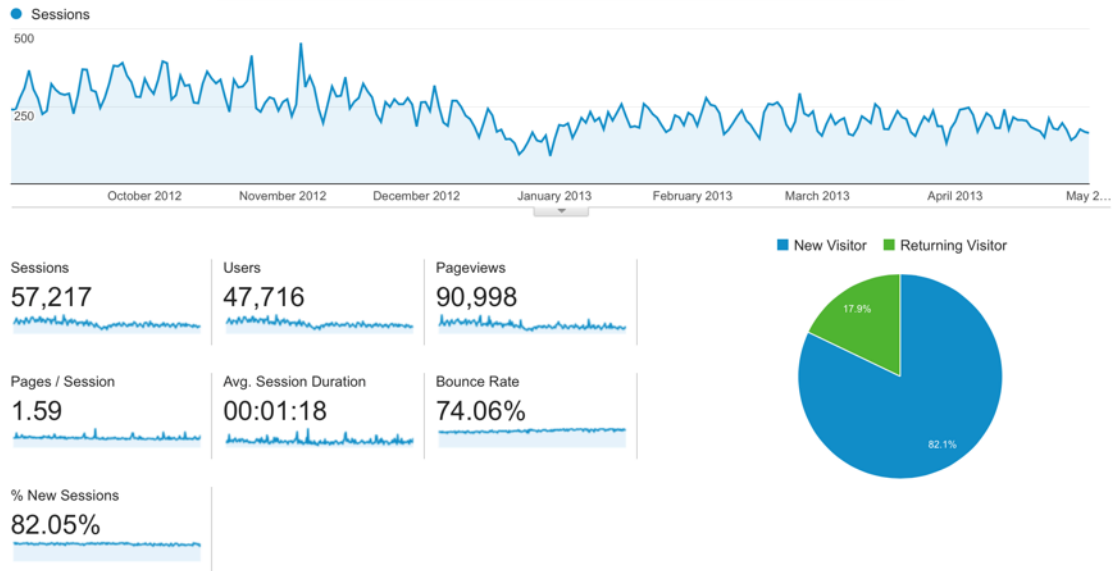


Figure 15. Website traffic for the academic year

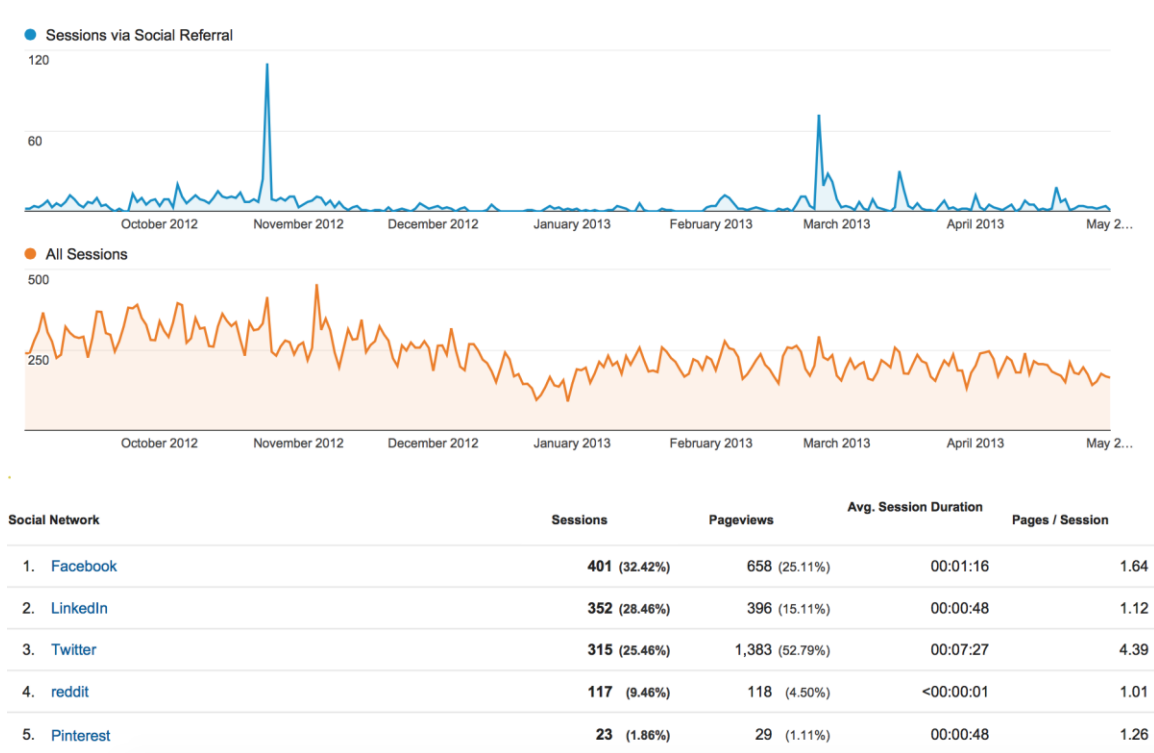


Figure 16. Number of social referrals through the year

Conversely, end of year social media projects reported a more positive story: students narrated a number of successes and struggles operationalizing unfamiliar social network sites and demonstrated progress in terms of the beginning of year Google search

of their name and end of year Google search of their name, in terms of number of professional listings in the search results.

### **Facilitating Professional Identity Formation**

Based on students' understandings and current practices of social media, a significant gap exists as to how these sites are currently being used and they should be used to improve their lives. Moreover, within the field of professional communication, social media is also a core competency or skill (Beetham & Sharpe, 2007; McKinsey, 2013; Moshiri & Cardon, 2014; Phillips, 2012; and Wenger & Owens, 2012); thus students should be capable of utilizing social media platforms as basic field competency.

Through course practices, students garnered a more professional understanding of social media platforms. Course digital literacy practices helped many of them understand that their everyday practices of social media were not in line with professional standards. Prior to the course, students used social media primarily for personal reasons; by the end of the course, the majority of students were questioning the appropriateness of their previous online behaviour. Refer to *Figure 17* to observe examples of student's initial understanding of social media practices and behaviour and subsequent insights garnered from the course intervention.



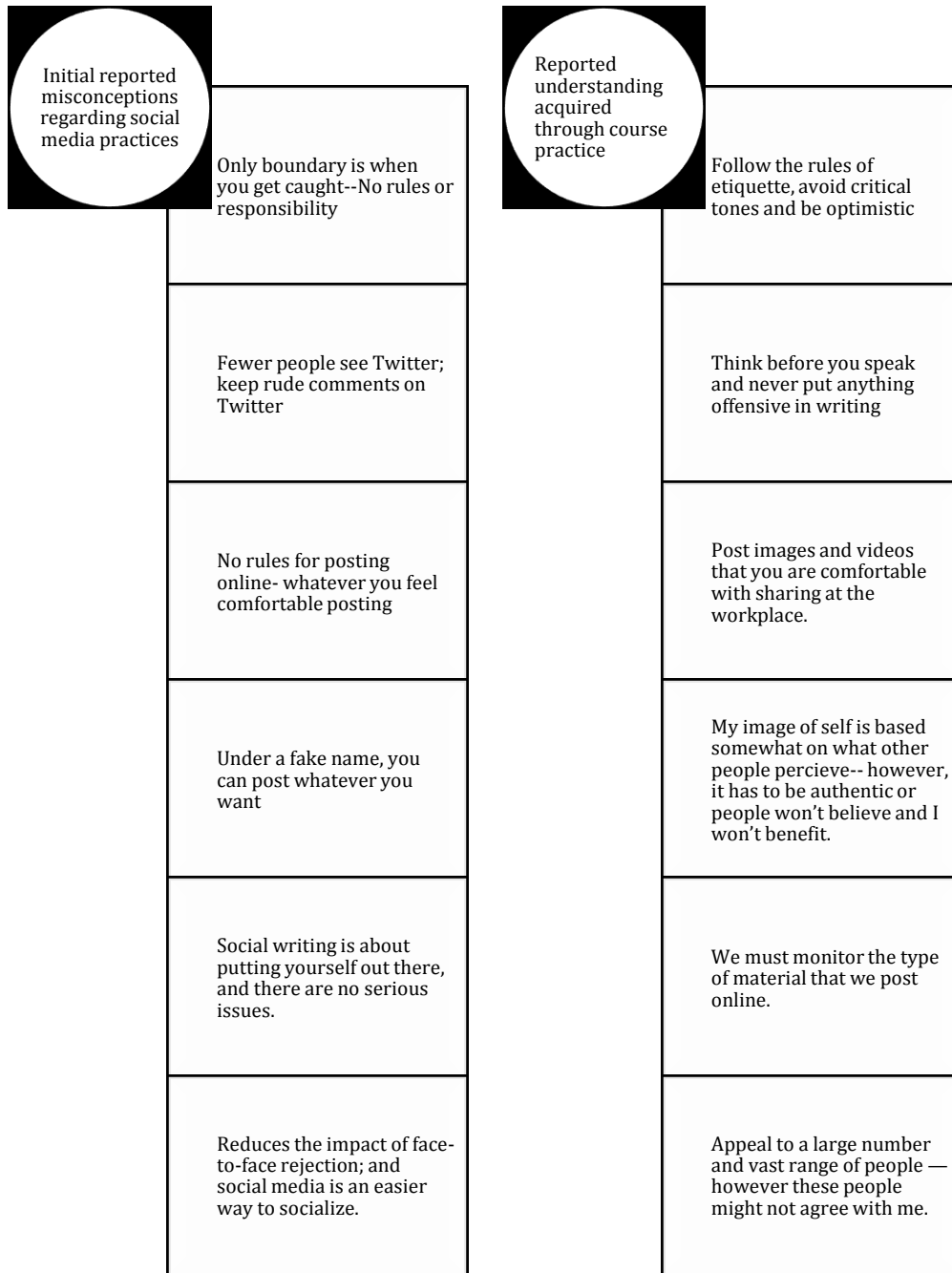


Figure 17. Narrowing the gap between everyday social media practice and professional practice

At the start of the course, learners’ practices on various social media networks were actually hindering them from taking advantage of these resources to develop competencies and advance their professional lives. Subsequent questionnaires demonstrated a significant level of improvement between the initial gap identified at the

beginning of the course and professional practice; substantial progress became evident once students were actively involved in the social media project, which directly affected their levels of engagement and overall professionalism. For example, students shared that they were now “learning how to engage and increase interactivity”, “changed in terms of the type of content posted on social network profiles”, kept trying new strategies, hands-on, teach yourself through trial and error”, and now have a better understanding of what “his or her professional brand were”. These follow-up responses not only indicate progress, but also represent an increase in social media competencies. The altered perception of social media and practices that emerged during the course suggests that there is a legitimate mandate for educators to integrate social media resources into higher education to foster digital literacy competencies.

The existing gap between students’ misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding social media use hindered the effective use of these online resources for professional development purposes. Fortunately, the outcomes of this study reveal that educators can play a major role in mending this gap. For example, at the beginning of our study, students demonstrated a profound lack of understanding regarding social media and its potential to shape their professionalism, and through anchored activities on social networks, digital literacies and a number of core writing competencies were developed. The value of these digital literacy skills is unchallenged, but “significant challenges to inculcating them remain” (Julien & Barker, 2009, p. 16). Perhaps, we, as educators, can greatly impact students’ misperceptions and practices by providing an opportunity for them to perform as actors in authentic settings on social networks. Furthermore, integrating social media practices into the course design fostered students’ core digital literacy competencies, which led to a better understanding of how social networks can be

utilized to shape professionalism.

A number of the barriers inhibiting the effective integration of social media into higher education were attributable to both deficiencies in learners' digital competencies and a lack of engagement with or interest in social media. Due to the wide range of beliefs and practices on social media platforms, a constructivist approach was incorporated into the course design; thus, participants had a role in determining learning outcomes of the course with regards to the social media project in terms of the following items:

- Participants determined their level of participation
- Participants defined their learning objectives
- Participants expressed feasible end goals

The complexity of exposing oneself on social networks requires educators to balance course needs with the psychological safety of learners; as a result, learners were given the opportunity to determine reasonable levels of engagement for the social media project or develop an alternative offline project. Refer to *Figure 18* for examples of levels of engagement established by students.



Figure 18. Levels of engagement

Student preferences for engagement in the social media project mirrored the preferences of professional writing practitioners in the field. For example, Hedman and

Djerf-Pierre (2013) reported, “The skeptical shunners are journalists who avoid having anything to do with social media” (p. 381), a position shared by a minority of journalists (p. 381). Furthermore, Hedman and Djerf-Pierre found that what they identified as “enthusiastic activists” lead an online life twittering and/or blogging around the clock. This group uses “social media for networking, personal branding and collaboration” (p.381). What they identified as the “social media activist” group, less than 5 percent of all journalists, “shares most of the fundamental professional ideals of other journalists, but differs in its approach to audience adaptation and personal branding” (p. 382). And finally, Hedman and Djerf-Pierre identified a group of journalists they called “the pragmatic conformists” or “journalists who regularly use social media, but who are selective and judicious in their usage” (p. 382). This pragmatics collect information on Twitter and blogs but rarely participate. Hedman and Djerf-Pierre note, “This group is using social media partly because of perceived peer pressure and organizational requirements; they think that they are expected to be up to date with the current trends in the industry and believe that cultivating their social media skills is a professional requirement” (p. 382). The pragmatic group also encompasses the bulk of journalists working in the field. While social media has perceived importance with respect to organizational or corporate values, many professionals remain ambivalent and develop the skill from a variety of stances.

To further shed light on barriers to performance on networks and help students foster strategies to address them, students were asked to develop individualized learning objectives and create feasible end goals. Refer to *Figure 19* for examples of learning objectives established by students.

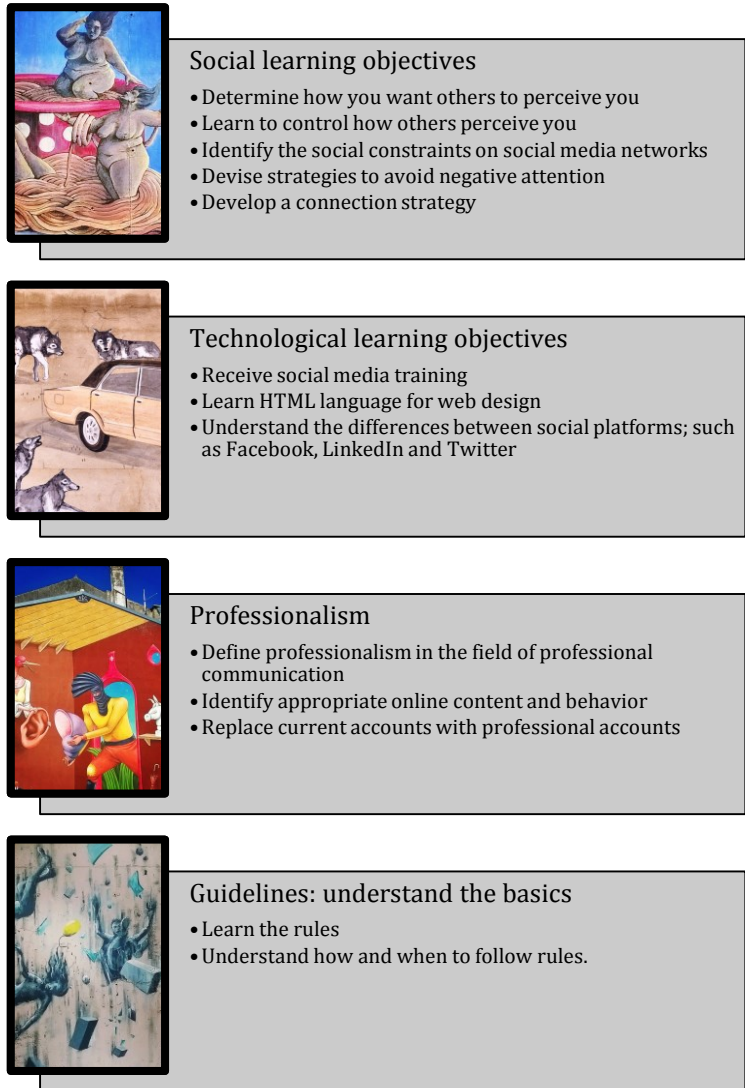


Figure 19. Examples of learning objectives established by students

Students had full control of their social media learning experiences; their success depended solely on achieving learning objectives and criteria they established. It can be argued that the exposure received in the course, both in terms of quality and level of engagement, significantly contributed to students being able to better articulate professional goals as they relate to using social media for self-advancement.

Furthermore, having students develop learning objectives presented a better picture of the

digital and social competencies they perceived they lacked. For example, students' learning objectives included, "the desire to find out how to define appropriate behaviour", "technology training", "and discovering "social media rules". In addition, the majority of students expressed major concerns with regards to having the ability to develop and maintain professional relationships on social networks.

As the course progressed, students became increasingly sophisticated with regards to social media use. Midway through the course, students were also asked to articulate end goals for the social media project and describe what they wanted to achieve by the end of the course. This question differed from the previous one asking them to describe learning objectives for the social media project, in the sense that they were not describing what they wanted to learn, but rather what goals they wanted to achieve. Refer to *Figure 20* for examples of end goals for the social media project.

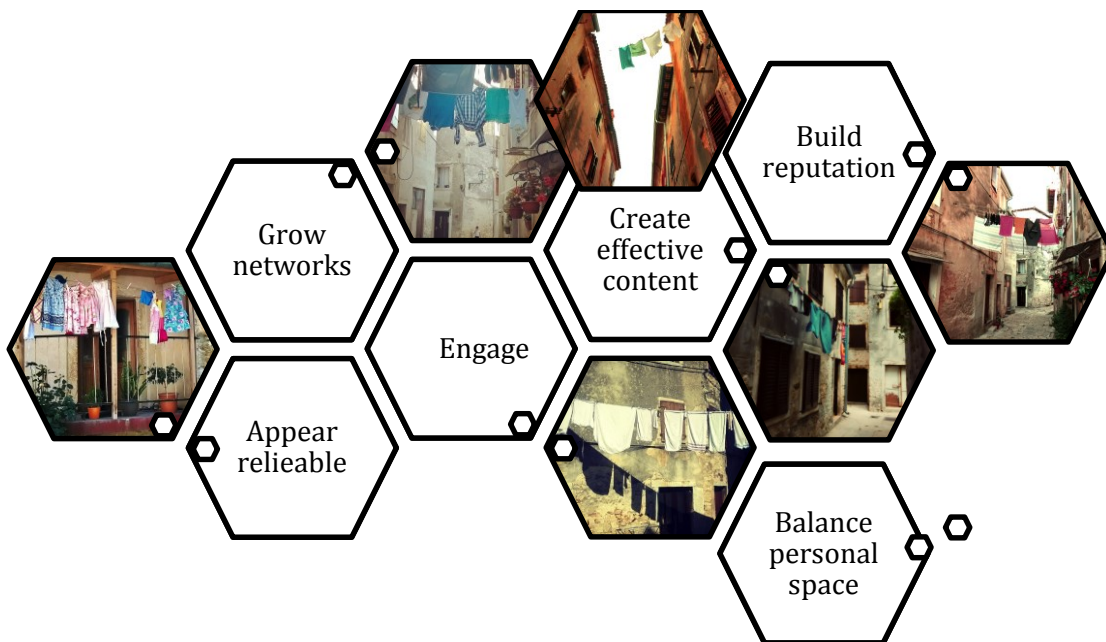


Figure 20. End goals for social media project as defined by learners

As the course progressed, students overcame reluctance to participate on social network sites, particularly when they gained the insight that social media writing is a

standard practice in the field of professional communication. They were able to articulate a number of insights: “we can use digital resources to better ourselves”, “strategy is key to building performance, “social media helps you get connected to people you would never have a chance to meet or to interact with”, “negativity can happen: have positive energy”, you don’t have show everything to everybody”, “never offend anyone”, “social media is a tool for building relationships”, and “there is no end date to this project”.

### **Limitations of the Study 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration**

Limitations of the study include having utilized a convenience sample. In addition, reporting on student surveys is unreliable due to inconsistencies in interpretation of questions. Finally, more follow-up questions should have been conducted to further clarify student responses. Additional limitations of the study concern the use of interviews. Caetano (2015a) observed that while narratives produced for research purposes through interviews can facilitate reflexivity since they produce a break from everyday practices; they are the result of a meeting between the dispositions and expectations of the interview and the researcher (Denzin, 1989). Furthermore, there are individual differences in participants’ ability to express them verbally (Caetano, 2015b, p. 232).

The next iteration of the study should probe students to discover and share the internal conversations that they, as adult learners, have when contemplating their professional identity and how they draw on their internal conversations when participating in virtual communities and explore what happens when this is played out and in what ways these stories create a disorienting drama that contributes to their understanding of themselves and the world they operate in.



## Conclusion

Constructing and developing one's agency for professional purposes can provide students with skills that are required for everyday survival in a neoliberal economy (Jensen & Prieur, 2015; Patsarika, 2014; Ryan, 2014; and Vallas & Cummins, 2015). The results indicated that a number of students lacked agency on social networks and that learners require guidance when articulating modes of online authenticity. The interviews consistently indicated that students were seeking guidance on how to use social networks as tools for professional growth (Archer, 2007; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2014; Holmes, 2015). In spite of this desire, a number of negative emotions were also expressed regarding the introduction of this practice into an academic setting, particularly when students were asked to transform what they considered a personal realm into a professional one.

Researchers have found that negative emotions can break patterns of habitus when spurred by internal conversations (Holmes, 2015; and Maxwell & Aggleton, 2014). According to Maxwell and Aggleton (2014) agency can be understood as a negative drive, a desire for recognition or the possibility of remaking an identity following an injurious performance (p. 802). Maxwell and Aggleton note that the consequences of an emotional event can instigate a process of reflection and ultimately a commitment to practices (p. 802). Maxwell and Aggleton (2014) note, "Fundamentally, emotions become generated by our movement through discursive and affective space, shaping what happens next – be this when they are barely registered, strongly suppressed or simply reacted to" (p. 816). In essence, the interviews functioned as a means to promote reflexivity on the part of the learners and contributed to their professional growth. Thus, combining a reflexive activity to social media projects might in the future

mitigate the psychological barrier to performance. Correspondingly, Holmes (2015) found that reflection could be oriented to action to solve the emotional problem of online social networks (p. 63). Holmes also advocates that reflexivity can be used to avoid emotional online conduct on the part of the user as well (p. 63). Through reflective exercises, students should be asked to explore agency and professional identity, particularly in the context of social network platforms.

Students who had opted out of the social media project maintained an interest in the project in terms of gaining a perspective on the practice through the observation of classroom activities. This result suggests that educators in the field of professional communication should seek a compromise with learners and provide a learning space where students are able to negotiate their roles and thrive, allowing for individual stances, from observers to full-fledge participants on social networks, examining the practices and competencies that are becoming more and more valued by the corporate world, thereby, mirroring a functioning CoP (Community of Practice). This finding is supported by Kramer-Simpson's, Newmark,'s and Ford's (2015) study in which students reported that they were able to negotiate needs of peripheral CoP or client project and the experience helped them transition post graduation into the workforce by building on the social nature of the projects and knowledge gained from developing their professional identity through participation in CoP (p. 12).

## **Chapter 5: Implementation of the Second Iteration**

*If we reject the chaff, we may lose the kernel.*

## Summary

Neoliberal ideology frames markets as being left alone to self regulate; however, in practice, governing structures have served to maintain the status quo and allowed capital elites to reshape labour into flexible markets. As a result, a new form of professionalism has emerged, a professionalism that requires individualization through personal responsibility and self-management. Students enrolled in a university-level course were given questionnaires, which explored their positionality and aspirations with regards to professionalism. Archer's theory of reflexivity and agency was applied as a theoretical framework, and a narrative inquiry methodology was employed to collect data. Presented in a dialogic form, the data illustrated the forms of agency exerted in the classroom by learners and how these inner conversations might lead toward constancy or change, morphostasis or morphogenesis, when students considered ways of being and becoming professional. The findings produced insights on professionalism that would inform the design of learning principles for a curriculum that addresses professionalism in a neoliberal world.

## Introduction

There is an old folk saying: *If we reject the chaff, we may lose the kernel*. A saying which aptly applies to the neoliberal ideology governing our economy and culture, an ideology currently bent on disempowering labour, but one that also provides a means to acquiring work. Neoliberal ideology is based on the libertarian belief of the primacy of the individual and has resulted in establishing themes of personal responsibility and self-management. Even though neoliberal ideology frames markets as being left alone to self-regulate, in practice, governing structures serve to maintain the power of capital elites allowing them to reshape labour into flexible labour markets, providing limited opportunities for social mobility. Thus, a new form of professionalism has emerged, one strenuously tied to real world practices (Beck & Young, 2005, p. 193). Beck and Young (2005) observed that neoliberalism has had a far-reaching impact on professional identity as older forms of knowledge-enabled professionalism are replaced by a less stable professional identity formation (p. 193).

The flexibilization of the workforce relies on individualization, “the process by which the identity of human beings is made an object of reflexivity and intervention” (Jensen & Prieur, 2015, p. 3). Under this form of professionalism, individuals must take responsibility for professional identity as they are removed from being collectively categorized (p. 3). One of the implications of this neoliberal model is that education has taken the responsibility of moving past the traditional boundary of the classroom to encompass the professional world; thus students participating in education must navigate different identities, between the personal identity, the here-and-now one, and the “in-the-make” professional (p. 527).

O'Sullivan et al (2012) noted that integrating professionalism into the curriculum

makes its importance transparent as professional values and behaviours require continuous development. Integrating a structured approach to professionalism through reflexivity provides learners with a means to formulate agency and perhaps achieve social mobility.

During the first iteration of the study, social media was introduced as a core component of a generic professional writing course in order to develop professional practice and inform professional identity. The results revealed a number of psychological barriers to professional performance on social networks, including fear, lack of skills, and misunderstandings regarding online identity practices, for example, a number of students were simply hesitant to break from their everyday practices to harness social media to foster professionalism and very few understood the importance and significance of striving to be professional prior to graduation. Educational research has found that individual agency and competency skills are directly tied to professional aspirations (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Gregory & Jones, 2009). In particular, Biesta and Tedder (2006) contend, “education is the process through which human beings develop their rational faculties, so that they become capable of independent judgement which, in turn, forms the basis for autonomous action (p. 4). The second iteration of the study incorporated narrative inquiry as a methodology to examine the reflexivities on professionalism to answer the following research questions:

- What problems might educators face when integrating social media into a generic introductory professional writing course for multi-majors?
- How can professional identity formation be facilitated through social media in order to bridge the transition from the everyday practices of learners to professional practices?

## Literature Review

In her text, *Making Our Way Through the World*, Archer (2007) explains how reflexivity can make the difference between social mobility and social paralysis. Reflexivity consists of the “internal conversation that takes place in silence without conventions or rules or manners (p. 73). She writes, “We talk silently to ourselves without misunderstanding” (p. 74). Reflexivity is invaluable, Archer argues, in the sense that social mobility is primarily a reflexive task (p. 87). Concerns are expressed through our inner conversations; and our inner conversations lead to the development of objectives or projects, and, ultimately, to practice (Archer, 2007, p. 89).

Thus Archer claims, “We talk to ourselves about society in relation to ourselves and about ourselves in relation to society” (p. 88). In times of crisis, when there is discontinuity or incongruity, individuals often shift into a mode where reflexivity becomes the guiding principle of practice (Archer, 2012, p.17). Archer’s (2007) work provides a rationale for practicing reflexivity. Educators can play a crucial role helping learners create a strong sense of agency and internal conversations might be a key element: “Defining and dovetailing one’s concerns can lead to the development of concrete courses of action or projects, and having projects in mind can lead to establishing satisfying sustainable practices as a way of being” (Archer, 2007, p. 89).

In contrast to Archer’s (2007) theory, Bourdieu’s conceptualization of “habitus” argues that in most cases an individual’s disposition explains behavior (Caetano, 2015b). Habitus is contextually contingent and nonreflexive. While individuals might be capable of forming decisions and making meaning, they are not always fully aware of what Caetano describes as the “complex combination of social factors and determinations that explain their actions” (p. 232). Thus, Caetano contends, it becomes necessary for

educators to encourage learners to move past their field of consciousness and engage in reflexivity (p. 232). Beyond the individual's basis for practices, habitus and reflexivity, there is also an external sociological influence over the individual's decision-making process. Herepath (2014) argues, "The potential bargaining power of collectivities of agents, and their resultant negotiating strength, fosters disparate groups (the cabals and coalitions found in any strategic arena) which are caught in a battle of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic wills" (p. 860) (i.e. for the purposes of this research, the classroom). Archer (2003) has identified this as the second stage of agentic structure, one that informs both individual and collective projects. Within a collective, agents seek to eradicate exigencies and retain benefits (Bourdieu, 1993). In opposition to Bourdieu, Archer argues that these practices are power negotiations shaped by agential reflexivity as a form of directional guidance (Herepath, 2014, p.860).

However, Archer and Bourdieu claim not to share compatible theories of sociology. As presented by Decoteau (2015), "Archer suggests that Bourdieu is guilty of 'central conflation' because he collapses subjectivity and objectivity so that agents and structures lose their relative autonomy" (p. 2). As a result, Archer (2007) believes that Bourdieu is unable to theorize reflexivity (p. 42). Archer is also criticized for ignoring habitual action and privileging reflexivity (Decoteau, 2015). Even so, Archer defends her theory as being one of analytic dualism, linking structure and agency, while maintaining their autonomy (Decoteau, 2015). Decoteau (2015) surmised, using a studied amalgamation of Bourdieu and Archer's work (2007), that personal identity emerges from contradictory emotions that are elicited by our complex and varied relationships to the natural, material, and discursive realms. We engage in internal conversations between the *I* (current self), the *Me* (past self) and the *You* (future self) to measure emotional input



and make decisions from the ranking of the three orders (p.5). Decoteau notes, “We do not forge personal identities ‘under the circumstances of our own choosing’” (p. 10), since our social selves entail a dialectical relationship with personal identity (p. 5). He insists that a distinction should be made between actors (playing roles) and agents (collectives producing change) (p. 5). He also notes that reflexivity does not necessarily lead to change (p. 9).

Research supports applying Archer’s work as a valid exercise when striving to understand the input of reflexivity toward the development of projects, which could potentially lead to social mobility. Case (2015) observed that the work of Archer can be” applied to guide and frame research on student learning in higher education” (p. 3). Case (2015) observed, “Students exercise corporate agency through their engagement with peers, in order to facilitate their achievement of academic success” (p. 5). Herepath (2014) contends that examining the “mediation of structure to agency” might reveal how “strategists use their subjective and reflexive mental powers to formulate their strategic projects, individually and collectively” (p. 873). For example, Van Geert and Steenbeek (2014) reported, “To realize their concerns or accomplish their goals, agents, such as teachers, use various kinds of tools, such as pedagogical skills or digital school boards”, and the realization of their goals (concerns) is dependent on other agents, i.e. students (p. 27). They found that for teachers, having a particular and variable amount of *social power* over students allows them to achieve their goals (p. 27).

### **Designing a Framework to Understand and Develop Reflexivity**

Narrative research as a method is used to explore students’ ways of knowing the professional world through their lived experience and, at the same time, to foster professionalism. Employing narrative research as both an object of the research and

means for professional development is not novel and has been practiced in educational research (Trahar, 2008).

### **Mapping Agency through Reflexive Practices**

Educators can prepare students to develop and shape professional identity by analyzing the underlying process that constructs their storied lives. Bamberg (2012) identified three realms or spaces of narrative inquiry to answer the "Who-am-I question" in terms of navigating between two opposing alternatives. Bamberg's realms of inquiry were adapted for the purposes of this study to answer the "who-am-I-question" in terms of professionalism: 1) **sameness**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **difference** between self and other, 2) **world**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **person** in terms of determining a direction of fit, and 3) **constancy**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **change** across time, where the first two require choices that do not have to account for temporal dimensions (Bamberg, 2012, p. 205). In the first realm, **sameness**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **difference**, narrative inquiry examines being in relation to others. Bamberg describes this realm as follows: "In our daily practices, we continuously mark ourselves as different, similar or same with respect to others. Integrating and differentiating a sense of who we are vis-à-vis others is a process of moment-to-moment navigations, and stories about self and others are good candidates to practice this from early on" (p. 204).

In the second realm, world to person, learners map agency, with the underlying assumption that agency is something that all learners have in the form of a capacity. In this realm, Bamberg argues that "while it is possible to view a sense of who we are as passive recipients of influences" from outside forces such as parents, teachers, or culture, Bamberg believes that it is possible "to view world as a product of self (where the self is constructed as highly agentive)" (Bamberg, 2012, p. 205). Thus, the second realm involves the presentation of self in terms of agency as responsible and passivity as not

responsible in a dilemmatic space. Finally, in the third realm, **constancy**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **change**, the learner charts the path from the person they were to how they would want to be positioned in the here-and-now with the assumption that all learners strive to develop a sense of self-worth (p. 205). Accordingly, the study asked students to formulate agency utilizing Bamberg's framework, learners asked to write a narrative exploring **sameness**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **difference**, **agency**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **passivity**, and **constancy**  $\Leftrightarrow$  **change**, themes that they explored throughout the year in reflexive memos to an outside researcher. See Figure 21.

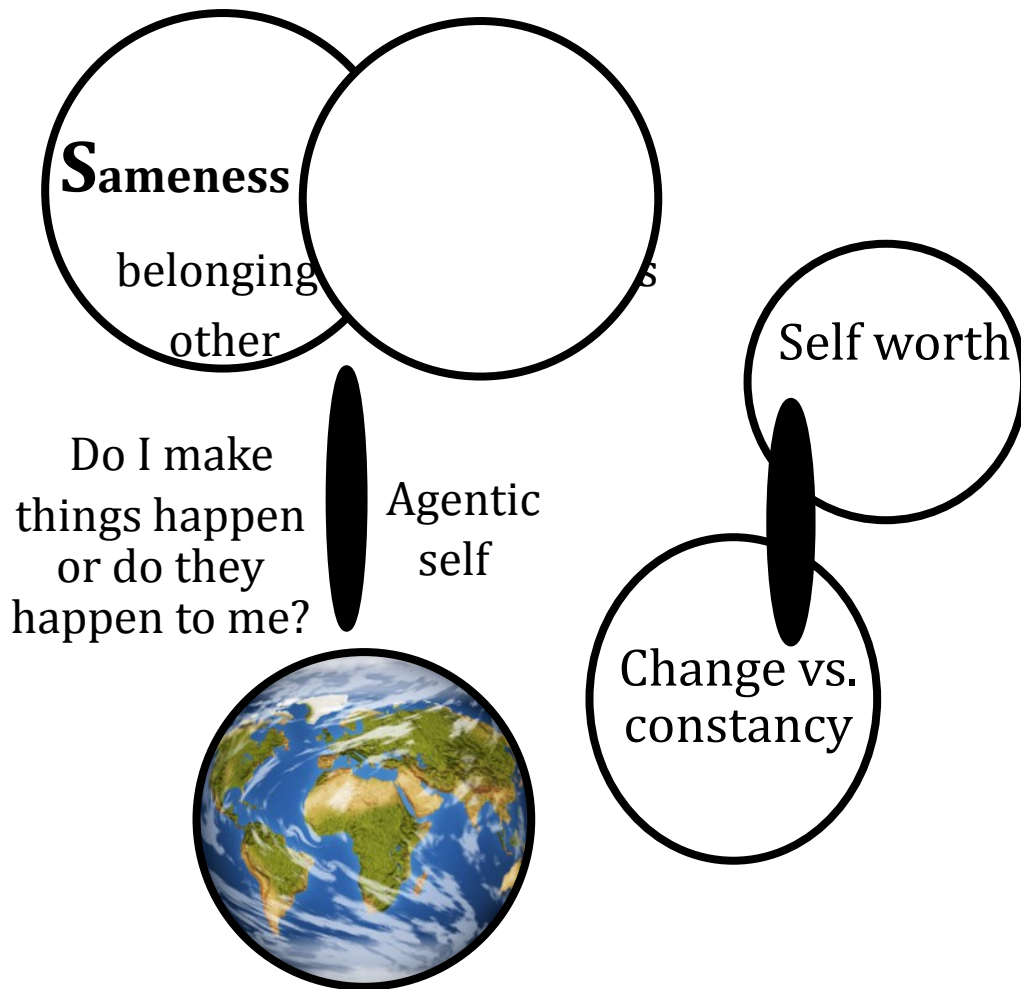


Figure 21. Realms of narrative inquiry to answer: Who am I?

### **Archer's Typology of Reflexivity**

Margaret Archer's work on reflexivity and agency provided a basis for the interpretation of the data. Reflexivity, according to Archer (2007) "is held to depend upon conscious deliberations that take place through 'internal conversation'." (p. 3). Additionally, Archer (2007, p. 93) outlined a typology of reflexivity, consisting of four modes. See Figure 22.

Two key terms to understand how the modes function, are morphostasis and morphogenesis. Morphostasis refers to “processes which tend to preserve or maintain a system’s given form, organization or state” (Archer, 1995, p. 166), and morphogenesis refers to agents that change society’s form, structure or state (Herepath, 2014, p. 860).

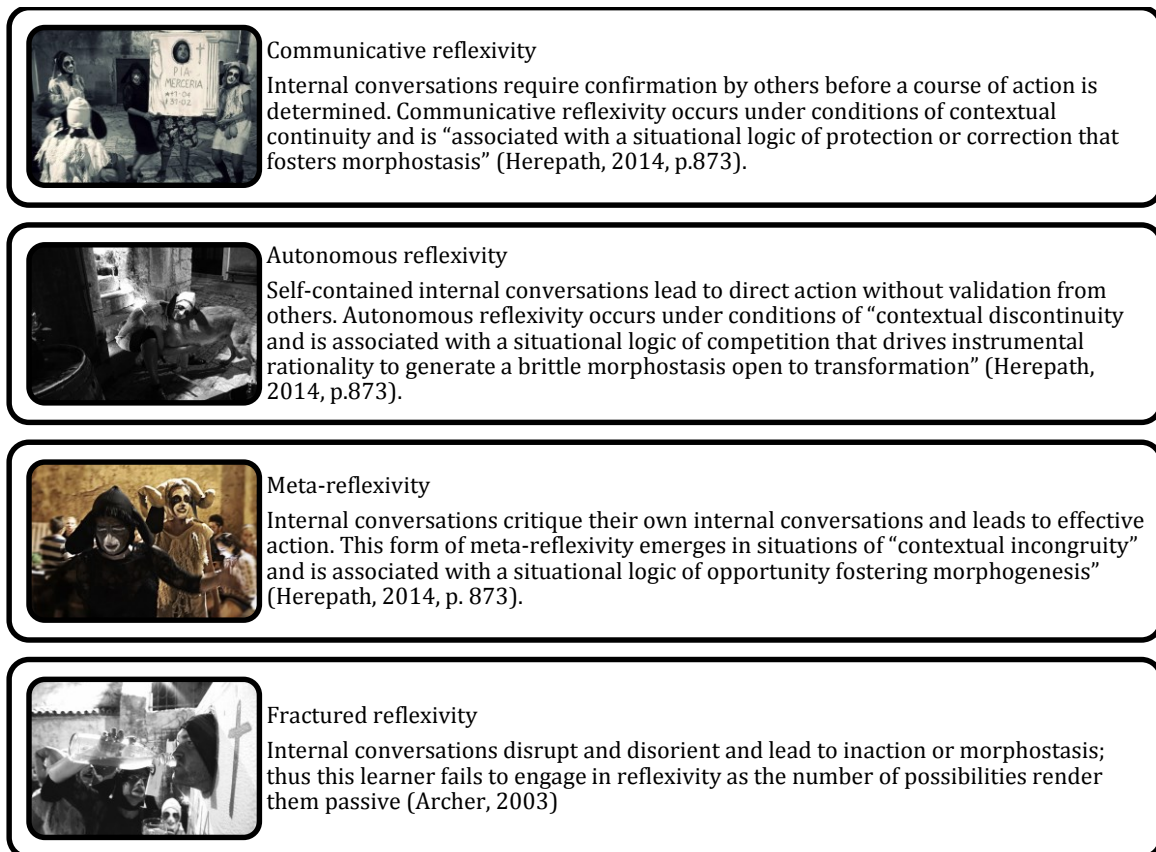


Figure 22. Archer's Typology of Reflexivity

Additionally, Archer (1995) identified two forms of agencies, one performed by the corporate and the other performed by the primary agent. The corporate agent consists of ‘those who are aware of what they want, can articulate it to themselves and others, and have organized in order to get it’ (Archer, 1995, p. 258); whereas, the primary agent, is unable to articulate demands and are subsequently unorganized (Archer, 1995, p. 185).

See Figure 23.

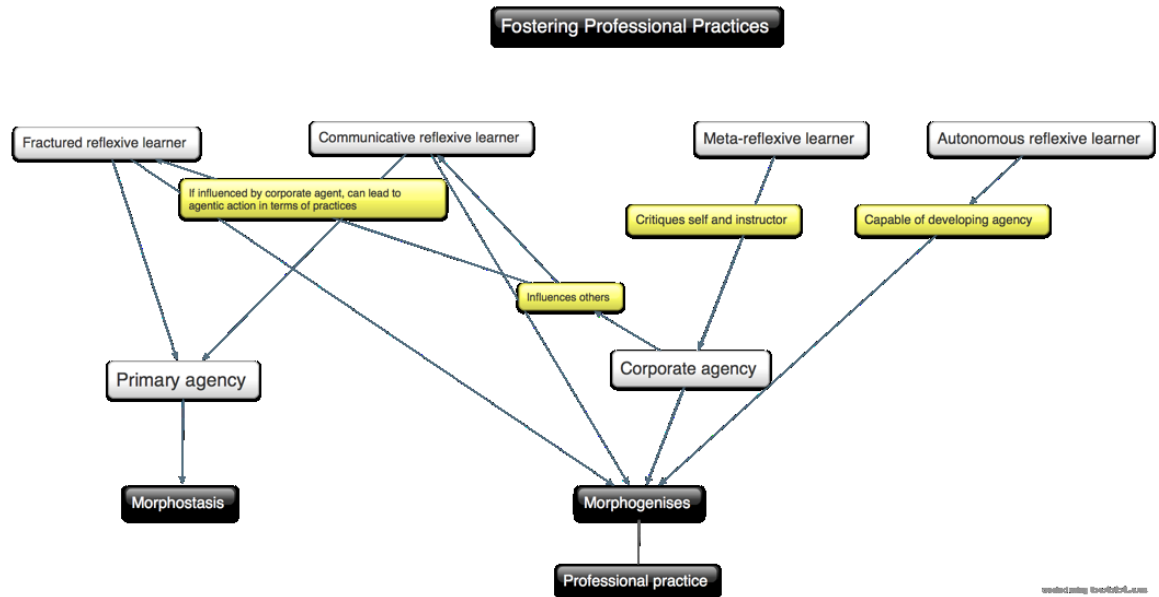


Figure 23. Reflexive practices and formulation of agency

Responding effectively to the voices of resistance potentially enables meta-reflexive students to formulate corporate agency and ultimately shape professional practices for themselves and encourage other learners.

### Method

This section describes the instrument, data collection and coding process. This phase of the study introduced a narrative methodology. With regard to epistemology, the narrative paradigm maintains that we understand the world and ourselves through interpretative social and cultural processes (Clandinin, 2006). We shape and interpret reality through stories with narratives serving as an organizing principle of human experience and knowing in the world (Sarbin, 1986). In sum, narrative research is a primary mode to construct social reality (Polkinghorne, 1989; Bruner, 1986; Spector-Mersel, 2010).

### The Rationale for Adopting Narrative Inquiry

Researchers Caine, Estefan, and Clandinin (2013) describe the process and

purpose of narrative inquiry as being geared toward the experience of the narrative and relational knowing: “Within narrative inquiry, experience is viewed narratively and necessitates considerations of relational knowing and being, attention to the artistry of and within experience, and sensitivity to the overlapping stories that bring people together in research relationships” (p. 574). While initially there were subtle differences between the usage of the terms “narrative research” and “narrative inquiry” (Caine et al, 2013, p.574); recently, Caine et al (2013) argue that the terms are used interchangeably in the literature (p. 574). Currently, a debate is emerging as to what forms of research should be considered narrative inquiry; it’s important to note, in any regard, that narrative inquiry is both phenomenon and methodology (Caine et al, 2013, p. 4).

In this sense, in the collecting the data, the narratives of lived experiences; researchers become narrators in the restorying of the data, leading to what Caine et al (2013) identify as relational being and knowing (p. 574). The goal of narrative research is to describe the "lived experience" of an event. Narratives, in essence, are about people, who act in space and time, typically across a sequence of events. The narrative structure holds the content or story together in a plot that sequentially arranges the narrative in terms of its complication, resolution, closure into a rational whole (Bamberg, 2012, p. 203). The purpose of this arrangement of the lived experience of participants into a narrative is based on the assumption that “narrative is the primary way that humans make meaning” (Hendry, 2010, p. 72).

When narrative inquiry is employed as a research method, the inquiry begins with doubt on the part of the research (Bruner, 1986, p. 121). One of the more interesting aspects of this form of research is that narratives generate questions that break down the boundaries that now separate research interests that have traditionally been divided into binaries “as dichotomous,

either or or, qualitative or quantitative, scientific or humanistic, or positivist or interpretive” (Hendry, p. 73). False binaries contribute to producing what Hendry (2010) has identified as “a truth effect that science is real knowledge and that narrative is mere interpretation and thus not real” (p. 73); Hendry (2010) argues that research that relies solely on one way of knowing, adopting one side of the either/or equation limits are potential to understand the complexity of the world and ways of knowing (Hendry, 2010, p. 74).

With regard to epistemology, the narrative paradigm shares underlying assumptions with the constructivist paradigm and maintains that we understand ourselves and our world by way of interpretative processes that are subjective and culturally rooted. We shape and interpret reality through stories with narratives serving as an organizing principle of human experience and knowing in the world (Sarbin, 1986). In sum, narrative research is offered as a primary mode to construct social reality (Polkinghorne, 1988; Bruner, 1986; Spector-Mersel, 2010). Educational researchers began to use narrative as a medium of data representation and as a guide in the development of methodologies, if they did not want to lose the temporal quality and contextual detail of what they were studying (Fenstermacher, 1994). For this reason, it’s value of contextual detail, narrative inquiry suits an examination of learner’s inner conversations. According to Archer (2007), a key element in terms of understanding inner conversations is that their strength is derived from “contextual continuity” and “contextual discontinuity” and affect two primary tasks: prioritizing and decision-making and answers the question “what matters?” and “what to do about it?” (p. 86).

### **Participants**

The study utilized a convenience sample, involving an upper level undergraduate course consisting of 23 students. The participants of the study were third and fourth year male and female students, between the ages of 20 and 55, who were enrolled in a



professional writing program, inclusive of both full-time and part-time students, all taking the course as a mandatory requirement. Student majors ranged a number of fields, including Mass Communication, Education, English as a Second Language, Translation, English Literature, Creative Writing, Geography, History, Political Science, and Journalism. To maintain research ethical standards and ensure research validity, a co-researcher was invited to the class to explain the research study and to distribute and collect consent forms from students in the absence of the teacher.

### **Intervention 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration**

The research was reframed through a sociological lens to examine the sociological barriers to performance on social networks and online identity formation. The following list is a summary of changes to the course design that were introduced during the second iteration:

- Added more in-class social media activities
- New course hash tags to facilitate participation and community
- Added project memo reflections
- Portfolio adjustment: one for process on course blog and one for polished projects (students reported a belief that process made them appear less professional)
- Reordered timing of projects to encourage more engagement (end of year lethargy-completed portfolios first month of course prior year and never revisited design or purpose- amateur work)
- Reframed the introduction of social technologies, modifying previous years approach to mitigate psychological barriers (addressed issues of technology and exposure with course material and discussions). Resistance to participation was adjusted for each student.

## Data Collection 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration

The following data were collected during the second iteration:

- Social technology survey
- Interviews and reflections on social media behavior, identity, social mobility based on Archer's (2007) work
- Measure of the contribution of articles published on the community website as measured through Google analytics
- Twitter activity assembled using course hash tags
- Course artifacts
- Blogging and commenting
- Instructor observations on significant events during the year, what worked and failed
- Email correspondence

A series of open-ended qualitative questionnaires were provided for the students to complete during class time, of which time they were asked to email their responses to the co-researcher. As it relates to addressing the issue of researcher's bias, firstly, "peer scrutiny of the research project" (Shenton, 2004, p. 67) was used to take care of the validity issues of the qualitative data, as well as, the overall research.

**Narrative inquiry.** According to Rice and Ezzy (1999), "The theoretical underpinning of narrative inquiry is the belief that telling a story about oneself pivots around choice and action, both of which have moral and ethical dimensions" (p. 126). Bamberg's (2012) three realms of narrative inquiry formulate a pathway toward identity formation and transformation of learners. The overall goal of narrative inquiry is not to report a generalizable truth (Byrne-

Armstrong, 2001, p. 112), but to retell the many narratives of our learners

### **Data Analysis**

In alignment with the work of Case (2015), this study utilized narrative analysis, which involves “taking each narrative on its own terms, with the primary analytical work being to understand the interrelations between the different forms of social power and agency exhibited in each particular narrative”. Traditionally, analyzing interview data involves the categorization of data sets; we propose an alternative methodology, ‘narrative analysis’, developed by Polkinghorne (1989). This methodology takes each narrative on its own terms with the overall objective of analysis to be the understanding of the interrelations of agency between the learner, educator, and research. Furthermore, as Caetano (2015b) noted, “[B]iographical interviews are a methodological tool with immense potential in the analysis of personal reflexivity” since they make it possible to both focus on individual discourse and “the synchrony and the diachrony of each person’s life pathway in different life domains (p. 238).

Schaafsma and Vinz (2011) propose three lenses to help researchers examine decisions regarding what data to include in the study and data for the purposes of presentation were selected based on the following framework: 1) *Saliency* – identifying what stands out, 2) *Incompleteness* –identifying the gaps, and 3) *Emphasis* –identifying patterns of repetition (pp. 78-79). Furthermore, Clandinin (2006) suggest that as one writes, one must continue to think narratively. He contends, “The text needs to reflect the temporal unfolding of people, places and things within the inquiry, the personal and social aspects of inquirer’s and participants’ lives, and the places in the inquiry” (p. 485). The writing itself should be a “narrative act” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 485). Accordingly, both the educator and outside co-researcher adopted the narrative form in terms of

responses to the student voices, creating a dialogic presentation of three distinct voices.

### **Assuring Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Barab and Squire (2004) noted that when “a researcher is intimately involved in the conceptualization, design, development, implementation, and researching of a pedagogical approach, then ensuring that researchers can make credible and trustworthy assertions is a challenge” (p. 10). Thus, prior to conducting the study, research ethics approval was granted by Concordia University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, the Office of Research. To maintain research ethical standards, in the absence of the instructor, a co-researcher was invited to the class to explain the research and distribute to and collect from students consent forms for participation in the study. An information letter providing a description of the research was attached to the consent form. At the meeting, participants were provided with the opportunity to give free and informed consent and made aware that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the duration of the research. In addition, the co-researcher collected all confidential data, including the survey and interview/questionnaire responses. The instructor did not view the responses until the end of the course after grades had been submitted. Moreover, the identity of the students is being kept confidential. It was further expressed to students that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that their withdrawal would have no effect on their course grade.

Students were provided with the questions during class time and they were asked to email their responses to the co-researcher. In this way, their instructor had no knowledge of student responses to the questions and confidentiality was maintained. As it relates to addressing the issue of researcher’s bias, first, “peer scrutiny of the research project” (Shenton, 2004, p. 67) was used to take care of the trustworthy issues of the

qualitative data, as well as, the overall research design. Second, since the data for both the quantitative and qualitative methods was collected online, the co-researcher had no direct contact with students; therefore, it was less likely that they were affected by the possible biases of researchers. See Appendix for Instruments.

## Results

This phase of the study focused primarily on facilitating reflexivity to develop agency and understand the underlying social processes surrounding agentic behaviour in order to discover ways to support social mobility and ultimately transfer this understanding to social networks.

### Barriers Encountered when Integrating Social Media

Participation on social networks remained anaemic. Again, perhaps, the length of the yearlong course contributed; most likely, it was due to fewer courses in the program contributing content, which led to the levelling of traffic. See *Figure 24*. This figure illustrates a smaller drop off in readership by years end than in the previous year.

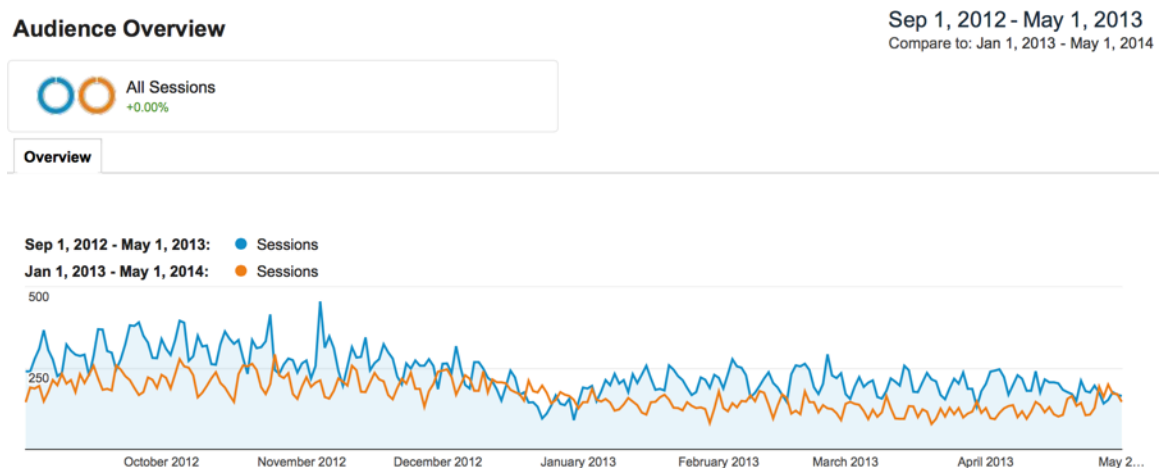


Figure 24. Year-on-year comparison of website traffic

The following *Figure 25* demonstrates that social media referrals were less dramatic however more steady than the previous years' numbers.

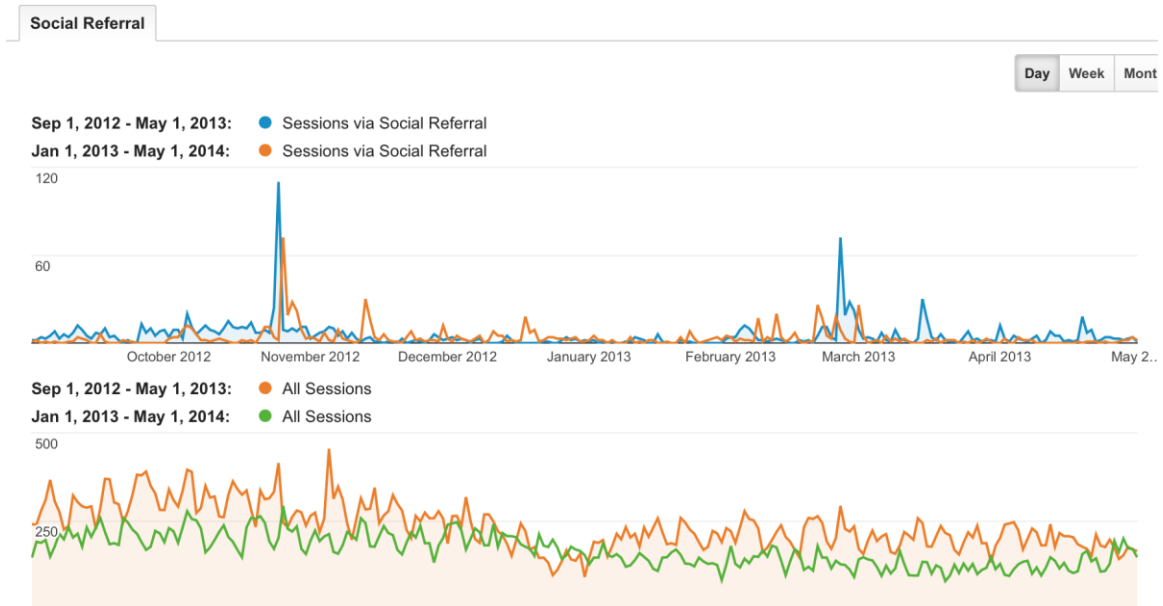


Figure 25. Year-on-year comparison of social referrals

The increase in social media activities through weekly presentations and the integration of two course hashtags, #eatingcrows and #Montrealites, normalized the behaviour in terms of facilitating the move from the personal category to a more professional one.

### **Facilitating Professional Identity Formation**

Van Geert and Steenbeek (2014) observed that teachers are agents who use the tools available to them to realize their concerns and accomplish their goals. Success is dependent on other agents, particularly students who often struggle for power within classroom structures; thus, teachers must exercise a “particular and variable amount of social power over those other agents, which allows them to reach their concerns and goals more or less efficiently” (Van Geert & Steenbeek, 2014, p. 27). Van Geert and

Steenbeek (2014) concluded, “Agents depend on one another for the accomplishment of their goals, the improvement of their tools and competences, and the consolidation of their power, and by doing so constitute dynamical and complex agent systems, self-organizing into typical patterns of educational understanding, evaluation and accomplishment” (p. 27). The following narratives present the data in a dialogic form, illustrating the various forms of agency exerted in the classroom by learners and the instructor and is followed by an analysis.

### **I. Sameness ⇔ Difference: Who am I in relation to others?**

**Communicative reflexivity:** *I didn't take this class to become a professional writer, but to learn to write professionally*

**Student.** I've always loved the idea of writing; I suppose because I love reading. However, the actual putting down of words on to paper has always been difficult. I'm interested in so many things that I sometimes have trouble reigning in my thoughts or finding the appropriate inspiration and I put the task off to another. That being said, once I do focus, I usually produce a high-level product. I'm not really a creative writer like a lot of other students in this class, though I do believe I'll write a novel at some point. I know that at least one person is studying journalism, but for the most part I'm the same as a lot of the others here that didn't take this class to become a professional *writer*, but to learn to write *professionally*. ... On the one hand, I suppose that I were a professional *writer*, but not of my own words: I'm a translator. My personal style tends to be more formal, which makes me different from my peers. I actually really care about things like spelling and grammar, and I love a good play on words. I'll instantly notice mistakes when I read something and love to find someone to whom I can point it out, but most people I know don't care that much. Depending on what type of document it is, I will

judge the writer/producer/company. This can make group projects difficult because my partners are usually different and much more familiar in their tone. ... I'm not inspired if the subject matter doesn't interest me. I need to learn how to actively do the work, regardless.

**Instructor:** This passage bites. My emphasis on learners becoming professional writers is misguided in the sense that I have created a back channel of resistance: my students have constructed a shared reality that they came to write professionally and not to be professional. I feel defeated by linguistic word play. How can they hope to gain expertise without the incumbent pressure of being professional?

**Analysis:** Ryan (2014) observed that communicative signs of reflexivity consist of parroting discourse and conforming to writing structures (p. 61). To the detriment of curriculum change, Herepath (2014) observed, "The potential bargaining power of collectivities of agents, and their resultant negotiating strength, fosters disparate groups (the cabals and coalitions found in any strategic arena) which are caught in a battle of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic wills" (p. 863). In essence, readiness to consult with other students to define underlying battles creates morphostasis in the classroom, a resistance to any change in the formula of the curriculum.

**Autonomous reflexivity:** *Are you good enough? I am.*

**Student:** I believed in taking on responsibilities when I was young to help me get organized, mind deadlines, and view writing as a profession instead of a pastime. I have noticed many people who believe they're good enough writers to get away with not taking writing seriously, but I have also seen many professors become frustrated with good writers who are sloppy with their work. Having a sense of purpose keeps me



moving forward in life when I sometimes see others doing as little as possible and not reaching full potential.

**Instructor:** The sad part, in my opinion, is that a number of students believed that they had reached their full potential as writers and, for this reason, their agency was somewhat arrogant and debilitating, both for the classroom atmosphere and professional growth. They often refused to cooperate, since in their mind, there was nothing left to learn.

**Analysis:** Ryan (2014) identified the key autonomous signs of reflexivity as being a focused and efficient approach to tasks similar to the positionality of the student writer (p. 61). Correspondingly, the type of behavioural resistance described in other students has an overall negative impact on lesson outcomes (Herepath, 2014). Herepath (2014), noted, “Throughout a given strategic episode, those experiencing exigencies seek to eradicate them, while those experiencing benefits seek to retain them: an argument that resonates with “Bourdieu’s (1993) notion of the field and the manifestation of power therein (Herepath, 2014, p. 860).

**Meta-Reflexivity:** *So, here I am uncool and virtuously brainy.*

**Student:** It became clear to me of how uncool I was this year when my professor asked the class to find 1000 followers on Twitter. My initial and naive response was *perfect*. That was then. This is now. Eighty followers. How is it that I have only eighty followers? Curmudgeonly, I open my LinkedIn account to soothe the burn from my rejection. I had tweeted fine, and I had attempted to add people that I was interested in, 298 people to be precise. Still, I am hopelessly lingering behind. I hear a rumor that a girl in the class bought her Twitter followers. This seems so tempting, but the guilt of cheating would haunt me forever. So, here I am uncool and virtuously brainy. I need to close this page and stop wallowing in self-pity. So, I quickly open up my LinkedIn. 92

connections, I smile to myself. 92 followers is good, and hey; I had two invitations waiting for me. I love the way that I am conscious of my pulse when seeing the little red flag underneath the friendship icon. There is a hint of mystery a healing pacification of that subtle yet undeniable yearning to be wanted. I click on a co-worker's LinkedIn. 500+ connections. There it is again, the looming sense of dysfunctionality harmoniously appears and that inevitable question that has haunted me since the beginning: how can I do this, but more worryingly to me is why am I so unhip?

**Instructor:** If only they were all so unhip and brainy. I asked for too much, so many Twitter followers in fact that it incited cheating and sunk some of my students into depression, even though I demonstrated concurrently with the students how to gain as many followers through example, having gained thousands of followers on LinkedIn and Instagram over a two-month period.

**Analysis:** Inarguably, there are signals here of a meta-reflexive: meta-reflexive signals are the following; “mediates appropriateness and creativity; uses unusual or interesting language and techniques... talks about self as writer” (Ryan, 2013, p. 63).

**Fractured reflexivity:** *What's going on here?*

**Student:** Man! All that giggling going on behind me! “What are we writing about?” Didn't they listen? How can they succeed if they don't pay attention? The prof just explained what is expected for this exercise. Right away, it is clear that, in this class, I am different. I don't really fit the mould. I'm much older, established in my work - even if it isn't great and is highly stressful - with no real intention to become a professional writer. At this point, I'm not even sure if the others in the class are serious, either. I do this to better myself, to improve my performance at work and thus my reputation. My age alone sets me apart. I carry with me a different mind-set. I'm more focused when I

work - at least I think I am. Maybe I'm focused in a different way. I can't produce work when it is noisy. Old school all the way. But these kids seem to function quite well even with the brou-ha-ha going on around them. It confuses me.

**Instructor:** This reflection is painful. I do have to repeat myself frequently. The computers in the classroom are a distraction and it's not always easy for me to keep everyone on task. In addition, while I strive to generate a positive environment, it sometimes leads to too much fun. A number of the students in the class are turning out to be extremely difficult to direct. They fail to complete their work on time and avoid the writing process tasks altogether, including the draft workshops and project memos.

**Analysis:** Certain behaviours and norms have become socially accepted and negatively impact the attitude and behaviour of other students. Whereas the learner in the narrative is demonstrating autonomous signs of reflexivity, he/she is surrounded by fractured reflexivity, in the form of disruptions and disorientation. Ryan (2014) observed that fractured signs of reflexivity are not participating at fullest capacity, i.e."– does not apply pre-writing activities ... and does not elaborate on reasoning for choices; cannot see self as writer; tends to dislike writing; makes inappropriate writing decisions ..." (p. 64).

## **II. World ⇔ Person: Do I make the world happen or does it happen to me?**

**Communicative reflexivity:** *It never really added up.*

**Student:** What I was forced to do and what I liked to do were different. ... The expectations that were placed before me were simple, and while not stated, they were implied: you were a lawyer or a doctor. Those were my options, the epitome of success. I now know that the pressure came not from my family, friends, teachers or any other specific crowd that I knew. Rather it was my perception of what was expected of me. The world is tough, but it will only get tougher. The money is out there, but is it truly

available for those who seek it? Are the insecurities of someone seeking a professional career in fact quashed? Before writing this I would say yes. Yet, reviewing the pessimism found in this short excerpt I think no. There must be a better way. What am I going to do? What am I going to do?.... Now I need to figure out a way to make money doing something I love. Cliché, but the fact that I've written it down on paper makes me all the more aware of this need. I often feel like I do not have a unified professional identity, which probably comes across through my Twitter account and job history. A part of my inability to settle down on one professional goal stems from the fact that the one thing I do know that I want to do, people often tell me should not be an end goal. I would love to be a CEGEP teacher, but when I tell people this, they usually expect I will only do this until I have the qualifications needed to be a university professor. Instead, I would like to stay at the CEGEP level since it will give me more time to focus on community involvement.... Recently, professors have told me CEGEP teaching jobs are not easy to come by, but I think that I were both a qualified and interesting candidate. Therefore, people often make me feel like I need more options or different plans, even though I know what I want.

**Instructor:** I must be mindful of my agency when students seek career advice as I might think I know best, but do I really know what's best for the individual standing before me?

**Analysis:** As stated in Figure 1, a communicative reflexive carries out conversations that require confirmation by others before a course of action is determined (Herepath, 2014, p.873). Accordingly, Bourdieu (1985) observed that actors structure the world through practice and acquire habits through history and socialization. In order to achieve morphogenises, this learner must break through preordained and practiced structures (Bordieu, 1985). It's imperative to set up a course design that allows for students to

explore their future selves (Ryan, 2014).

**Autonomous reflexivity:** *But who are we to blame?*

**Student 1:** Do I make things happen or do things happen to me? I believe I am a little of both. Many play the blame game- “I got the bad grades because of my teacher” or the “the government is the reason there are no jobs in Quebec”. But who are we to blame? We, as individuals must make things happen for ourselves. If we think about work, it is up to individuals to go out and search for a job.

**Instructor:** While things might happen to this student, the student is willing to own up to events and move forward responsibly. Resistance can be a powerful form of agency for students using “blame” as a fuel and it has transformative value. I used to believe that giving good grades would help students gain confidence and that it would eventually improve their lives. By eliminating the challenge wrought by grades, I eliminated a form of resistance that would not only challenge the students, but would also challenge me to clarify my goals and defend my decisions. In retrospect by inflating grades, I failed to provide my students with a rationale to strive to perform at their best. Now, I strive to have grades reflect performance.

**Analysis:** The autonomous reflexive understands that regardless of grades, contextual or external forces, individuals determine their agency (Archer, 1995). Reflexivity has the potential to assist teachers in helping students to aim beyond final course grades, but rather focus on developing long-term goals such as competencies that are applicable and in high demand. Additionally, Case (2015) observed, “Students exercise corporate agency through their engagement with peers, in order to facilitate their achievement of academic success” (p. 5); thus the learner compares his reasoning with those of peers to assert an ability to act upon the world rather than be acted on.

**Meta-reflexivity:** *He figured he was in a somewhat safe legal grey area.*

**Student:** Once upon a time in the far away land of Engl296, The Black Queen decreed that we had to get a bunch of twitter followers. Failure to amass these followers would result in dire consequences like poor marks and possibly failing the class. Unfortunately for Fred The Toymaker, he was unable to join in with the March of The Black Queen. More unfortunate for Fred, he had to take the class as this was his last semester before he moved out of Quebec and he needed the class to graduate. Oh, what to do? First he considered buying them on eBay. But as evil King Richard said, "we could do that, but it would be wrong." Also, Fred was short of cash. Oh, what to do? Then he remembered a story he heard long ago about a man named J F Sebastian who said "I make friends. They're toys. My friends are toys, I make them." So Fred hit upon the idea that he would just "make" friends himself. As a toymaker, he figured he could make something that would make as many toy accounts as he needed. But he had a problem. When you create a twitter account it needs an email address to send a confirmation to. And it checks to make sure the email account isn't being used by another twitter account. But then Fred found that as far as Gmail was concerned "fre.d" is the same as "Fr.ed" and "f.red" because gmail ignores the periods in the email addresses. So with one email account and some clever placement of periods, one email address can be used to create hundreds of twitter accounts. So Fred built himself a machine that created all the toy friends he needed. By doing it this way, using the tools Twitter already provides, he figured he was in a somewhat safe legal *grey* area, especially since he wasn't creating the accounts for financial gain or to say nasty things about people. He briefly considered telling the Black Queen that he could use his army of toys help her with her quest to get something retweeted 50 times, but figured that would spoil her fun. The toy-creating machine was

100% written by Fred, and writing it was easily the most fun Fred had in the land of Engl396.

**Instructor:** An evil genius. Resisting the course design while excelling professionally. This student transforms resistance into a rewarding and creative endeavor, says the Black Queen☺

**Research:** Meta-reflexivity often garners corporate agency and consists of learners “who are aware of what they want, can articulate it to themselves and others, and have organized in order to get it’ (Archer, 1995, p. 258), serving to formulate a powerful social identity (Case, 2015). Fortunately, for this learner, the instructor allowed for a creative interpretation of the project and applauded its artful execution.

**Fractured reflexivity:** *Not ready for the real world.*

**Student:** I think I’m passive aggressive. I have a strong personality with people that I feel comfortable with. But with anyone else, as well as in my own work, I’m more passive. When something good happens to me, it’s luck. If I get a good grade, well, I feel I’ve earned it to a certain extent, but am also surprised at the result. ...I don’t feel like I’ve worked that hard. Not in the sense that I slacked off, but that the work must be too easy for me if a smaller effort than that of my peer might result in a higher grade. Which gives me a sort of arrogance in that I think I’m better than my peers, who, in the end, are my competition for jobs. I do believe that I were successful, but the passivity comes in with the fact that I’m a student and a lack of professional experience creates a feeling of unworthiness, of not being ready for the “real world”.

**Instructor:** I am rarely mindful of resistance in terms that are positive. When I feel resistance, I push harder. When I push harder, I receive more resistance. When I fail to push back, I lose credibility. As a teacher, I need to garner my agency within the

classroom in such a way that I foster agency so that the revolution leads to insight and growth on all sides. If I could inspire students to work harder, perhaps, that would inspire this student to compete. However, while a cutthroat environment might resemble the “real world”, would it benefit learners? As it stands, the classroom space that this learner is currently describing is an unborn world. As an instructor, I believe that my classroom is the real world.

**Research:** This reflection shows how socialization shapes individual agency and identity within a particular context. As a primary agent, an inability to articulate demands make it difficult to formulate a future self (Archer, 1995); however, according to Herepath (2014), primary agency can be molded by corporate agency to produce morphogenesis. Instructional design should provide space for the learners to lead. The narrative also corresponds to Herepath’s (2014) argument that those who are “experiencing benefits seek to retain them” (p. 860).

### **III. Constancy ⇔ Change: Who am I and where do I want to go?**

**Communicative reflexivity:** *In the unborn world*

**Student:** I am happy with the way I have lived my life until now. However, sometimes I feel that my life has yet to begin. I used to think that life would begin when I graduate high school then I believed it would be when I turned eighteen. Now I feel that my life will really begin when I graduate university or when I move out...

**Instructor:** How can I design course activities and consequential evaluations that encourage students to be reflective about their individual agency, ones that ensure that my beliefs and practices do not take control in terms of shaping their thoughts and behavior so that growth is self-driven and authentic? Because life is present now and learners need to perceive a degree of control in order to find empowerment in the present.



**Researcher:** Despite fate, social structures and other external forces, human agency and individual motivation are vital components in the learning process (Martin, 2000).

Reflexivity allows educators to become “a sounding board for students’ individual and collective stories” (Martin, 2000, p. 6).

**Autonomous reflexivity:** *Shake the feeling of anxiousness.*

**Student:** Late last year, I was becoming extremely anxious in regards to where my future was heading, career-wise. I was currently working towards graduation. It was my second year working at T---- full-time as a technical support representative and I also held a part-time job at the P--- Lounge and W----. Many would probably think that I had enough on my plate to keep myself busy and satisfied but it became harder to shake the feelings of anxiousness that sparked up within me sporadically day after day. The reason I believed I was becoming anxious was because I wanted to pursue a career in communications/social media relations and ultimately in a sports-related field. However, feeding myself, putting a roof over my head, and paying for tuition among all other bills were my sole responsibility. I felt as though I was secure in my current job but sacrificing bit by bit what I wanted to transition into. When I introduced my feelings to a close friend or my manager at work, I was always countered with "you are still in school T--- you have plenty of time" and "Be patient T---, you are still young." Even with these reassurances, I still felt anxious!

Fast forwarding to 2014, I find myself in a much more reassuring position. Although I am still working at T---- in the same role, I have taken on additional projects to build on my experience in internal communications and social media. ... I also applied for an internship at the Social Media Agency ----- and got it! ... the moment I heard they were searching for interns, I jumped at the chance and sent in my cover letter and resume.

I feel great knowing that I am working towards building my portfolio and building the experience ... I am ready to work hard for what I want and I just know I can achieve it if I remain focused!

**Instructor:** The course design provided a framework for her/him to explore the type of sports writing he/she wanted to do post graduation as a professional.

**Analysis:** An autonomous reflexive deliberates courses of action, choosing feasible options and searching for ways to move forward (Ryan, 2014). Ryan describes this deliberation surrounding effects of action as “choices that constitute a form of self-assessment for learning, as this new knowledge is woven into the next course of action” (p. 62).

**Meta-reflexivity:** *What you can do with two dollars in your pocket?*

**Student:** I come from a family where education is not necessarily a priority. Both my parents did not go further than the CEGEP level and yet still managed to become successful. My father in particular went from arriving in Canada with just a few dollars in his pocket to today, owning two successful and established restaurants. I surprisingly differ from my parents greatly in that I put a lot of emphasis in furthering my education and finding a career that I am passionate for. I am currently in my last semester at and luckily I have found a topic for this course that I enjoy when put into practice in the real world, I excel at. However, at the back of my mind I always think about the family business that my father has created. This is where the conflict in my mind begins. I work so hard to excel at school and I really do love what I am learning, and yet there is the pressure of going on a different path and taking over the family business. Which path will I chose? I really wish I knew. It's a debate that loops in my head on a recurring basis and it is a stress that I think I will have to deal with for a long time. This decision will

define my professional career for the rest of my life and it certainly is the biggest debate I have faced thus far.

**Instructor:** Young adult learners face choices that are overwhelming and require them to peer far into the future. Perhaps, learning can be an end to itself and whichever career they choose, they were benefit from having learned; however, I don't know how I can convince them.

**Analysis:** Decoteau (2015) observed, "Critical realism posits that reality is so layered, complex and conjunctural that, at best, we can only theorize about some of the possible mechanisms at work" (p. 9). This learning is confronting a multi-layered world and its complexity. Furthermore, Greenbank (2014) observed "that making erroneous career choices or ending up 'under-employed' (i.e., in non-graduate jobs) is often an inevitable part of the learning process for graduates" (p. 188). For this reason, Ryan (2014) affirms that learning needs to incorporate students' reflexivities to shape future selves.

**Fractured reflexivity:** *Paralysis by analysis*

Although I intend to follow my dreams, and am certain that I can successfully do so if I never let up, my insecurities often cause me to ponder my mission and my existence. These thoughts have become increasingly intense as of late. Although I have no regrets, the past sometimes causes me to stagnate. Overthinking has rusted my inner mental machinations. This has led to paralysis by analysis. This stagnation has made it hard for me to create. I am lost if I cannot create. I am reminded of the things I've done and the people I've hurt through symbols and paradoxical encounters with other people. I have a firm grasp on how my future could manifest itself. However, as I grow older, I find it increasingly harder to relate and communicate with others. I have damaged some of my

closest relationships and have to an extent, alienated myself. But its cool, I'm totally fine  
shit is just crazy in my head right now.

**Instructor:** As an instructor, I am not purvey to the inner thoughts of my students; it  
seems many of them are overthinking life. At the beginning of the year when I  
announced that they were publishing their work online, I saw them seize with fear;  
consequently, I offered substitute offline projects and the option to publish under a  
penname.

**Analysis:** A fractured reflexivity carries out internal conversations that disrupt and  
disorient and lead to inaction, rendering the learner passive (Archer, 2003).

### **Limitations of the Study 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration**

Limitations for narrative inquiry include positioning the researcher in the sense  
that the researcher and phenomena are inseparable (Bamberg, 2012, p. 216); thus, the  
researcher needs to bracket assumptions and biases when restorying the narrative and  
avoid the pitfalls of interjecting moral and ethical stances (Hunter, 2010, p. 45). There is  
a risk of the researcher making oneself the focus of the restored narrative and pushing  
the voices of the subjects to the periphery of the narrative” (Trahar 2008). Trahar (2008)  
suggests that one “way of remedying this danger...is to adhere to the Bakhtinian concept  
of polyphony, or equality of utterance, where both narrator and listener exist on the same  
plane and have equal right to speak” (p. 261). For this reason, the results suggested the  
integrity of the voices of the students, instructor and researcher by using a dialogic  
approach. Another issue, which follows from this concern, is that narratives are  
dependent on context, social and historical, not only of the listener, but also of the teller  
(Trahar 2008), and, in this sense, narratives are not intended to embody the truth; as such  
Gergen and Gergen (2010) remind us that Foucault warned social scientists that such

representations of the truth could lead to further subjugation. Narratives are no more authentic than other forms of research (Gergen & Gergen, 2010). The key to discerning the usefulness of the narrative is to carefully examine the supporting evidence and argument provided by the researcher (Trahar, 2008, p. 262).

### **Discussion**

In the writing situation, Ryan (2014) noted, “Reflexivity involves deliberating about possible courses of action, deciding what might be feasible at this time in this writing situation and then choosing a way forward” (p. 63). This form of reflexivity leads to a “form of self-assessment for learning” and subsequently shapes decision-making throughout the writing process. Thus, the course design should encourage students to engage in reflexivity in such a way that it effectively shapes their decision-making. The results of the study demonstrated that students portrayed various levels and varying degrees of Archer’s (2007) typologies. Communicative reflexives seek confirmation of their decisions with others prior to action by checking in with the instructor or peers and following instructions without developing a personal voice (Ryan, 2014). Thus, the results demonstrated that Archer’s social theory on reflexivity and agency can be applied to guide and frame research on student learning in higher education and turns the focus of education to “being and becoming”, rather than solely on the tools, knowledge and skills (Barnett, 2009; Case, 2015; and Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007).

The results demonstrated that Archer’s social theory on reflexivity and agency can be applied to guide and frame research on student learning in higher education and in this regard is beneficial as it turns the focus of education to “being and becoming” rather

than solely on the tools, knowledge and skills embedded in the majority of course content objectives (Barnett, 2009; Case, 2015; and Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007). As well, it introduced a “strategy as practice” approach, which considered the positionality of learners (Herepath, 2014). Archer’s primary focus was appropriate since it was also directed “toward the reflexivity of self-conscious social subjects committed to the achievement of their personal projects” (Herepath, 2014, p. 9).

As noted by Decoteau (2015), “Critical realism posits that reality is so layered, complex and conjunctural that, at best, we can only theorize about some of the possible mechanisms at work” (p. 9). Archer’s theory is problematic in the sense that it assumes that actors not only have the ability to make objective decisions, but that they will make them consistently; Decoteau (2015) warns that “conscious reflexive action” does not always lead to change any more than habitual action is doomed to stasis (p. 9). Archer’s theory can help us understand the internal dynamics that are taking place in the learning environment when students are confronted with innovative practices or those that challenge the status quo. The theory cannot explain the “when, where and why actors are compelled to make decisive changes in their life courses, counter hegemonic truth-claims, or engage in struggles for social change” (Decoteau, 2015, p. 16). It does, however, provide guidance for educators, in terms of selecting pedagogical tools that might facilitate change by addressing the concerns of learners in such a way, that perhaps, they are able to make positive decisions regarding practice and projects.

The reflexive approach made it possible to gain an understanding of the relationship between agency and professionalism. Research argues that due to the “erosion of traditions and normative frameworks”, exterior realities can be faced by learners and negotiated (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 7); in the context and continuity of ‘a

post-traditional order', the self itself emerges as a reflexive undertaking (Giddens, 1991, p. 32). Acknowledging that the self must be investigated and constructed through a reflective process makes agency increasingly vital (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 7). This study showed the potential that reflexivity and promoting individual agency could have in improving classroom practices. Bhaskar (1989) asserted that through human agency, people are able to initiate changes in a purposeful way and to monitor and control their performances.

See Appendix C for course artefacts and Appendix D for guiding design principle results and revisions.

### **Conclusion**

Caetano (2015b) noted, “[B]iographical interviews are a methodological tool with immense potential in the analysis of personal reflexivity” (p. 238). Seeped in rationalization, interpretation and allocation of meaning, they make it possible for the researcher to explore “the synchrony and the diachrony of each person’s life pathway in different life domains” (p. 238). Reflexivity analyzes courses of action rather than social process (Caetano, 2015a). The data revealed how students perceive their individual agency in terms of how they identified as individuals and learners and provided significant insights to assist teachers to effectively foster professional agency.

Addressing the concerns of the various typologies of reflexivity in the writing classroom informs us of the importance of incorporating reflexivity into the instructional design.

The results also demonstrated that in order to better understand what is happening inside the classroom, educators’ need a view of what is taking place on the outside (Martin, 2000). Learners’ beliefs and differential experiences not only impact agency, but also “educational motivation and commitment” (Martin, 2000, p. 6). Upon reading the

student narratives, the instructor was reflexive about her own classroom practices and discovered a deeper understanding of how teaching approaches can shape individual agency and how students' agencies impact their learning and influence the individuals' ability to self regulate and move forward (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 6).

Overall, the results suggest that although students understand the importance of agency for upward mobility in both their educational and professional lives, there are many who lack confidence. Students who invoke their individual agency and express high levels of confidence in their abilities realize the importance of agency to achieving their goals in life (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Martin, 2000). Additionally, educational practices geared towards encouraging self-reflexivity and agency improvement influence, empowerment and emancipation (English, 2005; Fieldhouse, 1996; and Welton, 2005). Both educational researchers and educators play a pivotal role in bringing this transformative education to reality.

The following iteration of the study incorporated a number of formal reflexive exercises throughout the writing process in hopes of fostering professionalism and guiding students toward shaping professional practices and projects. In addition, learning analytics were used to evaluate the success of the intervention. If you consider Latour's (2013) actor-network theory of relational learning where the subject matter is de-centered and knowledge domains are permeable, learning analytics are unlikely to solidify a concrete objectivist reality that is capable of mirroring social relations on networks and the learning process. Many researchers believe that eventually, analytics will catch up to knowledge domains, and enable instructional designers to "personalize" the online learning process (Chen & Paul, 2001). Perhaps, the data uncovered, at the very least, provide a formative assessment to help guide learners. Chow (2013) observes, "In



numerate disciplines, many students are quite capable of making intelligent use of data about their learning” (p. 692).

## **Chapter 6: Implementation of the Third Iteration**

*Chew before you swallow, listen before you speak*

## **Summary**

This chapter marks the final iteration of the study, it is comprised primarily of a test of the instructional design. Deeper analysis often leads to awareness of obstacles that hinder us from making progress and the ability to perceive paths forward in life. This iteration of the study implemented a number of reflexive exercises to deepen students' understanding of professional writing and life. In addition, the course design was simplified to lighten the cognitive load. Data collected during this iteration included a number of in-class reflexive exercises that were now incorporated into the course design rather than the study. A summary of evidence indicated that the course objectives were reached and the new design proved more effective than the previous ones.

## **Introduction**

Undergraduates are known for making erroneous career choices and ending up working in positions that don't require a degree (Greenbank, 2014). Greenbank (2014) observes, "In order to motivate them to be future-oriented, students should be encouraged to reflect (frequently and in depth) through writing and discussion on the potential outcomes for their 'future-possible selves'" (p. 190). In fact, the importance of reflection in higher education is widely recognized and included in most professional standards and program objectives (Ryan & Ryan, 2013). Ryan and Ryan (2013) observed, "Despite the rhetoric around the importance of reflection for ongoing learning, there is scant literature on any systematic, developmental approach to teaching reflective learning across higher education programs and individual courses" (p. 244). They argue that its integration requires a detailed pedagogic intervention for success. Reflexivity was integrated into the course the final iteration as a formal activity and practice. Thus, rather than being implemented as a research technique to generate theory on how to design the course, it became an essential component of the course.

## **Literature review**

The literature review included a discussion on reflexive practices, the draft workshop and its importance in the development of reflexive self-assessment skills, and a short review on writing pedagogy.

## **Framework for Reflexive Practices**

Holmes (2015) and a number of researchers understand and emphasize that writers are "reflexive designers of text" (p. 62). Linked to professional development, academic reflection often begins with a stated purpose and should result in evidence of

learning or growing professional knowledge (Ryan & Ryan, 2013, p. 246). It is considered a transformative approach to knowledge in the sense that knowledge transformation is privileged over knowledge transmission (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). Reflective thinking, according to Archer (2007), affects two primary tasks: prioritizing and decision-making, answering the questions: “What matters? And “What should I do about it” (p. 86). Key triggers for undergraduates making career choices that have the potential to transform their future or stall it. Reflection is the synaptic energy that mediates structure and agency that helps us understand who we are (identity) and who we can be (agency) (Ryan, 2014, p. 65).

### **Draft Workshop Reflexivity**

Low compliance or participation in draft workshops in concert with learner complaints regarding insufficient feedback led to the integration of reflexivity exercises into the draft workshop process. Ryan (2014) observed, “Deeper reflection on one’s work and self can be facilitated through ‘stepping back’ strategies, which use one’s own work in a new context as an artefact to prompt reflection” (p. 70). For example, Ryan proposed using dialogic reflections to re-contextualize the written work by drawing on one’s own response and that of others to the work to engage in a conversation regarding the efficacy of the work and in terms of achieving its purpose and reaching its intended audience effectively (Ryan, 2014, p. 70). Ryan identified this process as evoking Archer’s (2007) internal conversations of the three D’s: Discernment, being identifying concerns, Deliberation, being weighing up the mitigating factors, and Dedication, being deciding to follow through or not. In this sense, reflexive prompts serve as an interrogation of the rhetorical situation and illuminates for the writer: What matters and what should I do about it? And in this sense is transformative and engendering of agency. Ryan (2014)

suggests the use of blogs to create two-way dialogues between the writer and their peers to facilitate this form of dialogic reflective practices.

### **Understanding the Cognitive Memo and Online Publishing**

Ryan (2014) developed a straightforward method for incorporating reflective practice into the writing situation with the underlying objective of producing transformative knowledge for learners. Rooted in Archer's (1995, 2007, 2012) theory of reflexivity, Ryan identified the writer as a "self-conscious designer of text, which foregrounds their reflexive and agentic position as writer" (p. 61). These reflections can take many forms and take place throughout the process. Ryan (2014) advocated that this practice, reflexivity and seeing the work with fresh eyes, was most effective when writers perceived their work in a new setting or medium. Ryan notes: "These contemplative reflections can also be prompted with particular focus on how the new setting infuses new meanings or enables the writer to see what was not visible in the original setting where the work was created. An interrogation of the effect of audience, platform and mode on written work can prompt new forms of reflexive action" (p. 70). Thus, learners enrolled in the course were encouraged to transform their projects to new mediums, for example the instruction set was first a standard document of that genre and later transformed to a visual comic strip with characters. Reflection took place at the draft workshop stage, through a meta-cognitive memo introducing the final project, followed by a final deep reflection on professionalism at the time of submission of each project.

Strong writers must have a number of repertoires to choose from to be considered "enabled" (Ryan, 2014, p. 61) Ryan reported, "Enablement involves using a variety of strategies, including: explicit instruction in forms and features of texts; modelling and

facilitating the processes of writing over time and in different ways for different texts; deep immersion in subject matter; opportunities for purposeful writing” (p. 61). Thus, the final design of the course combined a number of forms and expressions of digital texts, such as videos, comic strips, and presentations, with purposeful, domain specific writing tasks, work-shopped extensively and reflectively with peers, that were intended and published online, informing an authentic project for a real world audience.

### **Establishing Expertise in Writing**

A number of researchers have observed that developing writing is more complex than knowledge transfer (Ryan, 2014; Ryan & Ryan, 2014). Ryan (2014) observed, “Individual writers are accorded the responsibility of choice and self-assessment as they shape an identity as a writer (p. 61). As a reminder, Kellogg (2006) identified the following six overlapping skillsets required of professional writers:

- Problem solving
- Language use
- Managing cognitive load
- Domain specificity
- Rapid access to long-term memory
- Relationship of the readership.
- Managing the Emotional Challenges.

Kellogg (2006) describes the final progression to establishing expertise in writing as knowledge crafting (p. 7), a stage that relies on the use of deliberate practice (Kellogg, 2006, p. 8). Writers must apply both effort and motivation to practice tasks and be provided timely feedback (Kellogg, 2006, p. 8). Kellogg also noted that knowledge

transformation would not take place without domain specific learning due to the heavy cognitive load writing places on attention spans (p. 21).

Thus, this iteration examined if the adjustments to the course design reduced cognitive load, helped writers manage emotional challenges, provided enough deliberate practice, and established an effective vCoP for situated learning and shaping professional identity. As also presented earlier, Handley, Sturdy, Fincham and Clark (2006) challenged the cognitivists' idealization of the classroom as a learning environment and developed a model for how situated learning takes place within communities of practice. Revisit Figure 26 below for Handley et al's (2006) model.



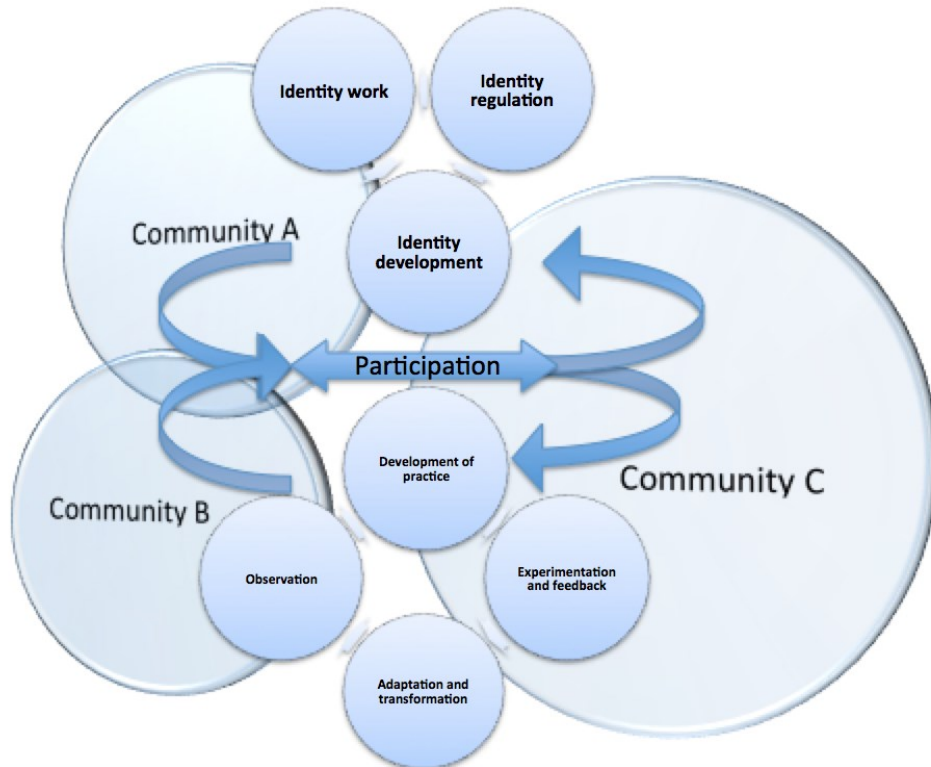


Figure 26. Development of identity and social media practice through participation on social networks (Adapted from Handley et al, 2006)

### **Method**

The third and final iteration was comprised of testing the final prototype of the instructional design.

### **Participants**

The study utilized a convenience sample, involving an upper level undergraduate course consisting of 25 students. The participants of the study were third and fourth year male and female students, between the ages of 22 and 60, who were enrolled in a professional writing program, inclusive of both full-time and part-time students, all taking the course as a mandatory requirement. Student majors ranged across a number of fields, including Mass Communication, Education, English as a Second Language, Translation, English Literature, Creative Writing, Geography, History, Political Science,

and Journalism. To maintain research ethical standards and ensure research validity, a co-researcher was invited to the class to explain the research study and to distribute and collect consent forms from students in the absence of the teacher.

### **Intervention 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration**

The course was redesigned to address the cognitive barriers that students experienced during the second iteration. The following list is a summary of changes that were introduced into the course design during the third iteration (See Appendix C: Course Instruments):

- Students make the decision early and contract to participate in social media components the first week of course, online or offline, to prevent wavering and inaction until the end of the course
- Introduced weekly reading quizzes on course material to improve compliance
- Introduced reflections on collaboration to improve compliance with regards to participation in draft workshops
- Deleted a number of projects, i.e. social media, job application, visual resume, interactive web project, and participation
- Enfolded the social media into the course process rather than as a separately graded project
- Introduced a professionalism score, based on how students participated in the course and feedback from students in the class
- As a project writing component, introduced reflections on professionalism
- Provided course points for publishing, obtaining online reach, completing project memo, and the collaboration and professionalism reflections in order to promote compliance

- Enfolded the two portfolios spaces into one professional process and product portfolio, emphasized that future employers would be able to see how you produced the product in addition to the final published project. The blogging function was used for process work; i.e., brainstorming, drafting, and collaboration, and pages were used to publish final projects.
- Introduced weekly tutorials on web design (html and coding) and social media practices
- Streamlined the schedule to create a more structured design for each project and reduce cognitive overload:
  - Week 1: Introduced the project (lecture format)
  - Week 2: Draft workshop (collaboration)
  - Week 3: Draft workshop (collaboration)
  - Week 4: Publish and promote work on social media in class

### **Data Collection 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration**

The following data was collected during the third iteration:

- Social technology survey
- Project memos
- Process reflections on collaboration
- Process reflections on professionalism and social media identity
- Measure of the contribution of articles published on the community website as measured through Google analytics
- Twitter activity assembled using course hash tags

- Course artifacts
- Blogging and commenting
- Instructor observations on significant events during the year, what worked and failed
- Email correspondence

### **Process reflections on professionalism and social media identity**

After publishing their course project and promoting it through social network, participants were asked to fill out a number of reflexive exercises to facilitate online professional identity formation. They completed the following six exercises:

- Reflexivity #1. Objective was to establish concepts and definitions of professionalism prior to informing an online professional identity.
- Reflexivity #2. Objective was to have learners become mindful of agency using Bamberg's dilemmatic spaces. (Refer to Chapter 5.)
- Reflexivity #3. Objective was to have learners understand the relevance of soft skills.
- Reflexivity #4. The objective was to prepare students to articulate a professional identity and learning objectives for professional growth.
- Reflexivity #5. The objective of this reflexivity was to have students reflect on the self-promotional nature of online identity.
- Reflection #6. The objective was to have the student reflect on their course experience and online professional identity.

### **Analyzing and Coding of Data**

Analysis of all survey data was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The qualitative data was analyzed and coded by at least two

coders. Whenever discrepancies surface, coders reflected on the data, discussed and agreed upon the most appropriate category the information should be placed, followed by an explanation to support the decision. To develop categories and codes for the transcribed data, coders carefully read students' responses for each question. A synthesis of the raw data was carried out and transformed into broader themes, and later more specific ones in the next stage of coding. When meaningful segments of the data were identified, they were coded using descriptive words, categories and general themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Taylor & Gibbs, 2010).

According to Taylor and Gibbs (2010), segmenting the data or dividing it into meaningful analytical units was important for accuracy and identifying significant points in the data (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). This process continued until the data had been segmented and initial coding completed. To pinpoint specific themes, two coders reviewed all responses placed under the broader categories, which then were scrutinized for more precise themes. Broader themes that emerged were used to categorize the unmodified responses of students to the questionnaires; this data was compiled into figures and integrated throughout the discussion of the results section. Refer to Appendix B for instruments.

### **Assuring Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Barab and Squire (2004) noted that when “a researcher is intimately involved in the conceptualization, design, development, implementation, and researching of a pedagogical approach, then ensuring that researchers can make credible and trustworthy assertions is a challenge” (p. 10). To maintain research ethical standards, in the absence of the instructor, a co-researcher was invited to the class to explain the research and distribute to and collect from students consent forms for participation in the study. An

information letter providing a description of the research was attached to the consent form. At the meeting, participants were provided with the opportunity to give free and informed consent and made aware that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the duration of the research. It was further expressed to students that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that their withdrawal would have no effect on their course grade.

### **Limitations of the Study 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration**

This phase of the study is limited in part by the sample: having selected a non-random sample and the sample size. Since only one section of the course is taught annually and the program is small, the sample included all students enrolled in the program during the time period that the study took place. In addition, self-reported data from reflexivity exercises cannot be independently verified and must be accepted at face value. A number of biases are related to self-reporting, including, selective memory, telescoping, attribution, and exaggeration.

### **Results**

This section includes a statistical analysis of the Google Analytics report from the community website to explore how barriers to performance can be overcome through instructional design. The final half explored how undergraduates perceive and shape professional online identity through a series of reflexive exercises.

#### **Participating in a v(CoP) to foster situated practice**

A year-on-year comparison to the previous year's Google Analytics of the community website demonstrated a 33% increase in online readership over the previous year, indicating a strengthening of the v(CoP) (virtual Community of Practice) in terms of

its reach and public engagement. See Figure 27. This increase, perhaps, results from participants contributing higher levels of participation in terms of online publishing and social network practices.

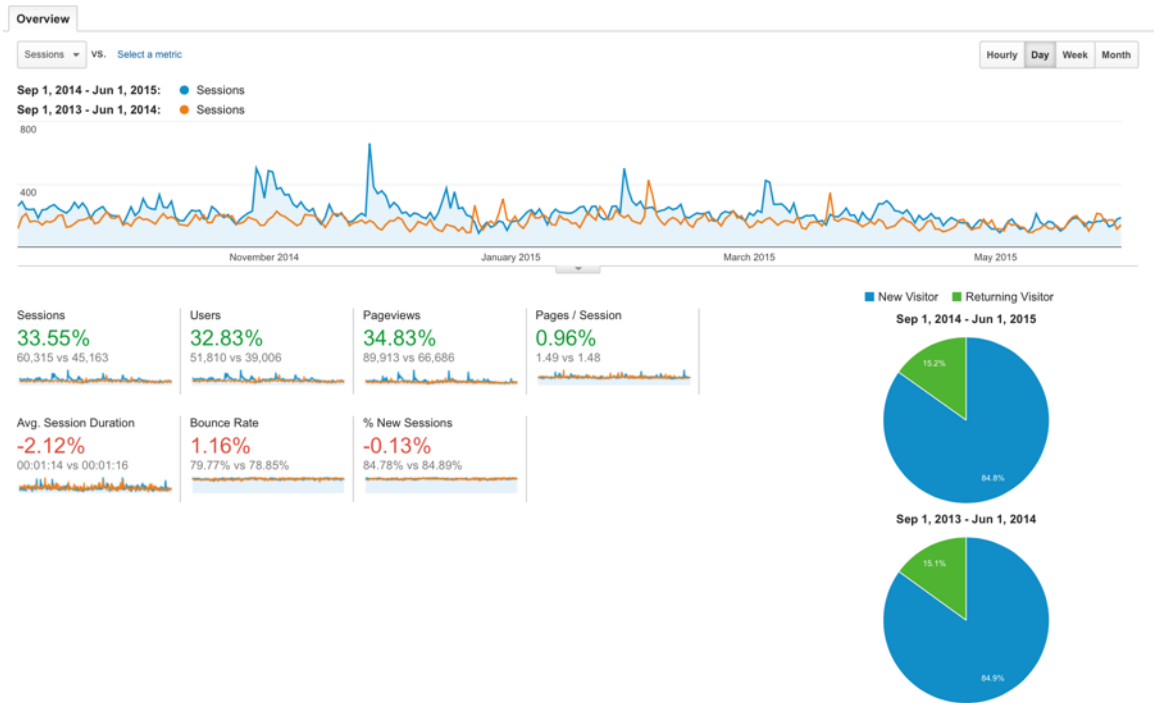


Figure 27. Year-on-year comparison of website traffic.

Furthermore, Google Analytics revealed that social sessions through social referrals to the website increased more than 320% over the previous year, leading to 26% more conversions. See Table 4 for details.

Table 4. Detailed year-on-year social media growth

	2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	% Change
Sessions	45,163	60,315	33.55%
Sessions via Social Referral	1,564	6,573	320.27%
Conversions	6,622	8,362	26.28%
Facebook	1,011	5,569	450.84%
Twitter	413	618	49.64%
Tumblr	2	148	7,300.00%
LinkedIn	37	62	67.57%

These results are the product of higher levels of participation and effective professional practices on social media networks. See Figure 28. The peaks in the following figure correspond to in-class publishing sessions.



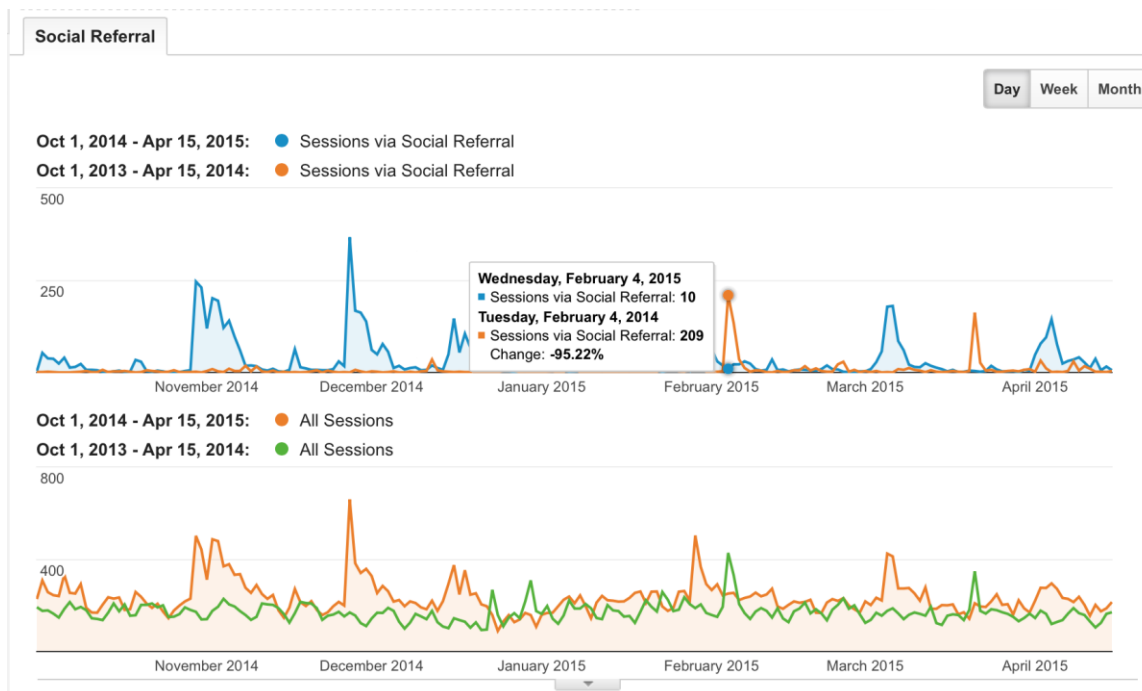


Figure 28. Year-on-year comparison of sessions via social referral

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> iteration of the study, only two significant peaks in social referrals occurred and only toward the end of the year. The 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration's first publishing meeting took place in October and while the results were tentative, by November, the participants understood the practice and were able to maintain momentum throughout the entire course with five additional peaks, which occurred during class time.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration, five students emerged as writing experts within the framework of the course. Their work was not only recognized within the classroom community through having received and won a number of nominations for professionalism from their peers and having been frequently mentioned in draft workshop surveys as providing the most effective feedback in terms of insights into the revision process, additionally, their articles scored the highest rankings.

The student articles published on the community website can be considered artefacts from participation in a virtual Community of Practice (vCoP) and a means

toward practicing professional identity. The analytics from the website are also a form of artefact reflecting the forms and types of interaction that resulted from class participation in virtual communities outside of the course. The following analytics were extracted to examine the vCoP from an instructional design perspective: Page of origin to which the analytic refers, blog where the page was published, Page Views, New Visitors, Exits, Entrances, Bounce and Time. From the Blog data where the article was published, two additional pieces of data could be identified: (1) team or individual blog and (2) newly founded blog or pre-existing blog. After publishing their articles, participants generated social sessions by actively posting links to their article on social network sites. If they were successful, they drew traffic to the page, a measurement recorded by Google Analytics. The top 1000 pages were examined for all iterations. The data extracted consisted of the articles that were published specific to that iteration. Table 5 provides a summary of the data.

Table 5. Summary of Google Analytics

Variable	1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration		2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration		3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Blog	5.25	3.055	27.07	4.5	49	5.6	
Founder	1.55	.49	1.78	.41	1.41	.49	
Team	1.64	.48	1.63	.48	1.35	.48	
Social Sessions	10.33	.96	45.49	4.57	25.76	57.16	
New Visitors	10.08	12.73	34.85	70.73	59.34	90.49	
Page Views	13.47	15.71	40.41	76.03	75.66	107.93	
Entrances	5.35	11.19	18.50	59.49	41.15	83.57	
Time	103	130.39	145.04	144.35	147.95	102.85	
Bounce	.46	.446	.61	.39	.57	.37	
Exit	.38	.31	.45	.28	.44	.27	
Sample size	n=117		n=99		n=216		N=432

Levine's Test of Homogeneity of Variances demonstrated a violation for the means and standard deviations of all variables with the exception of Team. For this reason, a Welch's Robust Test of Equality of Means was conducted: Blog  $F(2, 244) = 4347.20$   $p < .00$ ; Founder  $F(2, 235.859) = 24.874$   $p < .00$ ; Team  $F(2, 225.01) = 19.208$   $p < .00$ ; Social Sessions  $F(2, 195) = 18.526$   $p < .001$ ; Social Pages  $F(2, 199) = 13.853$   $p < .00$ ; Page Views  $F(2, 191.97) = 39.384$   $p < .00$ ; New Visitors  $F(2, 189.74) = 35.861$   $p < .00$ ; Time  $F(2, 200) = 5.32$   $p < .006$ ; Entrances  $F(2, 190) = 21.078$   $p < .001$ ; and Bounce  $F(2, 214.5) = 3.87$ ,  $p < .02$ . Normalcy could not be assumed since a number of outliers were found in the dataset as identified in boxplots. Outliers were not altered due to a consideration of the large sample size and the unlikeliness of an error of measurement since the data was

collected by and reported through Google analytics. A post hoc Games-Howell measure revealed there were statistically significant differences between the means of all iterations for the following variables: Blog, Founder, Team, Social Sessions, Social Pages, Page Views, New Visitors, Time and Entrances. The Bounce rate was statistically significantly different between the first and second iterations, being higher for the second. The Exit rate showed no differences among the three iterations.

Nistor and Fischer (2012) found a causal model embedded in the reporting of the CoP literature consisting of the following variables: expertise, derived from domain knowledge and experience, levels of participation, status, and the contribution and creation of artefacts (p. 110). Novices will have low levels of participation, limited domain knowledge, low expert status and small contributions to artefact development. An expert will have higher levels of participation, extensive domain knowledge, a central position and make significant contributions to artefact development. Thus, expertise, Nistor et al argue, is an individualistic characteristic that implies a social context and recognition within this context. Transforming identity from a beginner to expert is what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as an organic aspect of learning.

The course design strengthened the establishment and participation in virtual Communities of Practice. Table 6 summaries the increasing reach of student contributions to artifacts and numbers of significant events that strengthened status in the community from the 1<sup>st</sup> iteration to the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration.

Table 6. Summary of blogs, reach and significant events

1st Iteration

Participant	Reach	Significant Events
Death (1)	556	Interview with Glen Matlock of the Sex Pistols.
Education	58	
Fitness	119	
Habitat	65	
Word	452	
Art	44	
Fashion	85	
Living	24	
Justice	111	
Eats	124	
Travel	44	

2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration

Participant	Reach	Engagement
Markets	929	Interview with Chef Hughes. Chef requested a follow-up interview.
Love	118	
Music	500	
Habitat	240	
Eats	122	
Education	85	
Sports	93	
Health	140	
Film	246	
Living	90	
Travel	68	
Word	72	
Justice	112	

3rd Iteration

Blog	Reach	Highlights
Caffe	1845	Through domain specificity, this participant connected, online and offline, with a number of notable and successful café owners and baristas. Reported baristas,

		added Caffe projects to their websites and Facebook walls.
Sustainability	1098	Established relevance in the domain.
Chefs	1748	Interviews with a number of up and coming and famous chefs and owners of iconic restaurants in Montreal
Theatre	1789	Interviews with actors and comedians. Popular reviews and support and encouragement from the theatre community.
Hype	405	
Love	847	
Origins	104	
Arrival	683	
Langue	1354 (team of three)	
Culture	666 (team of two)	
Habitat	450	
Music	600	Kandle Osborne featured interview on personal Facebook wall. Interviews with a number of up-and-coming musical acts.
Eats	450	
Gaming	460	
Comics	372	
Wellness	1646 (team of two)	

Table 7 illustrates a summary of data collected from the course vCoP. The 1<sup>st</sup> iteration cannot be compared to subsequent iterations since a larger number of classes were contributing artefacts to the community website. However, figures can be compared to the previous academic year prior to the start of the study. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> iterations are

comparable in the sense that the course under study exclusively contributed to the website.

Table 7. Summary of Google Analytic Results Each Iteration

Period calculated: Oct 1 <sup>st</sup> -May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Iteration prior to study	1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration	2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration
Reach	33,712	48,168	35,674	48,685
Page views	64,706	75,584	53,026	73,381
Visitors	27,961	40,202	30,798	41,745
New visitors	81.76%	82.02%	84.68%	84.45%
Bounce	74.99%	68.66%	78.87	79.82
Social referrals	1326	1091	1465	6391
Social Conversions	334	99	5281	6812
Facebook	1046	350	1,011	5569
Twitter	174	314	413	618
LinkedIn	30	246	34	62
Tumblr	33	117	2	148

The 1<sup>st</sup> iteration CoP grew dramatically from the previous year's reported reach. As well, the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration exceeded the numbers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> iteration, indicating that the final course design effectively grew a large virtual community. Figure 29 illustrates the growth of breadth and number of social sessions on the blogs.

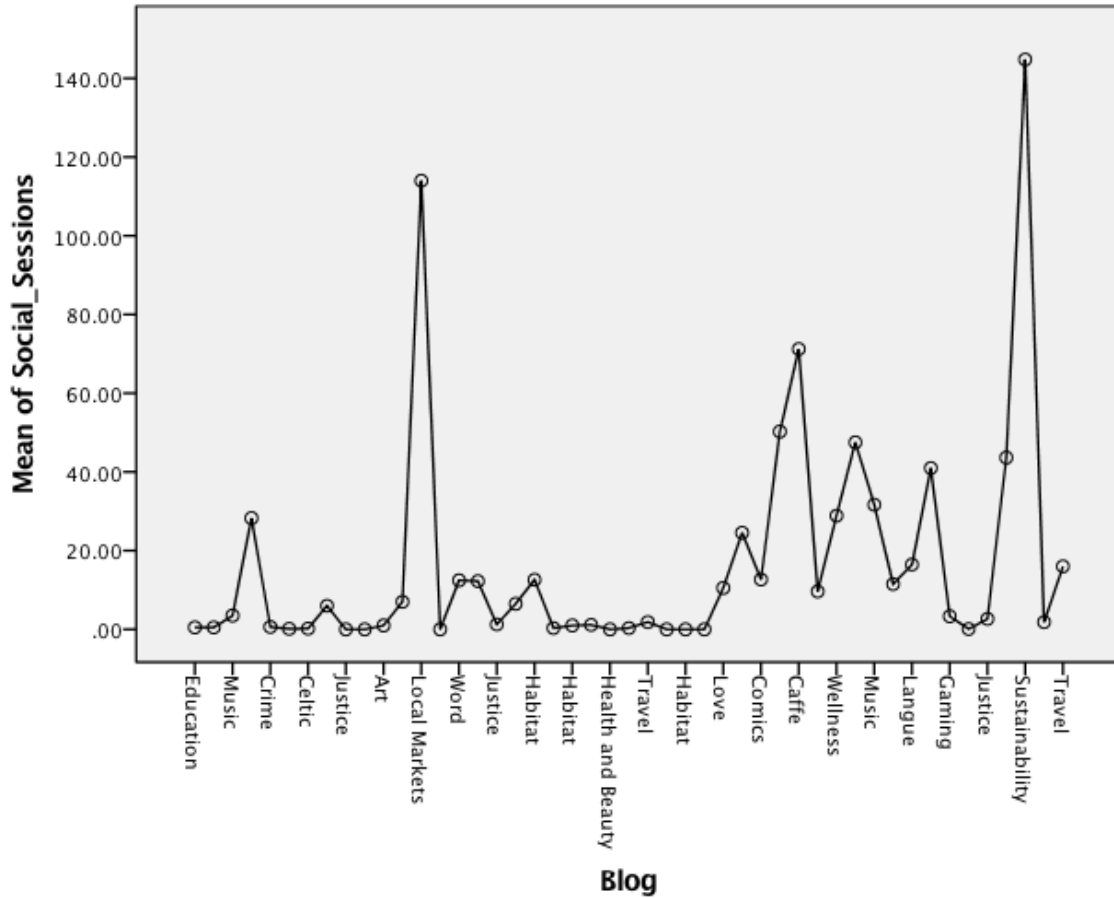
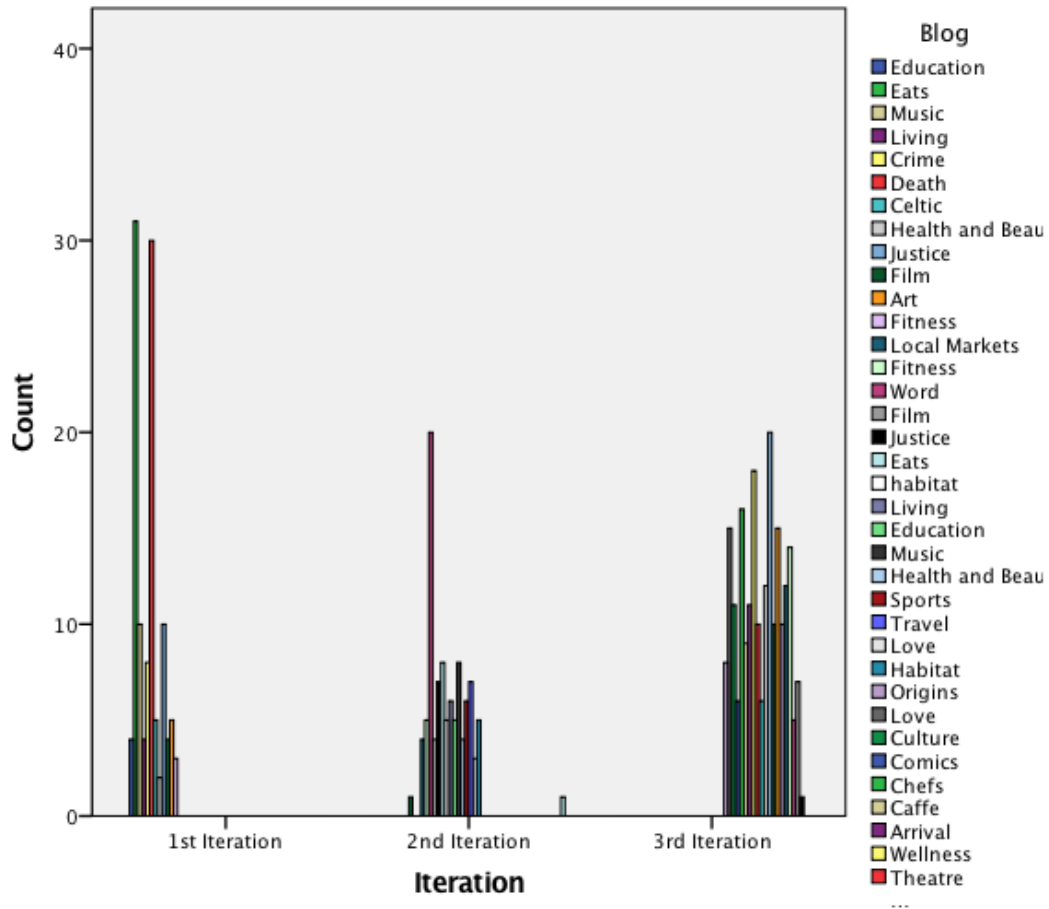


Figure 29. Average number of social sessions throughout the study duration

Social sessions are measured on as reported by Google Analytics from the 1<sup>st</sup> iteration ending with the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration. During the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> iterations only a few participants utilized social media strategically to increase reach. The social media project for those iterations was a separate project focused on growing networks and engagement, but was not directly tied into the community website. For the third iteration, the social media project was directly tied to publishing practices on the community website.

Figure 30 illustrates the breadth and depth of artefacts published on blogs. The third iteration demonstrates a broader and more actively engaged group of participants. The highs are not as high as in the first iteration; however, participation was widespread and a larger number





of participants made contributions to artefacts.

Figure 30. Summary of published pages

The strength of the virtual Community of Practice in the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration is also represented in Figures 31-33, in terms of Page Views, New Visitors, and Social Sessions.

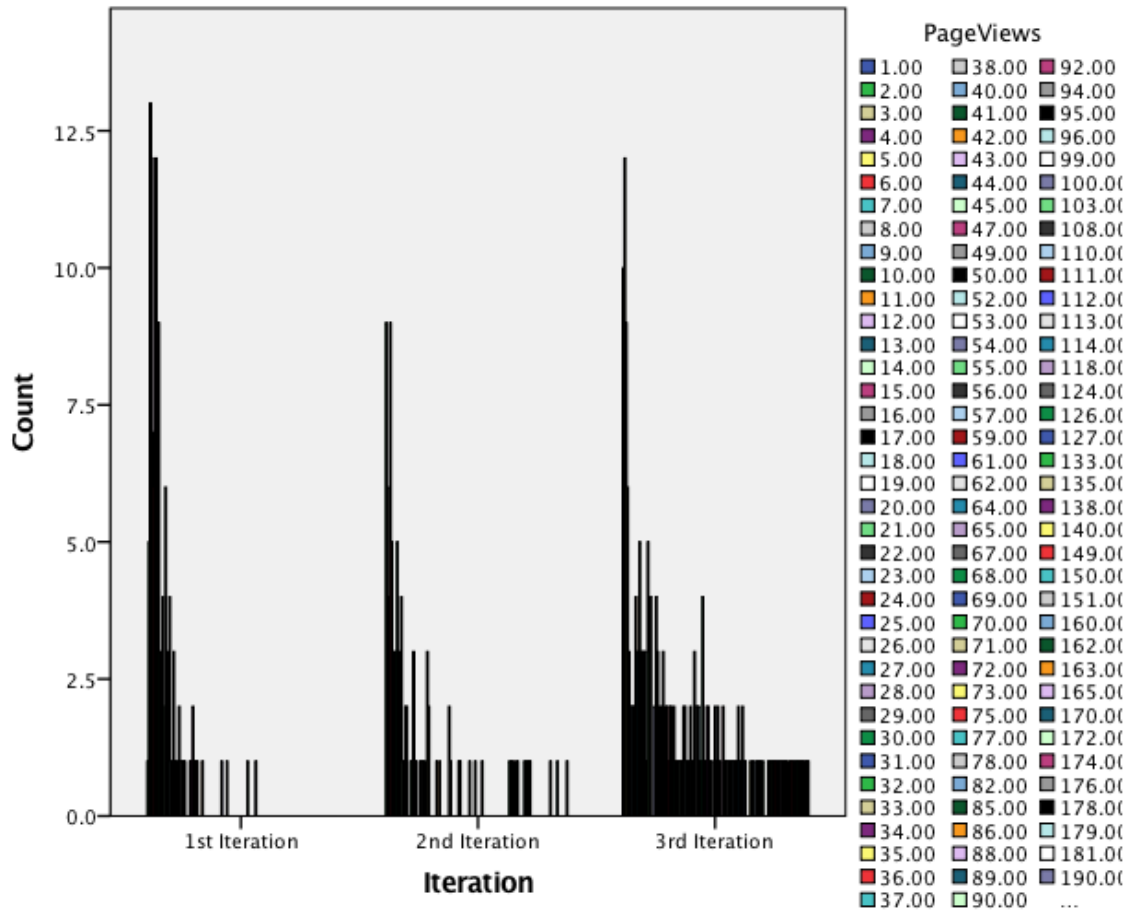


Figure 31. Summary of page views

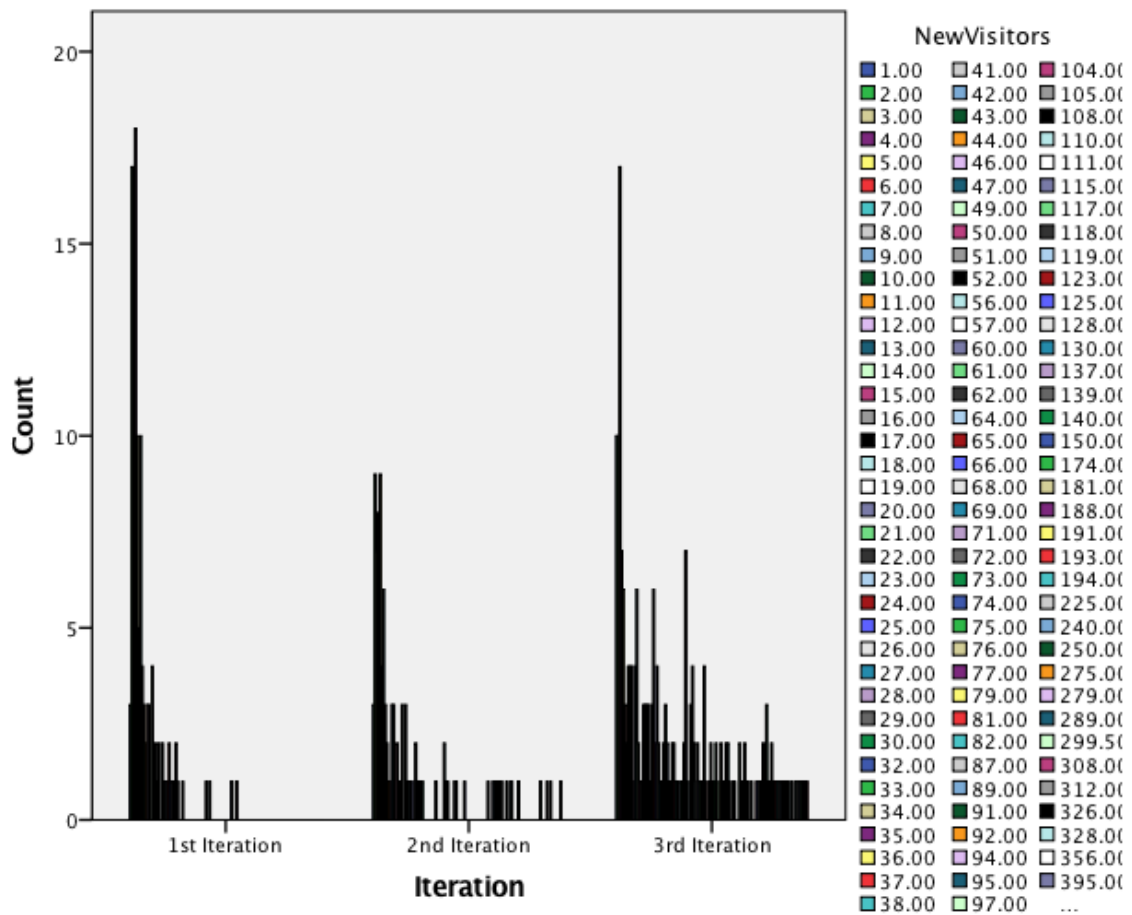


Figure 32. Summary of new visitors

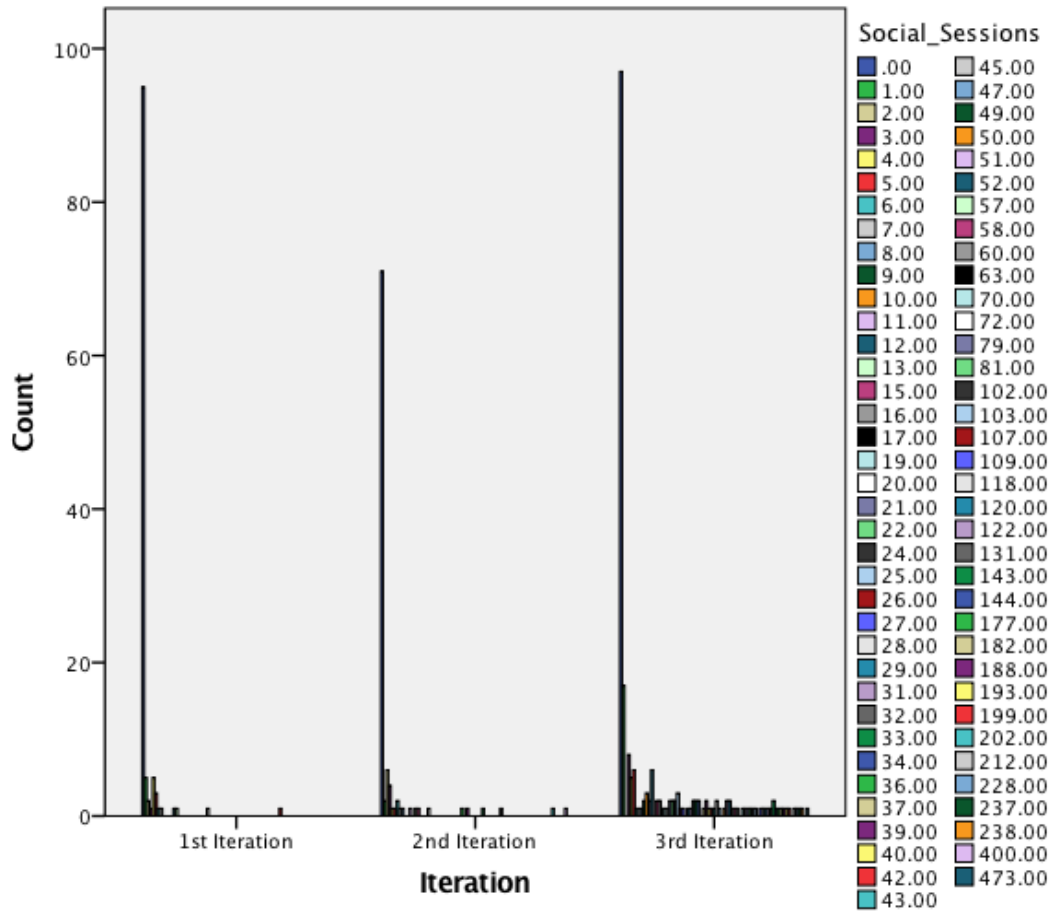


Figure 33. Summary of social sessions

The participants in the 3rd Iteration performed on social networks at a much higher and richer level as shown in previous iterations. To determine if it might have been a product of the course redesign or a difference between the groups of participants, data from the initial technology survey was analysed. Three continuous variables: Familiarity, membership, and active postings on social networks were compared. A Levine’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances revealed no violations; thus, a One-way ANOVA test was conducted on the data (See Table 8).

Table 8. Summary of Participants' Social Media Practices

Variable	1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration		2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration		3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Familiar	4.09	.996	4.65	1.59	4.19	1.662
Member	3.26	1.287	3.62	1.416	3.24	1.48
Active	2.48	1.31	3.69	1.43	2.67	1.065
Sample size	n=23		n=26		n=21	
					N=70	

The one-way ANOVA test revealed the following results: Familiarity  $F(2, 67) = 1.132$   $p < .328$ ; Membership  $F(2, 67) = .562$   $p < .573$ ; and Active posting  $F(2, 67) = 6.297$   $p < .003$ . A post hoc Tukey HSD test revealed that the means were statistically different in terms of numbers of sites where active postings occurred, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration had statistically significantly higher numbers of sites where they were active than the third iteration. Thus, it's possible to claim that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration participants were similar in terms of social media familiarity and membership and equal to or less active in terms of actual practices than the previous groups. The third group of students out performed the previous two groups. This finding demonstrates that they were not a more advanced group prior to the start of the course, indicated that, perhaps, the course design was an effective intervention. See Figure 34.

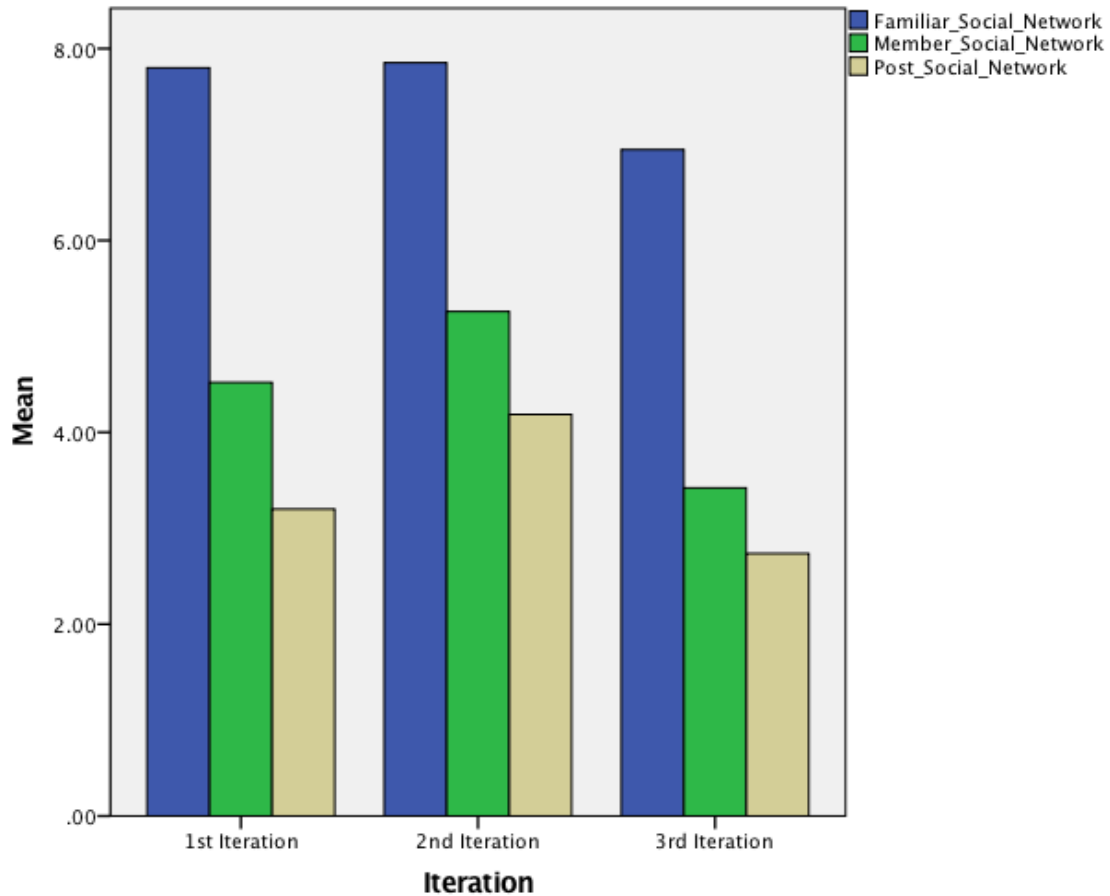


Figure 34. Participants' reported social media practices

As noted in the previous iterations, students found managing the emotional challenges of social networks daunting and solving the problems associated with building an engaged and genuine social network even more so. The community website afforded an opportunity for learners to practice their skill and learn how to manage the cognitive load. A qualified vCoP should also allow for the development of artefacts specific to the field, i.e. in this case, professional-level articles and in turn can be used to inform professional identity. Thus, students selected a specific domain to represent their interest and passion and write articles for publication. In addition to creating artifacts, the act of being a participant at some level, even if it is merely peripheral and observant, is also essential in a CoP. Wegner (1999) notes, “[This] refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process

of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities” (p. 4). It was possible for students in this capacity to interact with professionals, experts in the field, and to establish expertise. Nistor et al (2014) note, “Changing identity from beginner to old-timer, and respectively from novice to expert, is an organic aspect of learning in CoPs” (p. ). Nistor et al (2014) also confirmed through quantitative analysis that expertise is a determinant of participation in CoPs. Data collected from Google Analytics was then further analysed to determine if there were homogenous groups of variables that might inform some aspects of a vCoP and the instructional design. Thus, a two-step cluster analysis of the collected data specific to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration using the log-likelihood distance and the Schwarz-Bayes criterion on 431 pieces of data identified four variably sized clusters. The quality of clusters was ranked solidly “Good”. (See Figure 35.)

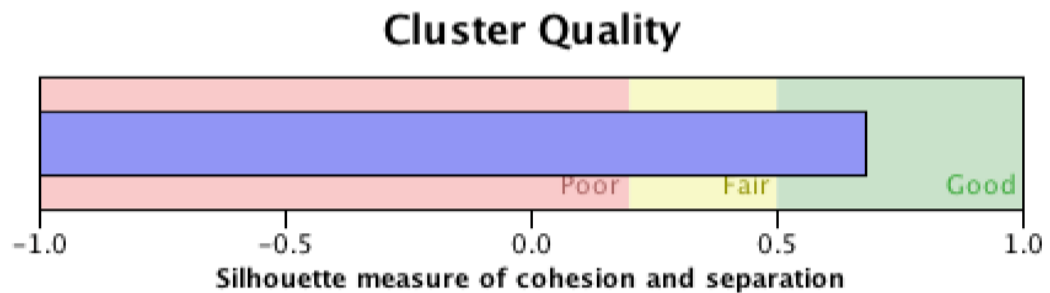


Figure 35. Cluster Quality

The following clusters were identified: Cluster 1 (31.5%) contained an independent student member of the class acting alone, original, in terms of founding a blog specifically tailored to their interests within a specific domain, with a modest level social media skills as measured by the number of social sessions; cluster 3 (31.5%) contained the only team-based cluster, formed to share a mutual area of expertise on a newly founded blog, demonstrating novice-level social media skills; cluster 2 (27.8%)

contained an independent student member who joined an existing blog with a novice level of social media skills; and cluster 4 (9.3%) contained an independent actor who founded an original blog who demonstrated expert-level social media skills. The cluster profiles are depicted in Fig. 36.

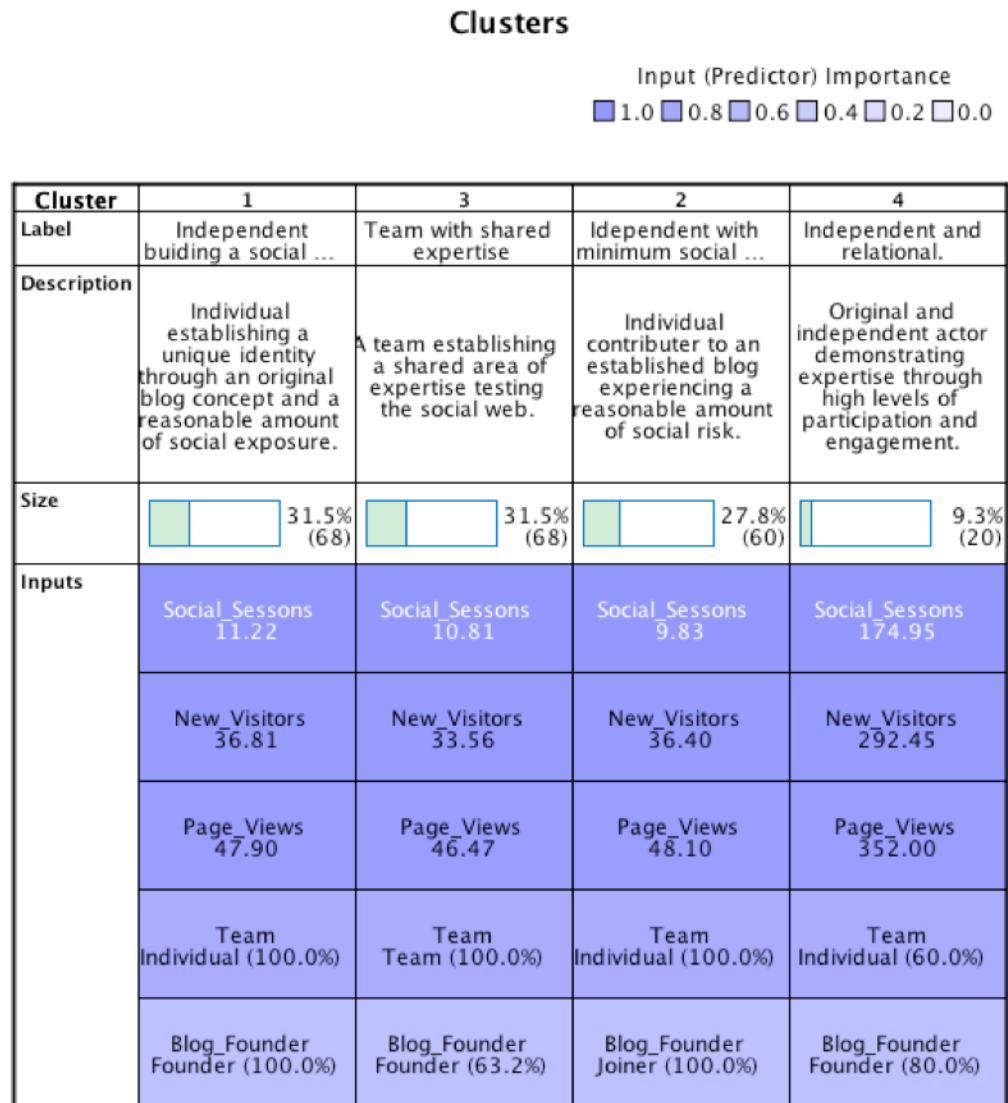


Figure 36. Clusters identifying homogenous groups of learners

There were statistically significant differences found between the clusters of the variables Founder, Team, Social Session, New Pages, and New Visitors. From the



Google Analytic results, a strong correlation was found between Social Sessions and Page Views and New Visitors. Social Sessions were a outcome of participation in the vCoP and directly correlated with generating page views and drawing in new visitors, and, more importantly, a measurable attribute of expertise in terms of social media practices and participation in a vCoP. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between Social Sessions, Page Views and New Visitors (See Table 9). Preliminary analyses showed the relationships to be linear; however both variables proved to lack a normal distribution, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilkes test ( $p < .01$ ); there were also a number of outliers that remained in the measurement.

Table 9. Correlations Among Key Analytic Variables

	Social Sessions	Page Views	New Visitors
Social Sessions	1	.863**	.872**
Page Views	.863**	1	.973**
New Visitors	.872**	.973**	1

*Note: n = 432, \*\*p < .01*

There was a strongly positive correlation between Social Sessions and Page Views  $r(432) = .863, p < .001$ , with social sessions explaining 14% of the variation in Page Views. See Appendix F for further statistical analysis of Google Analytics.

To visualize proportionately, the probable impact that social media practices had on reaching New Visitors and obtaining Page Views, see Figure 37.

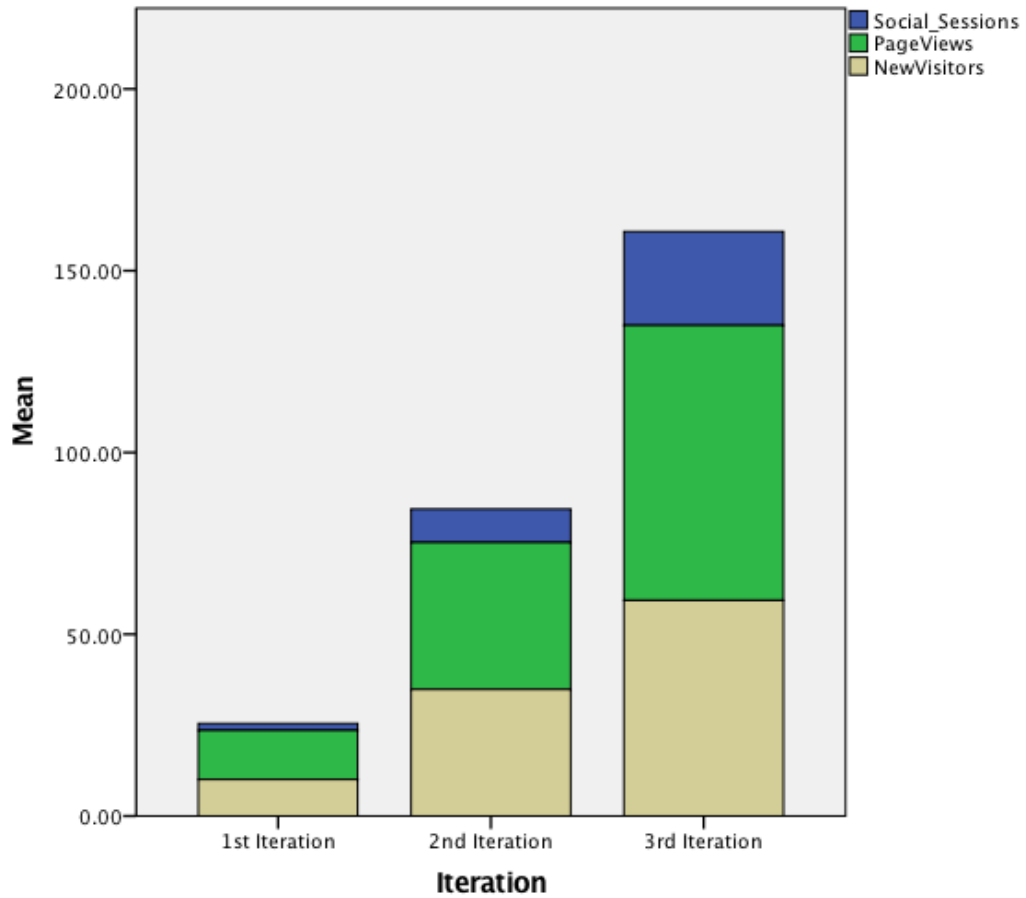


Figure 37. Impact of social sessions on website traffic

Social sessions, created by social referrals, pull readers to the website and reinforce and establish expertise for the writer within the realm of their specific domain. Thus, social referrals, generated through social media practices, form an essential component for building a viable and visible vCoP. See Figure 38 to visualize the impact of social referrals on the number of social sessions as measured by Google Analytics.

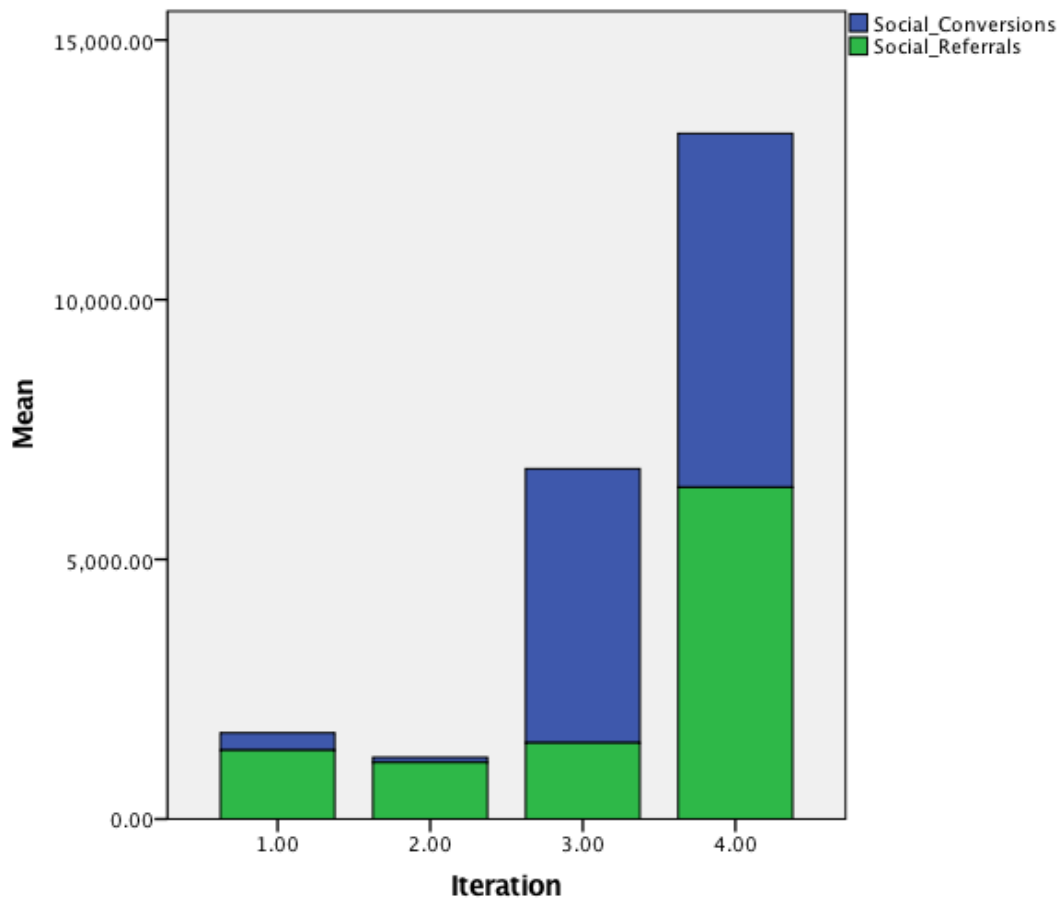


Figure 38. Proportion of social sessions emerging from social referrals

In order to establish a baseline, the first bar represents the time period prior to the start of the study. This bar chart provides evidence that participation in the social media project during the second and third iterations proved successful, the first iteration of the study was unable to generate social conversions. Perhaps, in the 1<sup>st</sup> iteration since participants were purportedly using fake identity accounts as described in their interviews they were unable to generate the positive relational attributes associated with social engagement and attract readers to their content.

Cluster groups identified instructional design aspects that influenced or supported levels of social media practice and ultimately impacted the reach of the group and depth of their engagement. Founding a unique blog and working independently proved enriching for students who were highly motivated to develop an online professional

identity. Teams, while less productive, were able to share mutual interests and test the waters of social media practice and self-branding with minimal risk of exposure and surrounded by a supportive team in real life (IRL). The final two clusters consisted of independent actors, one on an established blog and one as founder of a new blog. Both options provide affordances to learners based on individual preferences and fostered similar reach towards building and participating on a vCoP.

### **Barriers Encountered when Integrating Social Media**

Reflexive exercises revealed how students differentiated writing tasks for the web and transferred traditional writing skills to web-based skills and social media practices.

#### **The task of writing for the web**

The course required students to make the move from academic writing to professional writing; and even more importantly, writing for the web. Audience became a pivotal issue for the students who veered away from recycling old material and sought out fresh content, an essential component for establishing a credible voice on the web. Many were also making a transition for the first time, from pleasing an instructor to pleasing a broader, less-willing, but more agreeable audience. For this audience, their authenticity is based on their ability to reveal the truth without revealing too much information. The students reported that they developed the following competencies at the end of the first project. See Figure 39.

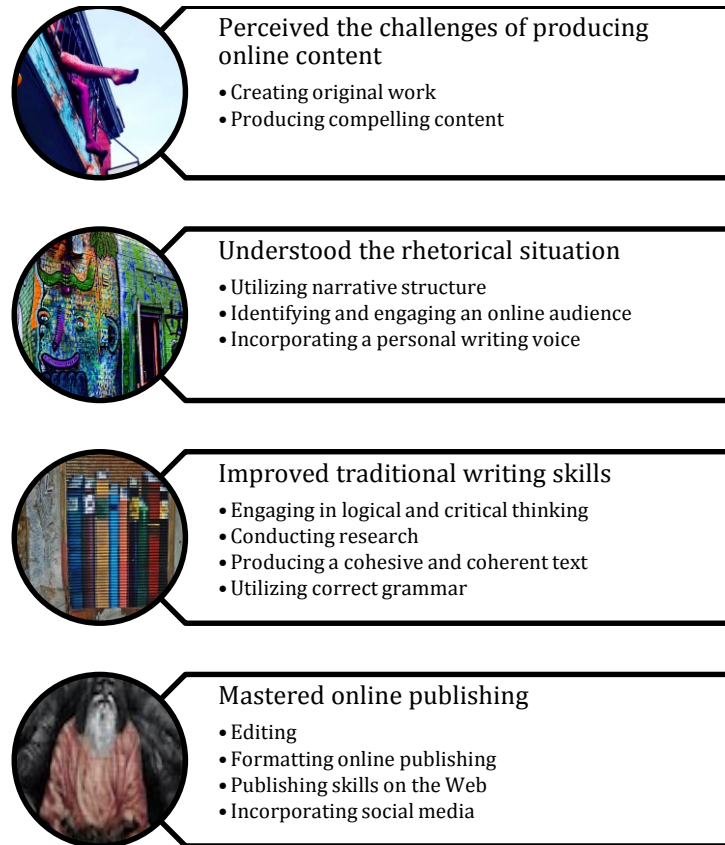


Figure 39. Competencies shaped during the first project

Learners also reported developing a number of soft skills through the course design's emphasis on process or the cycle of design. Reflection reinforces mental representations of the task and plausibly facilitates management of the cognitive load (Ryan & Ryan, 2103). Figure 40 illustrates how the fostering of soft skills informs the development of hard skills and shapes writing expertise.

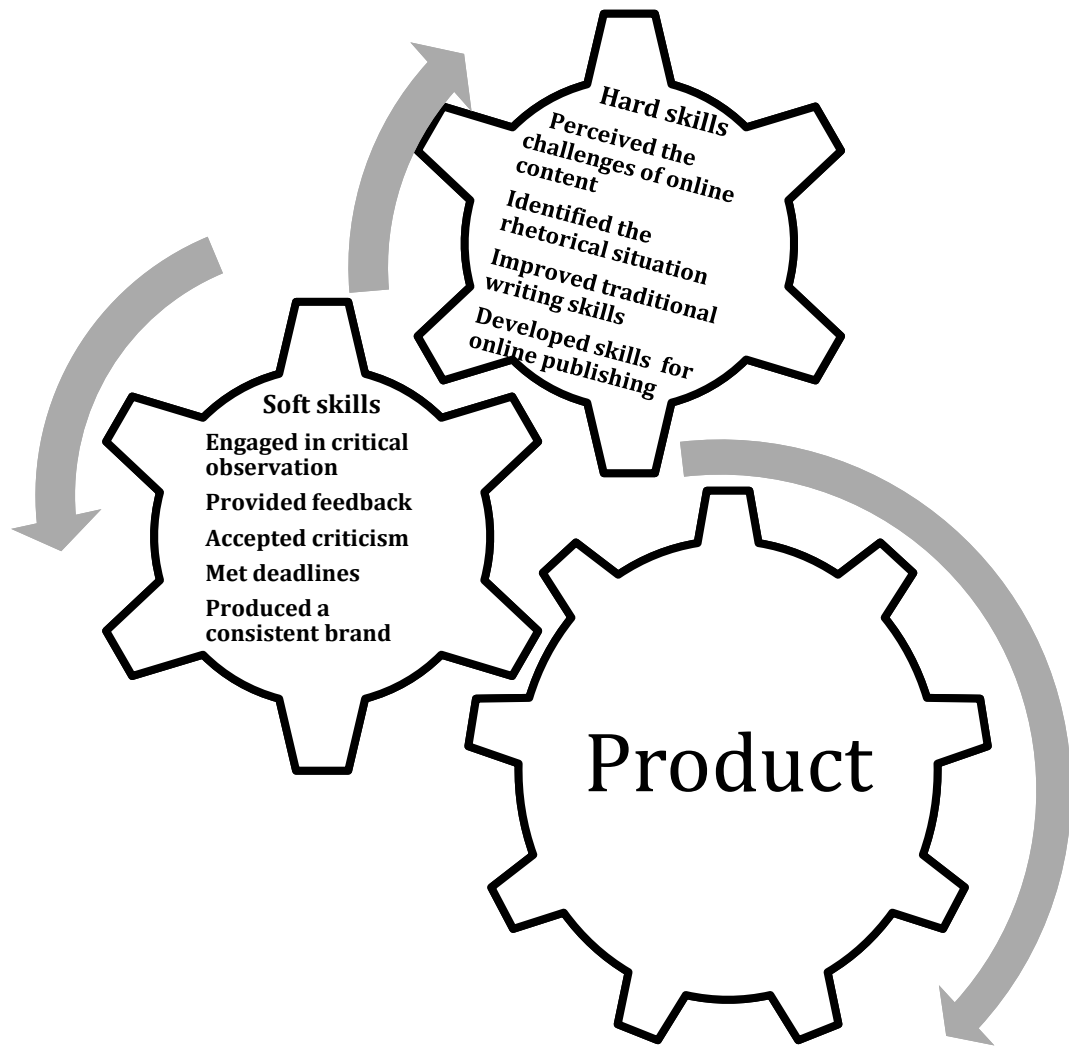


Figure 40. The relevance of soft skill in developing writing expertise

The first two iterations the course design failed to enforce participation in the process and students opted out of fully participating in the draft workshops or meeting deadlines; for this reason, perhaps, the course had minimal impact on their writing lives and the development of expertise and/or professional identity. In the third iteration, reflexive exercises were anchored to the following course objectives: online publishing, social media practices, and shaping online professional identity. These exercises helped

learners manage emotional challenges, cognitive load, and reinforced awareness of their relationship to readers.

### **Transference transitioning from personal to professional social media practices**

Learners recognized that personal social media practices were insufficient when developing a professional practices and online identity:

*The main challenge I faced was integrating everything I know about social media and applying it to my work. For instance, I usually share my work on Twitter, but not so much on Facebook, Google Plus, or Pinterest. The course taught me not to underestimate social media. Whereas before I would feel like I was bothering my friends by asking them to look at my work, now I don't mind anymore. The more people see it, the more my professional identity grows through social media networking. (Student's Voice)*

Figure 41 illustrates the challenges students reported when transforming personal social media practices into professional ones.

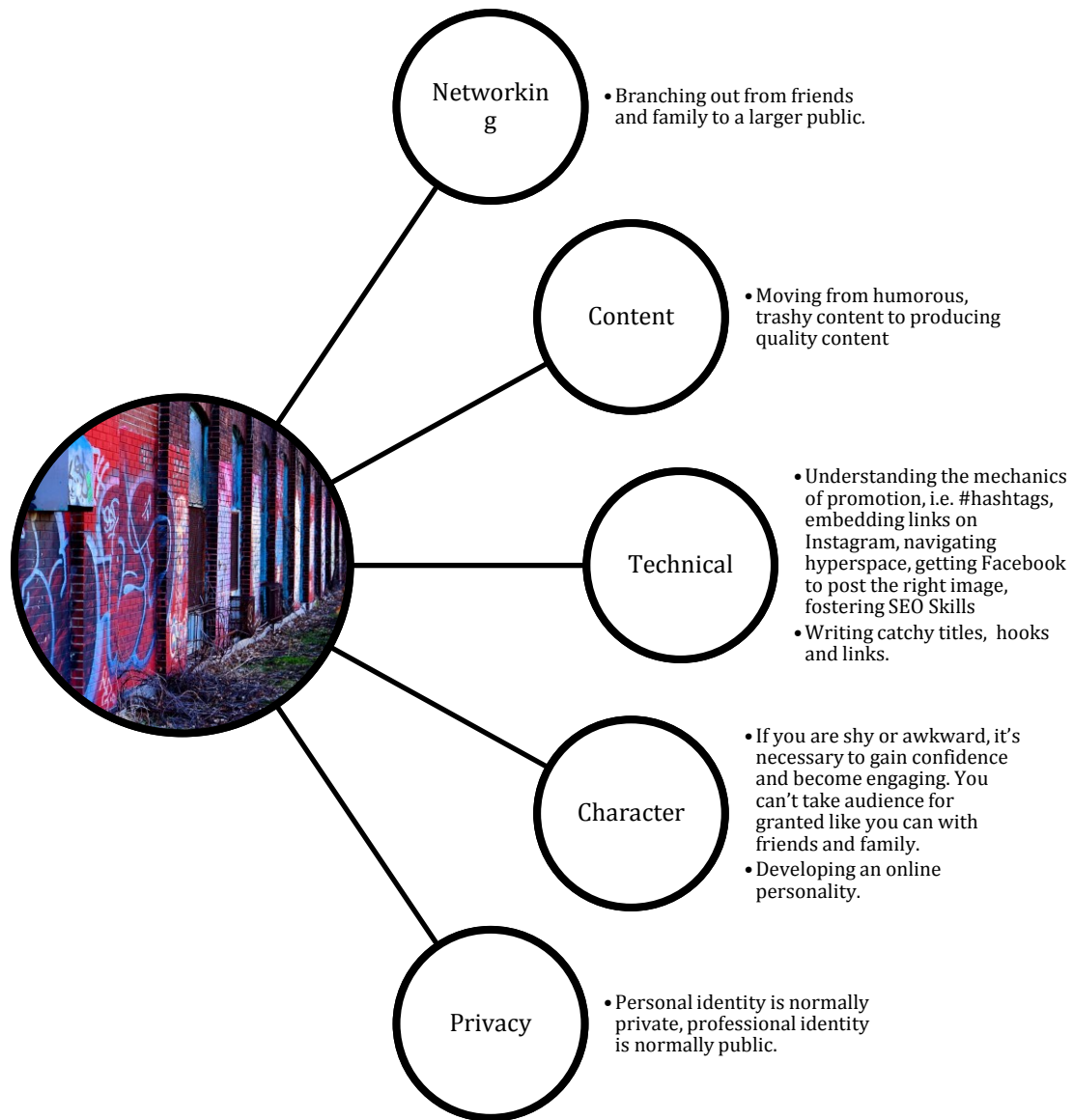


Figure 41. Transforming personal social media practices into professional ones

Learners also articulated their thoughts on the impact that gaining readers had on their participation and level of engagement in the course. Having outside readers helped them pay more attention to content rather than a style suited for one particular instructor. See Figure 42 for student feedback on having an online audience.





Figure 42. Shaping professional expertise through readership

Audience is a key factor when developing expertise (Kellogg, 2006). Having an online audience and not relying solely on instructor feedback for grades broadened their perspective and informed the writing process.

### **Facilitating Professional Identity Formation**

Students were also encouraged to reflect on professionalism and online identity formation as a means of fostering its growth by making them mindful of their role in informing their future selves and how it was possible to anchor course progress and participation towards the development of this future self. Thus, students voiced their concerns regarding self-promotion, defined the dimensions of professionalism in their field and practiced acquiring these attributes throughout the course duration online and in real life with each other. At the end of the course, they reflected back on lessons learned and progress made.

### **The Problem with Self Promotion**

Not every student anticipates or desires to build an online professional identity, and many students questioned the appropriateness of this requirement throughout the duration of the course. The following figure depicts the balancing act of emotions and triumphs that the act of self-promotion engenders.

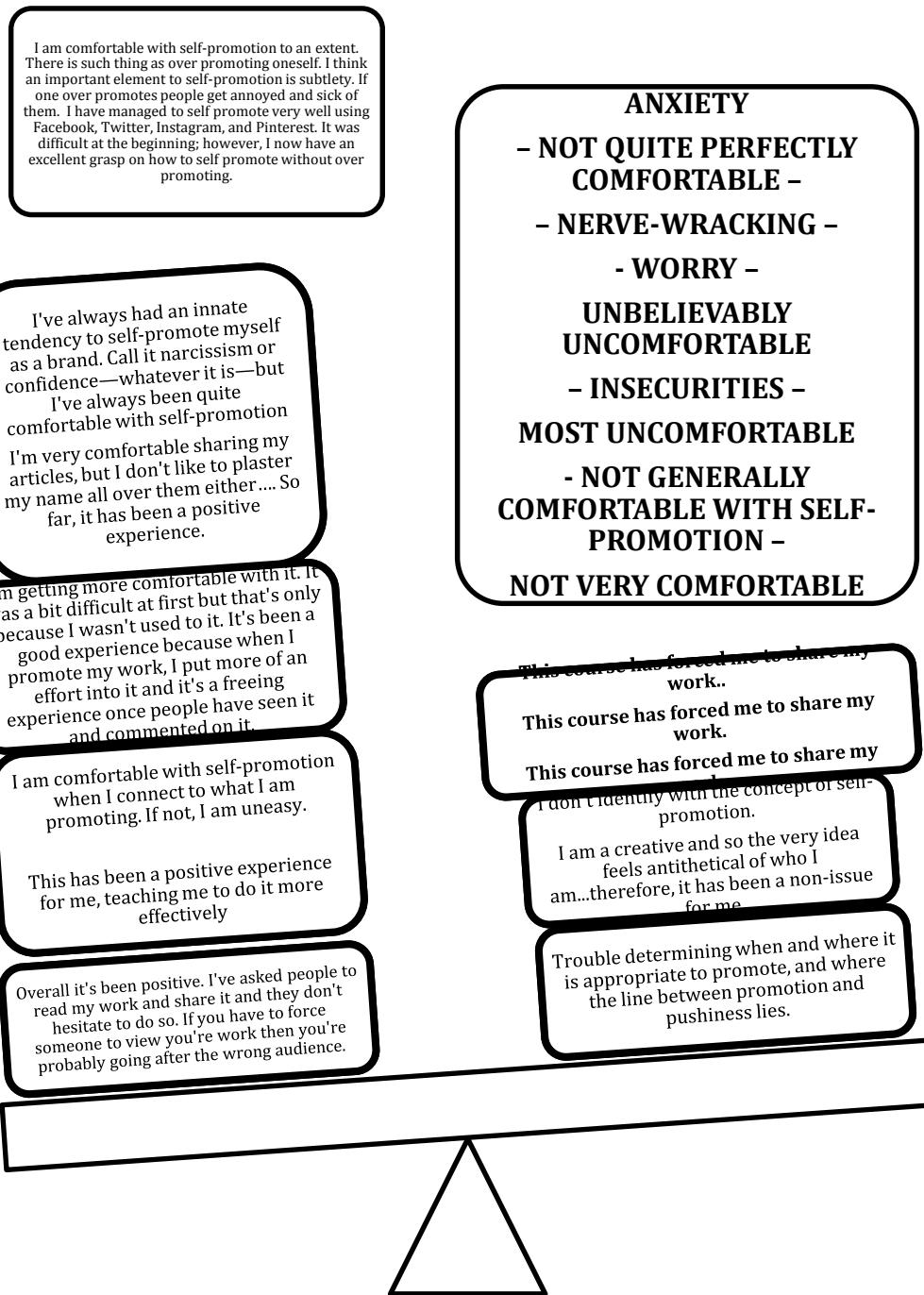


Figure 43. Finding the balance with self-promotion

At any given moment, a student could slip to either side, depending on the progress they were making. The lesson for the instructor was to find ways to help

students connect to their work. Pride and passion were key ingredients. Thus, selecting the specific domain for the year turned out to be a pivotal decision in making progress and finding the motivation and means to foster professional identity.

### **Professionalism**

In order to shape an online professional identity, students must be able to articulate what a professionalism means in their lives and project their future selves. Without this articulation, students fail to grasp the significance of the overall course design and remain dubious regarding participation as in previous iterations. In the third iteration, students articulated their understanding of professionalism earlier in the course and developed three clear categories for its practice: skills-based, demeanour-based, and neo-liberal based attributes that would inform their professional development. See Figure 44 for student feedback.

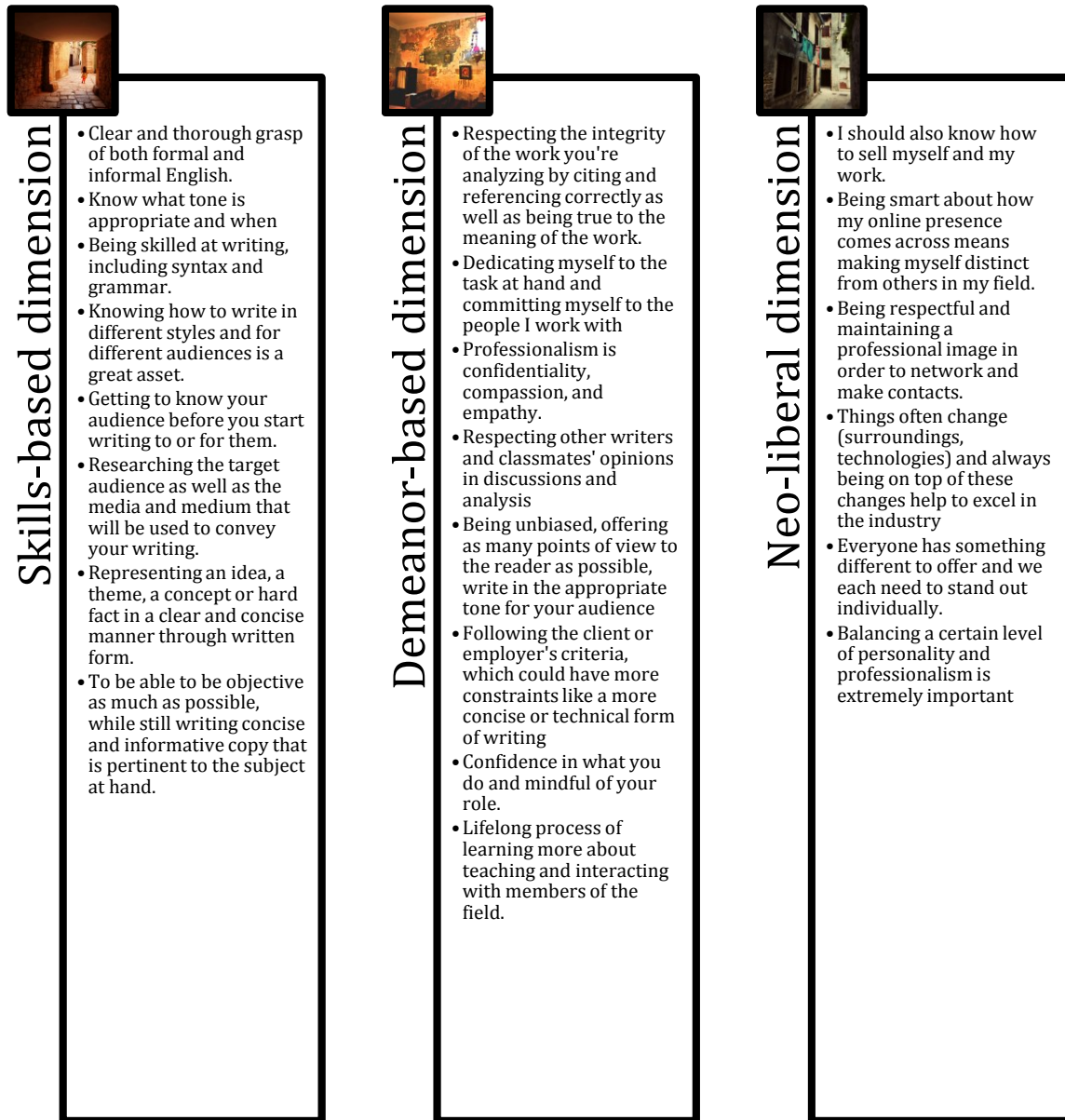


Figure 44. The dimensions of professionalism

Skills-based dimensions are based on mastering essential competencies for practice. Demeanour-based dimensions are based on projecting quality, value, and good character. Neo-liberal dimensions are based on branding and networking in the current labour environment. To evaluate progress made in the course in terms of fostering their

professional identity, students were asked to reflect on their experience as a way of reinforcing their way forward after the course ended. See Figure 45.



Figure 45. Facilitating online professional identity formation through social media practice and reflexivity

The key elements of lessons learned and progress made is summarized by a handful of students in Figure 46.



Figure 46. Benefits derived or lessons learned from online publishing and promotion of course projects

In sum the students utilized social media tools to gain a number of relevant digital literacies, particularly, the visual argument, one most often neglected in traditional writing courses. Furthermore, the students underwent the rigours of not only producing quality content for the course, but finding ways to have it read and evaluated by an outside community. It altered their perception of social media and made it a tool, like a pen or voice, which could be used to further their lives.

## **Chapter 7: Student Perspectives on Social Media, Online Identity and the Course**

*One good word is better than a thousand scolding ones*



## Summary

Historically, the field of communication has struggled with professional accountability (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007, p. 152). This phase of the study strives to achieve further accountability of the instructional design by examining the course through the lens of the learners. In addition, the chapter revisits online professional identity as it is currently being experienced by participants in the real world outside of course practices. The methodology for this phase of the research study consisted of three pieces of data collection. The initial social media technology survey established a baseline for student social media practices and beliefs. A contemporaneous to the course evaluation officially administered through the university provided an official student evaluation of the teaching of the course. A post-course web survey was administered one time by the researcher approximately one year after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration completed the course, two years after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration completed the course, and three years after the 1<sup>st</sup> iteration completed the course. For this reason, the data is not statistically comparable; however, the data provides insight in terms of what learners are doing in the professional world post course and attests to the value of the course content.

The post-course survey provided a broad perspective of learners and their practices in the professional world. Throughout the study, there remained a core group of students against the practice of social media technology and its incorporation into the course as evidenced by the results of the social media technology survey and reflexive exercise in all iterations of the study. Furthermore after the course, this same core group of students resisted participation on social networks. Even so, the majority of students throughout all phases of the study rated the course as being above average with some

aspects as being well above average. The students were eager to participate on social networks and who were pursuing careers in the field reported that the course had provided a framework that allowed them to inform their professional online identity.

### **Introduction**

As noted earlier in the dissertation, research has revealed a concern with respect to the large number of practitioners who are not prepared for the challenges that social media presents and who face a number of barriers due to a lack of social media knowledge and skills (Lariscy, Avery, Sweetser, & Howes, 2009; Macnamara, 2010). Practitioners who claimed that social media had great importance displayed rather moderate capabilities regarding skills and knowledge of social media in a professional context (Moreno et al, 2015). It was also found that even among public relations professionals, varying rates of social media were practiced (Robson & James, 2011; Sweetser et al., 2008; Wright & Hinson, 2012, 2013). While social media is no longer disputed as an established practice, little is known with regards to its value and impact. For this reason, preparing undergraduates for work in professional communication fields was not an easy endeavor. In this chapter, the final outcome of the course design was considered through the lens of students that participated in the course throughout its three iterations. All three sections participated in an introductory social media technology survey establishing a baseline, and a contemporaneous evaluation of the course near its completion; in addition, they were invited to complete a web survey one or more years after completion of the course.

## Literature Review

The following literature review explores the value of student evaluations of teaching performance and how they influence innovative instructional design and the relevance of developing a professional social identity.

### Student Evaluations of Teaching as Measures of Course Design

Student evaluations of instruction are influenced by a number of factors, with learning achievement rarely being one of them; conversely, the main objective of educators is to foster learning. In a comprehensive meta-analysis of student evaluations, Clayson (2013) found that at best, there is a *very low* correlation between student course evaluations and measures of *objective learning*, i.e. for example, mathematic test scores. If evaluations aren't measuring teaching effectiveness, what are they measuring?

What they do most often measure is grade expectations, enjoyment, and attractiveness of the teacher (Galbraith et al, 2012). Galbraith et al observed that, for the most part, evaluations were measuring customer satisfaction as it relates to the neoliberal market model of education. Thus, a number of effective instructors have developed strategies to game the evaluations to raise their scores (Fant, 2010; Galbraith et al, 2012). For example, Keeley, English, and Henslee (2013) observed that a number of researchers have found that instructors can gain higher evaluation scores simply by increasing grades (e.g. Krautmann & Saunder, 1999; Marsh & Roche, 1997; Smith, Cook, & Buskist, 2011).

In a quasi-experimental study, Clayson (2013) found that a positive correlation to the instructor's personality and evaluation scores; there was also a positive correlation between the initial student evaluation of a teacher prior to instruction and the one

received at the end of instruction. As well, the initial belief that the student held over the fairness of the instructor also influenced the final evaluation.

Even more remarkably, Galbraith, Merrill, and Kline (2012) found that the evaluations were possibly nonlinear in nature with the most effective instructors falling in the mid-range producing the highest levels of student achievement. In terms of validating the measure of performance, a number of meta-analysis on evaluations found teacher preparation and clarity have the highest correlation with learning; however, most other attributes measured have lower correlations (Cohen, 1981, 1982, 1983).

Further complicating our understanding of the scores is that many instructors are not in fact “average” but receive bi-modal scores. One explanation is that, perhaps, the best instructors challenge the students to the extent that good students appreciate them and poor ones depreciate them (Galbraith et al, 2012) or as Alauddin and Foster (2007) speculated that bimodal distributions occurring in student populations that are homogenously skilled might be the result of teaching style preferences (i.e. lecture versus discussion formats) and have little to do with teaching effectiveness.

Weiman (2015) observed students are unable to provide meaningful evaluations of more innovative teaching practices since their evaluations are based heavily on their experiences. Likewise, Colburn (2004) also reported that students tended to reward lectures over discussion-based courses, most likely because lectures fulfilled their expectations. Researchers have speculated that teachers who relied on discussion formats might appear to be lazy or ignorant (Colburn, 2004; and Miller & Pearson, 2013). Keeley et al (2013) also reported in their study that halo effects, a good or bad impression of the teacher, led to ceiling or floor effects that distorted the measurement and were resistant to

adaptations to the instrument mitigate their influence (p. 456). Based on their impression of the teacher, items would lose their variability and float upwards or downwards on the scale.

In sum, Galbraith et al (2012) found little support for the validity of using student evaluations as a measure of teaching effectiveness. Most importantly, Boysen (2015) noted there is widespread concern among faculty, regardless of the validity of the instrument, that the evaluations were misinterpreted and misapplied to decisions affecting their future. In terms of this study, student evaluations of teaching provide not only a means to measure the effectiveness of the course, but also contributed a significant barrier to its implementation, and for this reason, ultimately, influenced the final design.

### **The Significance of Fostering Professionalism**

In the end, professional communication is a vocational field geared toward developing core competencies. The primary competency for communicators is establishing a level of professionalism that determine the credibility of the message and sender (Lucas & Rawlins, 2015). Lucas and Rawlins (2015) contend, “Seen through a communicative lens, the professional becomes less an instantiation of given or established structural categories and more a set of discursive and material processes by which various aspects of social identity and relations are constantly enforced and renegotiated” (p. 176). In essence, being professional requires the formation of social identity and networked relations.

Cheney and Ashcraft (2007) identified three enduring themes regarding professionalism: the professional as division of labour, the professional as expert, and the professional as maintaining ethical standards of practice. Cheney and Ashcraft contend,

“[T]he term professional continues to evoke tangible evidence of status and identity, powerful images of actors and with attendant evaluations of bodies and behaviours, and exclusive networks of relationships” (p. 152). Historically, Cheney and Ashcraft note that the field of communication struggles with professional accountability (p. 152). As this study strived to accomplish, they believe that the way forward is “to set a stage for further studies of professionalism within communication studies, including reflexivity about the application of an analysis of professionalism to our own activities, relationships, and academic selves” (p. 168).

## **Method**

The methodology for this phase of the research study consisted of three pieces of data collection: the initial social media technology survey, which establishes a baseline for student social media practices and beliefs, a contemporaneous to the course evaluation officially administered through the university and a post-course follow-up web survey administered one time by the researcher approximately one year after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration completed the course, two years after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration completed the course, and three years after the 1<sup>st</sup> iteration completed the course in order to provide a broad perspective of learners and their practices in the professional world.

### **Social Media Technology Survey**

As an introductory activity, students were asked to participate in a social media technologies practices survey. Students self reported on their beliefs and practices regarding social media on a number of levels.

**Final Course Reflection.** Students were asked to share their final thoughts regarding social media practices and the course.

### **Contemporaneous to the Course Evaluation**

The university requires all faculty members to distribute course evaluations and/or encourage students to complete online course evaluations.

### **Follow Up Course Evaluation and Social Media Web Survey**

Students were invited to participate in a web survey after, perhaps, they had gained a more insightful perspective of the course from the field. The first iteration group was surveyed three years after completion, the second iteration group was surveyed two years after completion, and the most recent iteration, the third, was surveyed one year after completion. Kramer-Simpson, Newmark, and Ford (2015) recommend that students be contacted well after the end of the course to determine the actual benefits of a classroom intervention rather than limiting research results to learning outcomes and perceived benefits at the end of course. As noted earlier in the manuscript, Wilson and Ford (2003) and Cook, Thralls and Zachary (2003) contacted Technical Communication graduate students for their perspectives post-graduation up to ten years later to determine if as practitioners in the field they had been prepared for post-graduation careers. A web survey mode was utilized to conduct the survey since it was the most cost effective, efficient and only means to contact participants. The survey consisted of a mix of multiple-choice Likert scale questions followed by a few open-ended interview questions.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The sample size consisted of the population of students who were enrolled in the course during one of the three sessions when the study took place and who responded to the survey. Initially, students were asked to participate in an online survey of the course by following a link provided in a course email. As an incentive, students were offered a \$5 gift certificate to Starbucks for completion of the survey. This request was followed

up one week later, with personal emails sent to each of the non-responders. In addition, a link to the online survey was also posted to Twitter and LinkedIn. Each student was invited to participate a minimum of three times through a number of digital mediums: LinkedIn messaging, Facebook Messenger, Twitter DM, course email, and personal email.

### **Questionnaire Design**

Survey questions included standard course evaluation questions in addition to more specific questions regarding social media and professional identity formation. Testers reported a basic level of understanding of the questions. The survey was tested on three outside undergraduate students and consequently revised for wording and clarity.

### **Data Collection**

Course evaluations were administered towards the end of the academic year and prior to the end of the class meeting time. See Tables 10-12 for response rates. The responses from the first iteration of the study was not be included in the final results since at the time, the instructor was a full-time faculty member, and for this reason, the survey was administered online and resulted in a low response, too low to be considered a reliable measurement of the group's preferences. Online evaluations tend to have a lower response rate and lower scores than those administered via paper (Fogarty, Jonas & Parker, 2013; Stowell, Addison, & Smith, 2012).



Table 10. Response rates to Contemporaneous Course Evaluations

Iteration	Number of Participants	Number of Responses	Overall Response Rates
First Iteration: 2012-2013 (web)	21	8	38%
Second Iteration: 2013-2014 (paper)	23	18	78%
Third Iteration: 2014-2015 (paper)	25	20	80%

Table 11. Response Rates to Web Survey on Course and Professional Identity

Contact	Number of Participants Contacted	Number of Responses	Overall Response Rate
First Contact	69	24	35%
Second Contact	45	16	58%
Third Contact	24	7	29 %

Table 12. Web Survey Response Rate by Iteration

Iteration	Population	Responses	Response Rate
First Iteration Group (2012-2013)	21	17	81%
Second Iteration Group (2013-2014)	23	14	61%
Third Iteration Group (2014-2015)	25	16	64%
Total	69	47	68%

### Data Analysis

An analysis of the survey data was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Refer to the Appendix B for instruments. Two coders were employed for the open-ended question in the web survey.

**Social Media Technology Practices.** This survey was intended to broadly sweep a number of relevant issues noted in the literature regarding the self-reported personal

social media practices and its introduction as a space for academia and professional practices (Friesen & Lowe, 2012).

**Final Course Reflection.** This exercise asked third iteration students to evaluate the course and its past and potential future impact on their professional writing practices.

**Course Evaluation.** After the instructor exited the class, a volunteer member of the class administered the course evaluation. University administration both validated the reliability of the instrument and analysed the data. The instructor was not given the results until after grades were turned in.

**Web Survey.** Since respondents tend to be agreeable and strive to please the interviewer (Stern, Bilgen, & Dillman, 2014), to reduce survey bias, students were given the option to be anonymous, and thereby, provided with an opportunity to present more disagreeable information. Twenty percent of the respondents submitted anonymous surveys, a proportion which was equally distributed among the sections.

### **Ensuring Validity and Reliability**

The design of the official university evaluation instrument is rigorously tested for validity and reliability. Careful attention was applied to the web survey, attention to topics and content, length and format, question wording and order.

### **Ensuring Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Surveys were examined recursively for emergent themes, establishing the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings from multiple students reporting similar answers and crosschecking the results with the literature. While the sample size may not be comprehensive it is reasonable. In terms of response rate, Davern (2013), observed that many surveys have shown that a higher response rate does not result in significantly different estimates than the ones achieving a lower response rate).

## Results

The results section analyses the evidence in terms of how it illuminates barriers to practice and formation of professional online identity.

### **Barriers Encountered when Integrating Social Media**

Understanding the composite practices of learners sheds light on their subsequent participation in and evaluation of the integration of social media into the framework of the course. This section is followed by results from the official course evaluations and conclude with the post evaluation online survey 1, 2, and 3 years after completion. See Appendix E for results of the Social Technology Survey.

**Final Course Reflection.** When students are asked to do something to better their future, no matter how distasteful, they often will, when convinced of its veracity:

If there's anything that I've taken away from this course, it's the following:

Towards the beginning of the term, I had doubts about the practicality and usefulness of content I'd been publishing in this course. At some point, after hearing you discuss something with a student, those premature impressions changed. "Students go to an employer and tell them about their professional writing minor," you told a student, "but when they're asked what they've written professionally, very few have work to demonstrate." At that moment, after hearing you say that, it was almost like a light bulb turning on in my head, and quite simply, the aspiration to provide quality content ensued (Learner Voice)

If I were to end the self-reporting section of final comments with such a statement, it would be powerful support for social media and the relevance of its practice. In the end, one has to consider, and reconsider, its practice in this light: a number of students who were found social media practice distasteful. And the question becomes

how does one fairly evaluate such a course and its instructor? The fair thing to do would be to present in their authentic voice the truth regarding their aversion to social media practices. For example, in the paragraph below, a student captures its dispiriting consequences:

I feel that in a world where the "self" is pushed to either be hidden or completely ostentatious, one would need to have 2 social media accounts for everything. Social media as its primary function when it was first emerging was to connect PEOPLE to PEOPLE so that they could collaborate and share their work. Now social Media feels like it is made to connect COMPANIES to PEOPLE or as a tool to gain an advantage over other people. ... Social Media is difficult because while it still feels you are being connected you have a hard time knowing what you should and shouldn't post, which leads to an identity crisis of sorts.

(Participant Voice)

Here it is. In plain sight, yet hidden in a reflexive exercise, a depiction of the neoliberal entrapment that social technologies afford corporations. One can't help but admire the shift from the capital letter in Social media to the emphasis in capitalistic social Media. Whilst the tool is offered as a means to build professional identity, in many cases within the span of the course, it disconnected learners and created "an identity crisis of sorts". See Figure 47 for a fuller illustration of the darker side of social media practice.



Figure 47. Aversion to social media practices and online identity formation.

With respect to the CoP model and the learners' beliefs regarding social media practices and its inherent risks, the instructional design was respectful and allowed for self-determination on the part of the learners. Participants made the decision as to how they would participate and to what extent, and learning was achieved not solely through participation but through observation and exposure to the exercise. See Figure 48 for evidence regarding how the course encouraged participation on social networks and the benefits derived from participants who opted out.



Figure 48. Respect for students' beliefs and rights to privacy

The voices expressed in Figure 61 represent a minority voice within the class. The majority expressed a desire for the social media component to be mandatory since it comprises an essential professional skill in the field of communication.

**Contemporaneous Student Course Evaluations.** While it is agreed upon that course evaluations are good measure of student satisfaction regarding a course and its instructor,

many researchers believe that learners are unqualified to evaluate instructional design (Cohen, 1981, 1982, 1983). Stark (2014) noted, “Students are in a good position to observe some aspects of teaching, such as clarity, pace, legibility, audibility, and their own excitement (or boredom)” (p.13). Table 13 reports on a summary of biases found in the literature and their correspondence to the course and instructor in this case study.

Table 13. Biases revealed in student evaluations from the review of literature

	Favour	Against	Jury's out
Age and experience (Anderson and Miller, 1997; Basow, 1995; Cramer and Alexitch, 2000; Marsh and Dunkin, 1992; Wachtel, 1998; Weinberg et al., 2007; Worthington, 2002)		1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	
Attractiveness or sexiness Felton et al. 2004 Riniolo et al. 2006.			Most likely I should move this over a column or two;)
Innovation Weiman (2015)		1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	
Online vs. offline course evaluation Stark (2014)	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration (Online evaluations: Anger motivates people to action more than satisfaction)	
Gender (Anderson and Miller, 1997; Basow, 1995; Cramer and Alexitch, 2000; Marsh and Dunkin, 1992; Wachtel, 1998; Weinberg et al., 2007; Worthington, 2002)		1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	
Teaching style (Lecture vs. discussion) Alauddin and Foster, 2007; Colburn, 2004		1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	
Bi-modal distribution (Galbraith et al, 2012)	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration	
Halo and floor effect based on good and bad impression of teacher. Keeley et al 2013		1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration
Low response rate Stark (2014)	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration	



Enjoyment of course Stark (2014)		2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration (Students complained too much work)	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration (Less work)
Grading leniency (Blackhart et al. 2006)		1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	
Giving treats  Youmans and Jee, 2007)		1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration	

Table 14 provides a summary of the student evaluations of the course. The online evaluations differed significantly from the online evaluations, providing means and standard deviations, whereas the offline evaluations consisted of the mode. The sample size in the 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration was too small to be considered representative. In the online survey, 1 consisted of the highest score and five was considered the lowest rating of the course.

Table 14 Student Evaluation of the Course

	1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration	2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration
Online or offline (not the same form)	Online	Offline	Offline
Response rate	38% Bimodal distribution skewed positively with a high standard deviation. (Sample of 8 of 21)	78% (Sample of 18 of 23) Items of measurement were not exact. Reported mode.	80% (Sample of 20) Items of measurement were not exact. Reported mode.
Learned a great deal	2 sd	Above average	Above average
Rating of the course	2 sd	Above average	Above average
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The professor stimulates interest in the subject matter.</li> <li>The professor creates a climate in which you feel free to ask questions, disagree, express your ideas.</li> </ul>	1  1	<p>Students are encouraged to share their ideas and students are free to ask questions.</p> <p>Well above average for both.</p> <p>In line with the pedagogical approach.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to share their ideas and students are free to ask questions.</p> <p>Well above average for both.</p> <p>In line with the pedagogical approach.</p>
Rating of the texts and course materials. Syllabus and outline	2	Above average	Above average
Professor has a comprehensive knowledge of course material. Stimulates interest in the subject matter. Was responsive to students Learned a great deal	1.5-2.0 All of these categories have low standard deviations (.3-1) thus, in agreement.	Well above average	Well above average

The students were moderately satisfied with the course; however, it was not the course that they were expecting or described in the registrar. In any case, across all three evaluations, students reported that the professor appeared highly knowledgeable but to

some extent failed to transmit knowledge. In contrast, learners also reported that the course was stimulating, in the sense that they were free to explore ideas and openly express opinions. The course and instructor were given, perhaps, the lowest scores in the evaluation. Perhaps, expectations were not met by the course or professor, because they evaluated it under the rubric of a traditional course, one focused on knowledge as content, rather than transformational knowledge. The questions were phrased as if it should have been a traditional lecture based writing course, i.e. the professor fully explained the course content. Furthermore, the course was multimodal and one of the two texts primarily covered digital literacies, i.e. *White Space is Not your Enemy*. Many students expressed during the year that this was inappropriate content for a writing course and too challenging. Similar opinions were expressed regarding social media each year:

- Weren't expecting social media content (not in course description)
- Didn't believe it was appropriate content for the course
- Felt personal space was being invaded
- Voiced concern that their "real" friends would unfollow them.

Aside from their objections to the course content, the course design received prior approval from the Department Chair, as it was a generally held belief that the course required updating in order to obtain currency in the field. The next question that follows should concern transference of skillsets taught in the course to the field. A quantitative and qualitative web-based survey of the course, one, two and three years later follows.

See Appendix G for descriptive statistics of follow-up web survey.

**Follow-up Web Survey.** A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between iterations. See Table 15 for a description of the means and standard deviations. Levine's Test of the Homogeneity of

Variances revealed no violations. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in how the groups were managing social media profiles post course,  $F(2,17) = 5.447$ ,  $p < .008$ .

Table 15. Means and Standard Deviations for Description of Social Media Profile

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1st Iteration	17	2.88	1.495
2nd Iteration	13	2.46	.967
3rd Iteration	16	1.63	.619
Total Sample	46	2.33	1.212

A post hoc Tukey HSD showed that iterations 1 and 3 were statistically significantly different. See Figure 49.

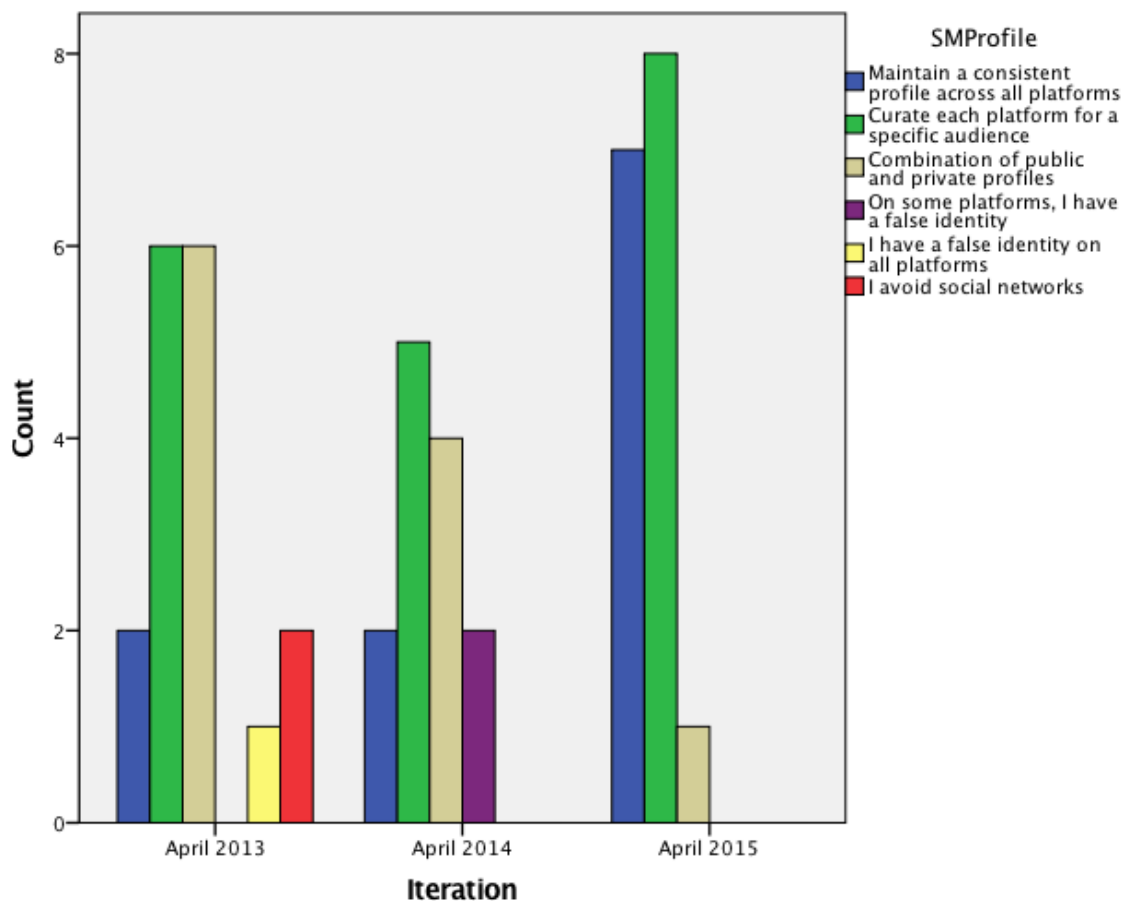


Figure 49. Distribution of social media profiles after the course

What is unique to the third iteration is that as a whole, the group is maintaining the highest levels of professional standards, maintaining a consistent social media profile

or curating each platform for a specific audience; this learning objective was emphasized throughout the course and through the course design. Thus, this result provides evidentiary evidence in favor of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final prototype of the course since the preliminary survey revealed no significant differences between initial social media practices and beliefs among the groups.

While there were no significant differences regarding social media behavior, the distribution of responses in the third iteration is more skewed toward the creation and sharing of original content than the previous two iterations. See Figure 50.

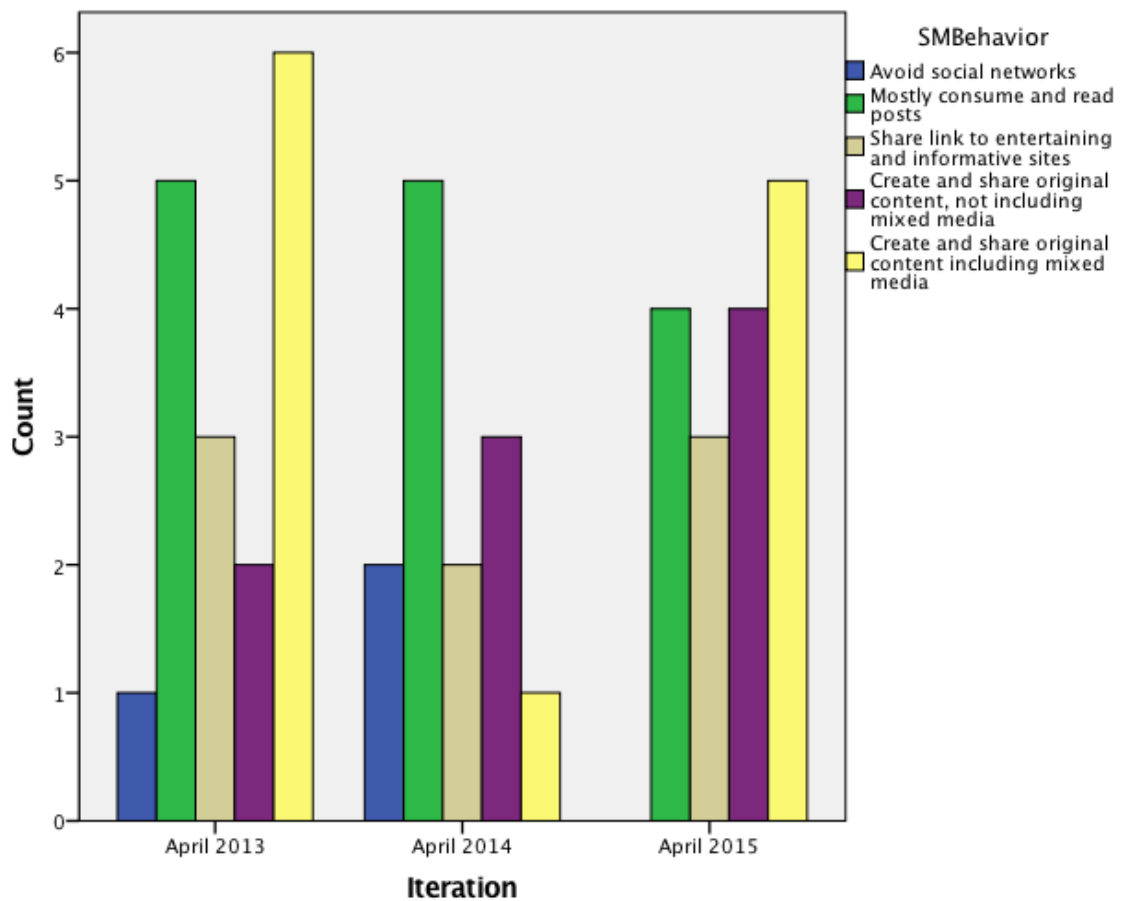


Figure 50. Distribution of online posting practices

There were also no statistically significant differences in terms of online privacy practices. See Figure 51.

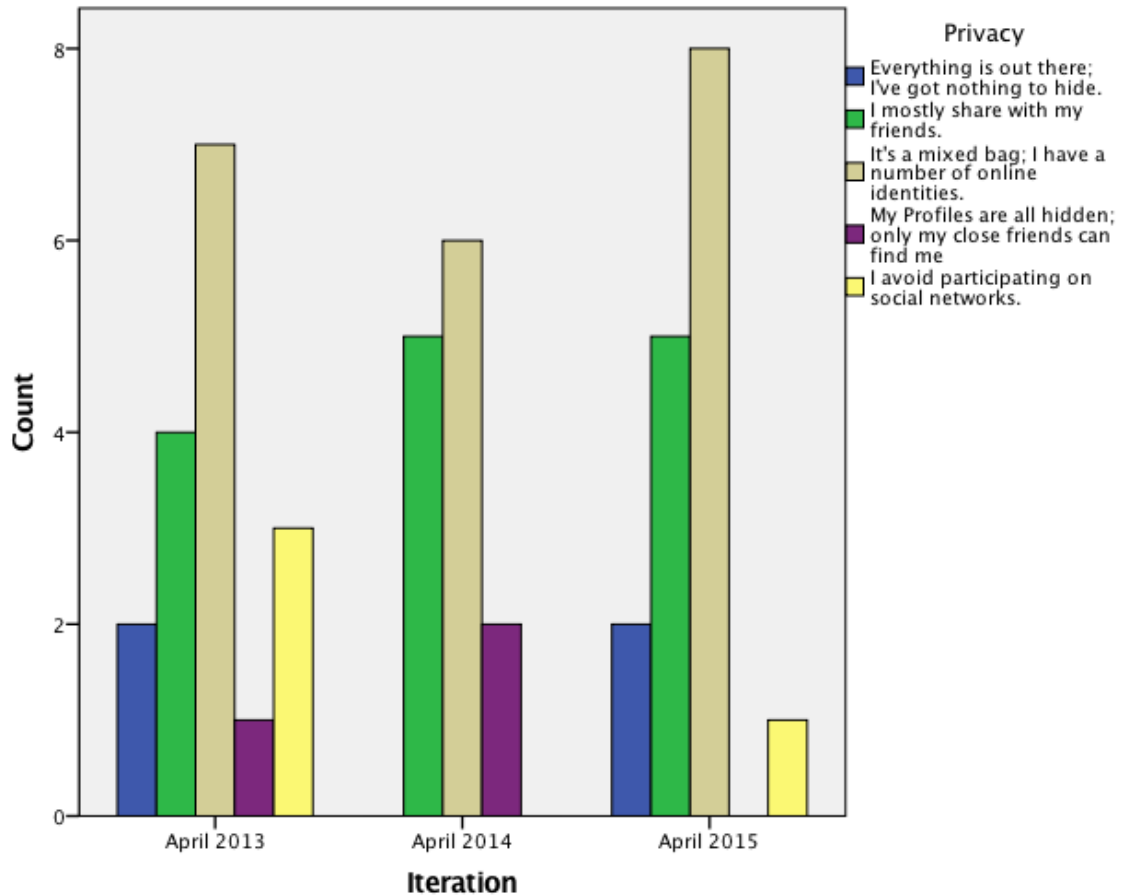


Figure 51. Distribution of online privacy practices

The majority of graduates are either curating their profiles or sharing almost exclusively with friends, and a limited number avoid social networks altogether. The following figure provides a more holistic view of graduate privacy practices, combining the results from all three iterations into one composite number. See Figure 52.

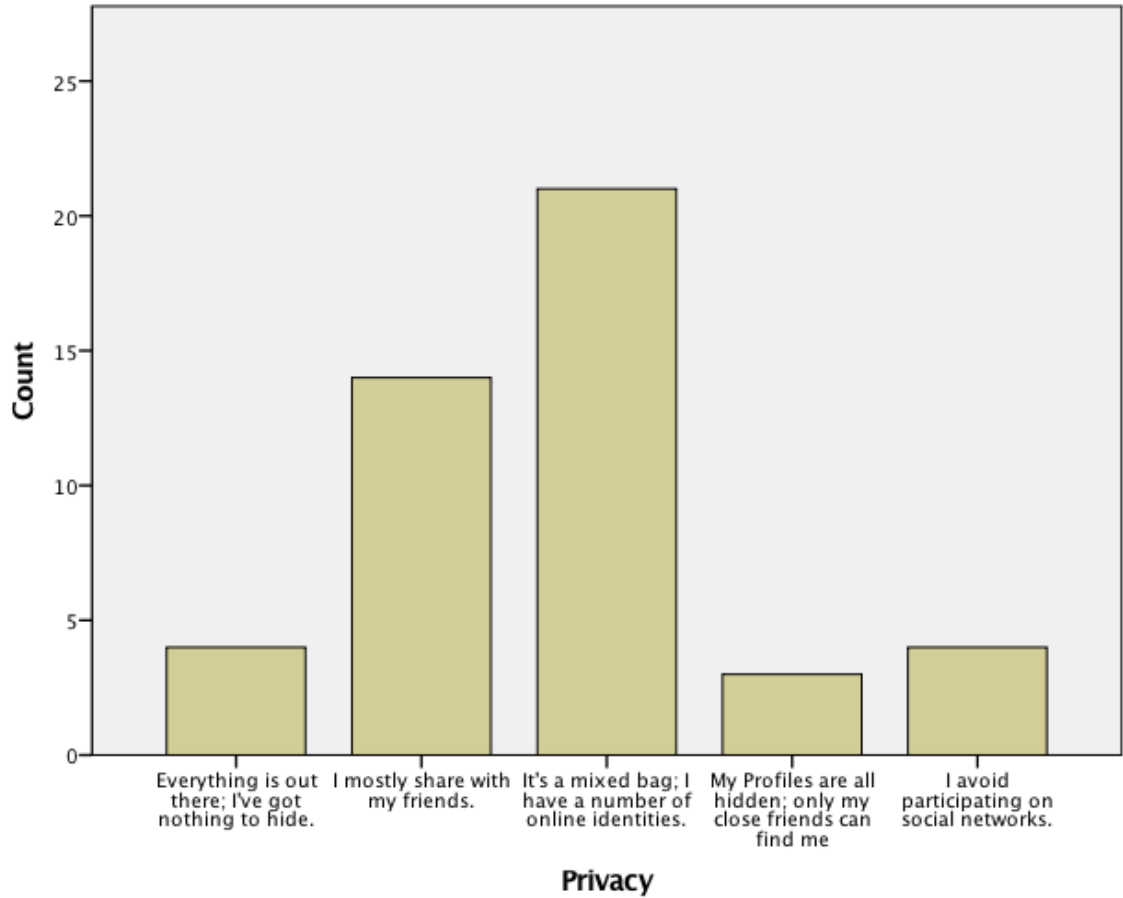


Figure 52. Composite view of privacy practices for participants from all three iterations

Figure 52 illustrates how after the course only a small number of participants remained hidden or offline entirely. The majority of graduates curated their online identities with privacy settings determined by audience and purpose of social network. The following figure, Figure 53, illustrates social media momentum after the course in terms of maintaining, growing, or shrinking their social network activity.

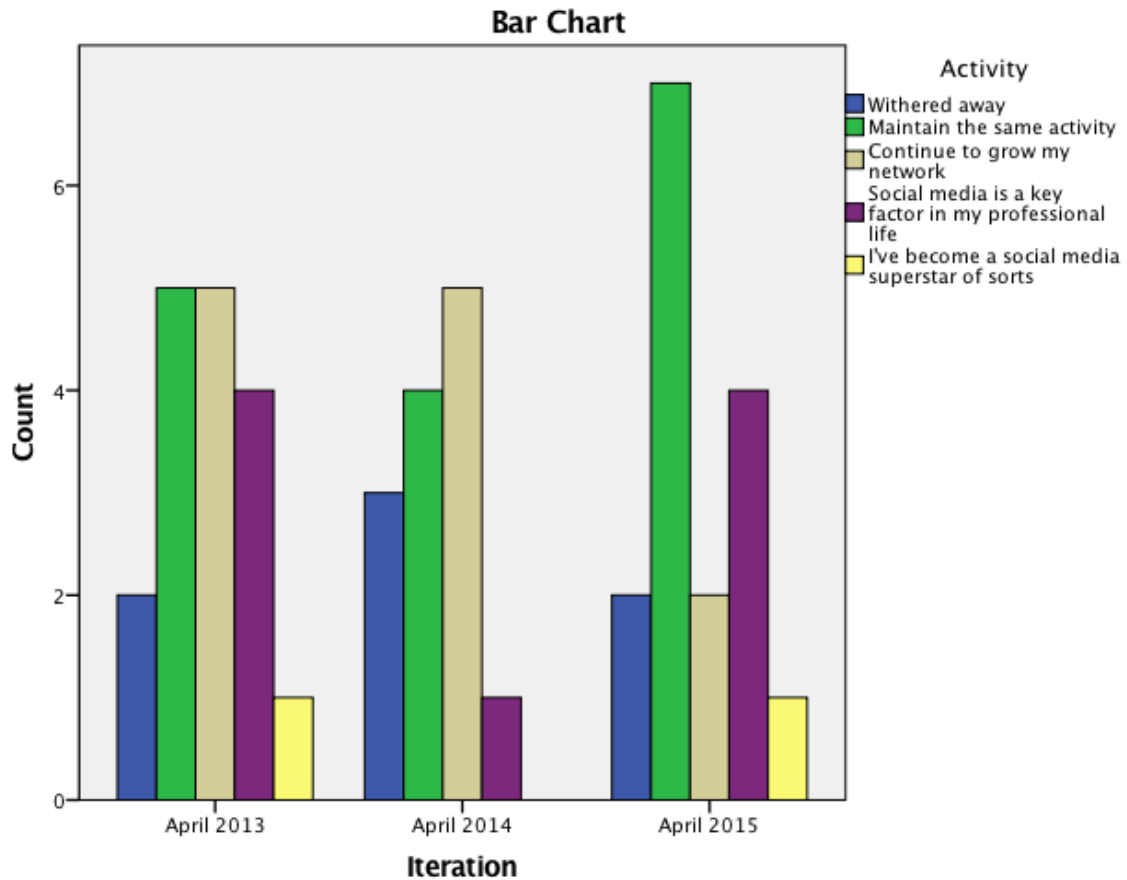
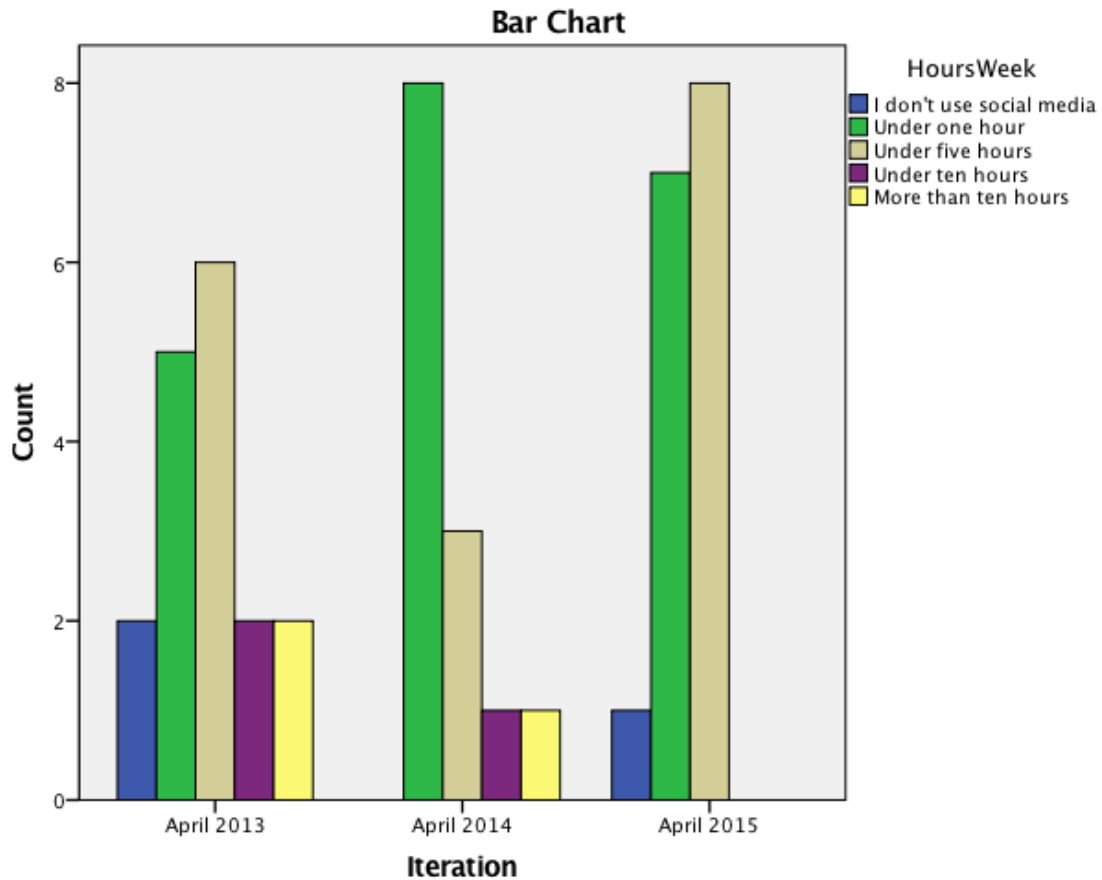


Figure 53. Social media activity post course completion

A number of students from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration maintained the same level of activity on social networks, which in retrospect was much higher than the previous two iterations. There is arguably a lack of equality with regards to the true value of the responses between iterations. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration, the “same level of activity” would translate to very little activity as compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> iteration. Perhaps, a more realistic and comparable measure would be the subsequent figure, Figure 54, measuring number of hours spent





per week on social networks.

Figure 54. Number of hours spent engaged on social networks

The 1<sup>st</sup> iteration had a more normal distribution; the graduates are reporting a broader range of practices consistent with the self-reporting of social media practices in the previous figure. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration, a large number of students reported spending a reasonable 1-5 hours on social networks weekly, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> iteration was skewed toward heavier practice. After the course, the bulk of course graduates reported spending less than one hour per week on social networks.

The following figure, Figure 55, examines where graduates of the course are today in terms of professional work.

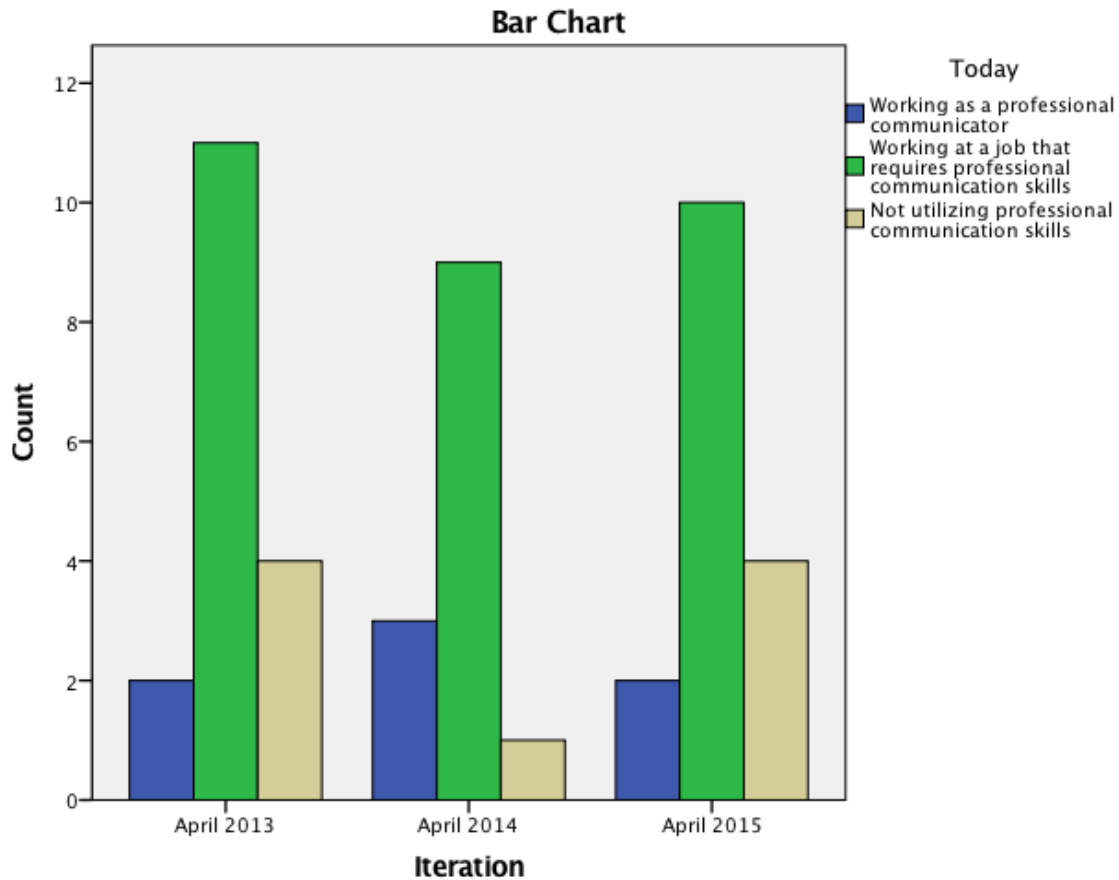


Figure 55. Where graduates are today in relation to professional communication

Only a small number are engaged in work that is exclusively limited to the field of professional communication. However, a number of graduates are working at a job that requires professional communication, an expectation embedded in the course design. The students came together in the course from a broad range of fields. A number of the students that reported they were not currently practicing professional communication skills, expressed a desire to do so in the future or stated that they were practicing skills taught through the course in their personal lives on blogs. Figure 56 illustrates the number of graduates who are using social media on the job.

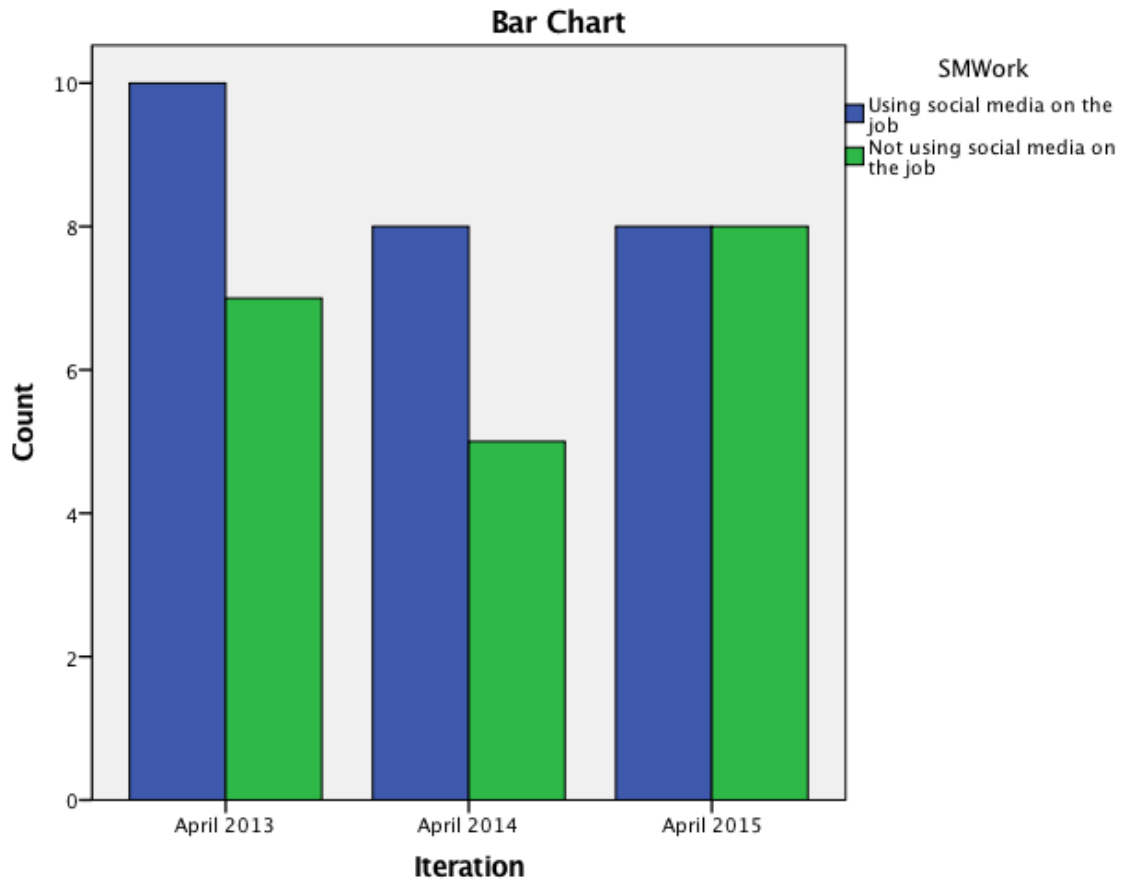


Figure 56. Social media as a required component of work

At least one half of all students are employing social media skills on the job post graduation. This emphasizes the importance of incorporating this skill into the classroom curriculum. The following table is a compilation, in order of importance as reported by students, of the professional communication skills that are an essential part of their job description and the number of times each responsibility was listed in that order. See Table 16.

Table 16. Professional communication responsibilities on the job

Top Responsibility	Number 2	Number 3	Number 4	Number 5
<b>Social media</b> IIII/IIII	Report writing III	<b>Social media</b> III	Correspondence II	<b>Social media</b> and (No. 6) Training materials
<b>Editing</b> III	<b>Blogging</b> III	Correspondence II	<b>Editing</b>	<b>Promotional writing</b>
Sales correspondence III	Internal documents II	<b>Copy editing</b>	Internal documents	<b>Technical writing</b>
Training materials II	<b>Instructional documents</b>	Translation		
Interactive presentations II	Product specs	Online ads		
<b>Content writing</b>	Video scripts	Project documentation		
Promotional material	Ad copy			
Internal documents	<b>Online newsletters</b>			
<b>Blogging</b>	Translation			
<b>Web comic</b>	Online bulletins			
Course materials	<b>Proof-reading</b> Correspondence			

Social media skills are not only the most frequently cited top responsibility; they are included as a required skillset in a number of rankings. So while it may not be the primary responsibility, it is often a responsibility. As the study has shown, prior to the course, students were not prepared to practice social media professionally. Resistance to

its practice proved formidable at times but clearly necessary in light of this data. Skills highlighted in bold were also taught in the course, either through process or product work. In terms of the course projects required prior to the redesign of the course, only two projects are listed, instructional material and content writing.

### **Facilitating Professional Identity Formation**

Qualitative answers from the online web survey provided evidence for this section. There are two aspects to online professional identity formation: 1) the negotiation the space itself, public versus private and 2) the negotiation of the individual's identity, personal versus professional identity. Graduates of the course perceived online spaces as serving as solely professional purposes, personal purposes, or as a combination of both, with the bulk of students desiring to keep professional and personal participation in online spaces separate. See Figure 57 for a detailed model of students' perceptions and statements of beliefs regarding online spaces.

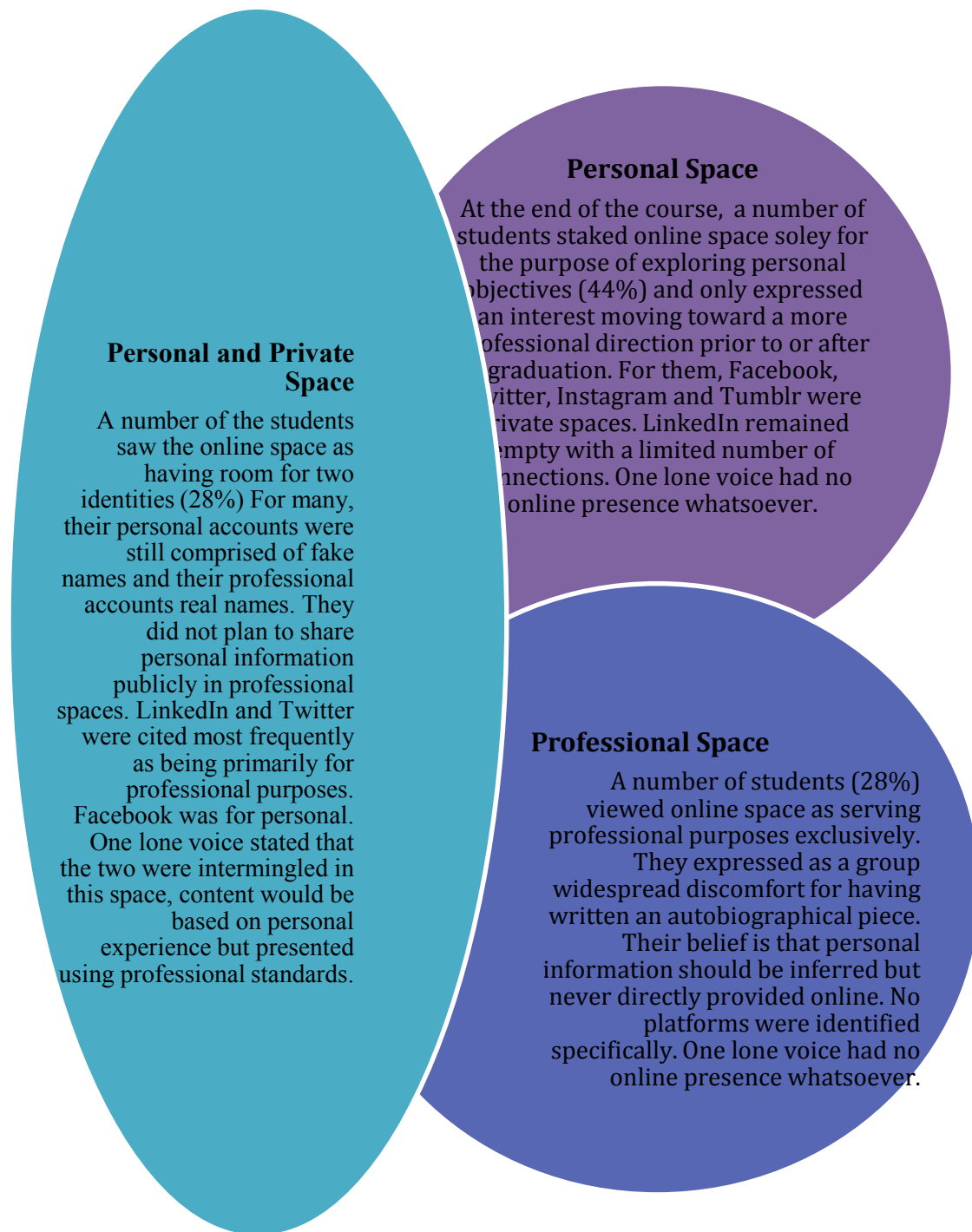


Figure 57. Staking online space for professional or personal practices

Depicting how students perceived online identity requires two models: 1) depicting identity that can either be informed through perceptions of professional identity and one that is informed through the conception of personal identity. Students who perceive online space as serving professional interests and objectives described personal

identity as being informed by professional standards and identity. Students who described personal identity as informing professional identity negotiated the space by injecting into their professional identity, an identity that represented the “singularity of sameness” or “unique” aspects of their personal identity. See Figure 58.

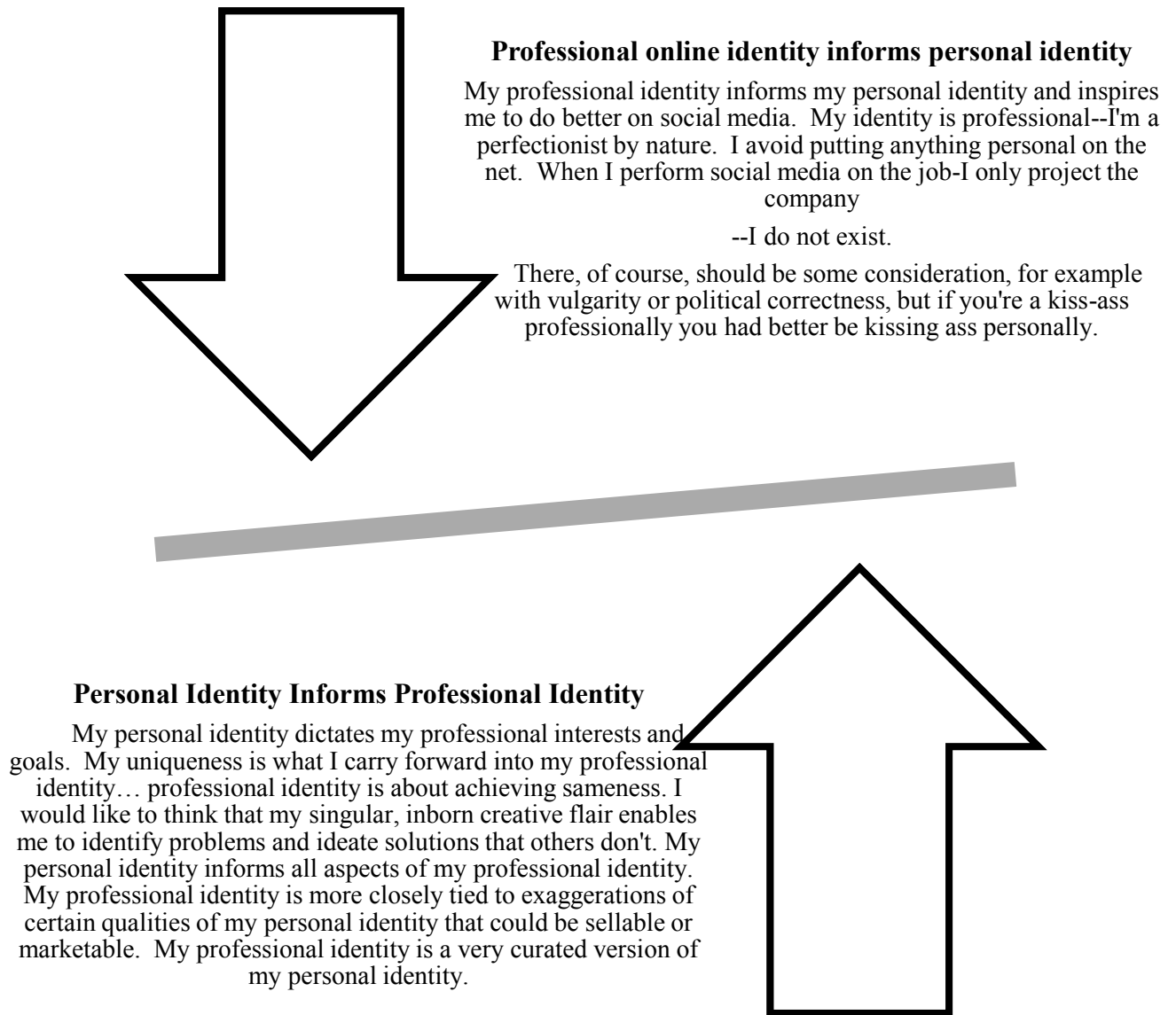


Figure 58. The binary professional identity model

An equal number of graduates perceived no difference between the identities, or rather saw the need for them to coexist and achieve mutual goals by presenting a

cohesive identity, one neither informed by the personal or professional constricts of identity, but informed by a consistency of thought and expression and authenticity. See Figure 59.



Figure 59. The cohesive professional and personal identity formation model

Most likely either conception of professional identity formation has its pitfalls and drawbacks although intermingling authentic personal identity with professional is the route advocated by a number of social media gurus and a sure road to success online success; however, integrating personal identity into online practices poses the highest level of perceived and true risk to the individual. Keeping the two lives separate, internalizing the personal and projecting a sanitized professional image must also be exhausting and lacks the satisfaction of being accepted for who you are, rather than for being a projection of perfection.



## **Limitations**

This phase of the study is limited in part by the sample: having selected a non-random sample selected and its subsequent size. However, since this is qualitative research, sample size not a significant factor. In any case, the sample was not random and findings cannot be generalized to any other population. As well, self-reported data from reflexivity exercises cannot be independently verified and must be accepted at face value. A number of biases are related to self-reporting, including, selective memory, telescoping, attribution, and exaggeration.

## **Conclusion**

It's a time old question as to how much authenticity to allow for in a professional environment and one that has never really been settled. As educators and researchers, it's not our decision to make for the individual. No amount of data can and should dictate the path we take in life or make our personal choices. What this research can do for the field of education is delineate the struggles and the risks that students confront when employing online social technologies for academic and professional purposes to better their lives and present an alternative form of instructional design, one which incorporates a vCoP model that allows for the individual learner to make the decision to participate and the level of participation on social networks.

## **Chapter 8: The Final Chapter**

*For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.*

## Introduction

Online social networks provide students with a number of affordances to shape writing expertise, including a platform for concise and persuasive language use that presents a number of emotional challenges and allows for an individual to develop domain specificity, practices which lead to an ability to manage cognitive load and develop strong bonds with readers. These platforms also provide students with opportunities to develop media literacy, the ability to create communications in a variety of contexts and forms. While students were well versed in the operational aspects of social networks, setting up of social media profiles and posting content, students were relatively unfamiliar with developing tactics for its practices that included strategic professional goals.

As noted previously, how an individual or group chooses whether or not to adopt a technology is often not based on the practical applications of the technology, its technological determinism, but rather on “consequences of practice” (Oliver, 2011, p. 380). Thus, Livingstone, Mascheroni and Murru (2014) observed that negotiating a balance between uniqueness and the need for identification with others results in “a dialectic between the staging of a performance, framed by social conventions and particular codes of self-representation, and the reflexivity developed through expected or actual feedback from audiences” (p. 2). Costa and Torres (2011) identified online spaces “as the ideal place to encourage students to build a presence able to complement their academic and professional lives” and recommended that individuals “consider the construction of a reputation as one of the main advantages of creating and maintaining a stable identity, one that encompasses the different dimensions of their lives” (p. 76). However, online social media practice might have to begin before the group can perceive

professional affordance. Thus, this section begins with the barriers to social media practices.

### **Summary of Barriers Encountered when Integrating Social Media**

The results supported the application of Archer's social theory on reflexivity and agency to guide and frame reflexivity to enhance learning and is beneficial as it turns the focus of education to "being and becoming" rather than solely on the tools, knowledge and skills embedded in the majority of course content objectives (Barnett, 2009; Case, 2015; and Dall'Alba & Barnacle, 2007). It also introduced a "strategy as practice" approach, which considered the positionality of learners, and was well suited to promotional social media practice (Herepath, 2014). The focus on Archer's work was appropriate since it is directed "toward the reflexivity of self-conscious social subjects committed to the achievement of their personal projects" (Herepath, 2014, p. 9).

In fact, the first iteration of the study inadvertently discovered that transforming personal social media practices into professional ones was rife with emotional challenges for learners, so much so, that it almost led to a paralysis of action. Online social networks embody the type of learning situation that calls for reflection oriented towards solving emotional problems. Reflexivity, it seems, can be called upon to solve most educational problems; however, Holmes (2015) observed that a less traditional learning environment can undermine reflexivity, due to their experiencing high-levels of complexity and rapid change. In these particular circumstances, Holmes observes, the "habitus" Bourdieu describes can no longer be relied upon for initiating action; for this reason, emotional reflection on the part of the participants is most likely the best guide for action (p. 63).

Decoteau (2015) described this reflection as one that takes place when our

personal identity engages in an “internal conversation” between “I”, the present self, “Me”, the past embodied self, and “You”, the future, hoped-for self, in order to weigh contradictory emotions (p. 10). Decoteau is suggesting a new understanding or reformulation of Bourdieu’s habitus as being multilayered and providing an explanation for decisive action. Decoteau believes, “By taking up the logic of one field, and using that logic to look at their lives in another field, individuals are able to achieve this reflexive distance and arrive at a conscious understanding of themselves that can lead to well-articulated plans for transformation” (p. 17). The fields between personal and professional social media practices although located similarly, in practice are quite distant. For example, third iteration participants wrote about the challenge of moving from private friends and family networks to public settings where they expanded their reach to include strangers, unfamiliar readers, in order to establish professional credentials.

The study supports the finding of other researchers in the field that discovered how negative emotions can break patterns of habitus when spurred by internal conversations (Holmes, 2015; and Maxwell & Aggleton, 2014). In this study, breaking personal social media practices was essential toward adopting the technology for more professional purposes. Maxwell and Aggleton (2014) contended that agency could be understood as a desire for recognition or the possibility of remaking an identity following a distressing performance (p. 802). Students who were concerned and anxious regarding their ability to practice social media in an academic and professional setting might find the negative energy helpful in terms of spurring them to action. The consequences of an emotional event can instigate a process of reflection and ultimately a commitment to practices (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2014, p. 802). The interviews generated for the

outside researcher functioned encouraged reflexivity on the part of the learners and contributed to their professional growth. Thus, it was determined for the third iteration that combining a reflexive activity to social media practices and projects would help mitigate the psychological barrier to performance and spur participants to action. This reasoning also corresponded to Holmes' (2015) findings that reflection can be oriented to action to solve the emotional problem of online social networks (p. 63).

After examining psychological barriers that were reported in the first iteration, sociological barriers to the adoption of the technology became the focus of the second iteration. Social constructivist argue that “organizational change emerges out of an ongoing stream of social action in which people respond to the technology’s constraints and affordances, as well as to each other” (Leonardi & Barley, 2010, p. 5). The materiality of technology exists independently; however, its affordances and constraints are almost entirely dependent on sociality (Faraj & Azad, 2012; Robey, Raymond, & Anderson, 2012). In the first iteration adoption of the technology for professional purposes was tepid in spite of students professing a desire to do so, the instructional design failed to address the sociological barriers to its adoption. As noted, Leonardi (2013) contended that people can seek a diverse number of goals from any particular technology due to perceived affordance or constraints (p. 70). This is an important factor for developing effective instructional design. The initial social media technology survey revealed that as a group, students did not perceive an affordance for social media in their professional lives, based on the low ranking on the Importance and Interest of using social media for the course.

The results supported the benefits of employing a virtual Community of Practice, with this respect, students who had opted out of the social media project were able to

benefit from peripheral practice and maintained an interest in the project in terms of gaining a perspective on the practice through the observation. Educators in the field of professional communication should consider developing curriculum that seeks a compromise with learners and provides a learning space where students are able to negotiate their roles, allowing for individual stances, from observers to full-fledge participants on social networks.

Constructing and developing one's agency for professional purposes provided students with skills required for everyday survival in a neoliberal economy (Jensen & Prieur, 2015; Patsarika, 2014; Ryan, 2014; and Vallas & Cummins, 2015). The results indicated that a number of students lacked agency on social networks and that learners required guidance when articulating modes of online authenticity and on how to use social networks as a tool for professional growth (Archer, 2007; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2014; Holmes, 2015). Additionally, a number of negative emotions were also expressed regarding the introduction of social media practices in an academic setting, particularly when students were asked to transform what they considered a personal realm into a professional one.

### **Facilitating Professional Identity Formation**

As noted by Vallas and Cummins (2015), the end of the standard work arrangement and loyalty between business and workers has led to the practice of shaping one's personal career through the same branding tactics used by large corporations (p. 9,11). Vallas and Cummins warned that the potency of personal branding discourse had solidified in the social imaginary in ways that made its avoidance nearly impossible; its ubiquitous presence in today's world has led to what Vallas and Cummins described as the "incorporated" self and internalization of the neoliberal imaginary of "market-based

logics (p. 11). The course allowed for learners to shape an online identity by publishing a continuum of information that in essence referred to the individual that validated their concept of self (Aresta et al, 2015), including, the following aspects of individualization: profiles (boyd, 2008), content (Costa & Torres, 2011; Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009; Zhao et al., 2008), and authenticity (Childs, 2011). Applying Livingstone, Mascheroni and Murru's (2014) theory that negotiating a balance between uniqueness and the need for identification with others results in "a dialectic between the staging of a performance, framed by social conventions and particular codes of self-representation, and the reflexivity developed through expected or actual feedback from audiences" (p. 2); students were encouraged to reflect on their online performance and its implications with regards to informing their future-selves.

A number of researchers have found that identity performance on social networks is dependent on the conception of public and private and the audience imagined by the subject; and through interaction, individuals develop a personal consciousness of their identity (Aresta, Pedro, Santos, & Moreira, 2014; boyd, 2008). The course provided opportunities for students to test this identity, set acceptable limitations determining levels of exposure and work towards further refining the consciousness of their identity. In concurrence with Aresta et al's (2015) findings, the study found that when learners discovered that they could build an edited self, the differences between physical and virtual realities and the positive and negative implications of maintaining an online identity attained importance (p. 70). In concordance with Terras, Ramsay, and Boyle's (2015) findings, many of the participants were unconcerned with having a public Internet profile and the users who were concerned safeguarded their privacy through the falsification of personal details.



If achieving this individualization identity appears simplistic and straightforward, it's not. Beck and Young (2005) observe that while the implications of new forms of professional identity formation are far-reaching in the sense that they have indeed replaced older forms of “knowledge enabled professional and academic identities”, ones that were relatively stable with “clearly defined knowledge *traditions*” linked to real-world practices. The concern with the new form as reported by Bernstein (2000) is that ‘there appears to be an emptiness in the concepts it engenders: *trainability* and *learning to learn* (p. 59). Since the concept is rather an empty truism, the actor can only recognize herself/himself and others through ‘the materialities of consumption’ or temporary stability constructed out of the products of the market’ (Bernstein, 2000, p. 59). Thus, graduates are faced with “professional boards” setting standards of practice and providing products of certification, removing the concerns and practices of higher education out of consideration and out-of-date. In the end, we have a “pessimistic variant of the learning society thesis” (Beck & Young, 2005).

### **The Course Redesign Process**

The following tables (Tables 17 and 18) detail the instructional re-design process through the three iterations of the study. Table 17 focuses on changes made to the course outline in lieu of findings from the previous iteration and Table 18 provides instructor notes.

Table 17. Specific course revisions over three iterations

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Iteration</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration</b>		<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration</b>	
Linear design		Linear design		Circular design (6 cycles)	
Paper and digital projects conjointly		Paper projects followed by digital projects		Digital only projects	
Autobiography (paper)	50	Autobiography (paper)	100	Presentations (signup)	100
Weblog	100	Presentations (signup)	100	Reading quizzes	200
Presentation	50	CV and Cover (paper)	100	ePortfolio (process and product portfolio)	200
CV and cover letter (paper)	50	Visual CV (digital)	100	Professionalism (final score influenced by peers and instructor)	200
Visual CV (digital)	50	Montrealites proposal (paper)	100	Autobiography	100
ePortfolio (process and product portfolio)	50	Social media (introduced)	100	Profile	100
Blog content proposal (paper)	50	Weblog (prewriting)	100	Interview	100
Social media	50	Profile	100	Instructions	100
Profile	50	Interview	100	Review	100
Interview	50	Instructions	100	Feature	100
Instructions	50	Review	100		
Review	50	Feature	100		
Feature	50	Interactive Web	100		
Interactive web project	100	Montrealites	100		
Community blog	100	ePortfolio (product portfolio only)	100		
Participation	100	Participation	500		

Table 18. Instructor notes on course design

1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration	2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Iteration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to technology incorporation at all levels.</li> <li>• Complained of having process work on portfolio.</li> <li>• Completed course early demonstrating low energy levels and attendance.</li> <li>• Low participation social media and online publishing.</li> <li>• Overlapping projects created confusion.</li> <li>• Portfolio introduced too soon.</li> <li>• Complained of having to mix process and product portfolios (i.e. imagined that the process was unprofessional).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Began with a traditional paper course and slowly moved toward digital technologies.</li> <li>• No technology issues</li> <li>• Complained of too much work.</li> <li>• Low energy and reduced attendance at end of year.</li> <li>• Low participation social media and online publishing.</li> <li>• Overlapping projects created confusion</li> <li>• Process portfolio was moved to the course blog.</li> <li>• Strove to increase participation by assigning a large proportion of grade to the score (strategy failed because students were unable to anticipate concretely how the points were assigned).</li> <li>• Product portfolio introduced too late in the year – technological requirements to make an effective design too difficult to master without additional training afforded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Six Cycles</b>, one project cycle each month.</li> <li>• Eliminated a number of projects to improve the flow of work and learners’ ability to concentrate on each item.</li> <li>• Assigned digital texts only to simplify instructions</li> <li>• Enfolded social media and blog prewriting projects into process.</li> <li>• Designed to optimize compliance, draft survey checks, reading quizzes, and increased process points assigned to each project.</li> <li>• Combined process and product portfolios- explained that employers also want to see how you work and not just the final product.</li> <li>• Social media and publishing compliance. Asked students to contract for social media project or alternative the first week to avoid delayed decisions regarding participation until the end of year.</li> <li>• Eliminated participation and correctly labeled the points as applying to “professionalism”, further emphasizing and reinforcing the concept as a learning objective.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cognitive load with regards to technology.</li> <li>• Students hesitated using social media until end of year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cognitive load with regards to design.</li> <li>• By pushing digital technologies to midcourse, student were overwhelmed with amount of work left to complete and skills to master to complete the work effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower cognitive load</li> <li>• No complaints of cognitive overload/technology/ or design.</li> <li>• Would have liked more social media training.</li> </ul>
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The final iteration culminated in a streamlined cyclical instructional design that would effectively support deliberate practice and scaffold reflexive exercises; see Figure 60 for an illustration of the final design.

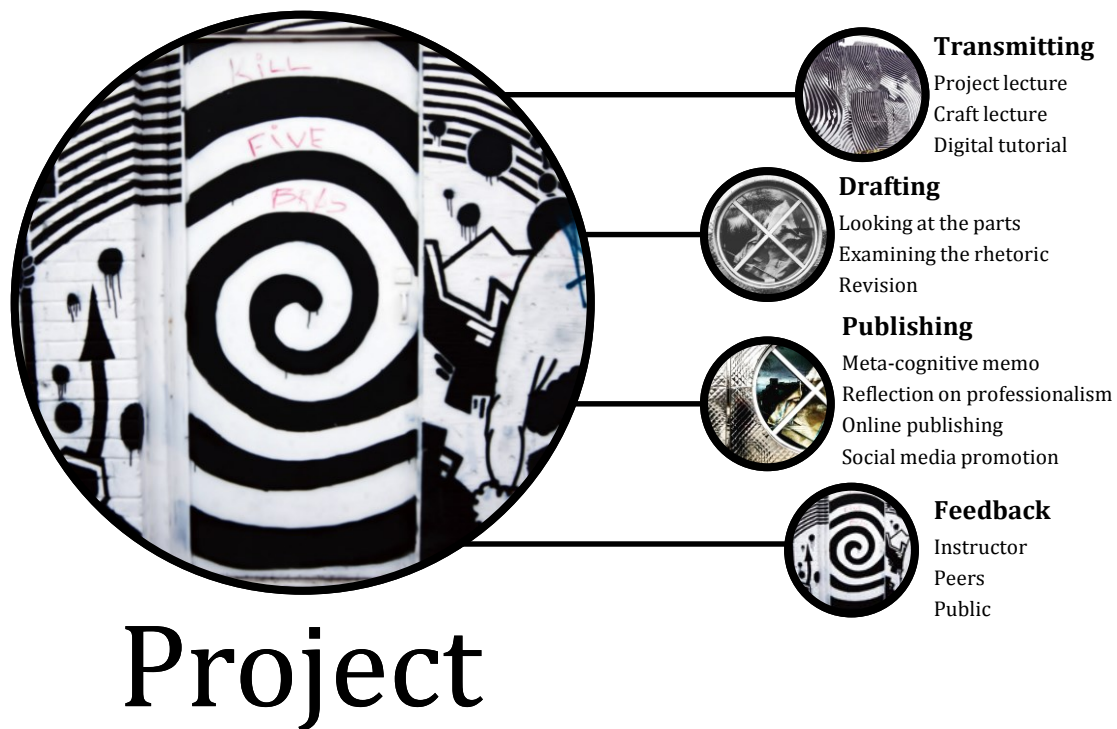


Figure 60. Cyclical process design

Key to this cyclical process design is the number and hierarchies of reflection that take place throughout the process from pre-writing, to draft reflections, to final reflexive exercises. Reflection enables students to position themselves as agentic and authentic

writers who move beyond the role of “obligatory school task writers” to shape their writing for a purpose (Ryan & Ryan, 2013). These strategies are intended to “stimulate the creative aspects of writing through such self-awareness and reflexivity to elevate the writer’s performance” (Ryan & Ryan, 2013, p. 70). Greenbank (2014) found, “In order to motivate them to be future-oriented, students should be encouraged to reflect (frequently and in depth) through writing and discussion on the potential outcomes for their future-possible selves” (p. 190). See Figure 61 for process details interwoven into the design.



Figure 61. Design of stages for transformational learning

Learners were compliant at all stages of the process and appeared to benefit from the simplicity of the structure, the reduction in the number of projects and overall focus on process rather than product. Participation in draft workshops led to insightful and informed revision work and resulted in higher quality work overall. Overall, the course

design effectively addressed Kellogg's (2006) criteria for shaping expertise in the field of writing. See Table 19.

Table 19. Incorporating Kellogg's (2006) model into the course design

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Iteration</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration</b>
<b>Problem solving</b>	<p>✗ Challenged Unfamiliar with online publishing technology and creating multi-modal texts</p>	<p>☐ Partially resolved by scaffolding the introduction of digital literacies.</p>	<p>☐ Resolved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital projects only framed the course design more effectively</li> <li>• Added technology tutorials, i.e. simple HTML coding, were helpful</li> <li>• Portfolio work was consistent throughout the year and scaffolding was provided monthly.</li> </ul>
<b>Language use</b>	<p>☐ Resolved through craft lectures on style</p>	<p>☐ Resolved through craft lectures on style</p>	<p>☐ Resolved through craft lectures on style</p>
<b>Managing cognitive load</b>	<p>✗ Unresolved- multiple issues revealed in the data. Course design primarily responsible.</p>	<p>✗ Unresolved – beginning with paper delayed the adjustment to digital literacy. Course design problematic.</p>	<p>☐ Resolved through cyclical instructional design-- a simplified repetitive design-- allowed for a faster learning curve.</p>
<b>Domain specificity</b>	<p>☐ Resolved Domain specified writing assignments</p>	<p>☐ Resolved Domain specified writing assignments</p>	<p>☐ Resolved Domain specified writing assignments were provided.</p>
<b>Rapid access to long-term memory.</b>	<p>✗ Unresolved Lacking knowledge of professionalism and professional practices on social networks</p>	<p>✗ Unresolved- instructional design hindered ability to have rapid access to long-term memory.</p>	<p>☐ ☐ Resolved Deep reflection, knowledge and domain specificity lead to rapid access to long-term memory.</p>
<b>Relationship of the readership.</b>	<p>☐ Partially resolved through online publishing</p>	<p>☐ Partially resolved through online publishing</p>	<p>☐ Resolved through participation in draft workshops and online publishing and increased participation on social networks</p>
<b>Managing emotional challenges</b>	<p>✗ Unresolved</p>	<p>☐ Partially resolved: memos to researcher encouraged a deeper level of</p>	<p>☐ Resolved Learners benefited from third course redesign, which entailed a reduced cognitive load, in</p>



		reflection	combination with additional technology tutorials and the systematic integration of reflexivity exercises.
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### **Guiding Design Principles**

A number of guiding design principles were tested and incorporated in the course design. Table 20 provides an overview of the more relevant and successful principles, a summary of the intervention, and a brief discussion of the effectiveness of the integration. Experiential learning, situated learning in a virtual Community of Practice, and deliberative practice were the foundation for the course design. According to Gentry (1990) The experiential learning task structure includes four phases: (1) design, setting the stage for the experience, specifying learning objectives, selecting activities for participants, identifying factors that impact learning and creating a plan for implementation (2) conduct, maintaining and controlling the design (3) evaluation, learning should provide evaluation and evidence of learning, and (4) feedback, provided by instructor (Gentry, 1990). In sum, experiential learning is “participative, interactive, and applied, and all four phases should be repeated throughout time (Gentry, 1990, p. 20). Deliberate practice entails “considerable, precise, and continuous efforts” in order to improve skills within a specific domain (Ericsson et al, 2007).

Table 20. Guiding design principles

Principle	Intervention	Findings
Experiential learning provides learners with opportunities to practice authentic workforce skills (Boone, 2011; Hawtrey, 2007; Ramburuth and Daniel, 2010).	Learners were asked to publish writing projects on a community blog that provides authentic readership.	An authentic online space was provided for publication of course projects. Reach was upwards of 4,000 visitors/month.
Writing expertise can be more effectively developed through situated learning in a Community of Practice. Handley et al (2006) observed that CoPs are “the context in which an individual develops the practices (including values, norms and relationships) and identities appropriate to that community” (p. 643).	Social media was employed strategically to build a virtual Community of Practice on the community website.	An analysis of web traffic established that students were able to participate and shape expertise that ultimately informed their professional identity.
Managing cognitive load is key to developing expertise in the field of writing (Kellogg, 2006).	Course was restructured to include fewer projects, folding social media and publishing into each project as a component of the grade. Each project was developed systematically throughout the year on the following schedule, repeated six times: introduce the assignment, draft workshop, draft workshop, publish and promote.	Students were able to manage course load and produce a higher quality of work.
A deliberate practice environment for learners improves performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).	Students had the opportunity to publish six professional articles online, each one increasing in complexity. They received feedback on each draft through subsequent workshops, instructor feedback and Google Analytics.	Deliberate practice was most effective when simplified into six repetitive cycles of learning. It was difficult to achieve an effective application of the principle when the course design overtaxed learners’ cognitive load.

<p>Approaches to effective learning should involve a pedagogical approach that is relational between teachers and students engaged in knowledge building in collaborative learning networks (Bolstad &amp; Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al, 2012; and Miller et al, 2008).</p>	<p>The instructor presented each writing project as a genre, i.e. interview, review, feature etc. and learners had the freedom to transform each genre to suit a particular online audience and domain specificity, i.e. food, travel or political writing, for example.</p>	<p>Evidence of success was found in the third iteration when an effective vCoP was found in Google Analytics.</p>
<p>Within the pedagogy of writing, domain experts have an advantage over generalists (McCutchen, 2000).</p>	<p>Learners were required to develop a domain specific expertise in professional writing, e.g. food writing, travel writing, literature and sustainability.</p>	<p>Students were given the opportunity to develop a domain specific expertise by joining an existing or blog or founding their own.</p>
<p>Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011).</p>	<p>Students were encouraged to use social media voluntarily to develop and promote a professional online identity.</p>	<p>While participation was voluntary, due to the emotional and cognitive challenges associated with strategic professional social media practices and professional identity formation, formal participation in a structured activity was found to be an essential component of successful implementation. When the activity took place in a formal classroom setting, it proved successful, i.e. the third iteration.</p>
<p>Effective instructional design considers the impact of social interaction and psychological safety on knowledge development (Xu &amp; Yang, 2010).</p>	<p>Students were provided an alternative, traditional offline assignment and allowed to forgo the social media component of the course and negotiate alternative projects that were socially interactive, yet perceived as being psychologically safe for the individual learner. See</p>	<p>Social networks are inherently risky spaces for learners and practitioners on the field. Inappropriate behaviour and missteps are magnified through public exposure to broad and reactionary online actors. It's important for learners to make the decision if the practice is worth pursuing.</p>

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Appendix C for alternative project. In addition, a social media expert was invited as a guest lecturer to discuss proper online conduct and field questions.

Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).	Learners blogged a pre-writing exercise for each course assignment, and draft workshoped on blog portfolios, which represented both process and final product work. The products were then published to a community website and promoted strategically through social media referrals, evidence of success was measured through Google Analytics.	Social media practices were most successful when integrated holistically into the course design rather than as a separate project, which was then perceived by learners as being more of an operational practice rather than strategic. A key-learning objective for social media practices is the strategic application since this form of practice was transferred later into sought after organizational practices.
Reflection promotes learning and the transference of mental models to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).	Students were asked to complete an online reflexivity based on individualized goals and progress.	Students were able to articulate forms of professionalism.
Negative emotions can break patterns of habitus when spurred by internal conversations and these same conversations can promote a higher level of consideration and respect of other users online (Holmes, 2015).	Scaffolding the project, having a guest speaker, providing tutorials, and incorporating social media into formal class activities, reflexive activities, and a live publishing and social media push session mitigated the emotional reflections.	Social media practices engender negative emotions; however, when combined with emotion-oriented reflexive exercise, the emotions can transform into agentic action with positive results.
Constructing and developing agency for professional purposes, will help provide students with skills that are required for everyday survival (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Gregory & Jones, 2009).	Learners completed reflexive exercises exploring the Bamberg's (2012) framework for social mobility.	Having students work on articulating their future-selves firmly established the relevance of online professional identity formation.

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Develop digital/media literacies through formal learning	Encourage to students articulate modes of online authenticity by encouraging them to formulate course projects through a variety of modes, i.e. video, online presentation software, graphics, and podcasts in addition to formatting course projects and customizing e-portfolios with basic CSS style codes and html script.	Instructions sets were first produced as a traditional print medium and transformed into comic strips with visual graphics, characters, and scripts as a scaffolding project to enforce visual arguments and relationship to readers by finding diverse ways to engage them.
Reflexivity practices benefit students during the revision stage of the writing process and will help foster agency when writing (Ryan, 2014).	Students were asked to fill out reflexivity forms after each draft workshop, evaluating the success of the workshop and possible courses of action to take in the revision process.	Perhaps, it helped them internalize feedback and provide more considerate feedback. I don't believe it could be proved whether the reflexivity was helpful or if the surveillance of the activity enforced compliance. After each workshop, the results of the surveys were discussed with an eye toward improving the effectiveness of the workshops.
Writers benefit from deeper reflection of their work as an artifact.	Students were required to complete a meta-cognitive introduction to each project.	This exercise was effective the third iteration after points were assigned to meta-cognition and reflection; in addition, feedback was necessary from the instructor. Many students were unable to identify competencies and skills achieved for each project without guidance.
Dialogic reflections foster writers' ability to reflect on their own work.	One peer review session for each project involved dialogic discussion between writer and	Students expressed a preference for the dialogic peer revisions

	reviewers.	and preferred them over the first round that entailed a more holistic perspective of the document and its form rather than an emphasis on its content.
Learners benefit and are encouraged from feedback on their work.	Weekly reading quizzes were integrated into the course design.	Quizzes enforced reading and improved their understanding of core concepts in the field, helping them represent mental models more efficiently.
Students require guidance using web 2.0 tools.	Provided html and web publishing online and in-class tutorials.	Through customization, students were able to build professional E-portfolio's that reflected their unique personalities.
Graduates benefit by being introduced to soft skills, such as professionalism and professional expectations, before graduation.	A professionalism component was introduced into the course design. Students were asked to contribute to each other's scores in a positive and productive manner, ending in an award ceremony at the end of the year.	Students articulated how soft skills informed the application and development of hard skills and ultimately contributed to the final product.

## **Limitations**

Limitations of the study include having utilized a convenience sample. In addition, self-reporting on student surveys is unreliable due to inconsistencies in interpretation of questions. Finally, more follow-up questions should have been conducted to further clarify student responses. Additional limitations of the study concern the use of interviews. Limitations for narrative inquiry include positioning the researcher in the sense that the researcher and phenomena are inseparable (Bamberg, 2012, p. 216); thus, the researcher needs to bracket assumptions and biases when restorying the narrative and avoid the pitfalls of interjecting moral and ethical stances (Hunter, 2010, p. 45). The key to discerning the usefulness of the narrative is to carefully examine the supporting evidence and argument provided by the researcher (Trahar, 2008, p. 262). Self-reported data from reflexivity exercises cannot be independently verified and must be accepted at face value. A number of biases are related to self-reporting, including, selective memory, telescoping, attribution, and exaggeration.

## **Conclusion**

As noted by Decoteau (2015), “Critical realism posits that reality is so layered, complex and conjunctural that, at best, we can only theorize about some of the possible mechanisms at work” (p. 9). Decoteau warns that “conscious reflexive action” does not always lead to change any more than habitual action is doomed to stasis (p. 9). Archer’s (2007) theory can help us understand the internal dynamics that are taking place in the learning environment when students are confronted with innovative practices or those that challenge the status quo. Archer’s theory cannot explain the “when, where and why actors are compelled to make decisive changes in their life courses, counter hegemonic truth-claims, or engage in struggles for social change” (Decoteau, 2015, p. 16). This

study employed a design-based research methodology to provide guidance for educators, when selecting pedagogical tools that might facilitate change by addressing the concerns of learners in such a way, that perhaps, they are able to make positive decisions regarding practice and projects. Thus no claims to causal relations should be made with regards to the result of the study. The study explored a diverse range of variables and learning theories that might impact learning and adoption of new practices for familiar technologies.

We can't escape being neoliberal subjects (Archer, 2008). Archer observes, "As subjects, we are always subjugated to ('played by') the system (whether or not we consciously realise it), as governance is enacted via our hearts and minds and the technologies of neoliberalism close down dissent and the perception of alternatives" (p. 281). For this reason, Archer notes that the onslaught of neoliberalism makes us all neoliberal subjects with scarce alternatives. Educators and learners must recognize the reality that the current stakeholders in our educational systems are corporations (Krause-Jensen & Garsten, 2014). In this environment, Patsarika (2014) argues, modern capitalism "demands the individual embraces mobility as a condition for progress and develops the capacity to continuously adapt to changing economic and social circumstances through self-exploration" (p. 534). Thus, education has taken on the charge of moving past traditional classroom boundaries toward the professional world, with students navigating different identities, between the personal, the here-and-now, and the in-the-make professional (Pastarika, 2014, p. 527).

A neoliberal economy relies on access to a flexible on-demand workforce to increase profits for shareholders (Jensen & Prieur, 2015). Jensen and Prieur (2015) argue that survival in the economy relies on individualization (p. 3). They note, "In



general terms, individualisation is a process by which the identity of human beings is made an object of reflexivity and intervention” (p. 3). For this reason, the course design relied heavily on reflexivity both as an intervention to shape identity and as a valuable skillset. Flexible on-demand workers are removed from traditional labour roles and collectives and are “faced with having to make themselves up” (Jensen & Prieur, 2015, p. 3). In particular, in this new world or virtual landscape, “we are not what we are, but what we make of ourselves” (Jensen & Prieur, 2015, p. 3). Jensen and Prieur (2015) claim that modern capitalism requires a weighty focus on personal traits and social skills (p. 6). They describe this change as paradigmatic and societal with an effect that the well-being of the individual relies not just on their competitiveness, but also on the commodification of the personal, which has become central to establishing the labour market value of human beings (p. 6). Thus, Jensen and Prieur (2015) note, “The neoliberal ideology brings about the conception that individual traits, characteristics, choices, and efforts determine individuals’ success” (p. 6). One unmeasured, yet apparent, value of the course design was its ability to address this paradigmatic shift in a timely fashion and effectively balance neoliberal concerns with humanism.

Beck and Young (2005) questioned whether critiques of academic and professional knowledge and autonomy signifies “the end of a no longer defensible form of knowledge-based professionalism as we have come to know it?” (p. 59). Well yes and no. A new kind of professionalism has emerged with weak ties to the acquisition and production of knowledge in universities and with much stronger links to practice in the ‘real world’. Academia must address and incorporate this form of professionalism but at the same time recognize that academia’s objectives remain relevant and can provide alternatives and amalgamations to neoliberal concepts. The notion that there are no

alternatives to neoliberal frameworks is in and of itself a neoliberal notion. Its time to recognize this as being so, address neoliberal concerns in academia, and strive to find a way forward and perhaps past its limitations.

Furthermore, generic modes of learning have their place in the professional writing curriculum. Beck and Young (2005) describe this as “genericism” and have found attempts to incorporate what was once a pre-higher education approach to training in academia at levels as high as doctoral programmes where it is identified as “key skills, core skills, and thinking skills” and thus applies “to all subjects, all regions, all fields of practice and all levels” (p. 59). The curriculum that was developed in this study was built around fostering generic skills sets within a virtual community of practice and addressed all three dimensions of professionalism identified in the study: generic skills, character-based, and individualized, but allowed for a flexible framework where students were able to make decisions regarding their level and form their participation. Conceivably, the final course design, with its circular, organic shape, taught fish to swim (See Figure 62).



Figure 62. *Piscem natate docem* (Adapted from an illustration by Antonia Novakovich)

### **Contributions to the field of education**

- Identified the appropriate learning theories and designed course artefacts that inform social media competencies and shape professional identity formation.
- Operationalized and evaluated a curriculum design that incorporated the psychological, social and cognitive factors impacting social media practices and shaping professional online identity formation.
- The course design effectively addressed all of Kellogg's (2006) criteria for establishing writing expertise, integrating concepts of domain specificity into a networked learning space.
- Provided a template for a humanistic-neoliberal course design that presented the challenges of and opportunities for informing a self-reflective individualized professional identity.
- The course design illustrated how to establish an effective virtual Community of Practice that fostered professional social media practices and identity formation.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Glossary of terms

**Affordance.** Invented by Gibson (1979), affordances are properties of an object that are perceptible and actionable.

**Autonomous reflexive.** Self-contained internal conversations that lead to direct action without validation from others. Autonomous reflexivity occurs under conditions of “contextual discontinuity and is associated with a situational logic of competition that drives instrumental rationality to generate a brittle morphostasis open to transformation” (Herepath, 2014, p.873).

**Bildung.** This concepts describe the process of fostering the individual and their potential through learning (Benade, 2014; and Hopmann, 2007), in order to develop of the ‘self- cultivated person, who transfers learned knowledge through reflection and contemplation into shaping one’s own character and acquiring practical wisdom’ (Teschers, 2013, p. 172). Rather than focus solely on the acquisition of knowledge or competencies, this type of learning encourages self-actualization through education. Benade (2014) notes: “the key feature of Bildung is that it does not yield to a rigid definition, with predefined outcomes (the antithesis of restrained teaching)” (p. 343); as elaborated upon by Osberg and Biesta (2008) in the sense that emergence and emergent curriculum are cornerstones of the instructional design rather than predetermined learning objectives.

**Blended learning.** Bernard, Borokhovski, Schmid, Tamin, and Abrami (2014) define blended learning as “the combination of face-to-face and online learning outside of class, where the latter does not exceed 50 % of the course time. Face-to-face classroom time therefore can be greater than 50 %” (p. 94).



**Communicative reflexive.** Internal conversations that require confirmation by others before a course of action is determined Communicative reflexivity occurs under conditions of contextual continuity and is “associated with a situational logic of protection or correction that fosters morphostasis” (Herepath, 2014, p.873).

**Communities of Practice.** This concept is based on a social learning theory developed by Lave and Wenger (1991); they proposed that learning occurs through discourse within communities where individuals are joined by relationships that share common practices and activities and are identified as “Communities of Practice” or (CoP).

**Competencies.** Competencies are not synonymous with skills. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined competencies as inclusive of ‘knowledge, cognitive and practical skills, as well as social and behaviour components such as attitudes, emotions, and values and motivations’ (2003, p. 2).

**Competency-based education.** As defined by Spady (1977), competency-based education must meet the following criterion: (1) stated criterion-referenced outcomes, (2) outcomes must be systematically embodied in the instruction and learning assessment (3) outcomes must be recognized in the field or supported by the literature.

**Corporate agent.** The corporate agent consists of ‘those who are aware of what they want, can articulate it to themselves and others, and have organized in order to get it’ (Archer, 1995, p. 258).

**Deliberate Practice:** This process is a form of practice for the purpose of developing expertise in a domain, which entails “considerable, precise, and continuous efforts” in order to improve skills (Ericsson et al, 2007).

**Design-based research.** Reeves (2006) describes educational design-based research as “the systematic study of designing, developing and evaluating educational interventions

(such as programs, teaching-learning strategies and materials, products and systems) as solutions for complex problems in educational practice, which also aims at advancing our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes of designing and developing them.”

**Didaktik.** This concept is applied to a form of ‘restrained teaching’ based on *Bildung* with the understanding that learning cannot be transferred but requires a form of teaching closer to guidance (Benade, 2014, p. 376); however, *Didaktik* does not achieve *Bildung*, it strives to reveal human agency for learners to see the possibilities or potential (Hopmann, 2007).

**Digital literacy.** As for the *digital* aspect of literacy, Selfe and Hawisher (2004) first proposed a similar term, the “literacies of technology” as meaning to “connect social practices, people, technology, values, and literate activity” a practice which is “embedded in a larger cultural ecology” (2004, p. 2).

**Educational technology.** Bernard, Borokhovski, Schmid, Tamin, and Abrami (2014) define educational technology as the “use of technology for teaching and learning as opposed to technology that may serve administrative and/or managerial purposes” (p. 94)

**Experiential learning.** Gentry (1990) The experiential learning task structure includes four phases: (1) design, setting the stage for the experience, specifying learning objectives, selecting activities for participants, identifying factors that impact learning and creating a plan for implementation (2) conduct, maintaining and controlling the design (3) evaluation, learning should provide evaluation and evidence of learning, and (4) feedback, provided by instructor (Gentry, 1990; and Wolfe and Byrne, 1975). In

sum, experiential learning is “participative, interactive, and applied and all four phases should be repeated throughout time (Gentry, 1990, p. 20).

**Expertise.** Sternberg and Frensch (1992) observed two aspects of expertise, a cognitive one that refers to how experts perform difficult tasks automatically and an attributional one”] that refers to an expert being so because they are regarded as being expert in the world (p. 194, 202).

**Fractured reflexive.** Internal conversations that disrupt and disorient and lead to inaction; thus this learner fails to engage in reflexivity as the number of possibilities render them passive (Archer, 2003).

**Habitus.** Decoteau (2015). Habitus is a set of acquired patterns of meaning, beliefs, behaviors and tastes. According to Bourdieu, it is through practice that actors structure the world by producing meaning, but this structuring is only possible because of embodied schemas that are constituted throughout history and are acquired by the individual through socialization. Individuals then (re)create these schemas through their practical actions because they are imposed/inscribed on the body, and have never passed through their consciousness. The habitus is not a product of ‘theoretical calculation’, but a ‘kind of “feel” for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1985).

**Information and communication technologies (ICTs).** This term is broad in scope and may include a variety of digital technologies: blogs, social media, World Wide Web browsers, Web editors, e-mail, spreadsheets, presentation software, instant messaging, plug-ins for Web resources, listservs, bulletin boards, avatars, virtual worlds, and many others (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004, p. 1568).

**Knowledge.** Accordingly, Benade (2014) defined knowledge production as having a material basis: the principles, concepts, and content, all of which is validated by scholars (p. 346).

**Mental Models:** According to Rouse and Morris (1985), “Mental models are the mechanisms whereby humans are able to generate descriptions of system purpose and form, explanations of system functioning and observed system states, and predictions of future system states” (p. 7). Mental models serve to simplify interpretation and in this way helping learners sustain old information and acquire new information (Gardiner & Christie, 1987), allowing for control and competency on tasks related to the mental model and influence effort, expectation, satisfaction and results (Jih & Reeves, 1992).

**Literacy practices.** According to Tusting, Ivanic, & Wilson (2000) a literacy practice encompass not only the text, but also the values surrounding its construction and the patterns of behavior that it elicits (p. 213).

**Meta reflexive.** Internal conversations that critique their own internal conversations and leads to effective action This form of meta-reflexivity emerges in situations of “contextual incongruity” and is associated with a situational logic of opportunity fostering morphogenesis” (Herepath, 2014, p. 873).

**Morphostasis.** Morphostasis refers to “processes which tend to preserve or maintain a system’s given form, organization or state” (Archer, 1995, p.166).

**Morphogenises.** Morphogenises refers to agents that change society’s form, structure or state (Herepath, 2014, p. 860).

**Primary agent.** The primary agent is unable to articulate demands and are subsequently

unorganized (Archer, 1995, p.185).

**Professional.** Cheney and Ashcraft (2007) identified three key themes of professionalism from the literature as being: “(1) the professional as division of labor in modern society, (2) the professional as claim-to-expert class, and (3) the professional as normative–ethical obligation” (p. 152).

**Professional communication.** Defined by Dubinsky (2002), professional communication is an inclusive term for a field that includes “technical writing, technical communication, technical and scientific communication, business communication, professional writing, and so on” (p. 72).

**Professional writing.** Professional writing is currently defined in a broader sense including audio, visual, and verbal texts, delivered via diverse multimedia (Moshiri & Cardon, 2014). No longer a secondary activity for workplace professionals, professional writing has become a field onto itself (Couture & Rymer 1989).

**Reflexivity.** Archer (2007) identifies reflexivity as a process that mediates social structures and human agency, in the sense that reflexivity can help learners negotiate the relationship between the self and social realities.

**Sociomateriality.** As articulated by Orlikowski (2007), this concept is arose as a rebuttal to technological determinism in that it argues that technology is inextricability intertwined with the user in the sense that “the social and the material are considered to be inextricably related — there is no social that is not also material, and no material that is not also social” (p. 1437).

**Social media.** Hew and Chung (2013) define social media as a broad reach of any web 2.0 technologies, particularly those which allowed for users to contribute content and engage in a two-way exchange among users on the site. Carr and Hayes (2015) defined

the term: “Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others” (p. 7).

**Social network sites.** boyd, D. and Ellison, N., (2008) defined social network sites “as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.”

**Technology.** For clarification for this research, technology is consider a process rather than a too or product; as elaborated on by Hickman (2001) who defined technology involving the “invention, development, and cognitive deployment of tools and other artefacts, brought to bear on raw materials and intermediate stock parts, with a view to the resolution of perceived problems” (p. 26).

**Technological determinism.** The belief that technology shapes learning and is not just a delivery mechanism (Jones, 2001).

**Technological literacy.** Selfe and Hawisher (2004) proposed the term as connecting “social practices, people, technology, values, and literate activity, which, in turn, are embedded in a larger cultural ecology” (2004, p. 2).

**Social construction of technology.** This perspective challenges the current theories which position technology as a determinant of practice, technological determinism, and the Community of Practice theory, which places technology in a relational dynamic with participation or social interaction and contends, “technology is positioned as a

*consequence of practice*” (Oliver, 2011, p. 380).

**Web 2.0.** Web 2.0 is typically defined by the characteristics, or technical design patterns, such as user-generated content, interaction, and collaboration, and, for example, consists of social networking sites, hosted web services and applications, as set forth by O'Reilly (2005). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) distinguished social media from Web 2.0 by identifying it as “group of Internet- based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (p. 61).

## **Appendix B: Research Instruments**



### Phase 1, 2, and 3 Technology survey

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following online sites are you familiar with? Check all that apply.

Face Book      Twitter      Pinterest      LinkedIn      Four Square  
 Tumblr      Google Plus      Wiki forums      Yelp      You Tube  
 Yammer      My Space      Word Press      Blogspot      Other blogs  
 Delicious      Digg      Reddit      Other

Which of the following online sites have you joined? Check all that apply.

Face Book      Twitter      Pinterest      LinkedIn      Four Square  
 Tumblr      Google Plus      Wiki forums      Yelp      You Tube  
 Yammer      My Space      Word Press      Blogspot      Other blogs  
 Delicious      Digg      Reddit      Other

Which of the following online sites have you posted information on? Check all that apply.

Face Book      Twitter      Pinterest      LinkedIn      Four Square  
 Tumblr      Google Plus      Wiki forums      Yelp      You Tube  
 Yammer      My Space      Word Press      Blogspot      Other blogs  
 Delicious      Digg      Reddit      Other

	N ev er	Practical ly never	Once in a while	Fair ly ofte n	V er y oft en	Almos t always
How frequently do you visit social media sites?	1	2	3	4	5	6
How frequently do you post or share information?	1	2	3	4	5	6
Please indicate how frequently online software technologies are integrated into your academic activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6

On average, how many hours per week do you spend using social media sites?

None      Less than 1 hour      1 to 3 hours      5 to 10 hours      More than 10 hours

Do you have experience creating and publishing online projects?

Yes      No      Uncertain

Select the level that best describes you:

- 1 Unfamiliar, I have no experience with social media
- 2 Newcomer in the sense that I have account(s), but rarely visit or post
- 3 Beginner, I make occasional postings and have made a few connections
- 4 Average, I have made a number of connections and postings
- 5 Advanced, I have competently used a broad spectrum of sites
- 6 Expert, I have guru status

Choose the stage that best describes where you are in the process:

1 Awareness: I am aware that social media exists, but have not used it – perhaps I’m even avoiding it. I am anxious about the prospect of using it.

2 Learning: I am currently trying to learn the basics. I am sometimes frustrated and I lack confidence.

3 Understanding: I am beginning to understand the process of using social media and can think of specific tasks in which it might be useful.

4 Familiarity: I am gaining a sense of self-confidence in using social media sites for publishing online. I am starting to feel comfortable publishing.

5 Adaptation: I think about social media as a professional tool to help me and I am no longer concerned about publishing online.

6 Creative Application: I can apply what I know about technology to develop an online reputation through publications on social media sites.

Do you understand the basic framework of website design in terms of back screens (dashboards) and front screens (published pages) Yes No Uncertain

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level of interest, rank the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level of interest, how would you rank your interest in using online software technologies?	1	2	3	4	5
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level of importance, how would you rank the importance of being familiar	1	2	3	4	5

with and confident using online software technology?					
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Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the use of social media.

	Stron strongly Disagree	Disag Disagree	No No opini on	Ag Ag ree	Stron Stron gly agree
Social media is harmful to your professional reputation	1	2	3	4	5
Social media is mostly used to waste time	1	2	3	4	5
Social media is effective because I believe I can implement it successfully	1	2	3	4	5
Social media promotes social reputation.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media is mostly intended for personal use.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media promotes the development of communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media is a valuable professional tool.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media is too costly in terms of risk to professional reputation.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media is an effective tool for students of all abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media enhances my professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media promotes the development of interpersonal skills.	1	2	3	4	5
Social media increases stress and anxiety.	1	2	3	4	5

### **Instruments 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration**

#### **Beginning of year interview**

- What was your opinion of social media prior to our guest speaker? Afterwards?
- What is your understanding of social writing? Describe or map out how it works.
- Have you ever encountered any serious issues when posting online? Please describe.
- What types of information do you believe professionals can post online?
- How would you describe your online digital presence?
- What questions do you have about the course social media-writing project?
- At what level do you plan to participate in the project and explain why?

- What additional skills in terms of social writing would you like to learn?

### **Midyear interview**

- Describe the progress you have made regarding your social media project.
- What are the obstacles you have encountered in terms of building a social network?
- Describe what has been holding you back, psychologically or socially?
- How can you overcome obstacles and barriers to your performance?
- What is your social media strategy?
- What are your social media goals?

### **End of year interview**

- Describe where you want to go in the future in terms of building social media networks: engagement, reputation, or numbers and why?
- How would you describe your online digital presence today?
- What questions do you have about the social media-writing project?
- Define what social writing means to you and its benefits and risks.

## **Instruments 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration**

### **Beginning of year interview**

Please answer the following questions and email them to my research partner Sophia. I will not see your answers until after the course has ended and grades have been submitted.

EMAIL to: [sophiam101@gmail.com](mailto:sophiam101@gmail.com)

- Prior to the course, how important was social media to you and explain how you used it.
- Prior to the course, describe your online presence? What sites did you use, describe your behavior and understanding of social media?
- Now that we have integrated social media into the course design, how have your perceptions changed regarding social media and how do you plan to use it?
- What is social writing? How does it work when it is effective?
- Have you ever encountered any serious issues when posting online? Please describe.
- What types of information do you believe professionals can post online?
- How would you define or describe appropriate online behavior for any individual, not just professionals?
- How do the social media roles differ between the personal and the professional?
- How would you describe your online digital presence?
- What questions do you have about the course social media-writing project?
- At what level do you plan to [participate](#) in the project and explain why?
- What additional skills in terms of social writing would you like to learn?

### **Midyear interview**

**Send your response to Sophia Miah at [sophiam101@gmail.com](mailto:sophiam101@gmail.com)**

- Describe the progress you have made regarding your social media project.
- What are the obstacles you have encountered in terms of getting started or building a social network.
- Describe what has been holding you back, psychologically or socially?
- How can you overcome obstacles and barriers to your performance?
- What is your social media strategy?
- What are your social media goals?
- Describe where you want to end in terms of building social media networks: engagement, reputation, or numbers and why?
- How would you describe your online digital presence today?
- What questions do you have about the social media-writing project?
- Define what social writing means to you and its benefits and risks.

**Part 2: Not to send in an email**

Go to [Visual.ly](#) and make an account.

- Select Create.
- Select compare yourself to a twitter celeb--twitterize yourself.
- Select solographic.
- Create.

Paste embed code into an entry on your website.

### **Reflection #1**

Write about inner conversations that you have regarding the course, professionalism, or social media. If you have trouble coming up with one, consider answering one or more of the following questions:

- Write about an inner conversation that talks you into doing something unprofessional.
- Write about an inner conversation that takes place when you make the decision to produce sub-standard work.
- Write the conversation that spurs you into being a perfectionist.

### **Reflection #2**

1. The first dilemmatic space is termed "belonging". In our daily practices, we continuously mark ourselves as different, similar or same with respect to others. Integrating and differentiating a sense of who we are vis-à-vis others is a process of moment-to-moment navigations, and stories about self and others are good candidates to practice this from early on. Begin a narrative exploring your experiences online regarding sameness↔difference.
2. The second dilemmatic space often is termed 'agency;' continue your narrative exploring world↔person, where the world is limited to online environments. While it is possible to view a sense of who we are as passive recipients of influences (typically from biological or outside forces such as parents, teachers, or culture), it also is possible to view world as a product of self (where the self is constructed as highly agentive). In terms of your ability to navigate and negotiate relations online, describe experiences of events happening to you and events you initiated. What are the barriers to your performance online and your strengths?
3. The third dilemmatic space is positioning ourselves. The dilemma of how to navigate the connection of a sense of who we used to be with how we want to position ourselves for the here and now-complete your narrative exploring constancy↔change in your professional online identity that has taken place during the course.

### **Reflection #3**

Write about concerns, projects and practices that you have regarding your future?

## **Instruments 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration**

### **Reflection #1**

1. Code name:
2. What does it mean to be a professional in your field of study?
3. What key competencies do you need to be successful in your chosen profession?
4. How many key competencies have you obtained and how did you demonstrate them?
5. Provide an example of professionalism from your lived experience.
6. Would you describe your online identity as being more personal than professional or more professional than personal? Explain and provide examples.
7. How would you evaluate your social capital?
8. Are your online connections comprised mostly of people you know or people that you want to know? Explain.

### **Reflection #2**

Thinking through social mobility.

4. Code Name (ie number, name, or other:))
5. The first dilemmatic space is termed "belonging". In our daily practices, we continuously mark ourselves as different, similar or same with respect to others. Integrating and differentiating a sense of who we are vis-à-vis others is a process of moment-to-moment navigations, and stories about self and others are good candidates to practice this from early on. Begin a narrative exploring your experiences online regarding sameness↔difference.
6. The second dilemmatic space often is termed 'agency;' continue your narrative exploring world↔person, where the world is limited to online environments. While it is possible to view a sense of who we are as passive recipients of influences (typically from biological or outside forces such as parents, teachers, or culture), it also is possible to view world as a product of self (where the self is constructed as highly agentive). In terms of your ability to navigate and negotiate relations online, describe experiences of events happening to you and events you initiated. What are the barriers to your performance online and your strengths?
7. The third dilemmatic space is positioning ourselves. The dilemma of how to navigate the connection of a sense of who we used to be with how we want to position ourselves for the here and now-complete your narrative exploring constancy↔change in your professional online identity that has taken place during the course.

### **Reflection #3**

Read the following article and answer the question at the end: Six Soft Skills Everyone Needs: More Than Technical Qualifications Needed to Move Ahead in Your Career.  
Larry Buhl

In a 2008 survey of more than 2,000 businesses in the state of Washington, employers said entry-level workers in a variety of professions were lacking in several areas, including problem solving, conflict resolution and critical observation.

**Communication Skills:** This doesn't mean you have to be a brilliant orator or writer. It does mean you have to express yourself well, whether it's writing a coherent memo, persuading others with a presentation or just being able to calmly explain to a team member what you need.

**Teamwork and Collaboration:** Employers want employees who play well with others -- who can effectively work as part of a team. "That means sometimes being a leader, sometimes being a good follower, monitoring the progress, meeting deadlines and working with others across the organization to achieve a common goal," says Lynne Sarikas, the MBA Career Center Director at Northeastern University.

**Adaptability:** This is especially important for more-seasoned professionals to demonstrate, to counter the (often erroneous) opinion that older workers are too set in their ways. "To succeed in most organizations, you need to have a passion for learning and the ability to continue to grow and stretch your skills to adapt to the changing needs of the organization," Sarikas says. "On your resume, on your cover letter and in your interview, explain the ways you've continued to learn and grow throughout your career."

**Problem Solving:** Be prepared for the "how did you solve a problem?" interview question with several examples, advises Ann Spoor, managing director of Cave Creek Partners. "Think of specific examples where you solved a tough business problem or participated in the solution. Be able to explain what you did, how you approached the problem, how you involved others and what the outcome was -- in real, measurable results."

**Critical Observation:** It's not enough to be able to collect data and manipulate it. You must also be able to analyze and interpret it. What story does the data tell? What questions are raised? Are there different ways to interpret the data? "Instead of handing your boss a spreadsheet, give them a business summary and highlight the key areas for attention, and suggest possible next steps," Sarikas advises.

**Conflict Resolution:** The ability to persuade, negotiate and resolve conflicts is crucial if you plan to move up. "You need to have the skill to develop mutually beneficial relationships in the organization so you can influence and persuade people," Sarikas says. "You need to be able to negotiate win-win solutions to serve the best interests of the company and the individuals involved."

**When It Comes to Soft Skills, Show -- Don't Tell:** How do you prove you're proficient at, say, critical observation? Demonstrating these soft skills may be more difficult than listing concrete accomplishments like \$2 million in sales or a professional certification. But it is possible to persuade hiring managers that you have what they need.

To demonstrate communication skills, for example, start with the obvious. Make sure there are no typos in your resume or cover letter. Beyond that, enhance your communication credibility by writing an accomplishment statement on your resume or cover letter, says Cheryl E. Palmer, president of Call to Career. "Instead of stating, 'great oral and written communication skills,' say, 'conducted presentation for C-level



executives that persuaded them to open a new line of business that became profitable within eight months."

1. Describe your soft skills, which of these skills did you develop or practice for this project and how can you integrate them into future coursework. Include in-class activities, process and product?

#### **Reflection #4**

The purpose of this reflexivity is to help you formulate an online professional identity. In order to do so, you need to formulate a plan and work on shaping and evolving your brand. Articulation of your personalized learning objectives is an important step toward professional growth and independence.

1. Thus far in the course, has your professional image remained the same or has it altered? Explain.
2. Describe your online identity? Do you have a distinct brand identity? If so, define. Have you one in mind that you would like to evolve? Please describe.
3. Have you been able to manage social media effectively to promote professionalism? Provide an example of being able to do so or not able to do so or one for both.
4. What are the challenges that you've encountered during the course regarding social media?

#### **Reflection #5**

Please follow these links to two short articles on branding:

- <http://www.weebly.com/inspiration/brand-personality>
- [http://www.weebly.com/inspiration/brand-without-bragging?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=brand-bragging](http://www.weebly.com/inspiration/brand-without-bragging?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=brand-bragging)

1. Are you comfortable with self-promotion?
2. Can you avoid it?
3. Have you managed to engage in self-promotion during the course?
4. Has it been a positive or negative experience? Explain.

The article states: "We all have stereotyped images of success, such as the consummate professional or the charismatic entrepreneur. But your personal brand should represent your own unique qualities – not what you think other people want to see. It's easier to sell yourself when you're being yourself, so be authentic about who you are. Focus on your strengths and stick to your own style of communication, whether it's writing a weekly blog post for customers or sitting down with a manager to share your successes. Reminding people who need your services about how you can make their jobs easier is a positive message they'll be happy to hear."

5. Are you comfortable with self-promotion?
6. Can you avoid it?
7. Have you managed to engage in self-promotion during the course?
8. Has it been a positive or negative experience? Explain.

The article suggests sticking to the facts: " Self Promotion: How to Brand Without Bragging Picture Creating a personal brand is a great way to share your talents and expertise with both colleagues and customers. But some people are uncomfortable with self-promotion and the idea that it may seem obnoxious to others. So what's the best way to sell yourself without alienating everyone else? Be Authentic We all have stereotyped images of success, such as the consummate professional or the charismatic entrepreneur. But your personal brand should represent your own unique qualities – not what you think other people want to see. It's easier to sell yourself when you're being yourself, so be authentic about who you are. Focus on your strengths and stick to your own style of communication, whether it's writing a weekly blog post for customers or sitting down with a manager to share your successes. Reminding people who need your services about how you can make their jobs easier is a positive message they'll be happy to hear. Stick to the Facts Focus on facts and not interpretation, writes marketing strategist and author Dorie Clark in Harvard Business Review. It's hard to argue with the facts if you say that you have a decade of experience in your field, a passion for what you do, or a certain number of social media followers, says Clark."

9. Do you have any striking facts that you can use to demonstrate your professional expertise? Explain.

Branding: "The Big Five Personality Traits— sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness — are keystones of branding that have been used since 1961. Most brand personalities boil down to one of these basics, impacting customer interaction and emotional connections." The article suggests that you plan for personality and create a voice. The following step falls into the domain of this course: Create a set of identifiers based on a few common design associations: Color – Warm colors are happy and stimulating; cool colors are more relaxed and calm Typography – Serif typefaces are formal and mature; sans serifs (which are used on most websites) are more agreeable and modern Images – Customers connect strongly with photos that include faces; landscapes leave more room for user interpretation Shape – Hard edges are more formal; round elements are casual Space – Open space seems inviting; tightly arranged elements are chaotic"

10. If you were to create a set of identifiers based on this list and your background, what would they look like and how can you or will you integrate these ideas into your portfolio? Explain.

### **Reflection #6**

1. How has publishing course content online and utilizing social media as a course tool shaped your understanding of professionalism? Whether or not you participated fully, you should have achieved some sort of understanding of social media through observation.
2. How has publishing course content online and utilizing social media as a course tool shaped your understanding of shaping an online professional identity? Whether or not you participated fully, you should have achieved some sort of understanding of social media through observation.

3. How has publishing course content online and utilizing social media as a course tool shaped your understanding of writing? Whether or not you participated fully, you should have achieved some sort of understanding of social media through observation.
4. Describe any skills that you acquired during the course and how they might be transferred to other coursework and/or your professional life after graduation?
5. Two-part question: (1) How could the course be improved in terms of its use of social media? I need help with this one:) On one hand, I respect Quebec's privacy laws in place for students, and on the other hand, I am aware that social media is an essential competency for professional work in the field of writing. (2) Did I achieve this balance?
6. Describe how you will move forward professionally in terms of the context of the course, based on what you have accomplished or gained from the course and what you believe you can accomplish in the future.
7. Social media is always the "elephant" in the room. How would you describe its purpose, value, and risks in terms of professionalism and its capacity to promote learning?
8. Once again, your social media identity--- describe your brand and how it has transformed through the course or remained stagnant. Explain what happened? :)
9. What would you like to achieve through social media and how will you go about it? (note your answer can include avoiding it at all costs--- be honest here---) In spite of social media's beneficial attributes, it's important to have a handle on social media due to the inherent risks of its use.

## Phase 4 Instrument

### Contemporaneous Course Evaluation

1. Overall, this course has been...

VG=Very Good, G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor, VP=Very Poor, MD=Missing Data

2. Overall, the instructor has been...

VG=Very Good, G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor, VP=Very Poor, MD=Missing Data

3. Overall, my learning has been...

VG=Very Good, G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor, VP=Very Poor, MD=Missing Data

4. Course outline and syllabus are clear, complete and well explained.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

5. Course materials, text book or readings are useful or relevant.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

6. I have found this course intellectually challenging and stimulating.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

7. The course met the objectives as stated in the course outline. 8. Instructor demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

Instructor demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

9. The instructor's explanations are clear.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

10. The instructor provides feedback in the form of exams and/or assignment g

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly

Disagree, MD=Missing Data

11. Students are encouraged to ask questions.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

12. Students are encouraged to share their ideas and

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

13. The instructor is approachable.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neither agree nor disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, MD=Missing Data

14. Overall, my involvement in this course has been...

++=Well-Above Average, +=Above Average, ±=Average, -=Below Average, --=Well-Below Average, MD=Missing Data

15. What was your level of knowledge of the subject?

VH=Very High, H=High, A=Average, L=Low, VL=Very Low, MD=Missing Data

16. What was your level of interest in the subject prior to taking this course?

VH=Very High, H=High, A=Average, L=Low, VL=Very Low, MD=Missing Data

17. What was your reason for taking the course?

Rq=Required for Major or Specialization, Ele=Elective for Major or Specialization, Mi=Elective or Minor, Ge=General Interest, Fit=Fit into Schedule, MD=Missing Data

### **Follow Up Web Survey**

A follow up survey to the course was distributed to course participants and included the following questions:

1. Select the option that best describes how your professional online identity has altered since completing the course.
  - a. Withered away
  - b. Maintained same level of activity
  - c. Continued to grow my network
  - d. Become a key factor in my professional life
  - e. Become a social media superstar of sorts

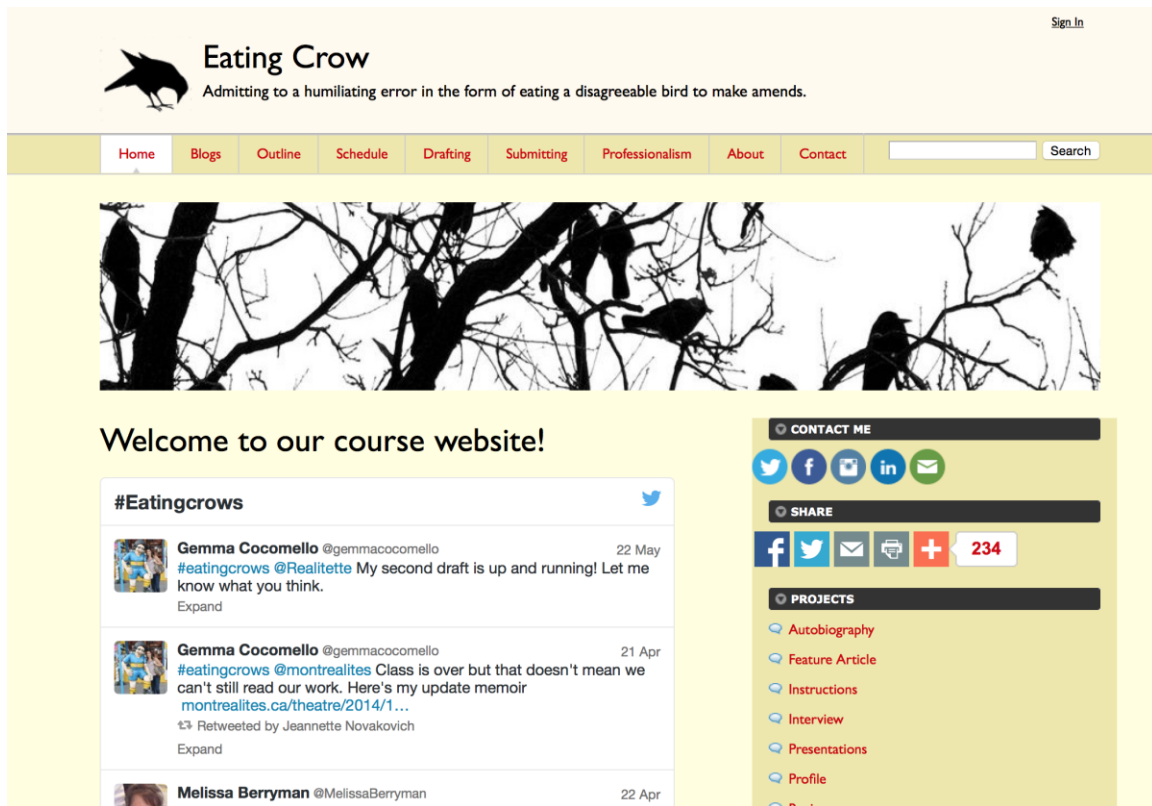
2. If you have a professional online identity, how many hours per week do you spend maintaining your profile and engaging your network?
  - a. I don't have one
  - b. Under one hour
  - c. Under five hours
  - d. Under ten hours
  - e. More than ten hours
  
3. Please rate the value of the social media component of the course, i.e. blogging, portfolio, publishing on Montrealites, and other social media apps, on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest score.    5       4       3       2       1
  
4. Please rate the overall quality of the course, on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest score.    5       4       3       2       1
  
5. Please rate the relevance of the course on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest score.    5       4       3       2       1
  
6. Where are you today professionally in terms of the field of professional communication?
  - a. Working as a professional communicator
  - b. Working at a job that requires communication/writing skills
  - c. Not utilizing professional communication skills
  
7. Since completing the course, have you used social media on the job?    Yes       No
  
8. Since completing the course, have you maintained or started to maintain a professional online identity?    Yes       No
  
9. Select the choice below that best describes your level of online privacy
  - a. Everything is out there; I've got nothing to hide
  - b. I mostly share information with people I know.
  - c. It's a mixed bag; I have a number of online identities
  - d. My profiles are all hidden, only my close friends can see my information.
  
  - e. I avoid participating on social networks.
  
10. Select the answer that best describes your online social media behaviour.
  - a. Maintain a consistent profile across all platforms
  - b. Curate each platform for a specific audience.
  - c. I use a combination of public and private profiles
  - d. On some platforms I have a false identity
  - e. I use a false identity on all social networks
  - f. I avoid social networks
  
11. Select the choice that best describes your online social network behavior
  - a. I mostly consume and read posts
  - b. I mostly share links to interesting or entertaining sites

- c. I mostly create and share original content, not including mixed media, i.e. words
  - d. I mostly create and share original content, involving all forms of media, graphics, words, videos ect.
  - e. I don't go online often
12. What types of professional communication writing do you do on the job, in order of importance?
13. How does your personal identity inform your professional identity?
14. How would you describe your online brand?
15. What measures do you take to safeguard online privacy?
16. If you classify social network profiles for specific purposes, such as personal versus professional, identify the platforms and describe the purpose of each profile and the differences in how you manage them.
17. Name----optional

## **Appendix C: Course Artefacts**



## Course Website



**Eating Crow**  
Admitting to a humiliating error in the form of eating a disagreeable bird to make amends.

Home Blogs Outline Schedule Drafting Submitting Professionalism About Contact Search

Welcome to our course website!

**#Eatingcrows**

**Gemma Cocomello** @gemmacocomello 22 May  
#eatingcrows @Realitette My second draft is up and running! Let me know what you think.  
Expand

**Gemma Cocomello** @gemmacocomello 21 Apr  
#eatingcrows @montrealites Class is over but that doesn't mean we can't still read our work. Here's my update memoir [montrealites.ca/theatre/2014/1...](http://montrealites.ca/theatre/2014/1...)  
Retweeted by Jeannette Novakovich  
Expand

**Melissa Berryman** @MelissaBerryman 22 Apr

**CONTACT ME**

**SHARE** 234

**PROJECTS**

- Autobiography
- Feature Article
- Instructions
- Interview
- Presentations
- Profile
- Reviews

The course website provides the course outline, schedule, assignment sheets, grading rubrics, lecture notes, drafting, submitting, and course announcements. Students were allowed to interact through Twitter posts fed to the course home page via a common hashtag #eatingcrows.

<http://www.eatingcrow.ca>

# E-portfolio Website

Sign In


## Portfolio Remix

Presenting Professional Writing Portfolios from Concordia University, Montreal QC

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Home   Blogs   About the Program   About   Contact

---



### Professional Writing Portfolios

Professional writing is in high demand in today's work environment. The portfolios on this website showcase students who have been trained in business, technical, and other areas of written communication.

**professional writer Jobs in Canada | Indeed.com**

**Digital Content W...**  
Embraces flexible writing styles based on the content goals that are tailored in language and style to the audience (e.g., teens, adults, professional rescuers,...)  
From Canadian Red Cross - 17 Aug 2015 22:08:25 GMT - View all [jobs](#)

---

**Web Content Write...**  
The Web Content Writer will:. Working in Toronto in this key role, the Web Content Writer will be responsible for writing articles and content for the...  
From Guelph/Humber Centre - 19 Aug 2015 18:45:51 GMT - View all [Toronto jobs](#)

---

**Copy Writer / Blo...**  
We encourage students and young professionals to apply and gain valuable experience! The Copy Writer will contribute to the team by crafting press releases and...  
From Indeed - 19 Aug 2015 15:53:15 GMT - View all [Toronto jobs](#)

---

#### BLOGS

- Alix Fraser**  
Entries (22) Comments (101)
- Amanda Marchese**  
Entries (16) Comments (88)
- Andrew Fleet**  
Entries (20) Comments (86)
- Barry**  
Entries (12) Comments (19)
- Carmen Pintea**  
Entries (19) Comments (75)
- Chantal Cloutier**  
Entries (13) Comments (81)
- Danielle Sanderson**  
Entries (11) Comments (15)
- DBlain**  
Entries (16) Comments (31)
- Frankie Johnston**  
Entries (16) Comments (57)


Students will develop process e-portfolios consisting of course projects and weekly blog entries. <http://www.portfolio-remix.com>

## Community Website

# Montréalités


Sharing diverse perspectives on life in Montreal.

- Home
- Arrival
- Habitat
- Eats
- Culture
- Education
- Hype
- Langue
- Justice
- Wellness
- Sports
- Love



### Woman with calla lilies by Ilona Martonfi - Montréalités Words


By Administrator on August 3, 2015 8:11 AM | 0 Comments



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**PAGES**

- About the editor
- Contact Us
- Guidelines for Submissions
- Past Editors



With a readership of 2000 plus monthly visitors, learners had the opportunity to develop a readership within a community of practice. Google Analytics collected readership data that students can use to guide future projects. <http://www.montrealites.com>

## Alternative Elective to Social Media

**Montrealites Editor Project:** Write a proposal for the Editor project and put together a paper portfolio of your work and substitute an "unpublished" project.

**Weblog Project:** Write ten journal entries in a diary form.

**Social Media Project:**

- SMP: Design and print 100 business cards. (keep a formal log)
- SMP: Distribute 100 business cards
- SMP: Collect at least 50 business cards from contacts.
- SMP: Write five thank-you letters to at least five of your new contacts.
- SMP: Write at least ten emails to ten of your new contacts.

**Portfolio Project:** Complete a paper portfolio.

If I missed anything, please let me know.

## **Course artefacts**

Each online course project page included the following multimedia items:

- An introductory image
- A description of the assignment
- Links to relevant examples and resources
- An embedded teaching PPT explaining the project
- A concluding video

## **Course Outline and Projects 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration**

### **Course Outline 2012-2013**

## Texts

*Portfolios for Technical and Professional Communicators*. Herb J. Smith & Kim Haines-Korm. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

*Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Joseph M. Williams & Gregory G. Colomb. Boston: Longman P, 2010.

*White Space is Not Your Enemy: A Beginner's Guide to Communicating Visually through Graphic, Web & Multimedia Design*. Kim Golombisky & Rebecca Hagen. Oxford: Focal Press, 2010.

*Writing for Multimedia and the Web*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Timothy Garrand. Oxford: Focal Press, 2006

## Projects

Autobiographical Essay	50
Presentations	50
Job Application Package	50
Visual Resume	50
Montréalités Editor Part I	50
Profile	50
Interview	50

Instructions	50
Feature Article: Travel/City/Event/Place/Issue	50
Review: Restaurant/Neighborhood/Policy/	50
Montrealites Editor Part 2	50
Social Media Project	50
Weblog	100
Interactive Multimedia	100
Portfolio	100
In-Class Work such as writing exercises/ quizzes/active participation/preparation/ surveys/	100

#### Course Description and Objectives

English 396 is intended for students already in control of the essentials of composition who wish to develop their ability to write effectively for professional purposes. Emphasis is placed on writing for specific audiences within a variety of rhetorical situations and on peer revision and editing in a workshop format. Please visit our course Schedule for weekly meeting details and deadlines.

Students can expect to:

### Course Schedule 2012-2013

Before the Movable Type training course, learners will have read the following texts and completed the following tasks:

*Portfolios for Technical and Professional Communicators.* Herb J. Smith & Kim Haines-Korm. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

*Writing for Multimedia and the Web*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Timothy Garrand. Oxford: Focal Press, 2006.

Schedule:

Date	Topics	Reading	Due
Week 1	Introduction to the Course	<i>Portfolios for</i>	<b>Entry #1: Topic</b>



	<p>Assignments</p> <p>Movable Type Introduced</p> <p>Introduction to Blogging &amp; Designing Portfolios</p> <p>Planning workshop portfolio</p> <p>Introduction to Autobiographical writing</p>	<p><i>Technical and Professional Communicators:</i> Chapters 1-3 and 5-6.</p>	<p><b>Self (In class on Word.doc)</b></p> <p><b>Portfolio Remix membership sign-up.</b></p> <p><b>Sign-in to movable type installation.</b></p>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p>Presentation: Writing for the web.</p> <p>What are the best writing practices for the web.</p>	<p><i>Writing for Multimedia and the Web,:</i> Chapter 2: Writing for many Media</p>	<p><b>Sign-in to movable type installation.</b></p>
<b>Week 3</b>	<p>Introduction to the Job Application Package</p> <p>Resume writing</p> <p>Writing cover letters and memos</p> <p>Complete the planning worksheet</p>	<p><i>Portfolios for Technical and Professional Communicators</i> Chapter 8</p>	<p><b>Entry #2: Topic Work (in class on Word.doc)</b></p> <p><b>Autobiographical writing due (on Word.doc)</b></p> <p><b>Sign-in to movable type installation.</b></p>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p>Draft workshop resume, cover letters and memo</p> <p>Composing a visual resume</p>		<p><b>Draft of résumés, cover letters and memo due (on Word.doc)</b></p> <p><b>Sign-in to movable type installation.</b></p>
<b>Week 5</b>	<p>Presentation Lesson #4 JW Style</p> <p>Write a storyboard for your visual resume</p> <p>Working with</p>		<p><b>Entry #3: People</b></p> <p><b>Verify ability to Sign-in to movable type installation</b></p>

	<p>Sliderocket.com and/or PowerPoint</p> <p><b>Movable Type Introduction</b></p>		<p><b>Introduction to dashboard.</b></p> <p><b>Publish entries on website</b></p>
<b>Week 6</b>	<p>Workshop visual resume</p> <p>Scribd.com - uploading your resume</p> <p>Designing web space</p> <p><b>Movable Type Training Program: 60 minutes</b></p>		<p><b>Draft of Visual Résumé due</b></p> <p><b>Publish autobiography on website's About page</b></p> <p><b>Publish résumé</b></p>
<b>Week 7</b>	<p>Introduce Montrealites</p> <p>Writing informal proposal letters</p> <p>Write a proposal describing what you would like to do as editor of a section of this website. Describe your purpose, audience and goals.</p> <p><b>Movable Type Training Program: 60 minutes</b></p>		<p><b>Job application package due</b></p> <p><b>Change your banner image.</b></p> <p><b>Customize website.</b></p> <p><b>Add social media widgets.</b></p>
<b>Week 8</b>	<p>Presentation Lesson #7 JW Style</p> <p>Writing a profile</p>		<p><b>Montréalités Editor proposal letter due</b></p>

## Autobiography

*If you're going to put your words on public display, it's your job to make that content compelling, intriguing, entertaining or informative. If it's boring... well. Suffice it to say that very few readers are going to be interested. ...That's why your About page has to be just as good as every other piece of content on your site....*James Chartrand, [Five Tips for Writing Your About Page](#).

Write a personal essay for your About Page on your portfolio that analyzes the ways in which a particular experience or series of experiences contributed to your present interest in, understanding of, or attitude toward life. The essay should move beyond a mere recounting of events, but instead should analyze how an experience has shaped your identity. You will also publish this piece on Montrealites, so don't reveal personal details, your goal is to be entertaining and to create a story that embodies some aspect of your life that others were able to relate to.

It's important to find a focus that will anchor your narrative. You may want to think ahead to how you want to use your portfolio:

- Focus on a moment of enlightenment: an event that helped you see some truth about yourself, your family, or the world for the first time.
- Focus on a moment of confrontation with the unknown or with people or situations that tested your values or challenged your identity in some way.
- Focus on a situation where you found yourself included in or excluded from a particular group or community.
- Focus on a moment of conflict between your own experience and conventional wisdom: doing something that couldn't be done, failing or struggling with something described as easy, finding value in something rejected by society.

Don't just stick to your basic credentials, degree and studies. Share some transparency; something unusual that explains how you made it here. Keep it concise and appropriate, make it honest, and tell a good story. Conclude by answering the question, how has this experience shaped your present interests or behaviors?

## Portfolio

More and more employers are asking applicants if they have a website or other web presence that they can access easily. By using material you develop for your traditional résumé and then considering what additional online elements you might use, you can develop a rich alternative for employers who want to see beyond your one-page résumé.

Remember, when you post your resume online, you are creating a "digital tattoo" or impression of yourself. When creating an online Identity, ask yourself the following question: How do you want a potential employer to see you?

### The Benefits of an Online Resume

- Having an online professional presence

- Providing an alternative easy to access resume
- Moving beyond the one-page limitation
- Adding projects
- Distinguishing yourself from the pool
- Matching a name to a face
- Providing links

The following slideshow presents an overview of why you should make a portfolio and how you might want to develop the overall organization:

### **Portfolio Requirements**

The table below describes items that you might want to include in your portfolio.

#### **Designing Your Portfolio:**

- Home page
- Ten blog entries
- Embedded pdf Curriculum Vitae
- Possible projects page with optional screen shots of published work accompanied by brief descriptions and/or pdfs of print projects and any other professional writing project that you've completed
- About page- autobiographical narrative
- Contact page- email information
- Visual design, include images/screenshots (cite the sources of your images/url minimum)
- Consistent font style
- Easy navigation

#### **Procedure**

Step 1: Write a home-page introduction and provide a media event such as a slideshow.

Step 2: Create a narrative biography on your About page.

Step 3: Create a simple Contact page (do not include personal information) .

Step 4: Create a page for your Resume/Embed Pdf using Scribd.com, online hosting service.

#### **Embedding a Pdf File**

1. Save resume file as PDF
2. Scribd.com- open an account
3. Upload PDF to scribd
4. Open the new scribd pdf and select the Share button on Scribd toolbar
5. Select Copy the embed code.
6. Return to your Dashboard for the blogs/Open Manage Page/Resume.
7. Select <A> and paste the embed code
8. Preview the page
9. Save the page

Step 5: Create pages for your e-portfolio.

Step 6: Search Flickr for creative common licensed images to create an attractive and consistent visual argument.

Step 7: Integrate any media projects that you have completed

Note: After generating ideas for your About Page, set to work drafting and polishing, crafting concisely vivid sentences and choosing each word with careful consideration. What impression do you want to create? Consider adding a professional image of yourself. Don't use prom pictures or weird cut outs. And finally, make sure that the overall impression is vibrant and worthy of notice.

Step 8: Write a headline for your resume.

Step 9: You might want to include some of the following information on your website:

- How did you choose your major?
- What is your ideal job?
- What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- What is the most significant project that you have completed?
- What role do you like to play on teams?
- Why should someone hire you?
- How do you approach a difficult project?

Warning! When Creating an Online Identity:

Protect yourself from stalking: minimize information about where you are (personal address) and what you are doing (schedules)

Protect yourself from identity theft (don't offer personal information)

## **Personal Blog**

This assignment requires you to write ten professional blog entries.

Blogs as a genre are more informal and immediate than most other forms of professional writing. The purpose of this assignment is to use that informality, as well as the capacity for linking to a variety of online media and to think reflectively. The goal is to engage more thoroughly with your own discipline and the role writing will have in your professional life. Blogging is your opportunity to join the read/write digital culture of the 21st century. Furthermore, it will enhance your social media skills.

Prompts are meant to be broad and open to interpretation. You will find the topics and due dates on the course schedule.

- Topic 1: Self
- Topic 2: Work
- Topic 3: People
- Topic 4: What do you do best?
- Topic 5: Etiquette
- Topic 6: Ethics
- Topic 7: Faves

- Topic 8: Stories
- Topic 9: Design
- Topic 10: Final Thoughts

### **Creating an Entry**

- Step 1: Brainstorm your topic.
- Step 2: Research online for professional articles relating to your topic. Consider using library databases.
- Step 3: Write a provocative title for your entry, one that will garner positive attention.
- Step 4: Search Flickr for an image that supports and adds interest to your entry.
- Step 5: Download image. Consider saving image with the URL of the Flickr image as the title, so that it were easy to find later when you cite your source.
- Step 6: Upload image to your entry.
- Step 7: Write your entry, making sure to create a smooth and informative link to your image source and other outside conversations and make sure to provide concrete examples.
- Step 8: Consider searching Youtube for a supporting video to add interest and charm.
- Step 9: Embed the video.

### **Notes on Writing for the Internet**

- Structure documents like an upside down triangle  
make big points first  
answers before explanation  
summary before details  
conclusions before discussion
- People don't read whole documents on the web: skimming / browsing are common, so make web documents easy to scan.
- Link to content rather than adding information, this allows readers to choose what they are interested in and builds trust by suggesting that you've done research

### **Grammar / Mechanics**

- Keep paragraphs short (25 to 35 word range)
- Rely on simple sentences (under 20 words)
- Use present tense
- Establish a sense of community with the you and we voice
- Avoid legalese ("the applicant", "the customer").
- Use positive constructions.

**NOTE:** This is a compliance project, if your entry is complete and complies with the above requirements; you will receive an A for the entry. For each item that is missing, you will lose 20%.

## Job Application

Most people obtain jobs through a multi-stage process. First you research the types of jobs you are qualified for and the types of employers you would like to work for. Then you try to convince specific employers to consider you for a job. These days, most employers have too many applicants per job to interview each personally. Employers sort through job application packages (resumes and cover letters) to decide which applicants to consider further. Your first communication with your future employer is likely to be in writing and must persuade him or her to continue the conversation.

For this assignment, you will create:

- One cover letter and tailored resume addressed to a specific prospective employer/internship. The letter should highlight different aspects of your experience relevant to the job listing. The tailored resume may well differ significantly in content or in layout or both from your conventional generic resume. The choices of content and layout should emphasize appropriate experience for a specific job posting.
- A memo addressed to me that reviews what you know about the particular employer, and describes the strategies and tactics you have used to adapt your letter and resume to the specific job posting. I expect you to make good use of the information in this memo in the arguments you present in your cover letter to the employer.

### The Job Application Process

**Step 1:** Know yourself. If you are lost, fill out the [Skills Inventory Worksheet](#).

**Step 2:** Know the job market.

**Step 3:** Know the job application process. Find out how it works in your particular field.

**Step 4:** Design a resume for each specific job listing/situation.

### The Conventional CV

The purpose of the resume is to describe your qualifications for work.

**Content.** Your resume should include contact information and relevant details of your educational training, professional training, special accomplishments, and skills. A resume is not a life history. The goal is to argue that you are qualified for a particular type of job and that you would be a capable, responsible, and personable employee who communicates effectively.

**Format.** Your format may be traditional or innovative as long as it is appropriate and as long as the information is highly accessible and is organized in a way that highlights the most important items--from the employer's perspective.

**Style.** Your style should be fairly formal. You need not use complete sentences, but you should use a concise, active style and show consistency in expression from section to section.

### **Cover Letter**

While your resume is addressed to any employer with a certain type of job opening, the cover letter is most effective when tailored to a particular employer. The purpose of the cover letter is to persuade that specific employer to grant you an interview. The tailored resume may well differ significantly in content or in layout or both from your standardized one-size-fits-all resume format. The choices of content and layout should emphasize appropriate experience for a specific job posting. Just as you appreciate being treated as an individual rather than as a statistic, so does an employer. Are you applying hit-or-miss to every company in the country? Or have you invested some effort into finding a company that you are well suited for?

### **Writing a Cover Letter**

**Content and Organization.** The opening of your letter should establish why you are writing to your reader. Be explicit about the fact that you are looking for a particular kind of job and explain why you would like to work at that particular company. Preview the body of the letter by stating your major qualifications for the job. The body of the letter develops each qualification with specific evidence. The goal is to show the reader both that you know what that specific company needs and that you have what it takes. You may organize this section in various ways: around your training and experience, around what the job or the company requires, or some other way. The letter should close by inviting a response.

**Style.** Cover letters are difficult to write because they aim at somewhat conflicting goals. On the one hand, you want to make a good first impression. So you want to sound polite and fairly formal. On the other hand, you want to stand out from the crowd--otherwise, why should the employer hire you rather than any of the other applicants? The best policy is probably to talk to your reader as directly and naturally as possible. Avoid hype.

**Format.** Use a conventional business letter format. Be brief: if possible, stick to one page.

### **Cover Memo**

Write a brief memo (no more than one page, single-spaced) addressed to me that will help me read, understand, evaluate, and "coach" your resume and cover letter. The memo must contain a job description and audience analysis, as well as a commentary highlighting how you adapted your resume and cover letter to the job. You should look over it carefully at the very end to make sure that it tells me "how to read" your resume and cover letter.

### **Writing a Memo**



Use the following outline for your memo: To: From: Subject: Date: The purpose of this memo.... Heading: Job Description Heading: Audience Analysis  
Heading: Rhetorical Analysis Heading: Recommendation

**Job Description.** You may base your job description on job listings that you find in a professional or trade journal, on the Internet, or in other resources on campus at Career Services. You may also write for a summer job, an internship, or for a scholarship or other award. Note that you must hand in copies of the job ad you use.

**Audience Analysis.** Investigate the particular company you are applying to. You may obtain information on the company from the library, on the Internet, from Career Services, or other places. You may also contact the personnel office of the company directly. Then write one or two paragraphs that specify any special qualities or experience that this company may be looking for in its employees. For example, suppose you are applying for a job as a chemical engineer. A small company may be looking for an engineer who can work on a variety of projects, while another may be looking specifically for someone who has experience with polymers. This is also the place to describe anything you know about the particular person you are writing to.

**Note:** I expect you to make extensive use of this information in your cover letter. It might also have a big impact on the organization and choice of details in your resume.

**Rhetorical Analysis.** Describe how you will adapt your resume and cover letter for its particular type of job, company, and reader and why you will make those changes. Normally, your reasons were closely related to the information in the job description and audience analysis.

When the assignment is complete, you will need to post a PDF copy of your resume and job application to your Portfolio.

### **Standards for Correctness**

Employers impose strict standards of correctness on application materials: An error is the equivalent of a bad spot on your shirt. Accordingly, I will mark this assignment on a somewhat stricter scale than usual. If any letter or resume contains more than two typographical or grammatical errors, I reserve the right to fail the entire package.

- [Planning Worksheet](#)
- [Draft Worksheet Cover Letter and Tailored Resume](#)
- [Grading Rubric](#)

### **Visual CV**

For the most part, a digital story blends 21<sup>st</sup> century media culture with traditional narrative in a short 30 second to 5 minute video or slideshow to evoke thought, feeling and perhaps even empathy. Ultimately, it helps us connect. If we can create a memory of who we are at this time in our lives that raises awareness above the thin layer of the page, we might move people to value our progress and path as much as our final product. Adding the digital story to the online resume creates an awareness of being,

rather than simply of having been. It engages the world by producing a new way for us to talk about ourselves, our lives and our dreams. For this project, you were creating a digital story of your life, a somewhat intimate insider's portrayal of how you live.

Why make a **visual resume**? Almost every employer requires a cv, but creating a visual CV can help you stand out and land a job. More employers are seeking to know a potential employee on a personal level and visual resumes can give employers this insight.

**Digital storytelling** combines video, images, music, and spoken word to tell a story in a short video.

Digital storytelling focuses on seven elements:

- Point of view
- Dramatic Question
- Voice
- Pacing
- Soundtrack
- Economy
- Emotional Content

The best digital stories are at once both personal and universal.

### **Step 1: Decide on the Story You Want to Tell**

Compose a story about what you do, a place in your life, an event in your life, or about someone important.

### **Step 2: Begin Writing Your Script**

Sketch out a script that you'll record with your own voice. Resist the temptation to take the easy way out and create a story with only images and music. People want to hear a personal voice. Don't be self-conscious about how your voice sounds; we all think we sound odd on tape.

Draft a short script. That's where many people get bogged down. Get past the fear of committing words to paper.

### **Step 3: Create a Storyboard**

Professionals have used storyboards for decades to plot out the sequences of events that unfold in a movie, TV show, cartoon, or commercial. This is where you'll plot out your visual materials to make them align with your voice-over.

A storyboard is simply a place to plan out a visual story on two levels: 1) Time -- What happens in what order? and 2) Interaction -- How does the voiceover and music work with the images or video?

A good rule of thumb is to use no more than 15 images and no more than two minutes of video. As a general rule, four to six seconds is the ideal time for an image to appear on-screen.

#### **Step 4: Gather Your Materials**

#### **Step 5: Prep Your Equipment**

#### **Step 6: Digitize Your Media**

You can begin this process earlier, but be aware that the production work involved in creating a short personal story can take many, many hours. Set aside enough time to do it right.

If you're using old photos, you'll need a flatbed scanner. Scan them and save them to a single folder on your computer. If you're using digital photos, make sure they're in JPEG format.

#### **Step 7: Record a Voice-Over**

You may decide that the microphone built into your laptop or desktop computer will suffice for recording your narration.

Many software programs are available to capture audio from an external sound source like a microphone. The free, open-source program [Audacity](#) can capture sound from either a computer's built-in mike or an external microphone.

Above all, speak slowly in a conversational voice. Don't make it sound like you're reading from a script.

#### **Step 8: Add Music**

Choose music that evokes the rhythm and pace of your story. For many people, this is the easiest part of the process. Most of us have soundtracks running in our heads that reflect the mood of the story we want to convey. The most effective tracks are often instrumental: classical, ambient, folk or jazz, with no vocals.

#### **Step 9: Edit Your Story**

Make sure you have all the elements of your story in your video-editing program. If you haven't done so already, import all images, video, your voice-over, and musical elements.

Next, bring the images or videos down into the timeline to match the layout of your storyboard.

It's time to create an initial rough cut before adding transitions or special effects. The draft version gives you an overview of your project and spotlights areas where images or video are insufficient to carry the story.

Next, add titles to the beginning and end of your story. You may also want to overlay text onto an image or video.

Next, add transitions -- a simple cross-dissolve generally works best -- and altering the length of each visual element to make sure it corresponds properly with the voice-over. Often, storytellers find that the "Ken Burns effect" on a Mac is a good way to add visual

interest to an image, panning across and zooming into a photo to highlight an expression or important element.

Expect to spend a few hours editing your story to get it just right. Don't overproduce: often the spontaneity and directness of the initial drafts get lost with too much polishing.

### **Step 10: Share Your Story**

When you've completed your video, upload it to a video hosting service and publish it to your portfolio.

In addition to telling the story of your passion or interest in your studies and future career, videos or slideshows must fulfill the following guidelines:

- Be 30 seconds to 10 minutes in length.
- Be made in as high a quality as you can.
- Contain original work, creative commons licensed material, public domain material or permission to use copyright protected material

### **Presentations**

For this assignment, you were presenting one chapter from Joseph Williams' *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* or Kim Golombisky & Rebecca Hagen's *white space is not your enemy*. Each student were assigned one chapter.

This assignment requires the following items:

- Produce a thirty-minute oral and visual presentation on your assigned chapter
- Integrate at least four challenging exercises
- 

The following example uses SlideRocket.com. Consider using Slideshares or Prezi to host your presentation. The presentation will take you several hours to complete. Don't wait until the last minute. No late presentations without a medical note were allowed.

### **Original Social Media Project**

For this project, you were required to complete the following items:

- Capture a before and after screen shot of your name's Google search results 3 times during the semester:
  - Beginning
  - Middle
  - End
- Sign up with at least three social media websites and create profiles, engage followers and make social connections (Foursquare, Twitter and LinkedIn).
- Set up metric tools for your portfolio to measure site traffic (Google analytics or sitemeter).
- Measure your overall efforts
- Write a memo to me summing up the experience

### **Identify Goals**

Think about whether reach, reputation or engagement is your goal.

Write down *specific* objectives related to your social media efforts. For example, a goal could be to get more social media mentions of your blog, increase readership, or build reputation. Goals encourage you to be efficient and focused with your social media efforts.

In any case, the first step is to Google search your name in quotes "Your Name" and screen capture your Google results.

Screen-capture your web presence at the start of the project, midway through the course and capture the results one last time before you hand in the social media assignment (include all three screen shots).

Set up Google alerts for your name

### Establish Credibility

Create a consistent social media identity. Include the same picture, credentials, and URLs for your ids. Sites can include LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, FourSquare, YouTube, Vimeo, Google Profile, SlideShare, Delicious, Digg, Reddit, or any website of your choice with the exception of Facebook.

Find influentials on social media sites.

Listen. Each topic and application has its own culture.

Interact with others users. Focus on becoming part of the read-write web.

### Social Media Monitoring

Search social media monitoring sites for mentions:

- [Addcitomatic](#) Look up your twitter id and full name in quotes
- [Google Alerts](#) Set up an alert for your name or blog in quotes
- [SocialMention](#) Tracks mentions related to your name

Set up metric tools:

- [TweetStats](#). Provide your average tweets per month.
- [Sitemeter](#) (Traffic analyzer). Track your blog site traffic
- [Google Analytics](#) Provide the visitor number for each month.
- [Feedburner](#) Provide the number of people who subscribe to your blog via RSS.

### Measure Efforts

Beginning of project:

Social Media	Followers/ Connections	Number and types of Posts	# of Responses to posts
Linked-In			

Twitter			
Choice			

Middle of project:

Social Media	Followers/ Connections	Number and types of Posts	# of Responses to posts
Linked-In			
Twitter			
Choice			

End of project:

Social Media	Followers/ Connections	Number and types of Posts	# of Responses to posts
Linked-In			
Twitter			
Choice			

### **Monitoring Social Reputation Building**

Where do you best fit in terms of social media reputation building and why?

Which applications did you most enjoy?

What are your social media goals?

Which applications serve your goals best?

How will social media influence your career?

Why is relationship building important?

How is online content different than offline?

What were your perceptions before and after this assignment?

<b>Social Media</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Linked-In # of connections</b>		10	5	1
<b>Linked-In completion/content</b>		100%	50%	25%
<b>Recommendations</b>		2	1	0
<b>Twitter # of Followers/connections</b>		50	25	0
<b>Numbers and types of Tweets</b>		25	10	0
<b>Social feedback from followers/friends</b>		5	3	0
<b>Choice # of Followers/connections</b>		10	5	0
<b>Choice: #'s interaction/badges</b>		5	2	0
<b>Choice: Social feedback followers/friends</b>		5	3	0
<b>Include 3 Screenshots of process</b>		3	2	0
<b>Includes a memo with a summary and analysis of the experience</b>				

## Montrealites Editor Project 1

For this project, you will write a formal proposal letter seeking my approval for the Montréalités Editor Project. The proposal is the first document in a sequence leading up to the end-of-year completion of the course. As an editor of a section of Montrealites of your choosing, you will develop a number of projects. After your proposal has been approved, complete the Montrealites Editor Bio information and send it to me. After you have completed and turned in the proposal and bio, you will receive a grade for part 1 of the Montréalités Editor Project.

The sequence of projects that you will complete as editor will include the following works:

- Profile
- Interview
- Instruction set
- Feature article
- Review
- Interactive web project
- Manage social media interaction

When writing the proposal, think of me as someone who wants to be sure that you are choosing a project that you actually want to do and one in which you can do a good job. What you were describing in your proposal is your vision. I need to be convinced that this project is important and that you have the ability to run it.

### Proposal Format

The format of this assignment should be that of a formal business letter. Protocols for business letter composition are provided below. Select your information and organize it in such a way that it is persuasive and accessible. Include the following items:

- **An introduction** that tells me why you are writing.
- **A section on the Website**, including an explicit well-developed mission statement.
- **A description of the section of Montrealites** that you want to take over or establish, describing your plans for researching the subject matter and developing your section. Convince me that you know what kind of information you'll need and where to find it.
- **A description of your goals** for this project
- **A discussion of your credentials.** Convince me that you have the background and resources necessary to conduct your research.
- **A schedule.** Convince me that you know what activities your research will require and that you can get them done on time.
- **A conclusion** that formally requests permission to proceed.



You should probably begin your letter by convincing me that a significant need exists that calls for the website section or revision that you propose. In short, how will your section increase web traffic? After you have convinced me of a need for your work, include a detailed description of your work plan.

Convince me that this plan for research is the right path and that the time exists in this semester to do the work well.

This work plan must also be plotted with time; you must indicate what work you were doing during each of the weeks left in the semester.

Format as a letter:

- Use block style.
- Employ headings and lists to render your information readily accessible

### Further Resources

Explore the following Web sites for further information on this lesson's topic:

- "[Short Course" on proposal writing \(from The Foundation Center\)](http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html) <<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html>>
- "[Ideas are a Dime a Dozen, So Why Should I Listen to Yours? 'Pitching' Your Ideas So That They Were Heard](http://www.stc.org/confproceed/2000/PDFs/00049.PDF)" <http://www.stc.org/confproceed/2000/PDFs/00049.PDF>
- Image source: [Flickr](#).

### Creating your Montréalités Editor Bio

Paste your info in the highlighted areas of the text box below. When you have completed the task, publish it to your process portfolio.

- Yellow highlight: upload a picture and copy a link to its location.
- Green highlight: substitute your name.
- Blue highlight: copy the url of your LinkedIn profile page.
- Purple highlight: copy the url of your portfolio page.
- Red highlight: substitute your Twitter id.
- Blue highlight: a mini version of your autobiography

```
<a href="http://www.montrealites.ca/Screenshot%202011-01-29%20at%2010.33.27%20PM.png"></a> Jeannette Novakovich<br /> <a href="http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=82928836&trk=tab_pro"> </a><a
```

href="http://www.jnovakovich.com/"></a><a href="http://www.twitter.com/Realitette"></a><p class="MsoNormal"><a href="http://www.twitter.com/Realitette"><br /></a></p>

Add text for your bio here.

## Montrealites Editor Project 2

For this part of the project, you were acting as editor of a section of Montréalités. In this capacity, you will publish a number of projects, measure and record Google Analytics of your published work, and integrate an active social media presence on the web, including, Twitter microblogs, Facebook updates, and a Pinterest board.

### Profile

This assignment will give you practice composing a descriptive and informative essay about a particular person (image source [Flickr](#)).

In an essay of approximately 800 to 1000 words, compose a profile of an individual whom you will interview in a follow-up project. The person may be either well-known in the community (a politician, a local media figure, the owner of a popular night spot) or relatively anonymous (a Red Cross volunteer, a server in a restaurant, a school teacher or college professor). The person should be someone of interest (or potential interest) not only to you but also to readers of Montréalités.

The purpose of this essay is to convey--through close observation and factual investigation--the distinct qualities of an individual.

### Composing Strategies

**Getting Started.** One way to prepare for this assignment is to read some engaging character sketches. Look at recent issues of any magazine that regularly publishes interviews and profiles.

**Choosing a Subject.** Give some serious thought to your choice of a subject. Remember that you're not at all obliged to choose a person who's socially prominent or who has had an obviously exciting life. Your task is to bring out what's interesting about your subject--no matter how ordinary this individual may at first appear.

Keep in mind, however, that the present occupation of your subject may be inconsequential; the focus of the profile may instead be on your subject's involvement in some notable experience in the past.

### Writing a Profile Template

A profile isn't a biography. It isn't a recounting of a person's work history. It's a story about some interesting aspect of a person's life.

### **Key elements**

***An interesting lead.*** You need to hook the reader right away. Try to capture the reader's attention and then keep it.

***Lively quotes.*** The reader needs to know you were there. You interviewed your subject. This isn't some second-hand story taken from a press release or a web site.

***Anecdotes.*** Funny, sad, touching or dramatic anecdotes will boost your story's appeal. Profile stories should entertain and inform.

***Perspective.*** What makes your subject worth a profile? If you are profiling a hairdresser, what made you pick this hairdresser? What makes your profile subject special? You should give your reader a clue high in the story why you are doing the profile. Sometimes it's because a subject is exceptionally interesting. Sometimes it's because the person has suddenly been thrust into the news.

***Background.*** You don't need to tell your subject's entire life story, but give some idea of the person's journey.

***Color.*** Some description of your subject. What does he or she look like?

***A logical flow.*** Add transitions between paragraphs when needed.

***Another point of view.*** Interviews with at least two people who know your subject are required. These will help enrich your profile. Keep in mind that profiles aren't necessarily puff pieces. Just because you are writing about someone doesn't mean you work for the person or are the person's public relations agent. What matters is that you try to tell the truth. Your story should have balance. If a politician with a supposedly spotless record turns out to be a child molester - and you have some evidence or proof - then that's your story.

***Depth.*** Profiles sometimes take on an investigative nature. Some reporters are known to do dozens of interviews for in-depth profiles of a single person. That's not what I'm expecting for this assignment, of course. But you should know that profiles should not be single-source stories. You shouldn't just take your subject's word on everything he or she says and leave it at that. You should try to bring some depth to your story.

***News and timeliness.*** Profile a subject with some connection to news stories or controversial issues.

### **Interview**

For this assignment, you were following up your profile with an interview. (Image source: [Flickr](#))

## Interviewing a Subject

- Before the interview, make a list of questions to ask your subject
- Get people talking. Learn to ask questions that will elicit answers about what is most interesting or vivid in their lives.
- Take notes during the interview. If you have trouble keeping up with your subject, just say, "Hold it a minute, please," and write until you catch up.
- Use a combination of direct quotations and summaries. "If the speaker's conversation is ragged, . . . the writer has no choice but to clean up the English and provide the missing links. . . . What's wrong . . . is to fabricate quotes or to surmise what someone might have said."
- To get the facts right, remember that you can call [or revisit] the person you interviewed.

**Drafting.** Your first rough draft may simply be a transcript of your interview. Next, supplement these remarks with descriptive and informative details based on your observations and research.

**Revising.** In moving from transcripts to profile, you face the task of how to focus your approach to the subject. Attend to key details, incidents, and experiences. Let your readers know what your subject looks like and sounds like. Build your essay on quotations from your subject as well as factual observations and other informative details.

**Editing.** In addition to the usual strategies that you follow when editing, examine all the direct quotations in your profile to see if any could be shortened without sacrificing significant information. By eliminating one sentence from a three-sentence quotation, for instance, your readers may find it easier to recognize the key point that you want to get across.

### Tips:

- Before your interview, learn all you can about your subject.
- Google your subject.
- Bring a list of questions to the interview.
- Discover what makes your subject newsworthy.
- Develop a theme.
- Dress appropriately.
- Establish a rapport with your subject.

### Guidelines:

- Find a subject from Montreal or of interest to Montreal readers.
- Interview in person or by phone or by email.
- Obtain a photograph of your subject.
- Make subject aware that your story will appear online.
- Include your subject's first and last name, job title or occupation, age and location.
- Talk to and quote at least two other sources who are knowledgeable about your subject.
- Use 10-point type, single-spaced Optima font.
- Provide an element of news, timeliness or human interest.
- Include quotes.

- Signed consent form.

License and Release Forms

[Montrealites.docx](#)

## **Instructions**

Instruction sets are common documents for many disciplines and occupations. The main goal when producing an instruction set is to create easy to follow directions.

Keep this in mind when you produce this assignment. Your objective were to create a professional instruction set for Montréalités in the form of written instructions and a comic strip. The comic strip is the essence of concise visual writing. Thus, for this project, I would like for you to produce a project that adapts an instruction set to the conventions and aesthetics of a comic strip.

To complete this assignment, you will complete a written instruction set and create a minimum of a ten-frame or ten-step comic strip for Montrealites based on the theme: "Montrealites Guide to Survival". The comic strip does not have to be humorous; instead, it needs to illustrate and make a point about something important in Montreal.

## **Objectives**

- To adapt technical information to reach a larger audience
- To gain expertise creating an argument that is largely visual.
- To understand the basics of typography and color choices when designing documents

Be sure to put a title and your name in the text box above the comic strip. Feel free to use the online comic strip maker: [Pixton Comics](#).

montrealites@montrealites.ca  
montrealites  
montrealites/fluffy

## **Procedure**

You will develop a set of instructions advising users on how to perform a specific task that one can complete in Montréal.

## **Guidelines**

- Choose something you are very familiar with and that is related to your section of Montréalités
- Ideally, your audience should be someone who has never performed this task before.
- Your audience should have a general understanding of the topic area.

- Choose a task with an appropriate level of difficulty--neither too easy nor too hard to explain in the space allotted.
- The task may involve a some type of process (e.g., applying to a university).
- The process should have discrete parts or steps that are fairly easy to name and refer to.

## Topics

Here are some topics that you might want to choose for your project:

- How to park downtown Montreal
- How to bake a three-layer chocolate fudge cake
- How to register your car
- How to break a lease
- How to speak Quebecois
- How to choose a night club

## Rhetorical Situation

Before you begin to write, consider the rhetorical situation for your instructions. Use the planning worksheet to help you determine the purpose, audience, context, and content for your instructions. Note, people have unique ways of learning. Take the [Vark Questionnaire](#) to learn about your style of learning. Next, consider how your audience might best learn. Consider the following video and reflect on the type of instruction that would be most effective for this computer user.

Depending on the nature of your task, you may wish to include some or all of the following contents.

What your instructions should include:

- An overview of the steps needed to complete the task
- Definitions of terms or concepts they need to know before they proceed
- Cautions or warnings that apply to the task as a whole
- A sense of how long the task will take
- Where they should perform the task
- List of materials or ingredients needed.
- List of steps in chronological order.
- Each step should include a diagram, drawing, photograph, or figure.
- Include captions for each illustration or figure.

Additional Guidelines for Designing an Instruction Set

- Make sure you use the imperative mood. ("Attach the red wire.")
- Phrase each step clearly and concisely.
- Provide "feedback" that informs the reader what will happen after they complete each step.
- Include warnings or cautions before readers encounter the problems.
- Break long lists into sections with appropriate sub-headings.
- Make sure sub-headings and steps are phrased in parallel form.

- Include troubleshooting tips.
- Provide a glossary of key terms and definitions.

## **Organization**

Instructions are normally organized in a chronological order. Beyond that, here are some other guidelines:

- Provide a clear hierarchy of headings and subheadings.
- Well-chosen fonts.
- Numbered lists and bulleted lists, where appropriate. Know the difference. Make sure bullets and numbering are consistently formatted. Do not number or bullet lists with fewer than two items.
- An appropriate amount of white space--neither too much nor too little.
- Effective use of alignment. Centered alignment may make it harder for users to skim headings and sub-headings; left alignment or indentations can be more effective for this.
- Effective use of contrast. Too much contrast means that nothing stands out; too little makes it hard for users to find what they need. Consider emphasizing elements like headings, key words, and warnings.
- Consistently used design features. Decide which fonts, font sizes, and forms of emphasis you will use and apply them consistently.
- Length should be about 2 pages single-spaced.

You will produce a traditional instruction set and a comic strip one. The traditional instruction set must be complete and include an introduction, steps, and brief conclusion.

## **Feature Article**

A special interest article for Montréalités focuses on the people, places, events, inventions, industries, and other elements that have shaped Montreal. In terms of style, they approximate a magazine article more than anything else. Content is meant to engage the reader. They should also be well-researched; books, journal articles, first-hand reporting, even internet sources used judiciously.

### **Writing Feature Articles**

For this project, you were writing a feature article. This type of article differs from a straight news story in one respect - its intent. A news story provides information about an event, idea or situation. The feature does a bit more - it may also interpret news, add depth and color to a story, instruct or entertain.

### **Writing the Introduction**

- Step 1: Introduce the topic without giving away the focus of the article immediately and provide a small scope of what it's about with an interesting hook.
- Step 2: Name the topic and write a sentence or two establishing its significance and where to find it.
- Step 3: State why this topic should interest the reader beyond local interest.
- Step 4: Create a segue to the definition of topic.

- Step 5: Define topic.
- Step 6: Give an extensive explanation of the event, invention, place, etc. (about a paragraph long).
- Step 7: Give enough information to give the reader an understanding of where the article is going.

### **History**

- How did it start? Or where did the first idea come from?
- Describe the necessary steps taken for this idea to evolve into the finished product, while giving dates and naming the most important contributors.

### **Cultural Significance**

- What sets it apart from others like it?
- Impact on society or its importance?
- Who or what has it influenced?
- Relevance today?
- Do we still see it today? If not, what remnants are visible?

### **Conclusion**

- Should be catchy, upbeat (if appropriate)

### **Captions**

- Make sure picture is linked to the content of the article
- Ask yourself, "Why is this picture important above all others?"
- Describe picture like you are curator of a museum. For example, "Here we see \_\_\_\_\_." But not so blatant.
- Try to include dates.
- Describe in a sentence the action of the picture...detail about the subject.

### **Titles**

- Intriguing titles are best
- Subtitles can be useful

### **Points to Keep in Mind**

- Focus on human interest - Don't think about writing a science story - think about writing a human-interest story.
- Be clear about why you are writing the article. Is it to inform, persuade, observe, evaluate, or evoke emotion?
- Write in the active voice.
- Accuracy is important.
- Keep your audience clearly in mind - what really matters to them?



- Avoid clichés - especially at the end of your article.
- Interviews for features usually need to be in-depth and in person rather than over the phone - this enables you to add in color and detail.
- Use anecdotes and direct quotes to tell the story -
- Talk to more than one person to provide a more complete picture
- Three to five sentence paragraphs are best. The articles were published using the one-column format.

### **Interactive Web Project**

For this assignment, you will produce an interactive web project for your section of Montrealites showcasing all that you have learned this semester. Strive to go beyond a simple linear click and read interaction. Your project should have a clear purpose and design. Consider working with members of the class and create interactivity between sections of Montrealites.

A key component of this project involves writing. This project should include at least five web pages of articles/reviews/features/instructions/profiles and so forth. It should include a minimum **3000-word count**.

The final component of the project is Interactivity, engaging your readers by seeking input from them or by simply providing an interactive element, which might include all, some or one of the following items:

- Image slide shows (not PPT!)
- Map widgets (Google)
- Tool widgets (calculators)
- Multiple web page interactions
- Parallel narratives
- Type of gaming puzzle that leads users through the an exploration of Montréal or Montréalités, using a kind of Nancy Drew gaming platform with icons, menu, and limited interaction.
- Videos
- Quizzes
- Form widgets
- Survey widgets

## **Course Outline and Project Revisions 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration**

**Course outline 2013-2014**

**Texts**

*Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Joseph M. Williams & Gregory G. Colomb. Boston: Longman P, 2010.

*white space is not your enemy: a beginner's guide to communicating visually through graphic, web & multimedia design.* kim golombisky & rebecca hagen. Oxford: Focal Press, 2010.

*Optional Text: Writing for Multimedia and the Web*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Timothy Garrand. Oxford: Focal Press, 2006

**Projects**

<b>Autobiographical Essay</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Presentations</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Job Application Package</b> <b>Visual Resume</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Montréalités Editor Part I</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Profile</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Interview</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Instructions</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Feature Article:</b> <b>Travel/City/Event/Place/Issue</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Review: Restaurant/Neighborhood/Policy/</b>	<b>100</b>

Montrealites Editor Part 2	100
Social Media Project	100
Weblog	100
Interactive Multimedia	100
Portfolio	100
Attendance including: In-Class Work such as writing exercises/ quizzes/active participation/preparation/ surveys/draft workshops/ you must stay until the end of class. If you finish your early, work on social media. If you leave early, you will get no credit.	500

### Course Schedule 2013-2014

Date	Topics	Reading	Due
Week 1	<p>Introduction to the Course</p> <p>Social media and technology survey</p> <p>Introduction to autobiographical writing</p> <p>Lesson #1 JW Style</p>	JW Lesson #1 Style	Entry #1: Self
Week 2	<p>Presentation Lesson #2 JW</p> <p>Draft workshop autobiography</p> <p>Creating SlideRocket/Prezi</p>	JW Lesson #2 Style	<p>Rough draft autobiographical writing</p> <p>Sign up for presentations</p>
Week 3	<p>Presentation Lesson #3 JW</p> <p>Introduction to the Job Application</p> <p>Resume writing</p> <p>Writing cover letters and memos</p>	<p>JW Lesson #3 Style</p> <p>Portfolios: 5-6</p>	<p>Rough draft autobiographical writing</p> <p>Entry #2: Work</p>

Week 4	Complete the planning worksheet		
	Presentation WS: What is design?	WS: What is design?	Autobiographical writing due
	Draft workshop resume, cover letters and memo	WMW: Chapter 2: Writing for many Media	Draft of resumes, cover letters and memo due
	Introduction to blogging		
	Composing a visual resume		
Week 5	Write a storyboard for your visual resume		
	Presentation WS: Mini Art School	WS: Mini Art School	Storyboard of Visual resume due
	Workshop visual resume	Portfolios: Chapters 1-3 and 8	
	Introduction to portfolios and completion of portfolio planning workshop		
	Introduction to Social media		
Week 6	Social media linking and drafting: Twitter, Pinterest Linked-In, Yelp, Four-Square		
	Lesson #4 JW Style	JW Lesson #4 Style	Portfolio

	Designing web space		workshop
	Publishing entries		Publish entries
Week 7	<p>Presentation Lesson #5 JW</p> <p>Introduce Montrealites</p> <p>Writing informal proposal letters</p> <p>Write a proposal describing what you would like to do as editor of a section of the website. Describe your purpose, audience and goals.</p> <p>Feel free to invent a new section or work on an existing one.</p>	JW Lesson #5 Style	Job application and Visual Resume due
Week 8	<p>Presentation Lesson #6 JW</p> <p>Writing a profile and complete planning workshop for profile and interview projects</p>	JW Lesson #6 Style	<p>Montrealites Editor proposal letter due</p> <p>Entry #3: People</p>
Week 9	Presentation Lesson #7 JW	JW Lesson #7 Style	Draft of profile due

	Lecture interviewing		
Week 10	<p>Presentation Lesson #8 JW</p> <p>Workshop profile and interview question drafts</p>	JW Lesson #8 Style	<p>2<sup>nd</sup> draft of profile due</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> draft of interview questions</p> <p>Entry #4: Topic What do you do best?</p>
Week 11	<p>Presentation WS: Color Basics</p> <p>Writing instructions for the web</p> <p>Planning worksheet</p>	WS: Color Basics	<p>Profile due</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> draft interview due.</p>
Week 12	<p>Presentation WS: What You Don't Know About Type</p> <p>Test during class (may involve field trips)</p>	WS: What You Don't Know About Type	<p>2<sup>nd</sup> draft interview due.</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> draft instructions due</p>
Week 13	WS: Step Away from the Computer?	WS: Step Away from the Computer?	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft instruction set due in form of



	<p>Integrating Montrealites and <a href="#">social media writing</a>.</p> <p>Publishing on Montrealites</p> <p>Editor bios</p>		<p>comic strip.</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> draft social media project due</p>
Week 14	<p>Presentation Lesson # 9 JW</p> <p>Etiquette</p> <p>Introduction to writing feature articles</p>	JW Lesson # 9 Style	Entry #5: Topic Etiquette
Week 15	<p>Presentation Lesson #10 JW</p> <p>Ethics</p> <p>Workshop feature articles</p>	JW Lesson #10 Style	<p>Entry #6: Topic Ethics</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> draft feature article due</p>
Week 16	<p>Presentation WS: What is a grid?</p> <p>Workshop feature articles</p> <p>Writing reviews</p>	WS: What is Grid and When Do I Need One?	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft feature article due
Week 17	<p>Presentation WS: I Need to Design Today</p> <p>Draft workshop review</p>	<p>WS: I Need to Design Today</p> <p>WMW: Chapter 1: Interactivity and the Writer</p>	<p>Entry #7: Topic Faves</p> <p>Feature article due</p>

Week 18			1 <sup>st</sup> draft of review due
	Presentation WS: Layout Sins	WS: Layout Sins	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft review due
	Draft workshop review	WMW: Chapter 5: Script and Proposal Formatting	
	Introduction to Interactive Web		
	Project: Digital Storytelling	WMW Chapter 8: Informational Multimedia and Web Architecture	
	Planning worksheet		
Week 19	Presentation WS: Some Format and Composition Issues	WS: Some Format and Composition Issues	Review due
	Creating a concept map	WMW: Chapters 3, 4, & 6	Interactive multimedia project proposal due.
	Creating a storyboard		
Week 20	Presentation Lesson #11 JW	Lesson #11 JW	Entry #8: Topic Stories
	Draft workshop	WMW: Chapters 17 How to Write Nonnarrative Informational Multimedia	Draft workshop concept map and storyboard
		WMW: Chapter	

		18 Interactive Multimedia Narrative and Linear Narrative	
<b>Week 21</b>	<p>Presentation Lesson #12 JW</p> <p>Designing web space</p> <p>Workshop interactive web project</p> <p>Portfolio workshop</p>	Lesson #12 JW	<p>Entry #9 Design</p> <p>First piece of interactive project due-- introductory entry.</p>
<b>Week 22</b>	<p>Presentation WS: Adding Visual Appeal</p> <p>Workshop interactive web project</p>	WS: Adding Visual Appeal	<p>Second piece of interactive multimedia project due</p> <p>(article, review, interview, profile)</p>
<b>Week 23</b>	<p>Presentation WS: The Scoop of Info Graphics</p> <p>Workshop interactive web project</p> <p>Writing for the web</p>	WS: The Scoop of Info Graphics	<p>Third piece of interactive multimedia project due</p> <p>(article, review, interview, profile)</p>
<b>Week 24</b>	Presentation WS:	WS: Storyboarding & Multimedia	Fourth piece of interactive

	Storyboarding	Components	multimedia project due
	Presentation WS: Multimedia Components		(article, review, interview, profile)
	Writing for the web		
	Workshop interactive web project		
Week 25	Presentation WS: Designing for the web & Interactive Multimedia	Portfolios: Chapter 7	Fifth piece of interactive multimedia project due
	Workshop Portfolios		(article, review, interview, profile)
	Workshop interactive web project		
	Visual.ly		
Week 26	Eating Crow Competition		Entry #10: Final thoughts  Interactive, Social Media, and Portfolio Projects due

## Revised Presentation Project

For this assignment, you were presenting one chapter from Joseph Williams' *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* or Kim Golombisky & Rebecca Hagen's *white space is not your enemy*. Each student were assigned one chapter.

This assignment requires the following items:

- Produce a thirty-minute oral and visual presentation on your assigned chapter
- Integrate at least four challenging exercises using social media as a technology for learning
- Upload your slide show to an online host such as Slideshares or Prezi and embed your presentation to a blog post on your process/product portfolio
- Tweet a link to your slideshow prior to class with the hashtag: #eatingcrows

The following example uses SlideRocket.com. Consider using Slideshares or Prezi to host your presentation. The presentation will take you several hours to complete. Don't wait until the last minute. No late presentations without a medical note were allowed.

## Revised Social Media Project

For this project, you were required to complete the following items:

- Capture a before and after screen shot of your name's Google search results at the beginning, middle, and end of course.
- Sign up with at least three social media websites and create profiles, engage followers and make social connections. (LinkedIn, Twitter, and Social Media App of Choice with Approval: Facebook Professional Page, Soundtracking, Foodspotting, FourSquare, Pinterest)
- Measure and record your overall efforts
- Write a memo to me summing up the experience

### Identify Goals

Think about whether reach, reputation or engagement is your goal. Write down *specific* objectives related to your social media efforts. For example, a goal could be to get more social media mentions of your blog, increase number and strengths of readerships, or build reputation. Goals will encourage you to be efficient and focused with your social media efforts.

In any case, the first step is to Google your name in quotes "Your Name" and screen capture your Google results. If your name is common add identifiers like "montreal" or "concordia university". Post a screenshot of your google results to your process portfolio blog, blackening out any unpleasant information.

Screen-capture your web presence at the start of the project, midway through the course and capture the results one last time before you hand in the social media assignment (include all three screen shots).

Set up Google alerts for your name.

## Establish Credibility

- Create a consistent social media identity. Include the same picture, credentials, and URLs for your ids. Sites should include LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Twitter, and might include Flickr, FourSquare, YouTube, Vimeo, Yelp, SlideShare, Delicious, Digg, or Reddit.
- Find influentials on social media sites.
- Listen. Each topic and application has its own culture.
- Interact with others users. Focus on becoming part of the read-write web.

## Social Media Monitoring

Search social media monitoring sites for mentions:

[Google Alerts](#) Set up an alert for your name or blog in quotes  
Monitor your Twitter account's @you mentions and retweets

## Measure Efforts

Social Media	Followers/ Connections	Number and types of Posts	# of Responses to posts
Linked-In			
Twitter			
Pinterest			
Additional choices			

Write a memo addressed to me describing what you have learned in relation to online communication and relationship building. Answer the following questions:

- Where do you best fit in?
- Which applications do you most enjoy?
- Which applications serve your goals best?
- How will social media influence your career?
- Why is relationship building important?
- How is online content different than offline?
- What were your perceptions before and after this assignment?

In addition, describe any difficulties that you encountered and concerns that you had throughout the year and don't forget to provide a statement of purpose, include headings and the following screenshots:

- Include three screenshots of your Googled name
- Include screenshots of and links to your main social media pages (LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Twitter)
- Create a Visual.ly infographic of your twitter id.
- What does your Visual.ly graphic tell you about your social media presence on Twitter? In terms of reach, reputation and engagement? Are you satisfied with the results? Explain.
- Include a screenshot of your @you twitter mentions and activity
- Include a Taggedo graphic, defining your social media presence on the web

## Course Outline and Project Revisions 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration

### Course Outline 2014-2015

- Dropped job application
- Dropped visual cv
- Dropped interactive web project
- Dropped social media
- Added professionalism
- Added Montrealites
- Added weekly quizzes

### Course Outline for English 396

**Instructor:** Jeannette Novakovich, Department of English, Concordia University

**Email:** jeannettenovakovich@gmail.com

**Office:** English- S-LB 644.03

**Office Hours:** Thursday 4-6:00 pm by appointment

**Office Phone:** 848-2424 ext 2393

#### Texts

*Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. Joseph M. Williams & Joseph Bizup. Boston: Longman P, 2010.

*white space is not your enemy: a beginner's guide to communicating visually through graphic, web & multimedia design.* kim golombisky & rebecca hagen. Oxford: Focal Press, 2013, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

Textbooks can be purchased at ARGOS Bookstore on St. Catherine near the university.

#### Graded Projects

Autobiography	100
Profile	100
Interview	100
Instructions	100
Review	100
Feature	100
Montrealites	100
Presentation	100



Quizzes	200
Portfolio	200
Professionalism	200

Project points were divided in the following manner:

- Written projects: 20 Draft workshop/10 Memo/10 Reflection/10 Analytics/50 Quality of work for a total of 100 points
- Professionalism grade is a reflection of your participation in all aspects of the course.
- Montrealites grade is a reflection of how effectively you develop the content in your area of expertise and engage the community.
- Portfolio is graded holistically in terms of content and design.

### Course Description and Objectives

English 396 is intended for students already in control of the essentials of composition who wish to develop their ability to write effectively for professional purposes. Emphasis is placed on writing for specific audiences within a variety of rhetorical situations and on peer revision and editing in a workshop format. Please visit our course Schedule for weekly meeting details and deadlines.

Students can expect to:

- Identify their readers and describe the characteristics of their readers in a way that forms a sound basis for deciding how to address them.
- Arrange material to raise and satisfy readers' expectations, using both conventional and rhetorical patterns of organization.
- Reveal the organization of their communications by using forecasting and transitional statements, and headings.
- Collaborate effectively with their peers in a community of writers who provide feedback on each other's work.
- Employ technology effectively
- Communicate in an ethically responsible manner.

### Professionalism

In this course, I will hold you to the professional standards.

**Promptness.** In this course, as in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All projects are due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Assignments turned in late were penalized one letter grade unless you have made other arrangements with me in advance. I will not accept late papers after a week has passed the due date.

**Appearance.** All work should be neatly prepared, using margins and spacing and design techniques that are conventional for the genre. Whether it is a resume, memo, or report, your communication should exhibit complete and appropriate format.

***Grammar, Spelling, and Proofreading.*** At work, even a single error in spelling, grammar, or proofreading can jeopardize the effectiveness of some communications (depending on the rhetorical situation). Grading will reflect the great seriousness with which these matters are frequently viewed in the working world. If you would like special assistance with any of these skills, I can recommend sources for extra help.

***Revisions.*** You will receive feedback on your writing at various stages of the writing process. You should try to apply the comments to improve not only the particular assignment you are working on at the time but also your strategies for writing in general.

***Appropriateness.*** When publishing text on the World Wide Web, you will need to consider the broad spectrum of possible audiences your writing may reach. The blogging platform allows you a high level of personal control, and you should be creative in your design of that space; you should also be aware, however, of the public nature of Web texts. Possible audiences for your blogging sites include, but are not limited to: potential or future employers, professors, and University administration. Please restrict the content of your site accordingly.

***Behavior.*** In addition to the requirements outlined above, you are expected to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading assignments on time; to help your classmates learn by your responses to their writing; to choose projects that require significant research and analysis; to spend at least six hours per week out of class for writing and class preparation; and to be courteous and considerate.

## Attendance

You are expected to attend class every meeting and to have your work with you. Regular attendance is required, because course instruction depends on your active participation. Two absences will probably not affect your performance too much (unless you miss a rough draft session--a major problem); but try to limit it to that.

Excused absences are appropriate, of course, but beyond that, let me repeat course policy: A student whose absences are excessive "may run the risk of receiving a lower grade or a failing grade," whether some of those absences are considered "excused" or not. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to complete missed work.

It is particularly important for you to attend--and be prepared to participate in class workshops. The more you have written before peer-review sessions, the more you will benefit from them. Although your drafts need not be "polished," in general, they should be complete enough for you to receive substantial help from your peers.

See me when you have questions about an assignment, when you would like to try out some ideas before a document is due, or when you have questions about a comment. You should also see me to get help with particular writing problems, to resolve differences about grades, or to suggest ways to improve the course.

## Grades

**A** superior; the work is of near professional quality. The document meets or exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and designed so that it is accessible and attractive; the mechanics and grammar are correct

**B** good; the document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in style, or it contains easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content, or its content is superficial.

**C** competent; the document needs significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. It may be formally correct but superficial in content.

**D** marginally acceptable; the document meets some of the objectives but ignores others; the content is inadequately developed; or it contains numerous or major errors.

**F** unacceptable; the document does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or it contains major errors or excessive errors.

When grading your papers, I will also consider your participation during the unit, including the completion of the planning worksheet and participation in the draft workshop.

**Note:** It were difficult to get an "A" for the course if you miss more than four classes or turn your work in late. Unless you make arrangements ahead of time, late work were docked one letter grade per day that it is late. Work without drafts or peer review participation were not be graded.

## **GRADING SCALE**

A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	Below 50

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and were reported to the University for possible further disciplinary sanction.

Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your writing from friends are NOT plagiarism. Taking someone's published or unpublished words and calling them your own IS plagiarism: a synonym is academic dishonesty. When plagiarism amounts to an attempt to deceive, it has dire consequences, as spelled out in the English department regulations.

### **Class Cancellations**

In the event that the instructor cancels class, an email were sent directly to students at least one-hour prior to the start of class. Be sure to check your email before each class. Information concerning University-initiated cancellations can be secured through the usual channels.

### **Course Schedule 2014-2015**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Doing</b>
<b>Sept 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the course</li> <li>• Social media and technology survey</li> <li>• Introduction to the Portfolio Project</li> <li>• Introduction to the Presentation and Montrealites projects</li> <li>• Copyright laws and privacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #1 Understanding Style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Developing content expertise</li> <li>• Social writing</li> <li>• Sign up for presentations and Montrealites project</li> </ul>
<b>Sept 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autobiographical writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #2 Correctness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Sign up for presentations and editors project</li> </ul>

<b>Sept 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autobiographical writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: What is design?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop autobiography</li> </ul>
<b>Sept 25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autobiographical writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #3 Actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop autobiography</li> <li>• Find an image for your autobiography</li> <li>• Reflection exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Oct 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and design</li> <li>• Writing for social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Step away from the computer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Autobiography due</li> <li>• Memo for project</li> <li>• Reflection exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Oct 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profile writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #4 Characters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Oct 16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profile writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: I need to design this today</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop profile</li> </ul>
<b>Oct 23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profile writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #5 Cohesion and Coherence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop profile</li> </ul>
<b>Oct 30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and design</li> <li>• Writing for social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: CH4-Layout sins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Profile due</li> <li>• Memo for project</li> <li>• Reflection exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Nov 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #6 Emphasis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> </ul>

<b>Nov 13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: mini art school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop interview questions</li> </ul>
<b>Nov 21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #7 Motivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop interview</li> </ul>
<b>Nov 28</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and design</li> <li>• Writing for social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: CH6-Layout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Interview due</li> <li>• Memo for project</li> <li>• Reflection exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Jan 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW Lesson #8 Global Coherence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Jan 15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop instructions</li> </ul>
<b>Jan 22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW Lesson #9 Concision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop instructions</li> </ul>
<b>Jan 29</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and design</li> <li>• Writing for social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Color Basics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Instructions due</li> <li>• Memo for project</li> <li>• Reflection exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Feb 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a feature article</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #10 Shape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Feb 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a feature article</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Adding visual appeal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop feature</li> </ul>

<b>Feb 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a feature article</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #11 Elegance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop feature</li> </ul>
<b>March 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and design</li> <li>• Writing for social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Infographics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Feature due</li> <li>• Memo for project</li> <li>• Reflection exercise</li> </ul>
<b>March 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW: Lesson #12 Ethics of Style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> </ul>
<b>March 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Storyboarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop review</li> </ul>
<b>March 26</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Multimedia Components</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Draft workshop review</li> </ul>
<b>April 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing and design</li> <li>• Writing for social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WS: Designing for the web</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz and presentation</li> <li>• Review due</li> <li>• Memo for project</li> <li>• Reflection exercise</li> </ul>
<b>April 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eating Crow Competition</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All course projects and portfolios Due</li> </ul>

Image source: [Enid](#), Flickr.

The Schedule is a work-in-progress and subject to changes:)

### **Professionalism**

- Contribute to the scoring and awards. .
- Fill out the [online form](#).

If you want to award a class member regarding professional behavior, please fill out the form.

- Heart - kindness

- Helping hand- neighborly
- Labour- outstanding participation
- Patience - calmness
- Diamond- quality - polished work and manner
- Dorothy's ruby slippers- Three weeks of goodness
- Poison idea -ACTORS ability to kill bad vibes and create a lovely environment!, higher professionalism score
- Sinatra award - "I did it my way" FACTOR "I did it your way" FACTOR Ability to follow directions, higher professionalism score
- Space traveler award - inertia FACTOR coming up with innovation, new ways of doing things, higher professionalism score
- Grammar bomb - FACTOR grammar expert, higher professionalism score
- KISS - keep it smart, -Play the KISS game strategy! draft work FACTORS conducting research - engage and excite your readers' intellect, higher professionalism score

### Drafting

Directions for the first web-mediated draft workshop: Examining content

Follow the link below to the appropriate draft worksheet for each project.

- [Autobiography](#)
- [Profile](#)
- [Interview](#)
- [Instructions](#)
- [Feature article](#)
- [Review](#)
- Form groups of three.
- Complete a draft workshop for each of your group members (40 minutes for each draft).
- Reviewers:

Open the entry on your computer screen.

Sign into comment.

Answer the questions on the draft worksheet.

Sign-in to comment.

Copy and paste the completed worksheet into the comment box.

Submit your comments.

- At the end of the workshop, read the feedback to your draft (during the following week, apply relevant feedback to the revision of the next draft and publish to a new entry).
- Fill out the [draft workshop survey](#) form before the end of class.

Directions for the *second* web-mediated draft workshop: Pillow Talk

You will perform a 30-minute timed draft workshop for each student in your group, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the revised draft.

- Break into groups of three.
- Open the draft entry.
- Sign into comment.



- Reviewers begin by writing positive comments explaining the strengths of the essay in the comment box.
- When the positive comment pool is drained, move on to focusing on the weaknesses of the draft and areas where you can see it would benefit from revision.
- Writers may respond to comments by asking for additional feedback or addressing concerns.

At the end of the workshop, fill out the [draft workshop survey](#) form.

### Draft Workshop Reflexivity/Feedback Survey

After you have completed a peer workshop of two of your peers' drafts, complete this survey.

Identify the project.

Draft Workshop Form

Please fill out this form when you submit your final project.

Name

Name the authors of the drafts that you workshopped and the authors who workshopped your drafts.

Did you receive helpful, timely, and detailed feedback?

Provide examples of feedback that you found valuable.

Provide examples of feedback that you believe was not helpful.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with ten being the most helpful, how would you rate your feedback?

Estimate what percentage of feedback you utilized in your revision?

How important is feedback to you on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most important, and how does it shape the revision process?

Do you have any suggestions for improving the process?

### Draft Workshop Survey

Identify the type of workshop that took place.

- Paper draft workshop
- Normal web or Mediated draft workshop
- Pillow talk web-mediated draft workshop
- Other

Evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I completed the draft workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
The process was manageable.	1	2	3	4	5
I provided valuable feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
I received valuable feedback.					

	1	2	3	4	5
I provided feedback that will help my peers edit their drafts.	1	2	3	4	5
I received feedback that will help me edit my draft.	1	2	3	4	5
I were able to incorporate most of the feedback when revising my next draft.	1	2	3	4	5
I provided feedback that will help my peers organize their drafts.	1	2	3	4	5
I received feedback that will help me organize my draft.	1	2	3	4	5
I provided feedback that will help my peers fully understand their audience.	1	2	3	4	5
I received feedback that helps me fully understand my audience.	1	2	3	4	5
I provided insightful and critical feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
I received insightful and critical feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
I mostly just praised the work.	1	2	3	4	5
I received mostly praise for my work.	1	2	3	4	5

Name / Email address / Name of peer reviewed and title of draft/ Name of peer reviewed and title of draft.

### Submitting

In class-work and most assignments were published on your process portfolio in the form of entries.

- Each draft should be published as a separate entry.
- All in-class work must be posted before the end of class.
- Work will not be graded if it does not include multiple drafts and workshop comments.

For your final draft, create a new **PAGE**.

Instructions:

1. Log into the [Dashboard](#).
2. Select "Pages"/"New"
3. Write your title in the first entry space above the body.(profile, memoir, interview etc.)
4. Copy and paste the following coversheet/memo into the body field of the page (10 points).
5. Upload an image.
6. After the image, copy and paste the text of your project.
7. In the tag field at the bottom of the page, type @topnav
8. Publish.
9. Refresh, located in top right hand corner of dashboard. (50 points for work)

10. Complete the reflexivity project (10 points). Link to [reflexivity form](#).
11. Double check that you completed the surveys for both draft workshops. If you forgot, here is a link to the [draft workshop surveys](#) (20 points)

Publish your work on Montrealites.(Montrealites Project (100 points total for year and social media points for each project includes 10 points)

1. Open theMontrealites blog in your dashboard and create a new entry.
2. Upload your image. Size to 550 px Centred.
3. Copy and paste the first paragraph of the text in the main body.
4. Select the extended tab next to the body tab at the top of the entry field and publish the rest of the piece.
5. Type in key search terms in the tag entry field.
6. Publish
7. Refresh the blog.

Work on social media . Find ways to promote your work. Write tweets. Pin to Pinterest boards. Create a post on LinkedIn. Create a promo campaign with class members. Comment on each others' entries on Montrealites. Post your image to Instagram if you use one of your original images and create a link to your post. (10 points)

Montrealites has Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram accounts that you can also log into in order to draw readers to Montrealites:

Twitter Username: Montrealites

Password: Montrealite

Instagram Username:Montrealites

Password: Montrealite

Pinterest Username: Montrealites

<http://www.pinterest.com/realitette/montrealites/>

Follow or like and I can add you to the pinboard.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/montrealites> Like and I will add you in as an editor.

Don't forget to complete your reflexivity form

### Project Memo

Project genre	
Identify the section of Montrealites where your piece were published.	
Did you use any software or cloud-computing tool to produce this work?	
Identify individualized learning objectives that you internalized for this project. OR What did you hope to achieve in terms of professional growth as a writer.	
Identify any skills that you refined through this	

project.	
Describe the most rewarding feature of this project and describe any future learning goals that emerged from this experience.	
Describe the most challenging feature of this project and identify any issues or problems that you experienced creating this project.	

## **Appendix D: Guiding Design Principle Results and Revisions**

## 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration Guiding Design Principles

This section will first report on the effectiveness of design principles introduced in the first iteration. The second half will provide a refinement of design principles for the second iteration of the study.

### Effectiveness of Design Principles in the First Iteration

The Table 21 illustrates the specific learning objectives established for the course redesign, the resulting guiding design principles applied to achieve these learning objectives and the intervention developed as a result and the findings from this iteration.

Table 21. Summary of learning objectives and findings from 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration

Learning Objective	Design Principle	Intervention	Measured Outcome	Findings
Students should be able to use language effectively and tailor it to reach specific audiences.	Approaches to effective learning should involve a pedagogical approach that is relational between teachers and students engaged in knowledge building in collaborative learning networks (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al, 2012; and Miller et al, 2008).	Publishing work online for a broader audience. Presentations on craft.	Feedback from graded projects and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics	Adequate progress as measured by grades. Inadequate progress as measured by Google Analytics.
	A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).			
	Experiential learning provides learners			

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	with opportunities to practice authentic workforce skills (Boone, 2011; Hawtrey, 2007; Ramburuth and Daniel, 2010).			
Students should be able to manage emotional challenges associated with specific writing tasks.	Situated learning, experiential learning, and deliberate practice should contribute to this learning objective. In addition, effective instructional design considers the impact of social interaction and psychological safety on knowledge development (Xu & Yang, 2010).	Publishing course work online.	Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.	Interviews revealed students were unable to cope with challenges presented by social media practices.
Students will strive to establish expertise in one specific domain area	Within the pedagogy of writing, domain experts have an advantage over generalists (McCutchen, 2000).	Students will select one topic to write about the entire course, and based on this interest, will join or found a blog to publish course projects.	Publication of coursework to a blog.	All students followed this policy, offline or online.
Students should master a number of genres for communicating information to specific audiences and present the genre using multi-modal literacies, i.e. instructions sets, features, reviews, profiles and interviews.	A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).	Course projects.	Graded projects	Adequate. Students struggled with completing the interactive web project. Lack of technical skills.
Students will practice	Reflection, not only	Course projects.	Graded projects.	Adequate.

and gain expertise managing cognitive load associated with mastering writing tasks.

provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).

Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.

Students will understand how to setup professional social media accounts and profiles.

Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).

Social media project.

In addition, a social media expert were invited as a guest lecturer to discuss proper online conduct and field questions.

End of year social media memo.

Adequate.

Students were provided an election to forgo the social media component of the course and negotiate alternative projects that are socially interactive, yet perceived as being psychologically safe for the individual learner. See Appendix C for alternative project.

Students were able to strategically use social media to build a social network and engage followers.

Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional

Social media project

Feedback from interviews and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics  
End of year

Memos were detailed and satisfactory. Google Analytics demonstrated that social



	development (King, 2011).		social media memo	media was not being used strategically to promote class projects.
Students will gain an understanding of professionalism in their field and articulate ways of reaching professional standards and identity.	Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).	Students developed- portfolios on a social platform to showcase course work and foster professional growth. Although a single course cannot address all of these issues, it can begin the process of fostering professional identity.	Graded e-portfolios	Interviews revealed students lacked agency and confidence concerning their professional lives.
Students will inform an online branded identity on social networks.	Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011). Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).	Social media project. E-portfolio project.	Feedback from interviews and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics	Students were able to articulate social media goals, specific to the tool itself, but were unable to articulate a branded identity. Limited success. Portfolios were introduced too early and students saw it as a product.  Students designed rudimentary portfolios and were reluctant

to use them for process writing and failed to develop higher quality portfolio designs as the course progressed and their skillsets increased.

### Refinement of Design Principles and Revised Course Interventions

The following section describes the parameters for the second iteration of the study based on the results of the first iteration. Table 22 provides an illustration of the revised learning objectives and interventions based on 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration findings.

Table 22. Revised learning objectives and interventions based on 1st Iteration Findings

Learning Objective	Design Principle	Intervention	Measured Outcome
Students should be able to use language effectively and tailor it to reach specific audiences.	Approaches to effective learning should involve a pedagogical approach that is relational between teachers and students engaged in knowledge building in collaborative learning networks (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al, 2012; and Miller et al, 2008).  A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer,	Publishing work online for a broader audience. Presentations on craft.	Feedback from graded projects and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics

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	1993).		
	Experiential learning provides learners with opportunities to practice authentic workforce skills (Boone, 2011; Hawtrey, 2007; Ramburuth and Daniel, 2010).		
Students should be able to manage emotional challenges associated with specific writing tasks.	Situated learning, experiential learning, and deliberate practice should contribute to this learning objective. In addition, effective instructional design considers the impact of social interaction and psychological safety on knowledge development (Xu & Yang, 2010).	Publishing course work online.	Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.
Students will strive to establish expertise in one specific domain area	Within the pedagogy of writing, domain experts have an advantage over generalists (McCutchen, 2000).	Students selected one topic to write about the entire course, and based on this interest, will join or found a blog to publish course projects.	Publication of coursework to a blog.
Students should master a number of genres for communicating information to specific audiences and present the genre using multi-modal literacies, i.e. instructions sets, features, reviews, profiles and	A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).	Course projects.	Graded projects

interviews.

Students will practice and gain expertise managing cognitive load associated with mastering writing tasks.

Students will understand how to setup professional social media accounts and profiles.

Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).

Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).

Course projects.

A guide to social media were added to the course website.

Students were encouraged to create a professional account on Twitter, a professional Facebook page, and develop a LinkedIn account. They will have two separate electronic portfolios: a process portfolio for course work and a product portfolio for the public.

Additionally, a qualitative approach to the social media project were implemented in the form of a revised project assignment.

Students were provided an election to forgo the social media

Graded projects. Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.

End of year social media memo.

		<p>component of the course and negotiate alternative projects that are socially interactive, yet perceived as being psychologically safe for the individual learner. See Appendix C for alternative project.</p>	
<p>Students were able to strategically use social media to build a social network and engage followers.</p>	<p>Despite ongoing policy makers mandate, competencies and information literacy skills among students, “actual skill levels are underdeveloped” (Julien &amp; Barker, 2009, p. 17).</p>	<p>Social media project Students were required to include at least three social media exercises into their presentations, to improve engagement and facilitate formation of a vCoP model</p>	<p>Graded social media project. Social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics End of year social media memo</p>
<p>Students will gain an understanding of professionalism in their field and articulate ways of reaching professional standards and identity.</p>	<p>Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).  Constructing and developing agency for professional purposes, will help provide students with skills that are required for everyday survival (Biesta &amp; Tedder,</p>	<p>Students developed e-portfolios on a social platform to showcase course work and foster professional growth. Although a single course cannot address all of these issues, it can begin the process of fostering professional identity.</p>	<p>Help students articulate modes of online authenticity Through reflective exercises, students were asked to explore agency and professional identity, particularly in terms of social network platforms. This were a key</p>

	2006; Gregory & Jones, 2009).		element introduced into the data collection process
Students will inform an online branded identity on social networks.	Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011). Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).	Social media project. E-portfolio project.	Graded e-portfolios Feedback from interviews and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics
Students will build relationships to readers	As noted by Greenhow (2011) virtual space is used for a number of purposes, both personal and professional (p. 140). Learners are concerned when higher education evades personal space.  Negative emotions can break patterns of habitus when spurred by internal conversations and these same	Students were encouraged to cultivate social networks directed toward their area of expertise on the community website rather than seek numbers of followers.	Social media project

conversations can promote a higher level of consideration and respect of other users online (Holmes, 2015).

### 1<sup>st</sup> Iteration Course Redesign

The following section provides notes and strategy for adjustments made to the course based on findings and revision to course learning objectives and design principles. Table 23 provides instructor notes on the course redesign, and Table 24 illustrates a summary of data collected, a summary of phenomena observed, and its influence on the course redesign.

Table 23. Instructor Notes on Course Design

1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High cognitive load with regards to web publishing.</li><li>• Questioned the value and importance of social media.</li><li>• Resistance to technology incorporation at all levels. Distracting.</li><li>• Completed course early and demonstrated low energy levels and attendance at the end of the year.</li><li>• Portfolio work was sufficient; however, publishing on the community blog failed to produce a virtual Community of Practice or impactful results on learning or professional identity formation.</li><li>• Overlapping projects created confusion.</li><li>• Portfolio introduced too early in the year; intended for end of year work and polishing.</li><li>• Complained about having to mix process and product portfolios (i.e. imagined that the process was unprofessional).</li><li>• Students failed to commit to using social media until end of year when they decided that the paper alternative would be more work than alternative. Practice time and depth was insufficient. In hindsight, reading the interviews over the summer revealed social media practices were emotionally laden.</li><li>• Blog commenting focused too much on editing and grammar comments, condescending and stressful. Students need to be trained with regards to what are high value and low value comments and sensitivity.</li></ul>

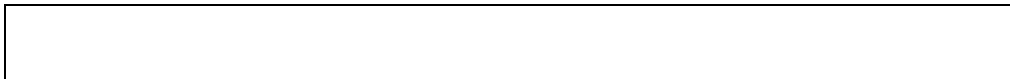


Table 24. Summary of the Results of Data Collected 1st Iteration

Data collected	Phenomena observed	Influence over subsequent revision to course
Social technology survey	Students who were frequent users of social media were confident regarding their skillsets and most likely over-estimating expertise based on the rudimentary activities that they were engaged in. Students who were infrequent users, expressed distaste and fear regarding its employment.	This result <b>WILL</b> influence subsequent course design.
Interviews	Revealed a number of barriers to performance on social networks, many of them being psychological based on fear and anxiety.	This result <b>WILL</b> influence subsequent course design.
Google analytics	Revealed anaemic publishing results. Analytics also revealed that few students were publishing or publishing articles that were able to reach sizeable audiences.	This result <b>WILL</b> influence subsequent course design.
Twitter activity	Minimal Twitter activity observed during the year.	This result <b>WILL</b> influence subsequent course design. Objective were to incorporate course and publishing #hashtags to increase engagement
Course artefacts	See Appendix C-1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration Course Artefacts. See Table * for revisions planned to course design based on instructor notes.	Artefacts were modified.
Blogging and commenting	A number of students	This result <b>WILL</b> influence



preferred to work on paper, subsequent course design. resulting in minimal commenting. Students were not compliant with the draft workshops. Once they made the move to paper, they were able to avoid full and deep participation due to a lack of online visibility.

Instructor observations	See Tables * and ** for revisions to the course design based on instructor observations.	This result <b>WILL</b> influence subsequent course design.
Email correspondence	Nothing out of the ordinary or of concern in terms of the course design.	This result <b>WILL NOT</b> influence subsequent course design.

The following table, Table 25, details subsequent revisions made to the course outline. This table is followed by Table 26, which includes a summary of revisions made to course artefacts and processes.

Table 25. Course Outline Revision for 2nd Iteration

1st Iteration		2nd Iteration	
Linear design		Linear design	
Paper and digital projects conjointly		Paper projects followed by digital projects	
Autobiography (paper)	50	Autobiography (paper)	100
Weblog	100	Presentations (signup)	100
Presentation	50	CV and Cover (paper)	100
CV and cover letter (paper)	50	Visual CV (digital)	100
Visual CV (digital)	50	Montrealites proposal (paper)	100
ePortfolio (process and product portfolio)	50	Social media (introduced)	100
Blog content proposal (paper)	50	Weblog (prewriting)	100
Social media	50	Profile	100
Profile	50	Interview	100
Interview	50	Instructions	100
Instructions	50	Review	100
Review	50	Feature	100
Feature	50	Interactive Web	100

Interactive web project	100	Montrealites	100
Community blog	100	ePortfolio (product portfolio only)	100
Participation	100	Participation	500

Table 26. Summary of Course Artefact and Process Revisions for 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration

1st Iteration	2nd Iteration
NA	Increased participation points
NA	Revised social media project
NA	Introduced portfolio later in the year
NA	Began the year with paper
NA	Introduced blogging and social media after the first month
NA	Separated the process from the product portfolio
NA	Incorporated social media activities into the presentations

\*See Appendix C for Course Artefacts

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Iteration Guiding Design Principles

This section will first report on the effectiveness of design principles introduced in the first iteration. The second half will provide a refinement of design principles for the second iteration of the study.

#### Effectiveness of Design Principles in the Second Iteration

The following table describes the design principles applied to this iteration of the study and their success and failure (See Table 27).

Table 27. Results of the Second Iteration of Design Principles

Learning Objective	Design Principle	Intervention	Measured Outcome	Findings
Students should be able to use language effectively and tailor it to reach	Approaches to effective learning should involve a pedagogical approach that is	Publishing work online for a broader audience. Presentations	Feedback from graded projects and social network	Competent grades. Google analytic feedback

specific audiences.	<p>relational between teachers and students engaged in knowledge building in collaborative learning networks (Bolstad &amp; Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al, 2012; and Miller et al, 2008).</p> <p>A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe &amp; Tesch-Romer, 1993).</p> <p>Experiential learning provides learners with opportunities to practice authentic workforce skills (Boone, 2011; Hawtrey, 2007; Ramburuth and Daniel, 2010).</p>	on craft.	feedback as measured by Google Analytics	could be improved
Students should be able to manage emotional challenges associated with specific writing tasks.	<p>Situated learning, experiential learning, and deliberate practice should contribute to this learning objective. In addition, effective instructional design considers the impact of</p>	Publishing course work online.	Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.	Interviews indicated that students struggled with developing agency. For this reason, reflexivity were incorporated more fully into the

	social interaction and psychological safety on knowledge development (Xu & Yang, 2010).			course design.
Students will strive to establish expertise in one specific domain area	Within the pedagogy of writing, domain experts have an advantage over generalists (McCutchen, 2000).	Students selected one topic to write about the entire course, and based on this interest, will join or found a blog to publish course projects.	Publication of coursework to a blog.	Competent. Not exceptional.
Students should master a number of genres for communicating information to specific audiences and present the genre using multi-modal literacies, i.e. instructions sets, features, reviews, profiles and interviews.	A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).	Course projects.	Graded projects	Competent. Not exceptional.
Students will practice and gain expertise managing cognitive load associated with mastering writing tasks.	Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).	Course projects.	Graded projects. Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.	Competent. Not exceptional.
Students will understand how to setup professional social media accounts and profiles.	Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the	A guide to social media were added to the course website.  Students were	End of year social media memo.	All students voluntarily participated in the social media project, with the

relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).

encouraged to create a professional account on Twitter, a professional Facebook page, and develop a LinkedIn account. They will have two separate electronic portfolios: a process portfolio for course work and a product portfolio for the public.

understanding that it was professional practice and would further their careers.

Memos demonstrated that a number of students obtained an understanding of professional social media practices.

Additionally, a qualitative approach to the social media project were implemented in the form of a revised project assignment.

Students were provided an election to forgo the social media component of the course and negotiate alternative projects that are socially interactive, yet perceived as being psychologically safe for the individual

<p>Students were able to strategically use social media to build a social network and engage followers.</p>	<p>Despite ongoing policy makers mandate, competencies and information literacy skills among students, “actual skill levels are underdeveloped” (Julien &amp; Barker, 2009, p. 17).</p>	<p>learner. See Appendix C for alternative project. Social media project Students were required to include at least three social media exercises into their presentations, to improve engagement and facilitate formation of a vCoP model</p>	<p>Graded social media project. Social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics End of year social media memo</p>	<p>Students actively engaged in formal social media activities during class, formulating a basis for developing a virtual community of practice; however, social media evidence was scarce on the community website. Transfer from the in-class activity to publishing must be encouraged through the next course design.</p>
<p>Students will gain an understanding of professionalism in their field and articulate ways of reaching professional standards and identity.</p>	<p>Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).  Constructing and developing agency for professional</p>	<p>Students developed e-portfolios on a social platform to showcase course work and foster professional growth. Although a single course cannot address all of these issues, it can begin the</p>	<p>Help students articulate modes of online authenticity Through reflective exercises, students were asked to explore agency and professional identity, particularly in</p>	<p>Interviews indicated that students struggled with developing agency. For this reason, reflexivity were incorporated more fully into the course design.</p>

	<p>purposes, will help provide students with skills that are required for everyday survival (Biesta &amp; Tedder, 2006; Gregory &amp; Jones, 2009).</p>	<p>process of fostering professional identity.</p>	<p>terms of social network platforms. This were a key element introduced into the data collection process</p> <p>Graded e-portfolios</p>	<p>Adequate e-portfolios. Not high quality. Students did not comply with memo to each piece or create effective designs.</p>
<p>Students will inform an online branded identity on social networks.</p>	<p>Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011). Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price &amp; Kirkwood, 2011).</p>	<p>Social media project. E-portfolio project.</p>	<p>Feedback from interviews and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics</p>	<p>Social media evidence as reported by Google analytics improved; however, activity was insufficient towards making claims toward establishing a vCoP .</p>
<p>Students will build relationships to readers</p>	<p>As noted by Greenhow (2011) virtual space is used for a number of purposes, both personal and professional (p. 140). Learners are concerned</p>	<p>Students were encouraged to cultivate social networks directed toward their area of expertise on the community website rather</p>	<p>Social media project</p>	<p>All students voluntarily participated in the social media project, with the understanding that it was</p>

when higher education evades personal space.

than seek numbers of followers.

professional practice and would further their careers.

Negative emotions can break patterns of habitus when spurred by internal conversations and these same conversations can promote a higher level of consideration and respect of other users online (Holmes, 2015).

### Refinement of Design Principles and Revised Course Interventions

The following section describes the parameters for the second iteration of the study based on the results of the first iteration (See Table 28).

Table 28. Revision to Learning Objectives and Design Principles Based on 2nd Iteration Findings

Learning Objective	Design Principle	Intervention	Measured Outcome
Students should be able to use language effectively and tailor it to reach specific audiences.	Approaches to effective learning should involve a pedagogical approach that is relational between teachers and students engaged in knowledge building in collaborative learning networks (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al, 2012; and Miller et al, 2008).	Publishing work online for a broader audience.  Presentations on craft.  *Weekly reading quizzes were integrated into the course design. Align with common classroom practices.	*Quiz grades  Feedback from graded projects

A deliberate practice



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	environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).		
	Experiential learning provides learners with opportunities to practice authentic workforce skills (Boone, 2011; Hawtrey, 2007; Ramburuth and Daniel, 2010).		
Students should be able to manage emotional challenges associated with specific writing tasks.	Situated learning, experiential learning, and deliberate practice should contribute to this learning objective.  In addition, effective instructional design considers the impact of social interaction and psychological safety on knowledge development (Xu & Yang, 2010).	Reflexive exercises	Feedback from reflexivity exercises
Students will strive to establish expertise in one specific domain area	Within the pedagogy of writing, domain experts have an advantage over generalists (McCutchen, 2000).	Students selected one topic to write about the entire course, and based on this interest, will join or found a blog to publish course projects.	Publication of coursework to a blog.
Students should master a number of genres for communicating information to specific audiences and	A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).	Course projects.  *A number of html and web publishing online and in-class tutorials were provided.	Graded projects

present the genre using multi-modal literacies, i.e. instructions sets, features, reviews, profiles and interviews.

\*Margaryan et al (2010) concluded that today's students might not be the "epitomic global, connected, socially-networked technologically-fluent digital natives"; the students in their study preferred "conventional, passive and linear forms of learning and teaching" (p. 439).

Students will practice and gain expertise managing the cognitive load associated with mastering writing tasks.

Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).

\*Course was restructured to include fewer projects, folding social media and publishing into each project as a component of the grade. Each project was developed systematically throughout the year on the following schedule, repeated six times: introduce the assignment, draft workshop, draft workshop, publish and promote. This will reduce cognitive overload.

Graded projects. Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.

Students will understand how to setup professional social media accounts and profiles.

Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood,

Topic were integrated into student presentations.

Students were encouraged to create a professional account on Twitter, a

Feedback as measured by Google Analytics.

2011).

professional Facebook page, and develop a LinkedIn account. They will have two separate electronic portfolios: a process portfolio for course work and a product portfolio for the public.

Students were provided an election to forgo the social media component of the course and negotiate alternative projects that are socially interactive, yet perceived as being psychologically safe for the individual learner. See Appendix C for alternative project.

Students were able to strategically use social media to build a social network and engage followers.

Kramer-Simpson, Newmark, and Ford (2015) observed that educators need to find ways for students to participate in communities of practice peripherally prior to graduation in order to foster mobility or participation in the workforce (p. 106).

Social media project was folded into the course process. Students were required to include at least three social media exercises into their presentations, to improve engagement and facilitate formation of a vCoP model

Social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics  
End of year social media memo

Students will gain an understanding of professionalism in their field and articulate ways of reaching

Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).

Students developed e-portfolios on a social platform to showcase course work and foster professional growth. Although a single

Help students articulate modes of online authenticity  
Through reflective exercises, students were asked to explore agency and

professional standards and identity.

Constructing and developing agency for professional purposes, will help provide students with skills that are required for everyday survival (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Gregory & Jones, 2009).

course cannot address all of these issues, it can begin the process of fostering professional identity.

professional identity, particularly in terms of social network platforms. This were a key element introduced into the data collection process

Graded e-portfolios

Students will inform an online branded identity on social networks.

Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011). Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).

Social media practices. E-portfolio project.

Feedback from reflexive exercises and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics

Students will build relationships to readers

As noted by Greenhow (2011) virtual space is used for a number of purposes, both personal and professional (p. 140). Learners are concerned when higher education evades personal space.

Students were encouraged to cultivate social networks directed toward their area of expertise on the community website rather than seek numbers of followers.

Social media project

Negative emotions

can break patterns of habitus when spurred by internal conversations and these same conversations can promote a higher level of consideration and respect of other users online (Holmes, 2015).

Students will articulate professional accomplishments and goals to inform the production of their online identity.

Writers benefit from deeper reflection of their work as an artefact. Ryan (2014) discovered that deep reflection of one's work and identity "facilitated through 'stepping back' strategies, which use one's own work in a new context as an artefact to prompt reflection" (p. 70).

Students were required to complete a meta-cognitive introduction to each project and final reflection exercise on professionalism and course goals and progress, articulating learning goals and achievements.

Meta-cognitive memos will introduce each final project on student e-portfolios. Compliance were achieved through a point system and instructor will provide feedback.

Students will provide feedback and accept criticism during the revision process to improve knowledge and articulation of mental models in order to improve language use and build understanding of the work's relationship to readers.

Reflexivity practices benefit students during the revision stage of the writing process and will help foster agency when writing (Ryan, 2014). According to Ryan (2014), "Reflexivity involves deliberating about possible courses of action, deciding what might be feasible at this time in this writing situation and then choosing a way forward" (62). Ryan emphasized the importance of reflexivity to make

Students engaged in two peer review sessions per project. The first were holistic, examining the generic conventions of the project and deficiencies and the second review session will involve a dialogic discussion between the writer and reviewers.

Feedback from draft workshops were shared with class to provide feedback on how to improve the activity.

Students were asked to fill out reflexivity forms after each draft workshop, evaluating the

the process of self assessment more visible. Furthermore, Dialogic reflections foster writers' ability to reflect on their own work. Ryan (2014) noted, "Dialogic reflections can be carefully facilitated so that the work itself and the responses of others to the work can provide the raw material upon which to reflect. Blogs or 'Conversations with the writer' are two ways to open written work to multiple responses, however it may be pertinent to limit access to a particular audience or group for response" (p. 70).

success of the workshop and possible courses of action to take in the revision process. This will increase the level of professionalism performed and facilitate an understanding of what it means to be professional.

Students were able to articulate what professionalism means in their field of practice and set goals to reach their future-self.

Educators can play a crucial role helping learners create a strong sense of agency in the world. Internal conversations are a key element: "Defining and dovetailing one's concerns can lead to the development of concrete courses of action or projects, and having projects in mind can lead to establishing satisfying sustainable practices as a way of being" (Archer, 2007,

A professionalism component was introduced into the course design, worth 200 points. The professionalism grade was defined on the course outline as a score "reflecting participation throughout the course". Students were asked to contribute to each other scores in a positive and productive manner, ending in an award ceremony at the end of the year for the

Professionalism score. Reflexive exercises on professionalism.

p. 89).

following categories.

### Course Redesign

This section provides notes and strategy for adjustments made to the course based on findings and revision to course learning objectives and design principles. Table 29 provides instructor notes on the course redesign, and Table 39 illustrates a summary of data collected, a summary of phenomena observed, and its influence on the course redesign.

Table 29. Summary of the Results of Data Collected 2nd Iteration

Data collected	Phenomena observed	Influence over subsequent revision to course
Social technology survey	No statistically significant changes from previous year found. See Chapter 4-1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration results.	This result <b>WILL NOT</b> influence subsequent course design.
Interview and reflections	Revealed students needed additional encouragement to participate in draft workshops and in online activities; more guidance and deep reflection would provide the necessary support to overcome social anxiety and lack of confidence.  The results from the interviews demonstrated that students were gaining insight from the exercise. Thus the exercises were formally incorporated into the course design.	This result <b>WILL</b> influence subsequent course design.
	Data collected from	

interviews and class discussions suggested that students needed additional guidance and supervision when publishing online and using social media.

Google analytics

Revealed anaemic publishing results. Analytics also revealed that a few students were publishing highly ranked articles that had acquired reach and engagement in short period of time through social referrals, indicated they were constructing a viable online professional identity. This result will influence the subsequent course redesign. As well, a number of students failed to publish their online work in a timely manner to foster a functioning Community of Practice.

This result **WILL** influence subsequent course design.

Twitter activity course hashtags

Increased Twitter activity observed over the previous year.

This result **WILL** influence subsequent course design. Objective were to increase participation.

Course artefacts

See Appendix C-2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration Course Artefacts. See Table \* for revisions planned to course design based on instructor notes.

This result **WILL** influence subsequent course design.

Blogging and commenting

Participation in draft workshops was mediocre with many students voicing complaints that their peers were not providing sufficient feedback.

This result **WILL** influence subsequent course design.

Revisions from draft-to-



draft proved insignificant. Students appeared to be rooted in their reflexive typology with only those who were already predisposed toward revision participating in the practice.

Instructor observations	See Tables 13 and 14 for revisions to the course design based on instructor observations.	This result <b>WILL</b> influence subsequent course design.
Email correspondence	Nothing out of the ordinary or of concern in terms of the course design.	This result <b>WILL NOT</b> influence subsequent course design.

Table 30. Instructor Notes on Course Design

1 <sup>st</sup> Iteration	2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cognitive load with regards to web publishing.</li> <li>• Questioned the value and importance of social media.</li> <li>• Resistance to technology incorporation at all levels. Distracting.</li> <li>• Completed course early and demonstrated low energy levels and attendance at the end of the year.</li> <li>• Portfolio work was sufficient; however, publishing on the community blog failed to produce a virtual Community of Practice or impactful results on learning or professional identity formation.</li> <li>• Overlapping projects created confusion.</li> <li>• Portfolio introduced too early in the year; intended for end of year work and polishing.</li> <li>• Complained about having to mix process and product portfolios (i.e. imagined that the process was unprofessional).</li> <li>• Students failed to commit to using social media until end of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cognitive load with regards to course design. Students complained of having too many projects</li> <li>• By pushing digital technologies to midcourse, student were overwhelmed with amount of work left to complete and skills to master to complete the work effectively. Began with a traditional paper course and slowly moved toward digital technologies.</li> <li>• No technology issues</li> <li>• Complained of too much work.</li> <li>• Low energy and reduced attendance at end of year.</li> <li>• Low participation social media and online publishing.</li> <li>• Overlapping projects created confusion</li> <li>• Process portfolio was moved to the course blog.</li> <li>• Strove to increase participation by assigning a large proportion of grade to the score (strategy failed because students were unable to anticipate concretely how the points were assigned).</li> <li>• Product portfolio introduced too late in the year – technological</li> </ul>

<p>year when they decided that the paper alternative would be more work than alternative. Practice time and depth was insufficient. In hindsight, reading the interviews over the summer revealed social media practices were emotionally laden.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blog commenting focused too much on editing and grammar comments, condescending and stressful. Students need to be trained with regards to what are high value and low value comments and sensitivity.</li> </ul>	<p>requirements to make an effective design too difficult to master without additional training afforded.</p>
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Tables 31 and 32 provide details on the course outline, artefacts, and process revisions that were made prior to the start of the third iteration.

Table 31. Course Outline Revision for 3rd Iteration

1st Iteration		2nd Iteration		3rd Iteration	
Linear design		Linear design		Circular design (6 cycles)	
Paper and digital projects conjointly		Paper projects followed by digital projects		Digital only projects	
Autobiography (paper)	50	Autobiography (paper)	100	Presentations (signup)	100
Weblog	100	Presentations (signup)	100	Reading quizzes	200
Presentation	50	CV and Cover (paper)	100	ePortfolio (process and product portfolio)	200
CV and cover letter (paper)	50	Visual CV (digital)	100	Professionalism (final score influenced by peers and instructor)	200
Visual CV (digital)	50	Montrealites proposal (paper)	100	Autobiography	100
ePortfolio (process and product portfolio)	50	Social media (introduced)	100	Profile	100
Blog content proposal (paper)	50	Weblog (prewriting)	100	Interview	100
Social media	50	Profile	100	Instructions	100
Profile	50	Interview	100	Review	100
Interview	50	Instructions	100	Feature	100

Instructions	50	Review	100
Review	50	Feature	100
Feature	50	Interactive Web	100
Interactive web project	100	Montrealites	100
Community blog	100	ePortfolio (product portfolio only)	100
Participation	100	Participation	500

Table 32. Summary of Course Projects and Artefact Revisions for 3rd Iteration

1st Iteration	2nd Iteration	3rd Iteration
NA	Increased participation points	Interactive web project dropped
NA	Revised social media project	Blogging project dropped
NA	Introduced portfolio later in the year	CV and Cover letter dropped
NA	Began the year with paper	Visual CV dropped
NA	Introduced blogging and social media after the first month	Participation dropped
NA	Separated the process from the product portfolio	Interactive web project dropped
NA	Added social media activities into the presentations	Professionalism added
NA		Reflexivity exercises added
NA		Drafting page revised
NA		Submitting page revised
NA		Quizzes added
NA		Eliminated Social Media project, folded into course process, Stage 3 Publishing
NA		Dropped the community website editor proposal project
NA		Made 50% project grade a process grade: memos, draft workshops, reflection exercise, and publishing

\*See Appendix C for Course Artefacts

## Guiding Design Principles

This section will first report on the effectiveness of design principles introduced in the first iteration. The second half will provide a refinement of design principles for the second iteration of the study.

### Effectiveness of Design Principles of the Third Iteration

The following table describes the design principles applied to this iteration of the study and their success and failure (See Table 33).

Table 33. Results of the 3rd Iteration of Design Principles

Learning Objective	Design Principle	Intervention	Measured Outcome	Findings
Students should be able to use language effectively and tailor it to reach specific audiences.	Approaches to effective learning should involve a pedagogical approach that is relational between teachers and students engaged in knowledge building in collaborative learning networks (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al, 2012; and Miller et al, 2008).  A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson,	Publishing work online for a broader audience.  Presentations on craft.  *Weekly reading quizzes were integrated into the course design. Align with common classroom practices.	*Quiz grades  Feedback from graded projects	Achieved through course design. Results were positive. Students were compliant in terms of completing assigned course readings. Reading compliance improved attention.  Graded projects ranged from competent to exceptional. Improvement.

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	Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).				
	Experiential learning provides learners with opportunities to practice authentic workforce skills (Boone, 2011; Hawtrey, 2007; Ramburuth and Daniel, 2010).				
Students should be able to manage emotional challenges associated with specific writing tasks.	Situated learning, experiential learning, and deliberate practice should contribute to this learning objective.  In addition, effective instructional design considers the impact of social interaction and psychological safety on knowledge development (Xu & Yang, 2010).	Reflexive exercises	Feedback from reflexivity exercises	Achieved through course design.  Students appeared to benefit from the reflexivity exercises in terms of enabling them to think through the consequences and means to professionalism and online professional identity.	
Students will strive to establish expertise in one specific domain area	Within the pedagogy of writing, domain experts have an advantage over generalists	Students selected one topic to write about the entire course, and based on this	Publication of coursework to a blog.	Achieved through course design.	

	(McCutchen, 2000).	interest, will join or found a blog to publish course projects.		
Students should master a number of genres for communicating information to specific audiences and present the genre using multi-modal literacies, i.e. instructions sets, features, reviews, profiles and interviews.	A deliberate practice environment for learners will improve performance (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993).  *Margaryan et al (2010) concluded that today's students might not be the "epitomic global, connected, socially-networked technologically-fluent digital natives"; the students in their study preferred "conventional, passive and linear forms of learning and teaching" (p. 439).	Course projects.  *A number of html and web publishing online and in-class tutorials were provided.	Graded projects	Achieved through course design.
Students will practice and gain expertise managing the cognitive load associated with mastering writing tasks.	Reflection, not only provides a key competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term	*Course was restructured to include fewer projects, folding social media and publishing into each project as	Graded projects. Feedback from interviews with outside researcher.	Achieved through course design. Reduced the cognitive load and established a more organic rhythm to the

	memory (Lombardi, 2007).	a component of the grade. Each project was developed systematically throughout the year on the following schedule, repeated six times: introduce the assignment, draft workshop, draft workshop, publish and promote. This will reduce cognitive overload.		course.
Students will understand how to setup professional social media accounts and profiles.	Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).	Topic were integrated into student presentations. Students were encouraged to create a professional account on Twitter, a professional Facebook page, and develop a LinkedIn account. They will have two separate electronic portfolios: a process portfolio for course work and a product	Feedback as measured by Google Analytics.	Achieved through course design.

portfolio for the public.

Students were provided an election to forgo the social media component of the course and negotiate alternative projects that are socially interactive, yet perceived as being psychologically safe for the individual learner. See Appendix C for alternative project.

Students were able to strategically use social media to build a social network and engage followers.

Kramer-Simpson, Newmark, and Ford (2015) observed that educators need to find ways for students to participate in communities of practice peripherally prior to graduation in order to foster mobility or participation in the workforce (p. 106).

Social media project was folded into the course process. Students were required to include at least three social media exercises into their presentations, to improve engagement and facilitate formation of a vCoP model

Social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics End of year social media memo

Achieved through course design.

Students will gain an understanding of

Reflection, not only provides a key

Students will develop e-portfolios on a

Help students articulate modes of online

Achieved through course design.



<p>professionalism in their field and articulate ways of reaching professional standards and identity.</p>	<p>competency, it also promotes learning and transference to long-term memory (Lombardi, 2007).</p>	<p>social platform to showcase course work and foster professional growth. Although a single course cannot address all of these issues, it can begin the process of fostering professional identity.</p>	<p>authenticity Through reflective exercises, students were asked to explore agency and professional identity, particularly in terms of social network platforms. This were a key element introduced into the data collection process</p>	<p>Students were able to design professional e-portfolios.</p>
	<p>Constructing and developing agency for professional purposes, will help provide students with skills that are required for everyday survival (Biesta &amp; Tedder, 2006; Gregory &amp; Jones, 2009).</p>		<p>Graded e-portfolios</p>	

<p>Students will inform an online branded identity on social networks.</p>	<p>Structured opportunities for voluntary and informal participation in virtual communities foster professional development (King, 2011). Innovative learning activities should be designed with the wider context of the course in mind and the relevance or purpose effectively</p>	<p>Social media practices. E-portfolio project.</p>	<p>Feedback from reflexive exercises and social network feedback as measured by Google Analytics</p>	<p>Achieved through course design.</p>
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	explained to learners (Price & Kirkwood, 2011).			
Students will build relationships to readers	As noted by Greenhow (2011) virtual space is used for a number of purposes, both personal and professional (p. 140). Learners are concerned when higher education evades personal space.  Negative emotions can break patterns of habitus when spurred by internal conversations and these same conversations can promote a higher level of consideration and respect of other users online (Holmes, 2015).	Students were encouraged to cultivate social networks directed toward their area of expertise on the community website rather than seek numbers of followers.	Social media project	Achieved through course design.
Students will articulate professional accomplishments and goals to inform the production of their online identity.	Writers benefit from deeper reflection of their work as an artefact. Ryan (2014) discovered that deep reflection of one's work and identity	Students were required to complete a meta-cognitive introduction to each project and final reflection exercise on professionalis	Meta-cognitive memos will introduce each final project on student e-portfolios. Compliance were achieved through a point system and	Instructor graded this component and shaped learners understanding of how to establish effective learning objectives and

	“facilitated through ‘stepping back’ strategies, which use one’s own work in a new context as an artefact to prompt reflection” (p. 70).	m and course goals and progress, articulating learning goals and achievements.	instructor will provide feedback.	achieve them.
Students will provide feedback and accept criticism during the revision process to improve knowledge and articulation of mental models in order to improve language use and build understanding of the work’s relationship to readers.	Reflexivity practices benefit students during the revision stage of the writing process and will help foster agency when writing (Ryan, 2014). According to Ryan (2014), “Reflexivity involves deliberating about possible courses of action, deciding what might be feasible at this time in this writing situation and then choosing a way forward” (62). Ryan emphasized the importance of reflexivity to make the process of self assessment more visible. Furthermore, Dialogic	Students will engage in two peer review sessions per project. The first were holistic, examining the generic conventions of the project and deficiencies and the second review session will involve a dialogic discussion between the writer and reviewers.  Students were asked to fill out reflexivity forms after each draft workshop, evaluating the success of the workshop and possible courses of action to take in the revision process. This will increase	Feedback from draft workshops were shared with class to provide feedback on how to improve the activity.	Achieved through course design. Students were able to understand the value of workshops and the feedback process and improve practice and craft.

reflections foster writers' ability to reflect on their own work. Ryan (2014) noted, "Dialogic reflections can be carefully facilitated so that the work itself and the responses of others to the work can provide the raw material upon which to reflect. Blogs or 'Conversations with the writer' are two ways to open written work to multiple responses, however it may be pertinent to limit access to a particular audience or group for response" (p. 70).

the level of professionalism performed and facilitate an understanding of what it means to be professional.

Students were able to articulate what professionalism means in their field of practice and set goals to reach their future-self.

Educators can play a crucial role helping learners create a strong sense of agency in the world. Internal conversations are a key element: "Defining and dovetailing

A professionalism component was introduced into the course design, worth 200 points. The professionalism grade was defined on the course outline

Professionalism score. Reflexive exercises on professionalism .

Encouraging the growth of soft skills, such as tact, listening, and consideration, enriched the learning environment.

one's concerns can lead to the development of concrete courses of action or projects, and having projects in mind can lead to establishing satisfying sustainable practices as a way of being” (Archer, 2007, p. 89).

as a score “reflecting participation throughout the course”. Students were asked to contribute to each other scores in a positive and productive manner, ending in an award ceremony at the end of the year for the following categories.

## **Appendix E: Social Technology Survey**

**Social media technology survey.** The following section will introduce a number of student responses to the survey. In the initial survey administered at the start of the course, students demonstrated a normal distribution in terms of the frequency of the online updates and posting content on social network sites. See Figure 62.

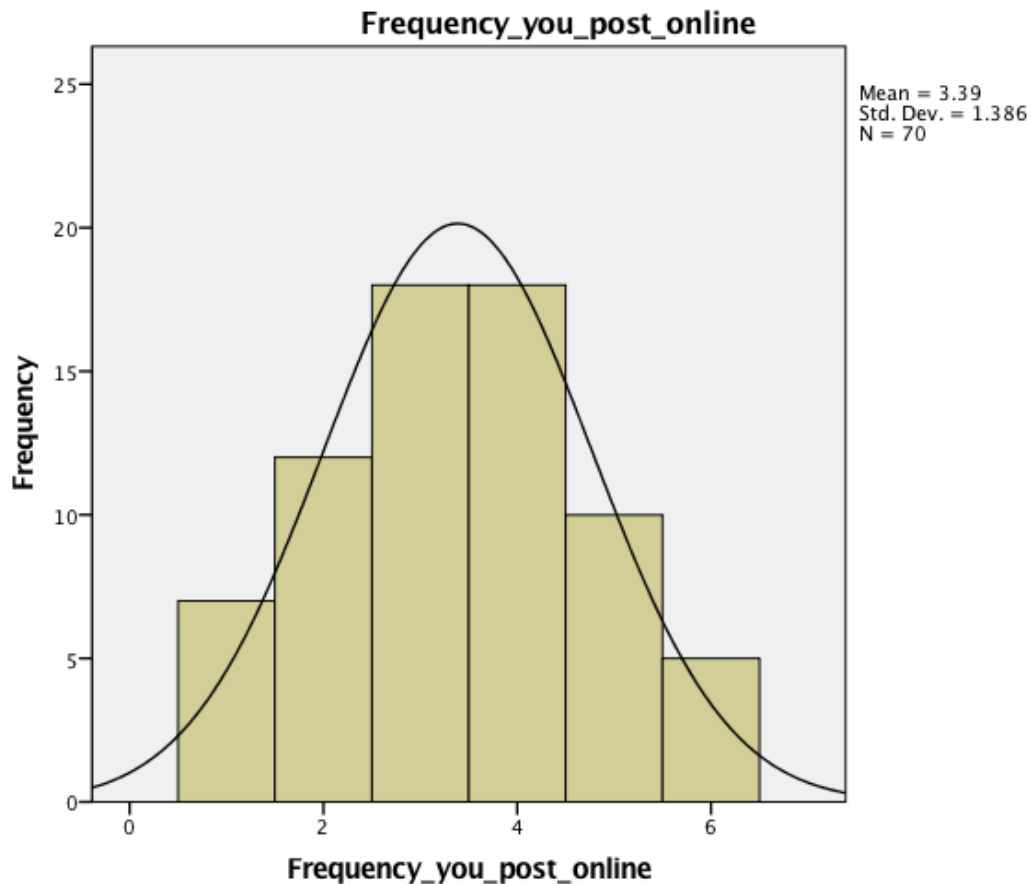


Figure 63. Frequency of online postings

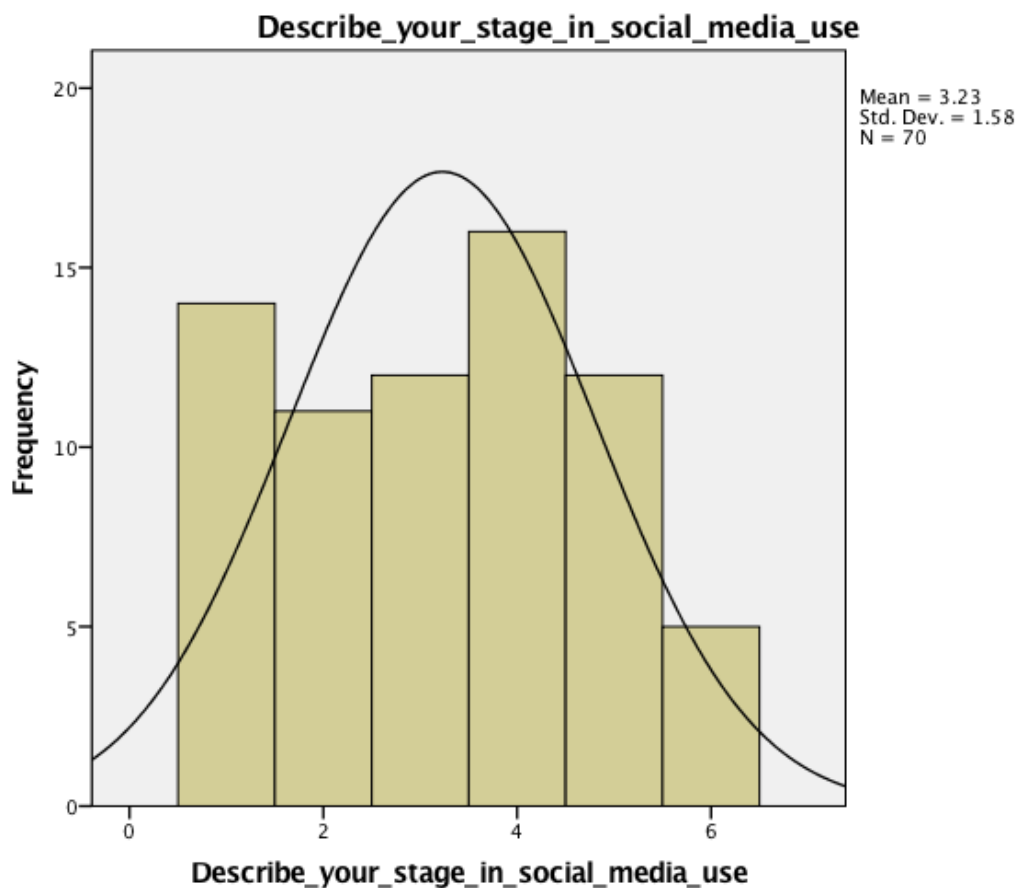
Participants were next asked to choose the stage of social media practice that best describes where they were in the process of obtaining social media skills:

- **Awareness:** I am aware that social media exists, but have not used it – perhaps I’m even avoiding it. I am anxious about the prospect of using it.
- **Learning:** I am currently trying to learn the basics. I am sometimes frustrated and I lack confidence.
- **Understanding:** I am beginning to understand the process of using social media

and can think of specific tasks in which it might be useful.

- **Familiarity:** I am gaining a sense of self-confidence in using social media sites for publishing online. I am starting to feel comfortable publishing.
- **Adaptation:** I think about social media as a professional tool to help me and I am no longer concerned about publishing online.
- **Creative Application:** I can apply what I know about technology to develop an online reputation through publications on social media sites.

The stages were selected based on Russell’s (1996) grounded theory research on how adults adopt technology practices and has been cited in a number of studies. Learner’s stages were spread across the range of stages with the Stage of Understanding being the most frequent choice. See Figure 63.





#### Figure 64. Stage of social media practice

The distribution of scores is almost bimodal in nature. Concerning, perhaps so, is the number of participants (36%) reported to be at the Awareness and Learning stages, expressing either a desire to avoid the practice altogether or a level of “frustration and lack of confidence” associated with the practice.

Next participants were asked to select the level of social media that best described them:

- **Unfamiliar**, I have no experience with social media
- **Newcomer** in the sense that I have account(s), but rarely visit or post
- **Beginner**, I make occasional postings and have made a few connections
- **Average**, I have made a number of connections and postings
- **Advanced**, I have competently used a broad spectrum of sites
- **Expert**, I have guru status

See Figure 64 for self-reporting of social media stage.

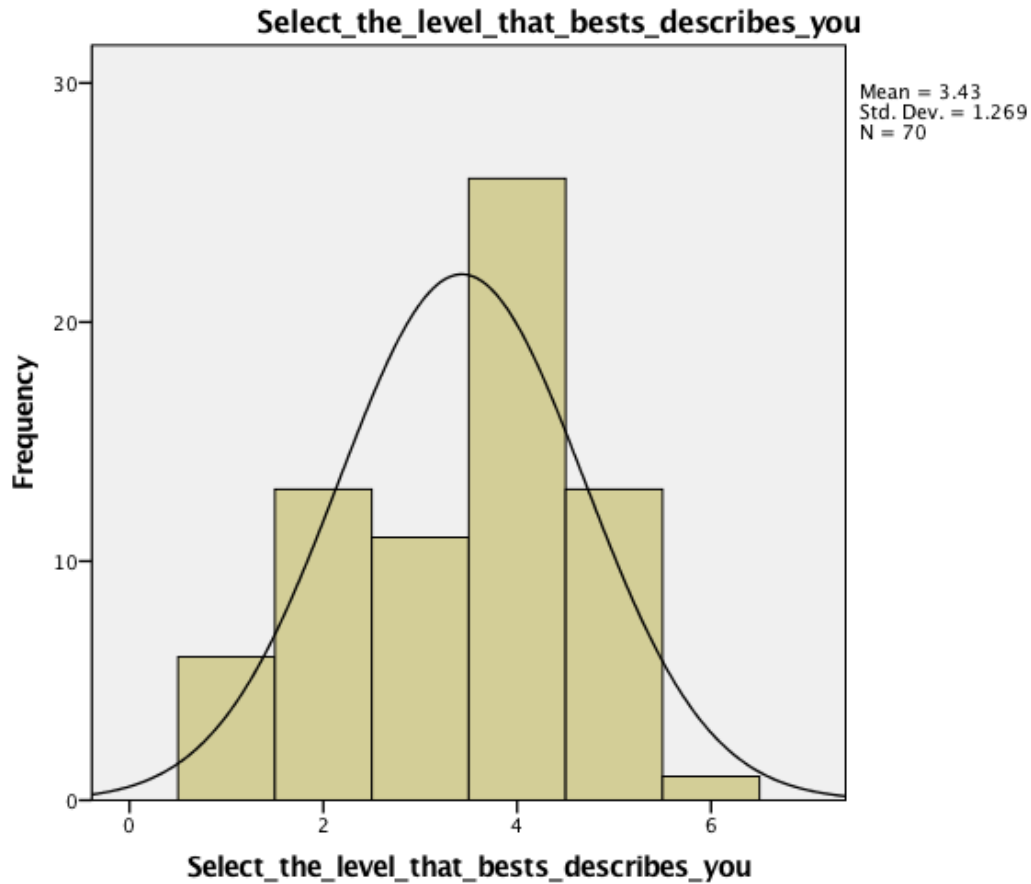


Figure 65. Level of social media practice

The most frequently cited answer was “Average”, or participants reporting having a large number of connections and frequent postings. Of concern to the instructor would be the learners (43%) with few connections and scarce social media experience. Making the assumption that because learners are contemporaneous to the technology would make them confident and practiced users is unfounded.

Next, the students were asked about their interest in using social technology; while the mode of answers fell in the center of the distribution as “Interested”, a large percentage, 51% reported being only mildly interested or not interested at all. See Figure 65.

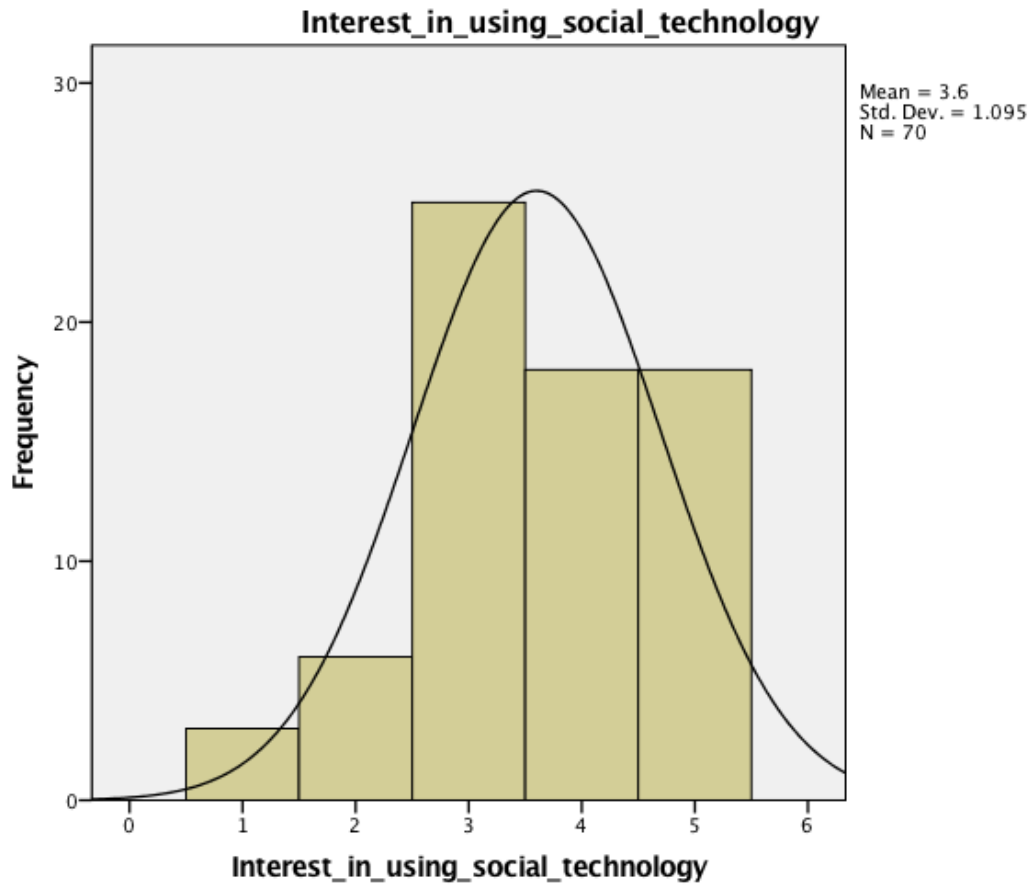


Figure 66. Reported interest in utilizing social technologies

When asked whether they shared the belief the social technologies were important, the distribution clearly skewed to the right, with the bulk of students reporting the belief that social technologies either not very important (30%) or not important at all (42%). See Figure 66.

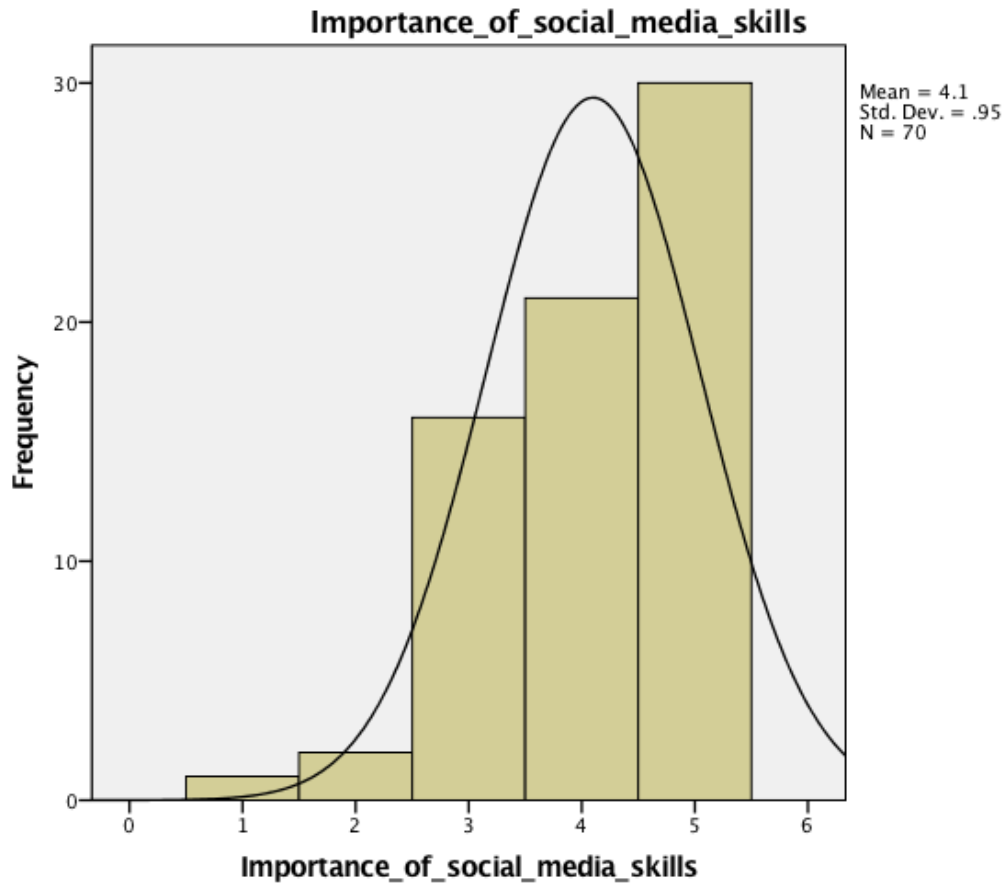


Figure 67. Importance of social media skills

A majority of students reporting a lack of interest in social technologies and a large majority reporting a belief that they were not an important skillset creates a barrier to its practice in the classroom. This type of bias would lead to, perhaps, a perception that the course design, with its embedded social media practices, was not entirely credible in terms of its breaking away from orthodox course designs and a resistance to its incorporation.

A reasonable follow-up question to report on is whether students reported a belief that social media technologies were a waste of time. See Figure 67.



Figure 68. Belief that social media is a waste of time

The results demonstrated a bimodal distribution with 39% disagreeing on some level, 10% having no opinion, and 21% agreeing on some level; however the most frequently reported answer was “Disagree” at 34%. Thus, while social technologies were not considered important, a number of students seemingly derive a benefit from its practice.

Next, the survey looked into whether the participants conceptualized it as primarily being a personal space. See Figure 68.

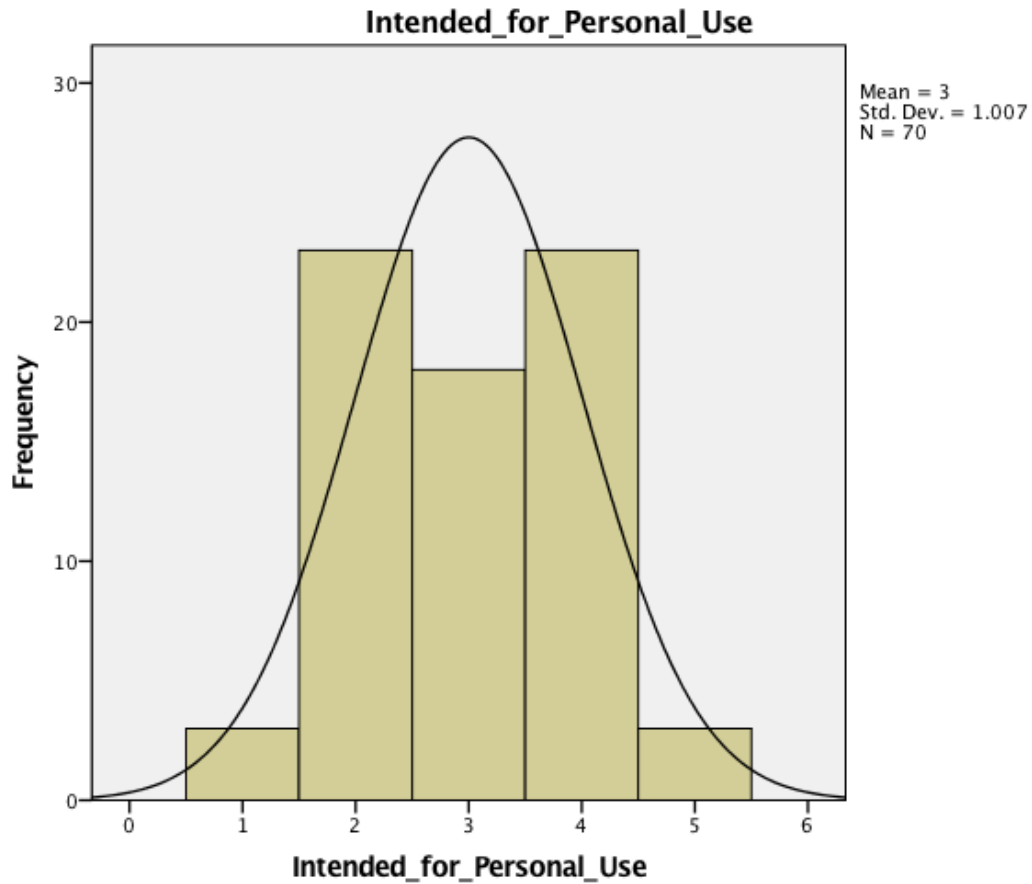


Figure 69. Social media is intended for personal use

This answer revealed a bi-modal distribution, with only 26% agreeing on some level with this statement, 18% having no opinion, and 26% disagreeing on some level.

Next, participants were asked if they could effectively manage the tool. See Figure 69.

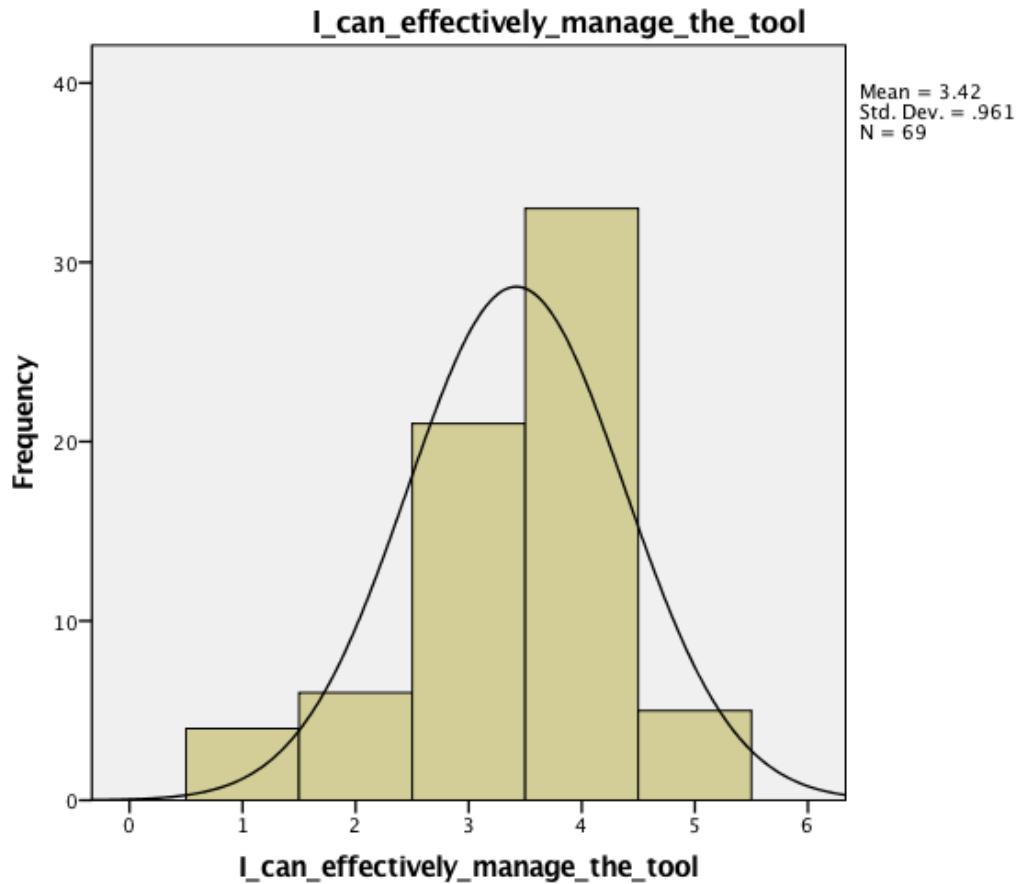


Figure 70. Belief that student can manage the tool

A large percentage of students reported no opinion or uncertainty as to whether they could effectively manage the tool (44.9%), although a slight majority of students (55%) professed confidence.

When asked if the tool could present a harm to one's reputation, only 9% reported concern. See Figure 70.

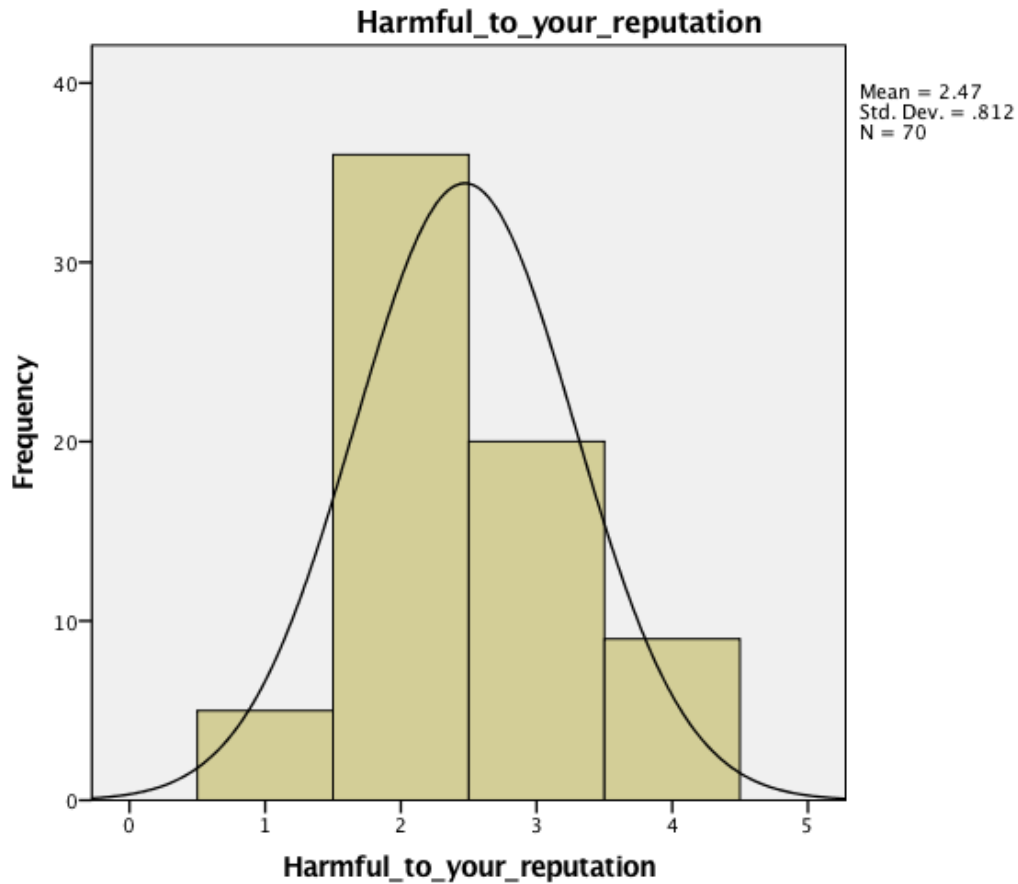


Figure 71. Belief that social media is harmful to one's reputation

A majority of the respondents disagreed (39%), with 20% (3) having no opinion and only 9% agreeing with 0% strongly agreeing. This answer demonstrates a lack of awareness with regards to the level of risk to reputation normally associated with social media practices. When asked if it risks professional reputation, rather than just reputation in general, a slightly higher number of students agreed (12%). See Figure 71.



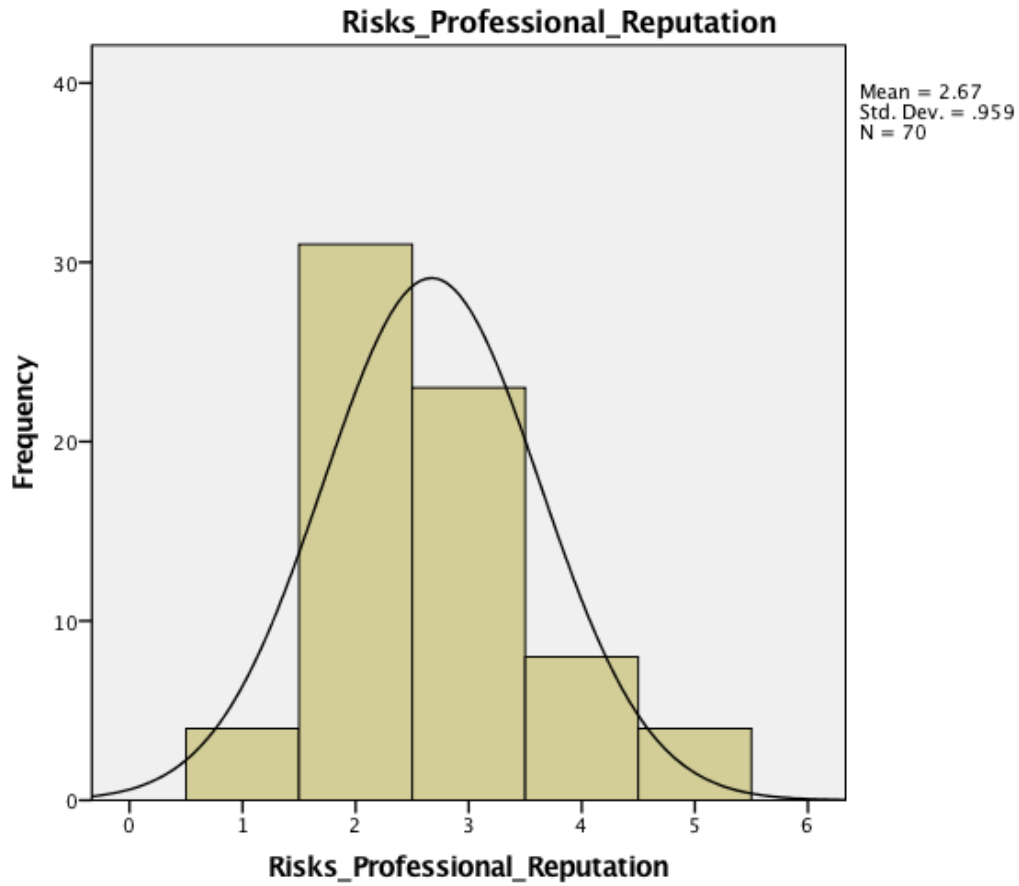


Figure 72. Belief that social media risks professional reputation

Correspondingly students were asked if they agreed with the following statement:

Social media promotes social reputation. See Figure 72.

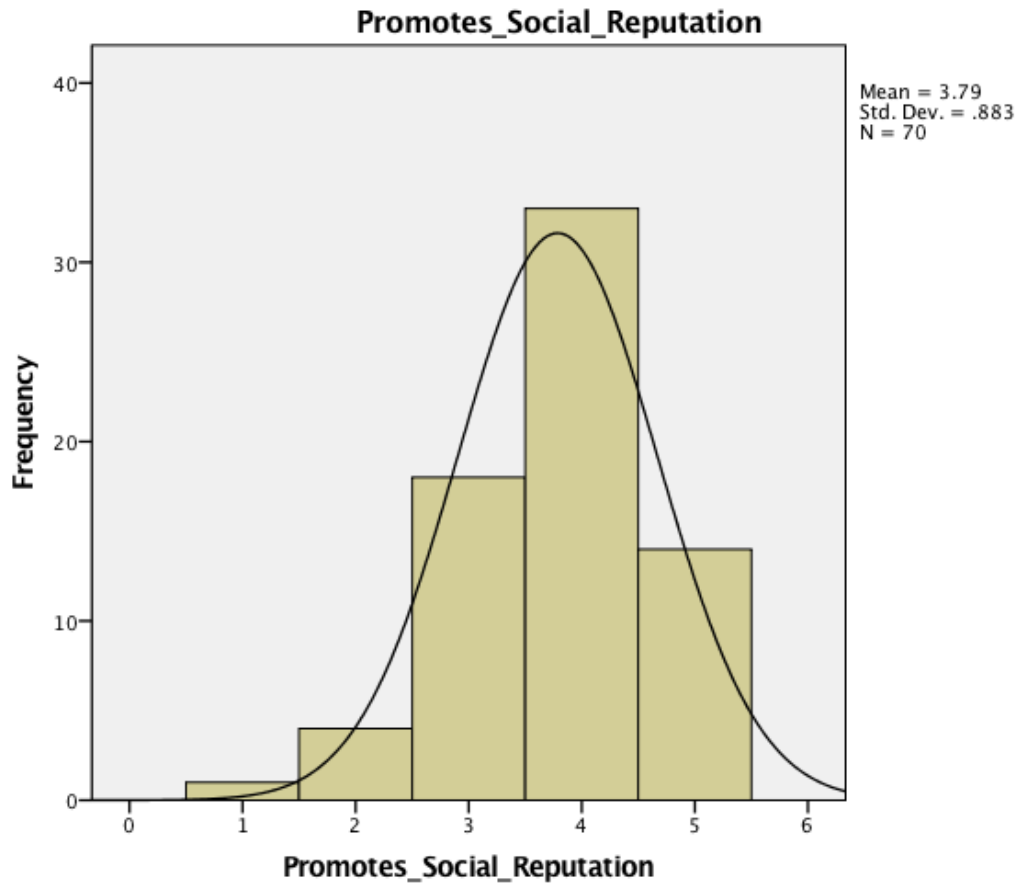


Figure 73. Belief that social media promotes social reputation

Only a small percentage of learners (5%) reported disagreement. The majority (47%) agreed that this is an intended purpose for social media.

When students were asked to agree or disagree to specific statements regarding professional uses for social media technologies, they reported more favorable responses than when asked in general about the importance of social media. See Figures 73, 74, and 75.

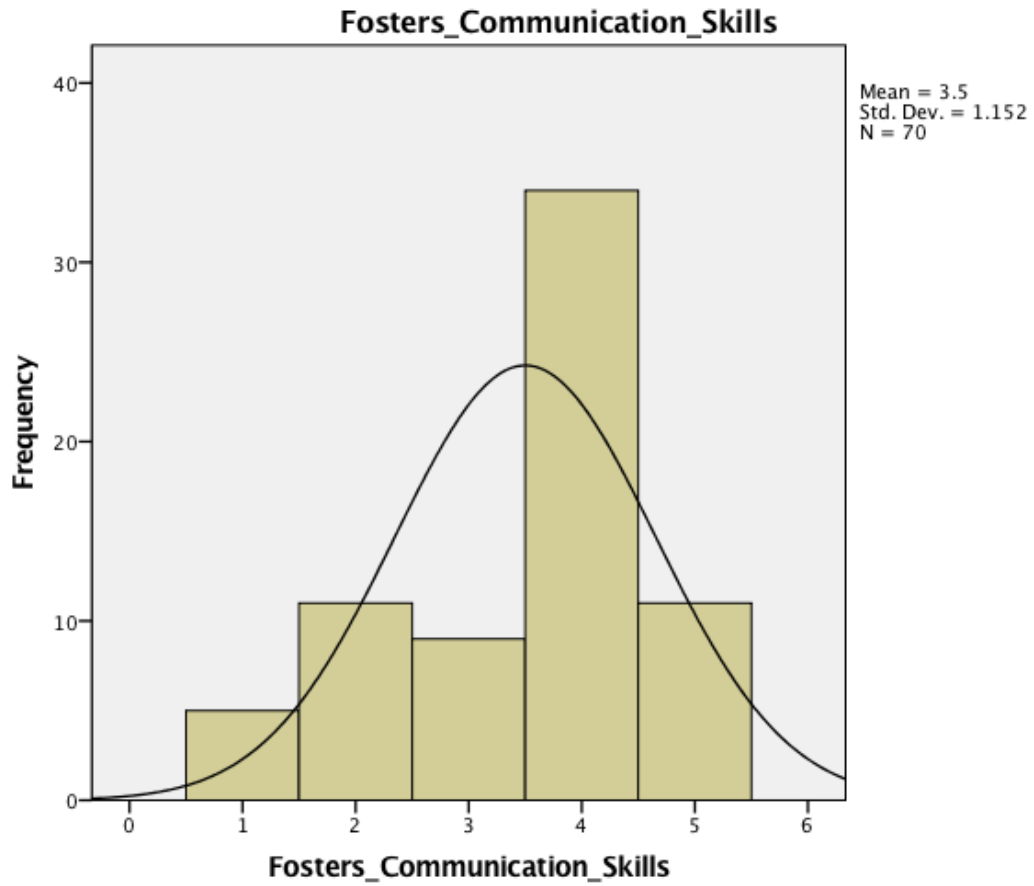


Figure 74. Belief that social media fosters communication skills

The majority of students agreed with this statement as they did with the following one with regards to its application to learning.

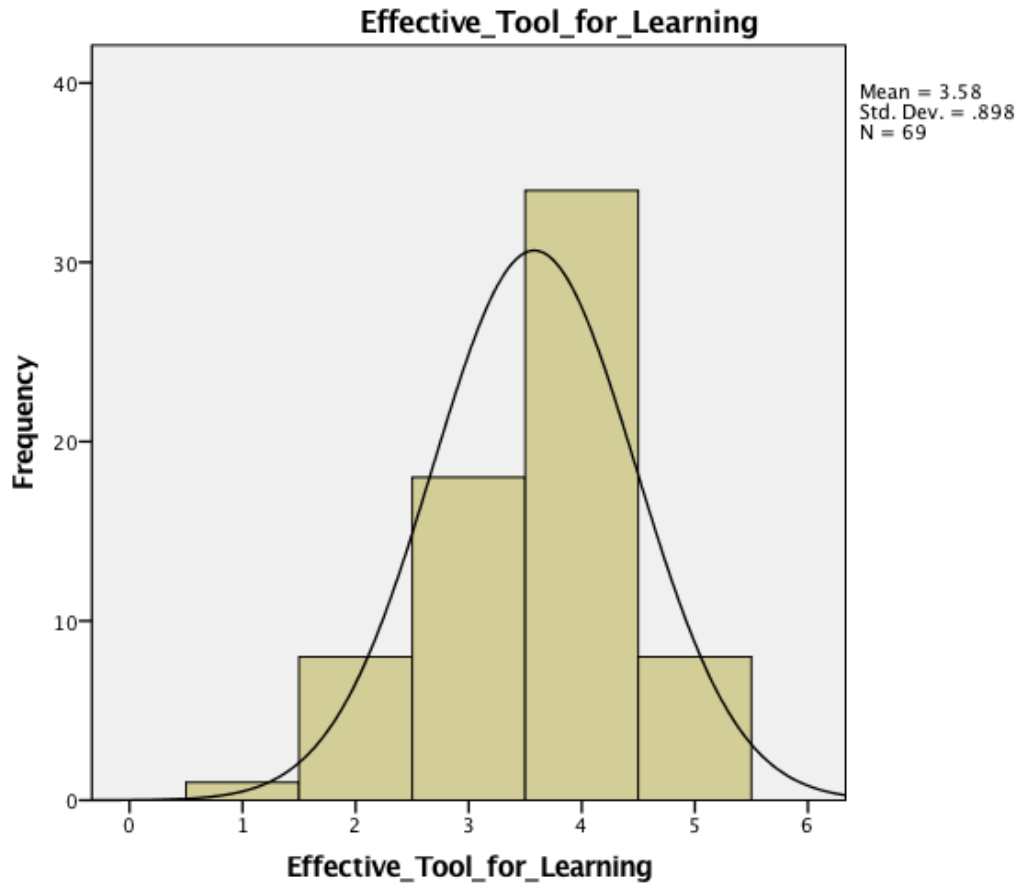


Figure 75. Belief that social media is an effective tool for learning

In the following reported belief, the majority of students had no opinion as to whether social media could foster interpersonal skills, an intended purpose of the social technologies, i.e. connecting folks in virtual space; however, ultimately, the data skewed in favour of this positive belief regarding social technology. See Figure 58.

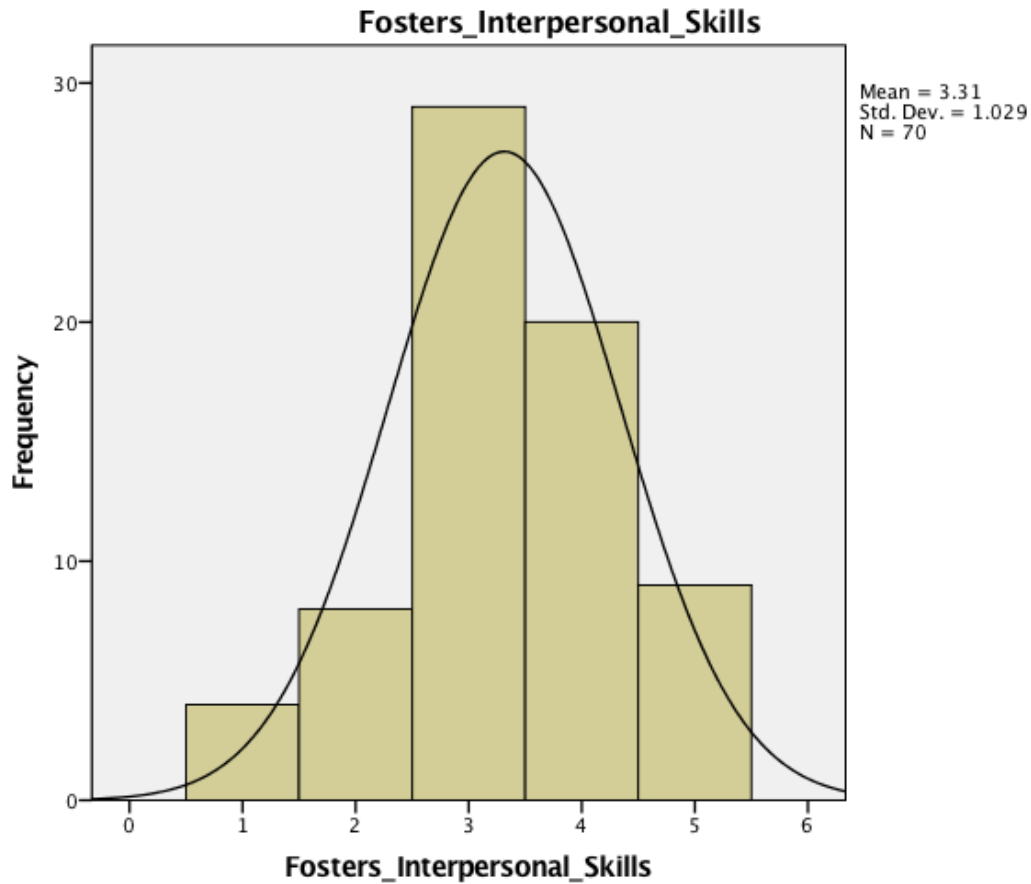


Figure 76. Belief that social media fosters interpersonal skills

In general, when asked again if they believe social media is a valuable professional tool, a large percentage agreed (53%), contradicting their previous responses regarding their disbelief as to the importance of social media and their interest in using the technology. See Figure 76. What this might demonstrate is that students are reluctant to place importance on social media's role in their general life, while at the same time acknowledging its potential impact on their professional life.

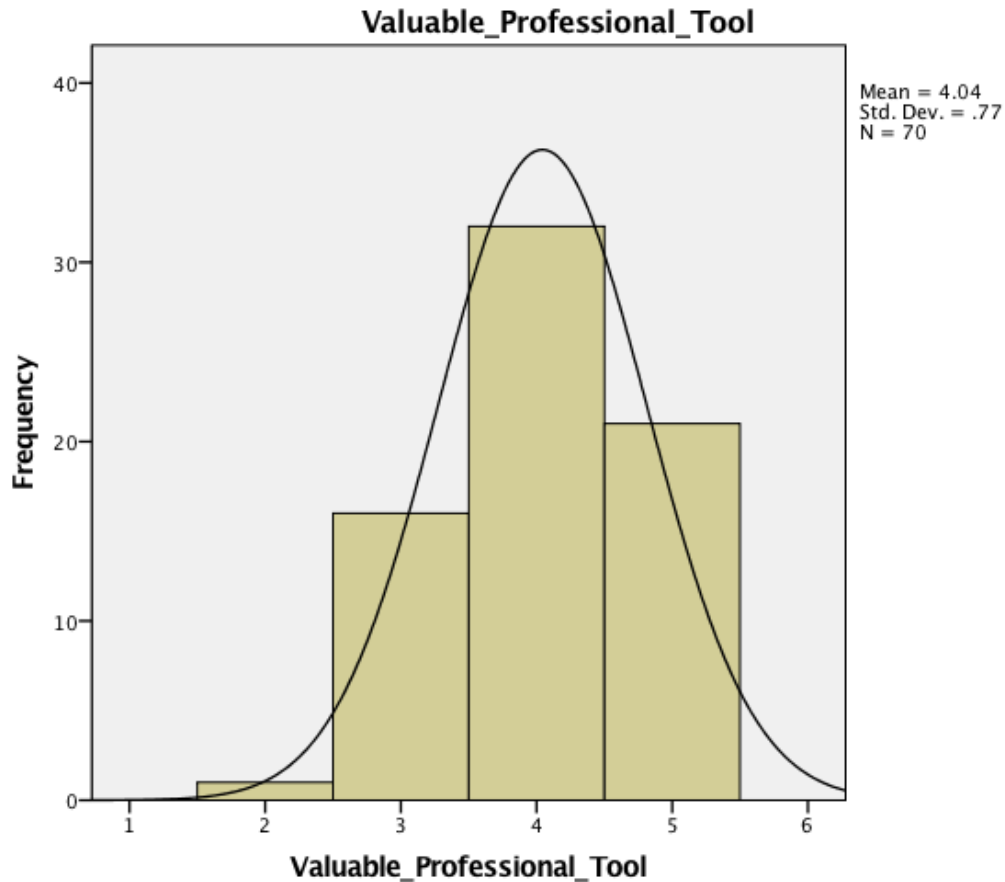


Figure 77. Belief that social media is a valuable professional tool

The social media technology survey revealed a complex picture of the online practices of learners and their beliefs regarding social technologies. A normal distribution was found corresponding to the online posting of material and reported level of social media practiced, and a bimodal distribution was reported in terms of the self-reported stages of social media practice. However, this uneven distribution makes developing an effective course design challenging; melding the skillsets of newcomers to experienced practitioners lends itself to a Community of Practice model, which allows for a range of levels of expertise. Participants reported beliefs regarding their interest in and the importance of social media skills was concerning in terms of its negativity and the amount of resistance to the incorporation of its practice into the course design. Students were also divided as to whether or not it was a “waste of time” and intended “personal

space”, two more areas of resistance to the course design, which would need to be overcome or incorporated into course practices. In general, students held a common belief that they could manage the tool and that it posed no risk to their reputation, both misconceptions and additional barriers to effective practice. Students were able to agree on a number of positive aspects of social media, i.e. its ability to foster communication skills, promote social reputation, foster interpersonal skills and use as an effective tool for learning. In terms of the instructional design, it becomes rather important for the instructor to frequently cite or provide specific attributes of social technologies to make their practice more appealing and credible.

## **Appendix F: Statistical Analysis of Google Analytics**



There were a number of outliers in the data set; see Figure 77 for scatter plot data.

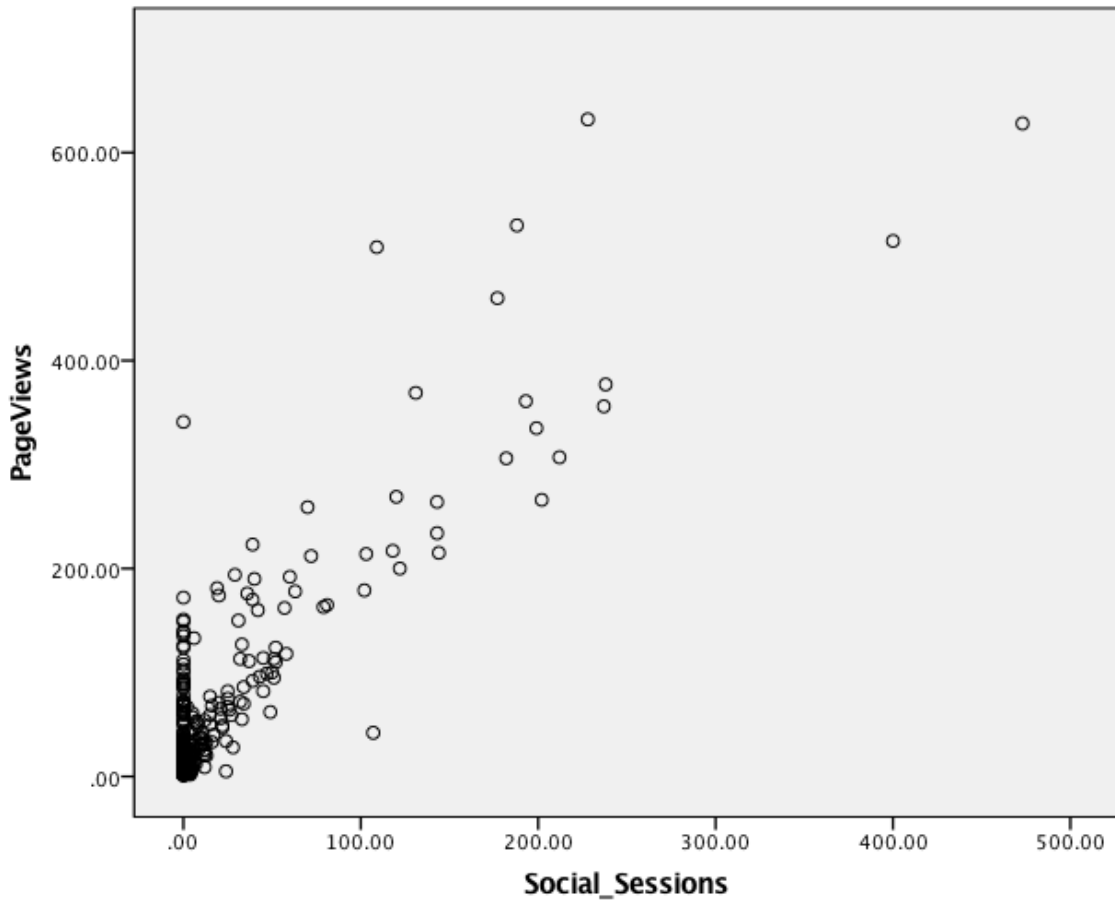


Figure 78. Scatter plot data demonstrating a linear relationship between Social Sessions and Page Views.

There was also a strongly positive correlation between Social Sessions and New Visitors  $r(432) = .872, p < .001$ , with social sessions explaining 13% of the variation in Page Views. However, once again, there were a number of outliers in the data set; see Figure 78 for scatter plot data.

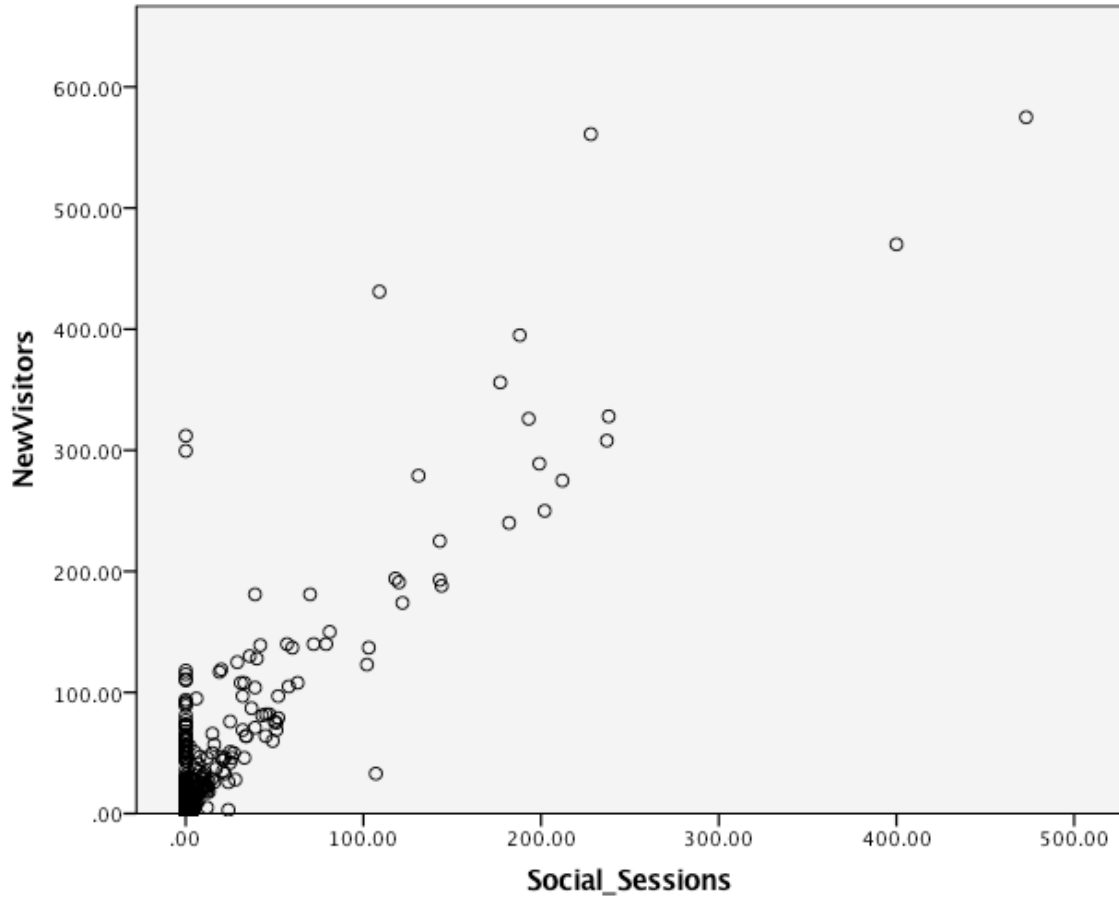


Figure 79. Scatter plot data Social Sessions and New Visitors

A linear regression established that the number of Social Sessions could statistically significantly predict Page Views,  $F(1, 430) = 1249.201, p < .000$  and number of Social Sessions accounted for 74% of the explained variability in Page Views. A Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.499 was found meeting the assumption of independence error. See Figure 79 for scatter plot data.

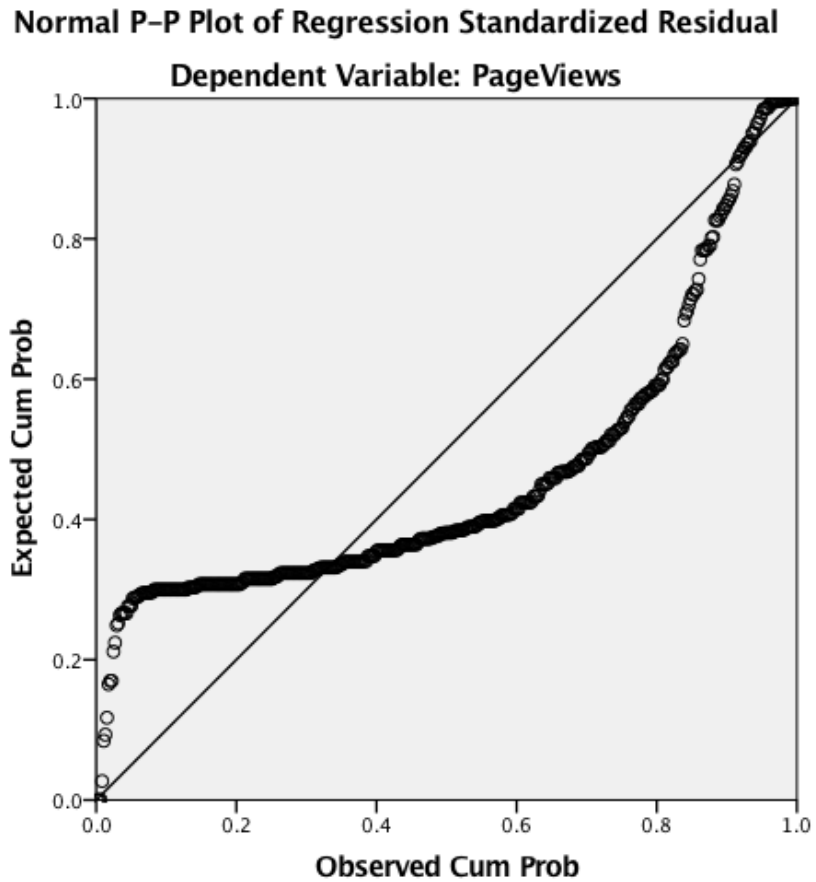


Figure 80. Regression analysis demonstrating relationship between social sessions and page views

A linear regression established that the number of Social Sessions could statistically significantly predict New Visitors,  $F(1, 430) = 1363.212, p < .000$  and number of Social Sessions accounted for 76% of the explained variability in New Visitors. A Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.711 was found meeting the assumption of independence error. See Figure 80 for Regression Plot.

**Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual**  
**Dependent Variable: NewVisitors**

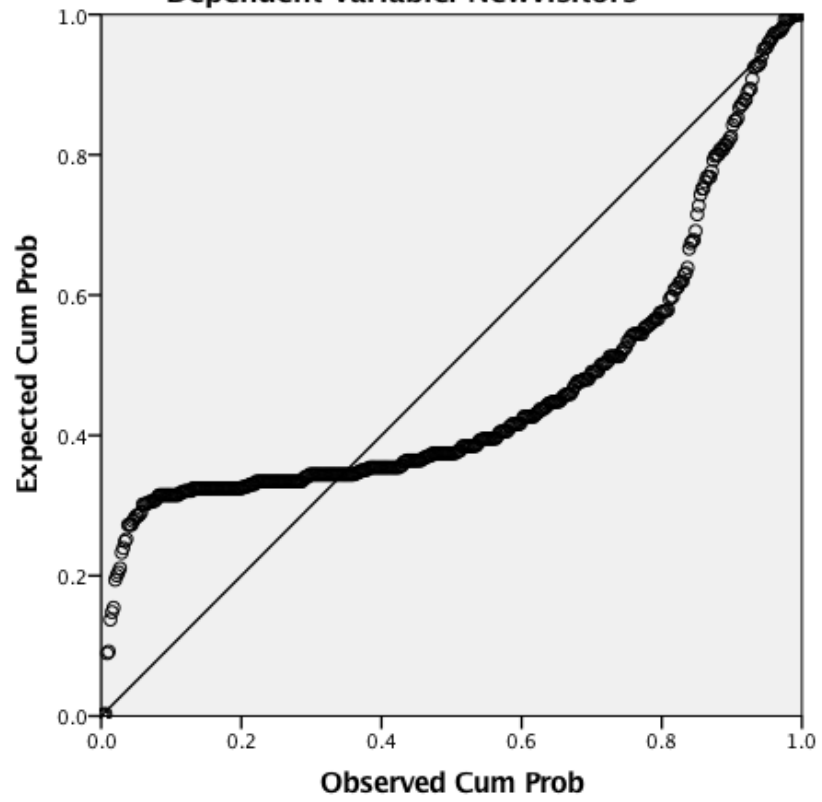


Figure 81. Observed regression plot

## **Appendix G: Ethics Protocols 2012-2016**

The following pages provide detailed information regarding ethics protocols, including, SPF forms, correspondence, and certification.

## Research Protocol Year 1

Summary Protocol Form (SPF)  
University Human Research Ethics Committee

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Office of Research – Ethics and Compliance Unit: GM 1000 – 514.848.2424 ex. 2425

### Important

Approval of a *Summary Protocol Form* (SPF) must be issued by the applicable Human Research Ethics Committee prior to beginning any research involving human participants.

The University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC) reviews all Faculty and Staff research, as well as some student research (in cases where the research involves more than minimal risk - please see below).

Research funds cannot be released until appropriate certification has been obtained.

### For faculty and staff research

Please submit one signed copy of this form to the UHREC c/o the Research Ethics and Compliance Unit, GM-1000. Please allow one month for the UHREC to complete the review.

Electronic signatures were accepted via e-mail at [ethics@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:ethics@alcor.concordia.ca)

### For graduate or undergraduate student research

- If your project is included in your supervising faculty member's SPF, no new SPF is required.
- Departmental Research Ethics Committees are responsible for reviewing all student research, including graduate thesis research, where the risk is less than minimal. In Departments where an ethics committee has not been established, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Unit.
- In cases where the student research is more than minimal risk (i.e. the research involves participants under the age of 18yrs, participants with diminished capacity, participants from vulnerable populations or participants from First Nations), an SPF must be submitted to the UHREC, c/o the Research Ethics and Compliance Unit, GM-1000, by the Course Instructor/Supervisor on the student's behalf.

### Instructions

This document is a form-fillable word document. Please open in Microsoft Word, and tab through the sections, clicking on checkboxes and typing your responses. The form will expand to fit your text. Handwritten forms will not be accepted. If you have technical difficulties with this document, you may type your responses and submit them on another sheet. Incomplete or omitted responses may cause delays in the processing of your protocol.

Does your research involve

- Participants under the age of 18 years?
- Participant with diminished mental or physical capacity?

- Aboriginal peoples?
- Vulnerable groups (refugees, prisoners, victims of violence, etc. )?

1. Submission Information

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Please check ONE of the boxes below :

- This application is for a new protocol.
- This application is a modification or an update of an existing protocol:  
Previous protocol number (s): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Contact Information

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Principal Investigator/ Instructor(must be Concordia faculty or staff member)	Department	Internal Address	Phone Number	E-mail
Jeanette Novakovich	English	S-LB 683.02	848-2424 ext 4674	Jnovako@alcor.concordia.ca
Co-Investigators / Collaborators		University Department	/	E-mail
Sophia Miah		University of Concordia Department of Education	of	sophiam101@gmail.com

3. Project and Funding Sources

Project Title:	Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation
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In the table below, please list all existing internal and external sources of research funding, and associated information, which were used to support this project. Please include anticipated start and finish dates for the project(s). Note that for awarded grants, the grant number is REQUIRED. If a grant is an application only, list APPLIED instead.

Funding Source	Project Title	Grant Number	Award Period	
			Start	End


#### 4. Brief Description of Research or Activity

Please provide a brief overall description of the project or research activity. Include a description of the benefits, which are likely to be derived from the project. Do not submit your thesis proposal or grant application.

Students enrolled in English 396 Advanced Composition and Professional courses are participating in a year-long project to gain social writing skills through social media technologies and practice. I would like to request your permission to write about this classroom project using mixed research methods : in the form of a survey, interviews, observations, and an analysis of the written component of the project. Students will end the project having valuable social media writing skills. The research project will add to our understanding of how this can be achieved while allowing for individual rights to privacy and government protection.

#### 5. Scholarly Review / Merit

Has this research been funded by a peer-reviewed granting agency (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC, Hexagram)?

Yes Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

No If your research is beyond minimal risk, please complete and attach the Scholarly Review Form

#### 6. Research Participants

a) Please describe the group of people who will participate in this project.

Students between the ages of 20 and 65 who are enrolled in English 396.

b) Please describe in detail how participants were recruited to participate. Please attach to this protocol draft versions of any recruitment advertising, letters, etcetera which were used.

Students who are enrolled in the course were asked for written consent.

c) Please describe in detail how participants were treated throughout the course of the research project. Include a summary of research procedures, and information regarding the training of researchers and assistants. Include sample interview questions, draft questionnaires, etcetera, as appropriate.

d)



I will employ mixed methods research: surveys, interviews, analysis of course activities, and grading rubrics. Most of the data collection will take the form of normal classroom activities.

- Rubric and assignment guidelines are attached
- Survey sample questions are attached
- Reflection and intervention strategies will also be employed
- Course schedule is attached
- Sample interview questions are attached

No specific research activities will take place during class other than the signing of the consent forms when the instructor will leave the room. The research involves the observation of a classroom project that will take place in its present form regardless of the participation in the study. Interviews will take place outside of the classroom through email and will remain confidential from the course instructor until the end of the course.

## 7. Informed Consent

- a) Please describe how you will obtain informed consent from your participants. A copy of your written consent form or your oral consent script must be attached to this protocol.

I will explain the project and leave the room. My research assistant Sophia Miah will ask them to voluntarily sign a consent form if they are willing participants. They can contact her at any time to withdraw from the study. The consent forms will not be shared with the instructor until the end of the course. The study examines a classroom project that will take place outside of the study. All students are participating in the course project. Only students who have signed the consent forms were included in the results.

- b) In some cultural traditions, individualized consent as implied above may not be appropriate, or additional consent (e.g. group consent; consent from community leaders) may be required. If this is the case with your sample population, please describe the appropriate format of consent and how you will obtain it.

This is not the case with my group of participants.

## 8. Deception and Freedom to Discontinue

- a) Please describe the nature of any deception, and provide a rationale regarding why it must be used in your protocol. Is deception absolutely necessary for your research design? Please note that deception includes, but is not limited to, the following: deliberate presentation of false information; suppression of material information; selection of information designed to mislead; selective disclosure of information.

There were no deception.

- b) How will participants be informed that they are free to discontinue at any time? Will the nature of the project place any limitations on this freedom (e.g. documentary film)?

They were informed at the start of the project that they are free to discontinue at any time. Contact information for withdrawing from the study were on the consent form. I will exclude data from anyone who wishes not to participate at the end of the course when data collection for the purposes of the research takes place.

## 9. Risks and Benefits

- a) Please identify any foreseeable risks or potential harms to participants. This includes low-level risk or any form of discomfort resulting from the research procedure. When appropriate, indicate arrangements that have been made to ascertain that subjects are in “healthy” enough condition to undergo the intended research procedures. Include any “withdrawal” criteria.

The project itself carries minimal risk as long as the students understand the importance of online professionalism. If a student should fail to understand the level of professionalism necessary to build social reputation, I will advise the student to remove the information. The objective of the course project is to build social media writing skills and professionalism. This instruction is part of the course design and includes ongoing intervention. Students can withdraw from the study at any time by contacting my research assistant, Sophia Miah.

- b) Please indicate how the risks identified above were minimized. Also, if a potential risk or harm should be realized, what action were taken? Please attach any available list of referral resources, if applicable.

Students’ online activities were closely monitored throughout the course in order to protect reputations and build professionalism. Guidelines and feedback were provided to students on a weekly basis as necessary.

The instructor will not be able to identify which students are participating in the study until the end of the course when the research data were compiled in light of this information. At the end of the course, only data from the students participating in the study were collected for the purposes of reporting research results. The survey were given to all students in order to tailor course projects for all students regardless of participation in the study. The research assistant were aware of students who are participating and will conduct interviews exclusively with this group of students. The goal of the study is to observe a social media-writing project. Students can opt in or out of the project regardless if they are participating in the research study. For example, a student can choose not to participate in the study and choose not to participate in the online project as well. Or they can choose to participate in the study and not to participate in the project. Any combination of participation might occur. The instructor will not have information regarding which students are participating in the study.

- c) Is there a likelihood of a particular sort of “heinous discovery” with your project (e.g. disclosure of child abuse; discovery of an unknown illness or condition; etcetera)? If so, how will such a discovery be handled?

There is no likelihood of a particular sort of « heinous discovery » with my project. Students will not be asked to disclose personal information at any time. The instructor will not be aware of who is participating in the study.

## 10. Data Access and Storage

- a) Please describe what access research participants will have to study results, and any debriefing information that were provided to participants post-participation.

Data were securely store in a password protected computer. Students were debriefed at the end of the study in terms of the results and their contribution to providing more knowledge about the social nature of writing and effective classroom activities.

- b) Please describe the path of your data from collection to storage to its eventual archiving or disposal. Include specific details on short and long-term storage (format and location), who will have access, and final destination (including archiving, or any other disposal or destruction methods).

As the instructor, I, Jeanette Novakovich, will introduce the course project and the research associated with the project. I will leave the room, and Research Assistant Sophia Miah will distribute and collect the consent forms, which she will retain and keep confidential until the end of the study. The instructor will not be able to identify the students who are not participating in the study. All activities examined by the research study are a normal part of the course outline and structure.

The study will focus on classroom activities revolving around social media writing and technologies. The chair of the English Department is aware that my students use social media as well as Justin Powloski, John Bentley, and Laurie LaForest. Students are not required to participate and are given alternative projects if they choose to opt out of this type of writing practice. For example, business card distribution can substitute for Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. Paper portfolios are an alternative for digital ones. Portfolios can be secured, as can social media media accounts. As well, students can choose to not use their real names and practice social writing with a pseudonym or not at all.

The classroom project begins with a technology survey in order to identify students’ beliefs and attitudes toward social media technologies and experiences and skills regarding its use. This survey’s objective is to help tailor the course social media writing project in terms of level of participation and specific skills that will need to be introduced, ie for example, online publishing skills and familiarity with HTML and CSS.

Students will then be given the option to develop electronic or paper portfolios of their coursework. Students who are interested or willing will network their coursework through the use of social media technologies and gain valuable professional social writing experience, a key skillset for professional writers.

Participants were tracked in such a way that interview and survey responses as well as other material created by participants can be assigned to a particular individual. However, the final reported results will not include any identifying information of participants.

My research partner, Sophia B. will collect confidential interviews of students who are participating in the study to identify performance obstacles. Interview data were shared in a general sense with the instructor in order to fine-tune the project. No specific interview information identifying a participant were shared with the instructor until the end of the project after grades are turned in. For the duration of the study (September 2012 to April 2013), students will engage in building social media writing skills in class and outside of class and turn in a final report. Only the researchers will have access to material with identifiers.

Please see attached Course Schedule for activity schedule.  
Please see [EATINGCROW.CA](http://EATINGCROW.CA) to view online course website.

#### Brief Outline

- Week One: Survey
- Week Five-Introduction to portfolios and social media, interviews
- Week Twenty-five- Memos of project were collected from students

The following observations were collected at the end of the course using digital archives generated during the course.

- Observations were noted in terms of the number of participants participating in social media activities online and the manner (name or pseudonyms) of participation.
- Observations were noted as to when a participant opted to drop in or out of a course activity.
- Observations were noted as to when and how participants interacted in terms of the type of interaction and nature of interaction, for example, commenting on blog entries and interacting with social media.

Interviews were taken at the start, midway and at the end of the project by the research assistant and not privy to the course instructor.

At the end of the course, observations of students not participating in the study were not be included in the results, including survey results and any other course materials.

#### 11. Confidentiality of Results

Please identify what access you, as a researcher, will have to your participant(s) identity(ies):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fully Anonymous	Researcher will not be able to identify who participated at all. Demographic information collected were insufficient to identify individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous results, but identify who participated	The participation of individuals were tracked (e.g. to provide course credit, chance for prize, etc) but it would be impossible for collected data to be linked to individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pseudonym	Data collected were linked to an individual who will only be identified by a fictitious name / code. The researcher will not know the “real” identity of the participant.
x	Confidential	Researcher will know “real” identity of participant, but this identity will not be disclosed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disclosed	Researcher will know and will reveal “real” identity of participants in results / published material.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participant Choice	Participant will have the option of choosing which level of disclosure they wish for their “real” identity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please describe)	

- a) If your sample group is a particularly vulnerable population, in which the revelation of their identity could be particularly sensitive, please describe any special measures that you will take to respect the wishes of your participants regarding the disclosure of their identity.

Sample group does not belong to a vulnerable population.

- b) In some research traditions (e.g. action research, research of a socio-political nature) there can be concerns about giving participant groups a “voice”. This is especially the case with groups that have been oppressed or whose views have been suppressed in their cultural location. If these concerns are relevant for your participant group, please describe how you will address them in your project.

*The goal of the project is not to give voice to groups that have been oppressed or whose views have been suppressed. If this type of voice should arise, the topic of professionalism and online reputation were given in the form of a mini-lecture.*

## 12. Additional Comments

- a) Bearing in mind the ethical guidelines of your academic and/or professional association, please comment on any other ethical concerns, which may arise in the conduct of this protocol (e.g. responsibility to subjects beyond the purposes of this study).

I will not identify any of my students.

b) If you have feedback about this form, please provide it here.

### 13. Signature and Declaration

Following approval from the UHREC, a protocol number were assigned. This number must be used when giving any follow-up information or when requesting modifications to this protocol.

The UHREC will request annual status reports for all protocols, one year after the last approval date. Modification requests can be submitted as required, by submitting to the UHREC a memo describing any changes, and an updated copy of this document.

I hereby declare that this Summary Protocol Form accurately describes the research project or scholarly activity that I plan to conduct. Should I wish to add elements to my research program or make changes, I will edit this document accordingly and submit it to the University Human Research Ethics Committee for Approval.

ALL activity conducted in relation to this project were in compliance with:

- *The Tri Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects* [http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS\\_2\\_FINAL\\_Web.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS_2_FINAL_Web.pdf)
- The Concordia University Code of Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Actions

Signature of Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_Jeanette Novakovich\_\_\_\_\_

Date: June 19, 2012

Note that SPF's with electronic signatures were accepted via e-mail

Dear Dr. Novakovich,

I am writing in regard to your recent UHREC submission entitled, UH2012-099, "Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation".

Please note the above referenced protocol has now been reviewed by the UHREC and is allocated a Queries status. Under Queries status, the research involving participants cannot move forward at this time. At your earliest convenience please forward a revised SPF with your responses to the below committee comments incorporated in bold:

1. Recruitment; It is first explicitly mentioned in 10b that the PI is the class instructor... Please revise the SPF addressing the potential for undue influence associated with conducting research in one's own class. Note that where the PI asks for written consent in a class s/he is teaching, there is the potential of perceived coercion. In other words, students may feel that it is necessary to participate in the project to avoid creating negative impressions. Please outline a process that prevents the PI from knowing who did or did not provide written consent to participate in the study.

For question 7a, whereas the PI is the class instructor, please ensure that students feel comfortable not participating in the study - how will you ensure this? If a student is in fact the PI, please clarify how s/he will keep students' identities confidential from the instructor.

2. Are participants being tracked, such that interview and survey responses as well as other material created by participants can be assigned to a particular individual?
3. For question 6c, please provide explicit details as to the procedure for the research - when will surveys be conducted, when will the observations take place, who will conduct the observations, etc?
4. For question 9, The risks are not minimal if the researcher is the instructor. Also, the researcher is proposing to examine the beliefs of non-participants - how does s/he propose to do this if they do not consent to participate?
5. 9b needs to be re-visited in light of the comments above.
6. For question 9c, social media activity can lead to heinous discovery; please re-address.
7. Please provide sample interview questions.
8. Up to what point can participants withdraw from the study (e.g., end of semester)? Who acts as the contact person for participants who would like to withdraw? Please add this information to the consent form.
9. Please indicate where data were stored and for how long. Does the PI/instructor have access to the data and identifiers during the semester?

10. Consent Form: Please be more specific about the procedures: How long will each activity take? If the activities take place during class time, how can perceived coercion be avoided? E.g. will the instructor leave the classroom while the research associate conducts the research activities in order to keep participation confidential?

11. Please explain the purpose of the study in simple words and in more detail.

12. Please include the PI's contact information at the bottom of the consent form

Thank you in advance for your time.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like information or guidance, please do not hesitate to contact me anytime.

Have a great day and we'll look forward to your revised SPF.

Kyla

Kyla Wiscombe  
Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor  
Office of Research  
Concordia University  
1550 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, suite 1000 (GM building)  
H3G 1N2  
Tel [514 848-2424 ext. 7481](tel:5148482424)  
[kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca)

Jeannette Novakovich <[jeannettenovakovich@gmail.com](mailto:jeannettenovakovich@gmail.com)>

.8/25/12.

to Monica .

Please note the above referenced protocol has now been reviewed by the UHREC and is allocated a Queries status. Under Queries status, the research involving participants cannot move forward at this time. At your earliest convenience please forward a revised SPF with your responses to the below committee comments incorporated in bold:

1. Recruitment; It is first explicitly mentioned in 10b that the PI is the class instructor... Please revise the SPF addressing the potential for undue influence associated with conducting research in one's own class. Note that where the PI asks for written consent in a class s/he is teaching, there is the potential of perceived coercion. In other words, students may feel that it is necessary to participate in the project to avoid creating negative impressions. Please outline a process that prevents the PI from knowing who did or did not provide written consent to participate in the study.

*My research assistant will collect the consent forms and retain the consent forms.*

- *I will introduce the study in conjunction with my research assistant, Sophia Miah.*
- *I will exit the room.*



- *Sophia will distribute and collect the consent forms.*
- *They were kept in her possession and confidential from the course instructor, myself, until the end of the course and final course grades have been submitted.*
- *The assistant were aware of who the participants are in order to interview them.*
- *The interviews were kept confidential from the course instructor until final course grades have been submitted.*
- *Participants were able to contact my research assistant to withdraw from the study at any point of the study.*

For question 7a, whereas the PI is the class instructor, please ensure that students feel comfortable not participating in the study - how will you ensure this? If a student is in fact the PI, please clarify how s/he will keep students' identities confidential from the instructor.

*My research assistant will collect the consent forms and retain the consent forms.*

- *I will introduce the study in conjunction with my research assistant, Sophia Miah.*
- *I will exit the room.*
- *Sophia will distribute and collect the consent forms.*
- *They were kept in her possession and confidential from the course instructor, myself, until the end of the course and final course grades have been submitted.*
- *The assistant were aware of who the participants are in order to interview them.*
- *The interviews were kept confidential from the course instructor until final course grades have been submitted.*
- *Participants were able to contact my research assistant to withdraw from the study at any point of the study.*

2. Are participants being tracked, such that interview and survey responses as well as other material created by participants can be assigned to a particular individual?

*Yes, participants were tracked. The survey were distributed to the entire class regardless of participation in the study. The purpose of the survey is two-fold, one to inform the instructor of the needs of specific students in terms of training, experience, and overall attitude toward social media (students who are not comfortable using social media regardless of whether they are in the study were provided an alternative activity). After final course grades have been submitted, surveys from study participants were pooled together.*

*The research assistant will conduct confidential interviews for the purpose of shaping the overall direction of the course (research action); however, the course instructor will not receive any identifying information about participants.*

3. For question 6c, please provide explicit details as to the procedure for the research - when will surveys be conducted, when will the observations take place, who will conduct the observations, etc?

*The survey were distributed the first week of class as a part of the course content to determine the skill levels of students and other classroom dynamics in order to allow the instructor to shape the course. It's essential to know who the experts are in order to facilitate classroom activities and devise alternative approaches to teaching social*

writing. The survey will only be used as part of the study if the study is approved and only those students who signed consent forms were included in the results. Observations are a normal part of my role as instructor. I will take notes of mishaps and what works in order to strengthen the course. Only observations from participants were reported in the results. These observations were collected after final course grades have been submitted when participants are identified; observations were collected from email records, blog entries and comments, Google analytics, and social media threads.

4. For question 9, The risks are not minimal if the researcher is the instructor. Also, the researcher is proposing to examine the beliefs of non-participants - how does s/he propose to do this if they do not consent to participate?

*If a student chooses not to participate, I certainly will not examine their beliefs in a paper intended for publication. They will not be included in any way in the results. This would be entirely unethical. The goal of the study is to understand how best to teach social writing while respecting the privacy laws of Quebec and the rights of the students. A student might choose to participate in the study and not participate in the activities. There might be some confusion with this respect. Those are the nonparticipants, participants in the study but not in the activity, whose concerns I would like to be able to address. They might not want to engage in the social media activities, but prior experience has shown that students still want to learn how to do it. There are a number of ways to do this, changing names, using my public social media accounts developed for the course, or working on paper and interchanging social writing within the classroom.*

5. 9b needs to be re-visited in light of the comments above.

a) Please indicate how the risks identified above were minimized. Also, if a potential risk or harm should be realized, what action were taken? Please attach any available list of referral resources, if applicable.

*Students' online activities were closely monitored throughout the course in order to protect reputations and build professionalism. Guidelines and feedback were provided to students on a weekly basis as necessary.*

*The instructor will not be able to identify which students are participating in the study until the end of the course when the research data were compiled in light of this information. At the end of the course, only data from the students participating in the study were collected for the purposes of reporting research results. The survey were given to all students in order to tailor course projects for all students regardless of participation in the study. The research assistant were aware of students who are participating and will conduct interviews exclusively with this group of students. The goal of the study is to observe a social media-writing project. Students can opt in or out of the project regardless if they are participating in the research study. For example, a student can choose not to participate in the study and choose not to participate in the online project as well. Or they can choose to participate in the study and not to participate in the project. Any combination of participation might occur. The instructor will not have information regarding which students are participating in the study.*

5. For question 9c, social media activity can lead to heinous discovery; please re-address.

*For the purpose of the course, students use social media to send out links to their articles and to grow professional connections. We do not use Facebook or engage in any type of personal social media engagement. The activity is controlled. The purpose is to showcase professional skills and writing interests. The students are enrolled in the professional writing minor program and this is considered a core skill in the field, running social media threads for corporate purposes. The bulk of the current job listings in the field require this type of professional experience.*

7. Please provide sample interview questions.

*What is your understanding of the social nature of writing?*

*Have you ever encountered any serious issues when posting online? Please describe.*

*What types of information do you believe professionals can post online?*

*How would you describe your online digital presence?*

*What questions do you have about the course social media-writing project?*

*How could the social media-writing project be improved?*

*What additional skills in terms of social writing would you like to learn?*

8. Up to what point can participants withdraw from the study (e.g., end of semester)?

Who acts as the contact person for participants who would like to withdraw? Please add this information to the consent form.

· *Participants were able to contact my research assistant to withdraw from the study at any point of the study.*

· *This information has been added to the revised consent forms. See attachment.*

9. Please indicate where data were stored and for how long. Does the PI/instructor have access to the data and identifiers during the semester?

*The research assistant will store the consent forms and the PI/instructor will not have access to identifiers of the participants. The bulk of the data is online and can be unpublished at the request of the participants at anytime. Students in the course are allowed to keep their portfolios for as long as they wish. The rest of the data in terms of surveys and grades, Google Analytics and such were stored in a password protected secure computer or laptop. The data were stored for five years.*

10. Consent Form: Please be more specific about the procedures: How long will each activity take? If the activities take place during class time, how can perceived coercion be avoided? E.g. will the instructor leave the classroom while the research associate conducts the research activities in order to keep participation confidential?

*The activities are a normal part of the course and will take place regardless of the study. Participants will not be identified and remain unknown to the PI/instructor. Basically, the activities are a part of the course design, and students are not coerced into participating in the activities. In the past, a number of students have opted out, chosen alternative projects, mimicked the projects on paper, or jumped in when they felt comfortable. Students in the writing program have varying aptitudes for technology in general, some still prefer writing with pen and paper. They are given this freedom in any case, study or no. Since the participants cannot be identified by the PI/Instructor, and the PI/Instructor is expressly interested in having participants who are "nonparticipants*

*in the activity" in order to find ways to accommodate them, coercion should not or is not likely to take place.*

*The interviews will take place confidentially with the research assistant, outside of class time through electronic mail and in person if requested by student. This information will not be shared with PI/Instructor.*

**11. Please explain the purpose of the study in simple words and in more detail.**

*The purpose of the study is find effective ways to teach social writing while being mindful of Quebec's privacy laws and the rights of students. The study will explore what is social writing, how to achieve effective results as measured by Google Analytics, and how to mimic it offline as well as practice it online.*

**12. Please include the PI's contact information at the bottom of the consent form**  
Done.

Thank you in advance for your time. Thank you. This has been very helpful.

Kind regards,

Jeannette

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Jeanette Novakovich of the English Department of Concordia University, [jnovako@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:jnovako@alcor.concordia.ca)  
English- S-LB 683.03, 848-2424 ext 4674.

### A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to research the social nature of writing.

### B. PROCEDURES

I understand that the research were conducted in the classroom and will revolve around normal class activities.

### C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

I understand that there are minimal risks involved in the study and that I werenefit by contributing to an understanding of how to utilize online social media technologies in order to optimize effective writing practices.

### D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences. If you would like to withdraw from the study at any time, contact Sophia Miah: [sophiam101@gmail.com](mailto:sophiam101@gmail.com)
- I understand that my participation in this study is:  
CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity)
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Jeanette Novakovich, English Department at Concordia University: [Jeanette.novakovich@concordia.ca](mailto:Jeanette.novakovich@concordia.ca)

If you would like to withdraw from the study at any time, contact Sophia Miah: [sophiam101@gmail.com](mailto:sophiam101@gmail.com)

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 [ethics@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:ethics@alcor.concordia.ca)

## **Final Correspondence and Certification**

Dear Dr. Novakovich,

I'm writing in regard to your recent HREC submission for the project entitled "Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation" which is unfunded. Your protocol has been assigned number UH2012-099. All conditions have been met, and this project has now received Full Approval beginning on August 28, 2012 and expiring on August 27, 2013. You are free to begin your research with human participants as you wish. You will receive your Certificate of Ethical Acceptability within a few weeks through email. Please be aware that you are also required to inform the HREC in a timely fashion of any modifications to your protocol, which you can do by email.

Please note that you are required to submit annual reports on this project in order for this approval to be renewed. Your annual report were due before the anniversary of your approval date (August 27, 2013). Please ensure the report is submitted before this time to allow for your Certificate of Ethical Acceptability is renewed for an additional year.

Note that if annual reports are not received before the due date, your present approval will expire and you will not be permitted to continue research with human subjects. Further, access to related research funding were blocked. These holds will remain in place until such time as the required reports are received and the protocol approval reestablished. The annual report is available for download on our website, and can be submitted to us by email:

<http://oor.concordia.ca/formsandreferenceddocuments/forms/researchethicsandcompliance/>

Best wishes for your research, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Kind regards,  
Monica



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY  
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

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Name of Applicant: Dr. Jeanette Novakovich  
Department: Faculty of Arts and Science \ English  
Agency: N/A  
Title of Project: Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation  
Certification Number: 10000661  
Valid From: August 28, 2012 to: August 27, 2013

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JPfaus".

---

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee



## Research Protocol Year 2

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH

---

SGW Campus - GM 900  
Tel: 514.848.2424 x 7481 • Fax: 514.848.4290  
oor.ethics@concordia.ca

### ANNUAL REPORT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

*Please ensure that all questions are fully completed. Attach additional sheets if you require more space. Once completed, please return a signed hard copy to the HREC, c/o the Office of Research, S GM-900.*

---

STATUS REPORT DUE DATE:

SPF#: 10000661		ORIGINAL SPF APPROVAL DATE: September 15, 2012
PROJECT TITLE: Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jeanette Novakovich		DEPARTMENT: English
OFFICE ADDRESS: LB 641	TELEPHONE: 514-755-3987	E-MAIL: jeannettenovakovich@gmail.com

QUESTIONS

1. Is data collection from human subjects still active in this protocol? YES X NO

A. If no, when did the data collection phase end? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is there currently primary data from this study in storage? YES X NO

A. If yes, please give details on the format and location of this data storage, who has access to it, and the plan for its eventual disposal/destruction:

Locked file cabinet in my office. Secure email account.

B. If No, please give details as to when this data was disposed of or destroyed, and what method was used to do so.

3. What is the current funding status of this project?

<input type="checkbox"/> Funded	Agency: _____ Grant Type: _____	Funding Period: _____ Grant Number: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Sought	Agency: _____	Funding Period: _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unfunded		

4. Have there been changes to any of the following elements since this protocol

originally received ethics approval that have not been submitted as a modification?  
To answer this question, please refer to your original SPF # «SPF».

	YES	NO		YES	NO
Appreciable Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sample Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consent Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Target Population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Research Methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Treatment of Participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. If you answered YES to any of the above, please explain what changes have been made, and why they were not submitted as a modification.
6. Since original ethics clearance, have any adverse events (such as complaints, injuries, problems or complications) been experienced by any participants as a result of involvement in the study?

YES  NO

## INVESTIGATOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

*Please check the category into which the project falls:*



### CONTINUING PROJECT

*I acknowledge that this project will continue according to the description in the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance with Concordia University Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or have been submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events occurring during the conduct of this research were reported immediately to the Office of Research.*



### COMPLETED PROJECT

*I acknowledge that this project was completed according to the description in the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance Concordia University Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or were submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events that occurred during the conduct of this research have been reported to the Office of Research.*



### TERMINATED PROJECT

*I acknowledge that this project has been terminated prior to completion, and that completed portions remained in accordance with the description of the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance Concordia University's Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or were submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events that occurred during the conduct of this research have been reported to the Office of Research.*

Signature of

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Jeanette Novakovich \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_ July 10, 2013 \_\_\_\_\_

### Research Protocol Year 3

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

OFFICE OF RESEARCH

SGW Campus - GM 900  
Tel: 514.848.2424 x 7481 • Fax: 514.848.4290  
oor.ethics@concordia.ca

#### ANNUAL REPORT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

*Please ensure that all questions are fully completed. Attach additional sheets if you require more space. Once completed, please return a signed hard copy to the HREC, c/o the Office of Research, S GM-900.*

#### STATUS REPORT DUE DATE:

SPF#: 10000661		ORIGINAL SPF APPROVAL DATE: September 15, 2012
PROJECT TITLE: Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jeanette Novakovich		DEPARTMENT: English
OFFICE ADDRESS: LB 641	TELEPHONE: 514-755-3987	E-MAIL: jeannettenovakovich@gmail.com

#### QUESTIONS

7. Is data collection from human subjects still active in this protocol? YES X NO

A. If no, when did the data collection phase end? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Is there currently primary data from this study in storage? YES X NO

A. If yes, please give details on the format and location of this data storage, who has access to it, and the plan for its eventual disposal/destruction:

Locked file cabinet in my office. Secure email account.

B. If No, please give details as to when this data was disposed of or destroyed, and what method was used to do so.

9. What is the current funding status of this project?

<input type="checkbox"/> Funded	Agency: _____ Grant Type: _____	Funding Period: _____ Grant Number: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Sought	Agency: _____	Funding Period: _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unfunded		

10. Have there been changes to any of the following elements since this protocol originally received ethics approval that have not been submitted as a modification? To answer this question, please refer to your original SPF # «SPF».

	YES	NO		YES	NO
Appreciable Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sample Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consent Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Target Population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Research Methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Treatment of Participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. If you answered YES to any of the above, please explain what changes have been made, and why they were not submitted as a modification.

12. Since original ethics clearance, have any adverse events (such as complaints, injuries,

problems or complications) been experienced by any participants as a result of involvement in the study?

YES  NO

INVESTIGATOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

*Please check the category into which the project falls:*



CONTINUING PROJECT

*I acknowledge that this project will continue according to the description in the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance with Concordia University Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or have been submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events occurring during the conduct of this research were reported immediately to the Office of Research.*



COMPLETED PROJECT

*I acknowledge that this project was completed according to the description in the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance Concordia University Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or were submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events that occurred during the conduct of this research have been reported to the Office of Research.*



TERMINATED PROJECT

*I acknowledge that this project has been terminated prior to completion, and that completed portions remained in accordance with the description of the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance Concordia University's Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or were submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events that occurred during the conduct of this research have been reported to the Office of Research.*

Signature of

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Jeanette Novakovich \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_ July 12, 2014 \_\_\_\_\_



## **Research Protocol Year 4**

- Submitted July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Modified with supplemental “interview guide” (See instruments in Appendix) August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Approved August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH

SGW Campus - GM 900  
Tel: 514.848.2424 x 7481 • Fax: 514.848.4290  
oor.ethics@concordia.ca

ANNUAL REPORT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

*Please ensure that all questions are fully completed. Attach additional sheets if you require more space. Once completed, please return a signed hard copy to the HREC, c/o the Office of Research, S GM-900.*

STATUS REPORT DUE DATE: July 10, 2015

SPF#: Certificate number: UH2012-099		ORIGINAL SPF APPROVAL DATE: 2012
PROJECT TITLE: Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jeanette Novakovich		DEPARTMENT: English
OFFICE ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:	E-MAIL: jnovako@alcor.concordia.ca

QUESTIONS

13. Is data collection from human subjects still active in this protocol? YES x  NO

A. If no, when did the data collection phase end? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Is there currently primary data from this study in storage? YES x  NO

A. If yes, please give details on the format and location of this data storage, who has access to it, and the plan for its eventual disposal/destruction:

Laptop and locked in file cabinet in locked office.

B. If No, please give details as to when this data was disposed of or destroyed, and what method was used to do so.

15. What is the current funding status of this project?

<input type="checkbox"/> Funded	Agency: _____ Grant Type: _____	Funding Period: _____ Grant Number: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Sought	Agency: _____	Funding Period: _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unfunded		

16. Have there been changes to any of the following elements since this protocol originally received ethics approval that have not been submitted as a modification? To answer this question, please refer to your original SPF # «SPF».

	YES	NO		YES	NO
Appreciable Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sample Size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consent Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Target Population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Research Methodology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Treatment of Participants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. If you answered YES to any of the above, please explain what changes have been made, and why they were not submitted as a modification.

I am seeking permission to conduct a follow up survey with students who have left the program, ie graduated to find out if the course design had an impact on professionalism, ie to measure the importance of social writing.

18. Since original ethics clearance, have any adverse events (such as complaints, injuries, problems or complications) been experienced by any participants as a result of involvement in the study?

YES  NO

19. If yes, please describe any adverse events in the space below.

INVESTIGATOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

---

*Please check the category into which the project falls:*

- CONTINUING PROJECT  
*I acknowledge that this project will continue according to the description in the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance with Concordia University Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or have been submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events occurring during the conduct of this research were reported immediately to the Office of Research.*
- COMPLETED PROJECT  
*I acknowledge that this project was completed according to the description in the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance Concordia University Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or were submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events that occurred during the conduct of this research have been reported to the Office of Research.*
- TERMINATED PROJECT  
*I acknowledge that this project has been terminated prior to completion, and that completed portions remained in accordance with the description of the application for which ethics clearance originally was granted and in compliance Concordia University's Policy for the Ethical Review for Research Involving Humans and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Any subsequent modifications to this project are indicated on this form or were submitted for prior ethics clearance by the Human Research Ethics Committee. Any adverse events that occurred during the conduct of this research have been reported to the Office of Research.*

Signature of

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Jeanette Novakovich \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_ July 10, 2015 \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Dr. Novakovich,

Thank you for submitting your Annual Report with Modifications.

Please find attached your valid Ethics Certificate for the above mentioned protocol.

*Regards,*

*Karen Gregg*

*Office Assistant*

*Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies*

*Concordia University*

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*Year 4 Certification*



**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY  
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

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**Name of Applicant:** Dr. Jeanette Novakovich  
**Department:** Faculty of Arts and Science \English  
**Agency:** N/A  
**Title of Project:** Social Reputation Building Project Evaluation  
**Certification Number:** 10000661

**Valid From:** August 25, 2015      **to:** August 24, 2016

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Pfaus".

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**Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee**

**Appendix E: Dissertation Outline as Presented in Proposal**

- I. Introduction (Chapter 1)
  - a. Justification for the study
  - b. Research questions
- II. Literature review and theoretical framework (Chapter 2)
  - a. Search terms for the literature review
  - b. Conceptualizing writing pedagogy
  - c. Conceptualizing the technology
  - d. Conceptualizing the practice
  - e. Conceptualizing the learner
  - f. Transference theory
  - g. Communities of practice
  - h. Professional identity formation
  - i. Principles guiding the design of the intervention
- III. Methodology (Chapter 3)
  - a. Making the case for design-based research
    - i. Framework for design-based research
    - ii. Addressing the research questions through methodology
  - b. Course selection
    - i. Justification and criterion
    - ii. Participants
  - c. Designing and implementing the redesign

- i. Original course description
      - ii. Draft principles as learning objectives
      - iii. Aligning learning objectives to course design
    - d. Overview of data collection
      - i. Design-Based research data collection methodology
      - ii. Data collection for each iteration using mixed methods
      - iii. Assuring credibility and trustworthiness
        - 1. Technology and social network sites survey of participants-  
SPSS software statistical analysis
        - 2. Interviews collected by outside researcher
        - 3. Journal or notes made by practitioner
        - 4. Revision drafts of instructional artefacts
        - 5. Follow-up survey of students
- IV. Results (Chapters 4-7)
- a. Implementation of first iteration (Chapter 4)
    - i. Introduction
    - ii. Review of the research questions
    - iii. Literature review addressing each research question
    - iv. Data analysis and results
    - v. Principles guiding the redesign
  - b. Implementation of second iteration (Chapter 5)
    - i. Refinement of the problem
    - ii. Research questions



1. Question one
  2. Question two
  - iii. Participants
  - iv. Procedure/Data collection
  - v. Data analysis and results
  - vi. Principles guiding the redesign
- c. Implementation of third iteration (Chapter 6)
- i. Refinement of the problem
  - ii. Research questions
    1. Question one
    2. Question two
  - iii. Participants
  - iv. Procedure/Data collection
  - v. Data analysis or results
    1. Question one
    2. Question two
  - vi. Emerging design principles guiding instruction
- d. Follow-up survey of course participants (Chapter 7)
- i. Participants
  - ii. Procedure/Data collection
  - iii. Data analysis or results
    1. Question one
    2. Question two

V. Conclusion (Chapter 8)

- a. Principles guiding the redesign and artefacts
- b. Ethical considerations
- c. Limitations to the research
- d. References

VI. Appendix

- a. Glossary of terms
- b. Course artefacts