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Before the Aftermath: A Pedagogy for Disaster Responsiveness examines how teachers of writing at the college level can respond to social, natural, or political disasters that interrupt their classes. As disaster becomes an increasingly prominent feature of contemporary life, teachers are encountering it in their work, and being forced to address these circumstances pedagogically. This project extends from that premise to explore what teachers who experience disaster do to address these disruptions, and to offer strategies of preparedness that can be deployed in teacher training efforts to better equip them to respond. From cases including the classroom responses of teachers to Hurricane Sandy in New York City in 2012, and the online circulation of strategies for response to the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, I demonstrate the complexities of choosing to address disruption, a task that requires teachers to attend to classroom emotions, to the stories of marginalized groups affected by the events, and to embrace the necessary failure of any pedagogical response to disaster. For scholars in rhetoric, composition, and writing studies, this project offers a critical vocabulary for understanding and engaging with unpredictable and often tragic circumstances of teaching by (1) theorizing disaster as a rhetorical situation of teaching and learning, and (2) offering concrete pedagogical strategies and orientations they can use in response. Ultimately, this project asks us to view teachers as a kind of "first responder" in their classrooms, and to view teaching in the wake of disaster as an ethical responsibility in an adversity-laden age.

BEFORE THE AFTERMATH: A PEDAGOGY FOR DISASTER RESPONSIVENESS

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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INTRODUCTION: SHELTER IN PLACE

> Taking appropriate shelter is critical in times of disaster. Sheltering is appropriate
> when conditions require that you seek protection in your home, place of
> employment or other location when disaster strikes. […] To effectively shelter,
> you must first consider the hazard and then choose a place in your home or other
> building that is safe for that hazard. – Ready.gov

I.

October 2016. Hurricane season. Matthew, the thirteenth named storm of the

season, becomes the first category 5 storm in the Atlantic in nine years (Beven). In the

span of six days, it makes landfall in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, and then

the United States. The storm kills people in all of these countries. In Haiti, it kills more

than 500. Matthew makes landfall in the United States in South Carolina, but causes

death and millions of dollars in damage in every coastal state from Florida to Virginia.

The most affected of these states is North Carolina, where 26 are killed (Price). The day

after the storm, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where at the time I am

teaching, sends an official communication to all students, faculty, and staff. It says: "Our

primary concern is for the safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty, and staff." It

advises faculty "to be as flexible as possible with students who commute to campus and

are unable to travel as a result of the storm," and asks them to "Consider utilizing online

tools for communicating and/or giving assignments."

II.

October 2017. Twitter. Ten days after *The New York Times* (Kantor and Twohey) and *The New Yorker* (Farrow) publish reports detailing the years of predatory sexual harassment and assault perpetrated by film producer Harvey Weinstein, actress Alyssa Milano tweets: "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet." The tweet goes viral, garnering more than 52,000 likes, 23,000 retweets, and 66,000 replies. The hashtag spreads, with Facebook reporting that within 24 hours, 4.7 million users worldwide posted more than 12 million posts, comments, and reactions using the hashtag (CBS/AP). This moment is later cited as the beginning of the #MeToo movement, using the name first coined by activist Tarana Burke in 2006, seeking acknowledgement of the prevalence of women's experiences of sexual harassment and assault (Shugerman). The #MeToo movement spreads across professions and disciplines, including in the academy. Within the field of rhetoric and composition, Melissa Hitchenson sends an email to the Writing Program Administration Listserv with the subject line, "We have a Weinstein problem." She ends her email by writing: "We are not exempt from this problem. The WPA relationships, with huge disparities in power between graduate students and adjuncts desperate for employment in an impossible job market, provides the perfect power dynamic for abuse to happen without recourse. This is not a conversation we can put off any longer. #metoo."

III.

October 2018. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Another mass shooting, this time at a synagogue. A middle-aged white man who frequented a social media site founded by neo-Nazis and who posted anti-Semitic memes enters the Tree of Life Congregation on a Saturday morning and uses an assault rifle to kill eleven congregants. It is the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in United States history (Robertson et al.). It is not hard to see this violence as part of two recent trends: the proliferation of deadly gun violence, and the rise of racial violence committed by white extremists. After all, the Pittsburgh shooting occurred only three days after another middle-aged white man, this time in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, killed two black people leaving a grocery store. This white man spared another white man who confronted him because, as he said, "whites don't kill whites" (Zraick and Stevens). A week later, Carolyn Calhoon-Dillahunt, Chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), sends an email to its mailing list, announcing that the National Council of Teachers of English "joined 87 civil rights groups in full-page *New York Times* and *Pittsburgh Gazette* ads to show solidarity with the victims of violence and their families in Pittsburgh, Louisville, and all around the country these past few weeks." Four months from this email, the annual CCCC convention will be held in Pittsburgh.

These circumstances and the problems they represent are, by 2019, sadly familiar. Even the act of listing them brings an uneasy comfort that arises from familiarity: "oh," we may think, "another one." Another litany of the tragedies, horrors, and moral outrages

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that seem to mark the time of everyday life. Each of these examples also demonstrates that these problems are not confined to the places in which they occur. While not true of every circumstance, eventually, the troubling events that arise with painful regularity come home to roost in our profession, our discipline, and our classes. This project is an effort to account for what happens when these tragedies arrive, to generate new understanding of what college-level teachers of writing do when faced with disaster.

As the first example above shows, disaster can impact teachers' and students' abilities to even conduct class as scheduled, because they may not be able to meet at all. It is possible that continuing to work online, as the guidance suggested, could address this issue, but this solution would not apply if students or teachers are without electricity, or are displaced. As the second and third examples show, the nature of the circumstances we are confronting may also lead students, teachers, or even professional organizations to speak out. Something about the events presents itself as a rhetorical exigency, which calls to be addressed. Teachers facing these circumstances will need to decide, in the moment they feel that exigency, how best to handle it. Do I, as a teacher, feel moved to speak out to my students about something that is happening? If I do, what should I say? Or perhaps I should not say anything, and give the students space to discuss it? What happens if a student says something—like personally identifying with the #MeToo movement—in front of the entire class? As teachers repeatedly and increasingly face these scenarios, they may come to the realization that, in many cases, they were not trained for this. In all the pedagogical training that I have received, both formally and informally, at multiple institutions, I was never given pre-emptive guidance about how to address the litany of

violence that marks everyday life—from school shootings to wildfires, from hurricanes to racist killing—if it came up in class. But these moments have come up in class. This project examines these and other similar moments to better understand and prepare teachers to address the disasters and disruptions they continually face.

Teaching Writing Amid Disaster

Circumstances of disaster offer a rich case for investigations into the practice of responsive pedagogy, the role of emotion in the classroom, and how we understand rhetorical situations of teaching and learning. How do teachers respond when the courses they are teaching are disrupted by unforeseen and tragic circumstances? How do those teachers account for and manage the challenges, both personal and pedagogical, that they face in doing so? How do teachers choose what responses they will offer in these circumstances? Writing in the journal *College English* in 2012, Paul Lynch noted that compositionists "seem to feel a frustration with our usual pedagogical habits, a frustration occasioned by a host of new appellant entities knocking at our doors—violence, terrorism, nature, science, politics—all pointing to a general sense that the usual modes of response are unfit for present crises" ("Composition" 473). The problems Lynch lists are just as pressing now as they were then, but the field of composition as a whole has not yet risen up and developed the new modes of response that he calls for. Are new pedagogical modes available to address disaster? Is it possible to adapt familiar pedagogies to the task? Can we prepare teachers to address the kinds of disruptions they may encounter, prior to their occurrence?

Before the Aftermath: A Pedagogy for Disaster Responsiveness takes up these questions by examining the actions taken by different groups of college-level teachers in response to various disruptions impinging on their teaching. I have studied their responses by conducting qualitative interviews, by tracking the circulation of texts online, and by administering quasi-experimental surveys and interventions. As I show, though individual teachers' reactions often differ, several common dimensions of disaster response emerge. Teachers addressing disaster have to balance many competing interests. They have to balance their responsibilities to their students and their administrators and institutions. They also have to balance their personal inclinations to speak up, and risk wounding affected students or themselves, or to remain quiet, and risk by their silence sending a message of disregard. Drawing on insights from affect theory, scholarship on responsive pedagogy, and work in teacher training and development, this project articulates a model that asks teachers to embrace emotion and to adapt familiar genre forms as a mode of offering an ethical response to disaster.

This project asks us to see teachers as a kind of "first responder," working alongside more traditional first responders like aid workers and emergency medical technicians, though in separate fields. In the wake of disaster, communities rise in mutual aid to ensure that their members' needs are met. Traditional first responders tend to many basic, indispensable necessities, including the need for food and water, shelter, and medical care. Teachers who serve as first responders by addressing disaster in their work can tend to the minds of communities facing disruption and tragedy, helping those they serve—in academic or public spheres—to understand and process their experiences. My

project engages this role to ask how we might understand teachers' actions following

disaster differently by choosing to see them as first responders. I also ask what

preparations we can offer teachers to step into this role.

In this project, I advance two key arguments. First, I demonstrate that teachers

respond to disaster in both logistical and emotional ways, and that they respond by

adapting familiar genre forms, like syllabuses and bibliographies, to this task. Second, I

argue for a pedagogy of disaster response that embraces radical contingency, flexibility,

and failure, which is often inevitable in such strained circumstances. This pedagogy is

grounded in theories of experience and education, as developed by educational

philosopher John Dewey and later scholars who have taken up his work. By employing

Deweyan notions of experience, this pedagogy aims to be adaptable to the wide range of

disaster circumstances that can occur, particularly because the manifestations of disaster

are innumerable and unpredictable. Focusing on possible tactics of response, on the

interpersonal, public, and digital spaces where response can take place, and on teachers'

own felt senses of the efficacy of their responses, this project investigates how teachers

have responded to disruptions that have already occurred, and then from these insights,

how we can best prepare teachers to address disruptions yet to take place.

In the remaining chapters in this project, I pursue these arguments in two broadly-

construed moves. First, I examine the question of how teachers address disruptions, with

the aim of developing nuanced depictions of what response looks like in practice.

Second, I articulate a pedagogy grounded in insights from the earlier case studies that

allows teachers to sensitively and ethically address the disruptive circumstances they

encounter. The first move is carried out across Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Two, "Emotional Experiences of Disaster in Hurricane Sandy," takes as its case the impact of Hurricane Sandy on New York City in the fall semester of 2012. From qualitative interviews I conducted with teachers who taught at this time in the English Department of the most-affected four-year campus of the City University of New York (CUNY), I demonstrate the emotional consequences that this experience had on the instructional work these teachers pursued, even years after the fact. I also demonstrate how many of these teachers felt moved to respond more than they were able to, or how the responses they offered felt, in retrospect, inadequate. These findings help to illuminate the affective dimensions of disaster response, as well as the stakes of choosing to or declining to address disruptions when they occur.

Chapter Three, "Hashtag Syllabuses as Public Memorials in Charlottesville," examines the case of the responses offered by activist educators to the white nationalist violence in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017. These educators responded by sharing and circulating resources in digital spaces like the platforms Twitter and Medium, and adapted a familiar academic genre, the syllabus, to serve this task. What resulted was an iteration of the new genre known as "hashtag syllabuses," in this instance named the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus. The rhetorical genre analysis I perform of hashtag syllabuses, particularly the Charlottesville Syllabus, allows me to demonstrate specific dimensions of responsive action as recorded in these texts, an affordance not offered by classroom responses, which often go unrecorded. By tracking the deployment and circulation of these hashtag syllabuses online, I demonstrate that teachers' responses to disaster can be

shared across institutional boundaries, and can circulate continually to agitate for continued responses to later disasters.

The turn to the second move takes place with Chapter Four, "A Pedagogy for Disaster Responsiveness," which builds on the analyses of the preceding chapters to more comprehensively posit a vision for tactics teachers can use to respond to disaster, as well as how we can better prepare teachers to take these actions. The data for this chapter is drawn from pre- and post-test surveys conducted around a targeted teacher training intervention. I conducted this intervention for a small group of graduate teaching assistants enrolled in a pedagogy practicum course, and the data that emerges illuminates key factors influencing relatively new teachers' readiness to address disruption in their courses. These factors include the amount of experience they have with teaching, and their willingness—for better or worse—to let their students determine what circumstances to address in class. I use these findings to directly explore some of the challenging questions that pedagogical response to disaster raises, including what responsibilities teachers have to address disaster, what forms their responses should take, and the value of choosing to engage with such challenging circumstances. The project concludes by offering a heuristic for disaster response that teachers can use in moments of need to guide the actions they will take. While a particular difficulty for responding to disruption pedagogically is the uniqueness of each disaster, this heuristic offers general principles that can be adapted to a range of contexts. It is my hope that when pressing exigencies arise, teachers who turn to this heuristic will feel better-equipped to take action for themselves and their students.

By theorizing how teachers respond to disasters interrupting classes, and developing practical modes of response for others to use, this project offers two significant interventions into contemporary scholarship in rhetoric and composition. First, to ongoing scholarship examining rhetorical situations of teaching and learning, I contribute knowledge of both rhetorical and pedagogical situations of disruption that are increasingly common in contemporary life. Conversations about responsive teaching are long-standing in our field, and I further develop this discourse by demonstrating that a key way to respond to students and their circumstances is to prepare for disruption to occur. My arguments suggest that such disruptions are rhetorical contexts, which therefore merit serious rhetorical study. Second, this project intervenes by prompting scholars concerned with teacher training and development to consider disaster as a context that instructors ought to be equipped to address. This intervention impacts all teachers of writing who may face the kinds of disruptions examined here, and may seek guidance about how best to address them. In this aspect, in this project I aim to concretely improve teachers' capacities to address disruption.

My project extends current conversations in three major areas: work addressing teaching in challenging circumstances, affect theory, and teacher training and development. Extending scholarship that seeks to account for the complicated reality of classroom teaching, this project offers specific attention to the increasingly common context of disaster impacting the classroom. In addition, because responses to disaster are frequently emotional, this project expands theories of emotion, both within rhetoric and composition and interdisciplinarily, to account for these particular circumstances. Finally,

drawing from extensive work in teacher training and development, this project offers new directions for training to prepare teachers to respond to the array of potential disruptions they might face.

Disaster and Other Challenging Circumstances for Teaching

The scholarship I group under the rubric of addressing challenging circumstances in teaching is extremely various. As a field, rhetoric, composition, and writing studies has not yet taken up a sustained engagement with disaster and its impact on teaching. While the topic has not been entirely ignored—scholarship interrogating the task of teaching through disruption and tragedy does exist—we do not yet treat disaster as a significant category of analysis. This prevents me from approaching this topic as a cohesive body of work, so instead I draw insights from related scholarship across the breadth of the discipline, including pedagogical work on responsive pedagogy, and on teaching specific disruptions, as well as from technical communication scholarship on risk communication.

The development of responsive pedagogies—approaches to teaching that remain sensitive to new influences in the classroom—have long been a focus in the field. For example, as digital technology has developed significantly over the past twenty years, a great deal of pedagogical scholarship has arisen to account for it, opening up major areas of pedagogical research into issues like multimodality, and teaching in online and hybrid spaces. Journals in the field specific to these efforts, like *Computers and Composition* and *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, have become major forces by publishing research that furthers these areas. This example stands in contrast to

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the precipitous rise of disaster over the same time period, which, like digital technology, has become a common presence in our lives, but which has not received the same critical attention.

Other work in responsive pedagogy, like community-engaged pedagogies, would seem poised to incorporate understandings of disaster as it impacts communities. As Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters write, "the most immediate effect of service-learning is to rearticulate the college or university as part of rather than opposed to the local community" (4). As a practice, service learning is premised on the idea of turning outward from the academy and toward the community it shares; scholars have noted that "public engagement initiatives have the potential to transform our understanding of the 'service' role of writing courses from that of 'serving' other academic programs to 'serving' a much more broadly defined public" (Rose and Weiser 4). Other framings of this community engagement, like community literacy, have prompted readers to move beyond cultural critique and toward applied literacy practices in actual community spaces (Flower), or to engage in activism outright, in the form of community organizing (Goldblatt). As an exigency, disaster does not recognize the boundaries between university and community spaces; it affects people across these lines. Pedagogies that seek to build connections between the academy and its various local communities ought to account for the presence of disaster, and how it can impact these spaces alike. Moreover, attending to this task would not necessitate a significant paradigm shift for community-engaged work. In the introduction to a collection on community pedagogies edited by Jessica Restaino and herself, Laurie Cella writes that "the premise of this book

is that good projects can come from unpredictable circumstances, or what seems like chaos to the untrained eye" (10). I agree, and would extend Cella's claim to suggest that the unpredictable circumstances of disaster can indeed provide a valuable starting point for projects linking academic and community spaces. Community-engaged pedagogies that respond to disasters could develop beneficial partnerships that would allow both areas to withstand disruptions affecting them across institutional lines.

Often, when disaster has been taken up directly in the field, it is in composition scholarship addressing particularly devastating circumstances. These engagements tend to recount the experiences of teachers in the wake of specific disruptions, as they have reflected on how they taught through them. Shane Borrowman, for example, has written about how he chose to face the morning of September 11, 2001, with his students, writing that when he reflects on that day, he feels "personal shame," and explaining: "I am left with an unshakable feeling that I failed my students in some simple, fundamental way" (1). He feels this way because he "canceled class rather than proceeding with business as usual discussing the events that were unfolding" (1). He later reflects, "maybe this was a teachable moment […] but it shames me now that I didn't do more" (2). The narration of experience Borrowman offers is valuable, and bears significant resemblance to many of the responses to disaster I explore in this project. Other teachers have also written about their experiences in natural disasters, as many who encountered Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005 have done (Johnson et al.; Piano, "Writing"; Piano et al. "Making"). Scholarship examining contemporary political economy has also touched on disaster, as austerity measures, like disaster, create similar challenges to teaching

composition in the early 21st century, challenges in whose face the field is asked to revolutionize itself (Bernstein; Fedukovich; T. Scott; Scott and Welch). One telling move is to borrow the language of natural disasters as metaphor: when Sean Ross Meehan describes the aftermath of the 2008 "Great Recession" in higher education as an "earthquake," for example, his choice of comparison reveals how interrelated these examinations are in practice, because the crisis in political economy perpetuates disasters of other kinds, and exacerbates its impacts.

While all these examples offer valuable contributions, I identify two clear gaps in this research that this project seeks to address. The first gap is one of scope: while much of this scholarship addresses specific disruptions, there is little systematic examination of disaster as a whole. The second gap is temporal: while much of this work is rightly concerned with the forces that create disaster (like the scholarship on political economy) or on reflecting on disasters after they have passed (like the scholarship on specific disruptions), there is a need for pedagogical research that hews very closely to the moment of disruption. To say that there is relatively little scholarship in these areas does not mean that there is none, however. Deborah M. Alvarez has studied using writing to address disruption in the forms of violence and natural disaster, the kind of systematic study I am calling for. Alvarez's book, however, targets adolescent literacy. We need to extend this work to spaces of higher education. Similarly, Paul Lynch, in his essay about composition's "apocalyptic turn," already discussed above, calls for a broader approach in much the same way that I am, arguing that disaster is a moment of potential for "a renewed assembly of composition" ("Composition" 473). Though Lynch's essay was

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published almost seven years ago, and the list of tragedies to which his argument could apply has only grown longer, Lynch's call has thus far primarily been taken up by a handful of public writing scholars. None of these responses, in my opinion, adequately respond to the particular situation, disaster, which motivated his original essay. The call remains unanswered.

Lynch's essay is also valuable for its framing, which addresses the temporal gap I identified above. Few studies addressing disaster have examined the conditions of these disruptions in themselves; most work in composition studies has focused on their effects. Teaching a disaster is a significantly different task when considered from its midst or its aftermath, particularly as that aftermath lingers for a period of months and years. While this kind of scholarship is extremely useful, much more research (like the studies cited above) has focused on the long tail of disaster response, leaving a need for work addressing its immediacy. Nevertheless, work addressing the moment-by-moment task of response also exists, in the form of brief reports from the field. In an essay titled "First, Do No Harm," Sarah DeBacher and Deborah Harris-Moore address the challenges of teaching through Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and a mass shooting in Santa Barbara, California. "We find ourselves not just *living* in the age of trauma but teaching in it," they write, "and with very little guidance about how to do that well." What differentiates DeBacher and Harris-Moore's examination from others I have discussed is their attention to the immediate minutiae of classroom teaching following these disruptions. Describing the need to respond, a need so many teachers have felt, and a need that motivates this project, Harris-Moore writes, "it seemed impossible not to

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address an event so vivid and immediate, and there was no time to research trauma or prepare a thoughtful, related assignment." The authors of a similar examination, Heather Adams, Jeremy Engels, Michael Faris, Debra Hawhee, and Mark Hlavacik, addressing the challenges of responding to the Sandusky child abuse scandal at Penn State, likewise grapple with the challenge of wanting to respond but not being sure if it was the right moment to engage, only to conclude: "our sense of urgency to take some action outweighed our doubts about doing so" (Adams et al. 344). The challenges described in both of these pieces, between deciding to act or not, and over what kind of response to offer, make clear that teachers need more guidance in moments of disruption.

Research attending to the immediacy of response may be scarce precisely because the rapidity it requires runs counter to the deliberative care often valued in academic work. Adams and her co-authors note this directly:

> We very much felt the need for some sort of timely response and decided to take swift action for this reason, despite our realization that as academics, we are ill-equipped to shift into pedagogical, much less scholarly, "crisis mode." The rhythms of our profession demand the slow contemplation of ideas and the distance of multiple drafts and peer review. Our training cultivates a value for distance and objectivity, not the urgency of first response. (344)

While it is true that the pace particular to academic research might disincline scholars from publishing about the messiness of their snap judgments when facing disaster, because these needs are pressing and ongoing, we ought to prioritize and value work that makes the leap into vulnerability by choosing to communicate the experience of immediate disaster response.

In this regard, a useful model for studying disaster response can be found in the subfield of technical communication known as "risk communication." Earlier work in communication exists that addresses responses offered to specific disasters by people impacted by them, like Walzer and Gross' notable 1994 essay on Aristotelian deliberation and the Challenger disaster. Similarly, in 1998, Jeffrey T. Grabill and W. Michele Simmons argued for a view of "the technical communicator as one possessing the research and writing skills necessary for the complex processes of constructing and communicating risk" (417). As disaster and risk have become more prominent, technical communication research has followed these examples to examine disruptions such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (Frost; Richards), earthquake relief efforts in Haiti (Varvas and McKenna), and the communication practices of "unpredictable workplaces" like that of emergency medical services (Angeli). Such scholarship takes clearheaded and detailed approaches to the messiness of different disasters' aftermaths, and scholarship in composition studies outside of technical communication would benefit immensely from following these examples. In examining how disaster response takes place in very short spans of time, this project shows how teachers address the kinds of disruptions highlighted in scholarship on challenging teaching situations from many areas, and provides a much more granular depiction of what pedagogical response to disaster can look like.

Emotional Dimensions of the Experience of Disaster

As an area of inquiry, affect theory has much to offer studies of disaster, and this project draws on scholarship addressing affect and emotions from within the discipline of rhetoric, composition, and writing studies, as well as on interdisciplinary work in affect theory from fields like cultural studies. This project additionally bears on related areas of research like trauma studies. The contribution I offer in these areas is bidirectional: while affect theory significantly informs the study of disaster in teaching contexts, this project also contributes to affect theory by offering new cases (in the examples of the disruptions I examine) and new practices (in the pedagogies I propose) that expand its knowledge and reach.

In rhetoric, composition, and writing studies, affective work is by no means new territory. In rhetoric, Joshua Gunn and Jenny Rice have argued for an understanding of affect as embodied in speech. This work has been extended and expanded in essays by Hawhee ("Rhetoric") and Rice, whose respective discussions of rhetoric's sensorium and how it functions ecologically have done much to deepen our understanding of the way affect moves and functions in the everyday. In composition, Laura Micciche laid significant groundwork with her 2007 book *Doing Emotion*, in which she articulates a view of "emotion as emerging relationally, in encounters between people, so that emotion takes form *between* bodies rather than residing *in* them" (13). It is also worth noting the relationship between emotion and exigency; in his foreword to Micciche's book, Richard Miller begins by invoking the school shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007, noting "America's uniquely awful history of education and violence" (*ix*). Clearly, the links

between affect and disaster have long been understood, and this project seeks to further those links in a more systematic way.

The understanding of the connectedness of disruption and affect has been pursued in fields beyond our own, as well. The affective turn in the humanities has been pursued for at least two decades in a variety of disciplines from psychology (Frijda; Matthis; Oatley) to cultural studies (Ahmed; Berlant; Cvetkovich, *Archive*; Cvetkovich, "Public"; Massumi; Stewart) to geography (Thien). Affect theories emerging from cultural studies in particular have strong bearing on this project. One reason for this connection is the emphasis of these theories on the necessary openness of affect, which impacts disaster as a circumstance we have no choice but to be open to. Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, for example, describe affect "as potential: a body's *capacity* to affect and be affected" (2, emphasis original). This requires the body to be open to being affected, even as affect exceeds bodily bounds. Brian Massumi argues that for affect, "*its autonomy is its openness.* Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is" (35, emphasis original). Sara Ahmed likewise argues that "an ethics of responding to pain involves being open to being affected by that which one cannot know or feel" (30). The value of this emphasis on openness to this project's study of disaster arises from the recognition of the broad dispersal of disaster's impact: we are all capable of being struck by disaster at almost any time. Affect theory prompts us to understand this as an ability to be impacted, and an ability to experience emotions as a result. Studying how teachers address disruptions through the lens of affect theory allows us to place the emotions they personally

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experience in relation with the way those emotions circulate and are shared among entire affected communities.

Yet despite the range of disciplines working with affect, many debates regarding even broad questions about affect remain persistently unanswered. The title of Micciche's book, for example, *Doing Emotion*, belies significant contention about the relationship between emotion and affect, and whether or not they are interchangeable terms. For his part, Massumi distinguishes them: "emotion and affect—if affect is intensity—follow different logics and pertain to different orders" (27). Micciche argues in favor of using "emotion" rather than "affect" or "feeling" to describe her work because she regards emotion as the term best able "to perform meanings and to stand as a marker for meanings that get performed" (14). In contrast, feeling "suggests the personal, individual experience of emotion," while affect "names preverbal conditions that encompass emotion and feeling" (14, 15). Moreover, Micciche argues, "affect refers more to a sense and atmosphere than it does to a specific, intentioned act of making and unmaking" (15). Micciche would find agreement with Deborah Thien in her work exploring emotional geographies; Thien writes that "affect is used to describe (in both the communicative and literal sense) the motion of emotion" (451). This description is useful for the emphasis it places on affect as active, viewing it "as a scene of immanent force," instead of as "dead effects imposed on an innocent world" (Stewart 1). Though Thien, Micciche, and Massumi would disagree on terms, they nonetheless share this important emphasis; Massumi writes that intensity, which for him is "equated with affect," is "filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonance" (27, 26). A separate contour of the debate over

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terms in affect theory involves gender. Thien and Micciche both argue that shifting to the term "affect" is a way to masculinize, and thereby critically recuperate, the feminized term "emotion," and I find these claims persuasive (Thien 452; Micciche 3, 16). Though in this project I use both the terms "affect" and "emotion," I intend them to have different meanings. Specifically, I trace the *affect of disaster* in the form of the *movement of emotion* through the irruption of a disaster, and into the complexity of its immediate aftermath.

Related scholarship in trauma studies has examined similar questions to affect theory, and accordingly also bears on this project. Many affect theorists have examined moments of trauma for the emotions that they cause. The relationship between these two areas is characterized usefully by cultural theorist Ann Cvetkovich, who writes that "when serving as a point of entry into understanding the affective life of social systems, trauma must be seen to inhabit both intense sensation and numbness, both everyday and extreme circumstances"—including, I would add, disaster (*Archive* 43). Trauma studies is an equally broad area of inquiry as affect theory, but for the sake of this project I want to highlight the robust way it has been pursued in the discipline of rhetoric, composition, and writing studies. Within the discipline, trauma studies have responded to similar exigencies as the kinds of disaster I am examining, like racist violence and incarceration (Meiners and Sanabria; Wolters), sexual violence (Hesford; R. Thompson), and school shootings (Socolovsky). Another common case for the study of trauma is the Holocaust (Bernard-Donals; Samuels; Tinberg; Tougaw), which differs from the cases in my project due to the historical distance we have in studying it. Though the intervening time does

not make the Holocaust less traumatic, it does allow teachers to approach it more intentionally, and in a more carefully considered way. This differs from the immediacy of disruptions thrust upon teachers, often while a semester is already well underway. A disruption like this that has been extensively employed in trauma studies was the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and for a swath of scholarship published in the 2000s, a common opening move was to invoke the recent national trauma of these events (Bernard-Donals; Borrowman; Newcomb; Socolovsky; Worsham). Though not exclusively about 9/11, the collection edited by Borrowman, *Trauma and the Teaching of Writing*, opens by invoking the attacks. The first six of twelve essays in that collection also begin with the attacks, before, in its later essays, the book turns to historical instances of trauma. Events on the scale of September 11, 2001, are enormously impactful on all aspects of life, and it is rare even in this age of disaster to encounter anything quite so seismic. But as I have already discussed, the commonalities between scholarship responding to the disasters we continue to encounter and events like the 9/11 terrorist attacks speak to the relevance of the work of both this study and work in trauma studies to one another.

This project is distinguished from trauma studies by a difference in approach. While I agree with Lynn Worsham that "trauma arguably forms the most fundamental rhetorical situation in which we operate as scholars and teachers of composition," I am primarily interested in moments of action that precede moments of trauma (171). According to Worsham, trauma is a reaction that only sets in over time. She writes that "the traumatic event cannot be assimilated or experienced fully at the time of its

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occurrence, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who has been overwhelmed by trauma," and adds: "to be traumatized is to be possessed by a past experience that was never fully experienced as it occurred" (174). Many of the events I examine in this project, or to which this project can apply, could well be traumatic for those who experience them. But if trauma is an experience that occurs as part of a process, over a long term, then it is a secondary reaction to those I am concerned with. This project focuses specifically on the moment of a disaster's irruption, meaning that it focuses on the immediate reactions that teachers are able to offer when challenging or tragic events occur, before trauma has the chance to set in. Whether or not trauma occurs as a result of these events is a separate question from the one examined by this study. I value work in trauma studies, which I see working alongside this project, that can help teachers and students to address the painful circumstances they have experienced. My investigation, by focusing on teachers' immediate responses, augments work in trauma studies by extending it toward an even earlier timeframe. Affect provides a link between these spans of time, as emotions move throughout communities from the moment disaster occurs, until later, when trauma may set in.

Training Teachers to Prepare for Disaster

A final category of scholarship that is significantly impacted by this study is work on teacher training and development practices. While the exact nature of these efforts varies by institution, debates continue in scholarship regarding how best to carry them out, including over issues like how sufficient the amount of training generally provided

is, what forms training should take, and what content the training should address. These debates remain unsettled. The circumstance of disaster complicates all of these questions. While scholars debate whether new teachers who are given only a one-semester practicum course, "a primary component in teacher professionalization," are sufficiently ready to teach writing, how is their readiness impacted when disaster strikes (Dobrin 19)? Scholars debate how training courses should balance covering composition theory and the practice of teaching, but where along that divide does addressing disruption lie? How do teachers who feel like they "have been tossed into the deep end," as one new teaching assistant quoted in Jessica Restaino's *First Semester* reports, rise to the challenge of disaster response if they haven't been prepared to anticipate these events (8)? I argue that given its prominence, it is necessary to prepare all teachers to address disaster. Given enough time, it is likely that all teachers will experience a disruption that impacts their work. This implicates not just research into best practices for training new teachers of writing, but similar areas concerned with the question of how to provide this training, like scholarship in writing program administration (since writing program administrators are often tasked with training efforts) and issues of academic labor (since many teachers of writing are contingent faculty).

The task of training novice instructors to teach composition often falls to writing program administrators (WPAs) as part of their supervisory roles. This is reflected in scholarship on training composition teachers; a great many of the books and essays cited in Stephen Wilhoit's "bibliographic essay" tracing the development of training efforts from 1972-2002 are addressed to an audience of WPAs. WPA scholarship has continued

to explore best practices for training new instructors (Reid), and has attempted to deepen understandings of teacher development as it intersects with key concepts like emotion (Saur and Palmeri), and labor status (Stephens). Disaster preparedness can serve as a natural extension of this work, and the dispositions it leads to can become a regular part of pedagogical development, whether in teacher training (like practicum courses), or ongoing teacher development efforts (like lectures and workshops). While the way a teacher chooses to respond will necessarily depend on the specific circumstances of the disaster, in any instance, preparing to offer a response is an important step in adequately addressing the exigency it presents. WPAs or other faculty tasked with teacher training efforts can play an important role in ensuring that this preparation takes place.

Writing program administration work is concerned not just with teacher training, but also with labor. The broad reliance on contingent faculty in the academy is of particular concern for WPAs because of the high concentration of such faculty under WPAs' supervisions. As of 2010, almost two thirds of all faculty positions in higher education were non-tenure-track (NTT) (Shulman). Survey data from the Conference on College Composition and Communication indicates that almost 70% of writing program instructors are classified as non-tenure-track, and that 80% of writing class sections are taught by contingent faculty (Gere). WPAs themselves may or may not occupy tenure-track positions, but because their duties involve supervising instructors who frequently occupy contingent positions, they often consider the role that labor status plays in the work of those they supervise (Lamos; Strickland). Patricia Stephens, for example, has asked how WPAs, already overburdened, can support a staff of part-time instructors

when that task asks them to take into account both "the emotional impact of long-standing exploitation" on part-time faculty and "the wide range of expertise and experience" among them (36). The challenge these issues pose for WPAs is further heightened in the situation of disaster, where strained circumstances exacerbate the emotions and labor concerns of everyone. In the aftermath of disaster, much is asked of tenure-track and contingent faculty alike, but WPAs, due to their supervisory roles, are especially burdened with the task of managing the responses of a range of instructors. Disaster thus forces WPAs to devote extra attention to these already-present issues in their programs, at a time when these issues are exacerbated by suffering. When teachers, contingent or not, feel capable of responding to disaster because they have been prepared to, the burdens facing WPAs can be mitigated. In the long run, WPAs benefit from incorporating disaster preparedness efforts into the teacher training efforts they pursue.

This project contributes to discourses on teacher training and development for WPAs and non-WPAs who are asked to take on this important task. Specifically, I offer recommendations for training interventions that can be carried out in practicum courses and workshops, or adapted to other settings. These interventions seek to foster the development of habits of reflective thinking that allow teachers to anticipate and adapt to disasters when they occur. But because these are habits of thinking, they cannot be developed quickly or in one-off training efforts, and thus I recommend that teachers who implement them do so in the larger context of providing ongoing engagement with the possibility of disaster. Such efforts do not necessarily represent an overwhelming departure from current teacher training efforts; I am aware that the range of topics that

teacher training needs to address is already broader than it is possible to incorporate in the space available to many of these efforts. Instead of regarding disaster preparedness as an entirely new area for training programs to cover, we can imagine disaster as a particular context that impacts other areas already being addressed, like concerns over responsive pedagogies, accessibility, and challenges frequently encountered in teaching. In this way, preparedness can be folded into ongoing training, equipping teachers to respond effectively whenever disruption occurs.

Personal Stakes: Hurricane Sandy, 2012

I want to close this chapter by briefly describing what the personal impact of responding to disaster can be for teachers of writing. Here I am drawing on my own experience as a novice teacher during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy on New York City in 2012. I will explore the context of Sandy at length in the next chapter, when I examine through interviews how other teachers experienced and addressed that situation. My own account is intended to show what the impact of disaster can be on classes, and on teachers, to demonstrate the need for the pedagogy I propose in this project.

Hurricane Sandy, in the words of one of the teachers I interviewed, brought New York City to its knees. After leaving a trail of devastation across the Caribbean and up the eastern coast of the United States, it arrived in New York on a Sunday night. By that point, the subway system, which normally never stops, had been shut down entirely, and Brooklyn College, where I taught, had cancelled classes for Monday. Through the night of October 29, 2012, millions in the city were left without power and dozens were killed.

And at noon the next day, the emails started coming in. First, an email from Brooklyn College, cancelling classes through Wednesday and promising further updates. An hour later, I emailed my students. I was unsure what to do with my students, or what to tell them. Our class on Wednesday had been cancelled, so I needed to address that. The students' next essay was also due that day; I needed to address that, too. I had not received any guidance from the college or the Writing Program Administrator. In the absence of recommendations about how to proceed, I made a judgment, and sent an email to my class. I wrote: "Hopefully you've all made it through the storm alright, and you and your families are all safe." And then I told them—as long as they had power—to send me their essays by Friday.

Even years later, I feel a sting of regret and failure at what I regard as the inadequacy of this response. I saw the damage all around me, and intellectually I was beginning to recognize how bad the situation was. But I failed to connect what I experienced to my teaching. My aim in writing this is not to castigate myself for my failings, but to point out how long-lasting the emotional consequences of experiencing a disaster can be, and how they can bear on pedagogical situations. Perhaps because the impact of Sandy was so broad in New York City, and because I was such an inexperienced teacher at the time, the circumstances I encountered after the storm have lingered with me. Across this project, I interrogate the ways that disasters have lingered with teachers, both the same one that I experienced, Hurricane Sandy, and others, like the white supremacist violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. My experience of the Hurricane, and my inability to respond to it effectively, was the genesis of this project, in which I

explore the ways—effective or not—that teachers have addressed disruptions pedagogically. For teachers facing disaster in the future, I offer specific tactics of response that will allow them to face situations like the one I did in a way they will not come to regret. But more than this, I offer teachers an understanding of the task of disaster response as a whole—a task that implicates the work of teaching in all its messy, hopeful, and ethical dimensions. As I explore the pedagogical response to disaster across the remainder of this project, I ask my readers to bear in mind the potential negative consequences that failing to address disaster can have. But I do not ultimately arrive at a place of despair. Instead, I argue that by choosing to address disasters as best we can, we teach in a way that is powerfully attentive to the effects, even negative ones, that we all share.

CHAPTER II

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF DISASTER IN HURRICANE SANDY

Each classroom I have taught in at UNC Greensboro has been equipped with a technology-enabled teaching station. On each of these stations is a small intercom box, with two help buttons: "AV Assist," and "Campus Police." Press either, and following a short dial tone, a voice at the other end will immediately answer, offering assistance. Though in the course of my teaching work, I have only needed to use the A/V Assist button, the presence of its counterpart floats forward in my mind when I contemplate the possibility of a disaster in the classroom. I imagine the possible disruptions for which its creators intended it—a particularly disruptive student? an active shooter?—and wonder how often it is actually used, if ever. The button feels notable for its persistent lingering: though I have never pushed it, the button, and the potential crisis it signifies, have awaited me in every instructional space.

I invoke the Campus Police button to suggest two implications of its ubiquitous inclusion. First, the people who decided to include it, and those supervising and approving that decision, must believe that normal classroom activities, which do not require police intervention, can be disrupted enough to require an intercom button. In other words, things have the potential to go wrong. Second, the button is one of several innocuous material features that prepare classroom spaces for disaster, including, for example, commonplace (and legally mandated) fire alarms. We accept these features, like

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fire alarms, if we think about them at all, because though we would rather not need them, we prefer to have them available should disaster occur. Facing the potential of disaster, we prepare the material spaces we occupy, just in case.

This material preparation stands in contrast to the lack of preparedness many inexperienced teachers feel when confronting disasters that disrupt their classes. In a series of interviews I conducted with teachers who taught through Hurricane Sandy in New York City in the fall semester of 2012, many of the least experienced teachers I spoke with reported feeling under-prepared for and disempowered to respond to the events taking place. Many these same interviewees similarly expressed a desire for more guidance from the institution, letting them know at the very least what options for response were available to them. Though a hands-off approach may arise from an institution's respect for principles of academic freedom, the affective responses of the more inexperienced teachers to the events of the hurricane, as reported in their interviews, reveal that these teachers felt more adrift than liberated. Though classrooms like the ones I have taught in are materially prepared to respond to disaster, the teachers who work in these spaces are often not. It is easier and cheaper, of course, to provide a button than to undertake a program of professional development that enables teachers who have not yet dealt with disaster in the classroom to feel empowered to respond to it. But the commonsense notion that we ought to be prepared, "just in case," applies equally to teachers. I argue across this project that teachers should be prepared to consider themselves as first responders, operating in educational spheres to produce greater learning and understanding of disruptions after they occur. The eleven interviews that

serve as the basis of this chapter allow me to portray in detail how teachers took up the role of first responders following the irruption of Hurricane Sandy, whether or not they felt prepared to do so. My aim in developing this depiction is to better understand how teachers experience and address disaster in the context of their work, particularly in the space where this work is significantly carried out: the classroom.

In this chapter, I focus on the affective experiences teachers have had to disaster, specifically oriented around the experience of Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Because my interest is in the teaching of writing at the college level, I sought out writing teachers to interview; the interviews I conducted with these teachers are the primary data for this analysis. From these interviews, I argue that disaster has powerful emotional after-effects, which often lie unaddressed as logistical concerns take more prominence. I also demonstrate that discourses around failure and academic labor can illuminate challenges teachers face in responding. I begin with the methods by which I collected my interview data, and the methodology by which I analyzed them. I follow with insights from theories of affect, rhetorical failure, and academic labor, each of which contributes to a nuanced depiction of the interviewees' experiences. Next, I turn to a detailed analysis of the interview data, including discussions of the roles of emotion, experience, and flexibility in pedagogical responses to catastrophe. Finally, by exploring the question of what kind of response a disaster merits, and what kinds of preparations offering such a response might require, I claim that flexibility, a common pedagogical tactic, is useful but insufficient in disaster circumstances. Instead, I argue for a proactive approach, better conceived of as preparedness, to address challenging and unexpected circumstances. This

chapter thus develops a nuanced depiction of the classroom responses to disaster offered

by teachers for their students, and analyzes those responses to offer an initial version of a

heuristic for response that is developed across the ensuing chapters.

Contextualizing Interviews with Teachers

The data in this chapter is drawn from a qualitative analysis of retrospective

interviews with teachers who have experienced disaster, with the aim of discovering how

they responded, both personally and in their classes. Because I am primarily interested in

college-level writing instruction, I conducted interviews with eleven teachers in the

English department at CUNY Brooklyn College (BC). All but one of the interview

participants taught college writing during the semester that Hurricane Sandy took place:

each was instructing at least one section of the two required writing courses at BC.

However, not all participants were primarily teachers of writing: 4 of the 11 specialized

in other areas (i.e. Medieval Literature, Shakespeare, American Studies, and Comparative

Literature). I did not limit my subject pool to only those teaching writing or only those

specializing in teaching writing because I was also seeking respondents with a range of

positions and experience. Contingent faculty made up a significant portion of the

interviewees (8 out of 11); all of these instructors had less teaching experience than their

tenure-track (or tenured) colleagues (3.6 semesters of prior experience on average,

compared with 29.3, post-PhD at the time of Hurricane Sandy). This difference in

experience was significant in how these teachers responded to the hurricane.

Interview subjects were recruited via two rounds of solicitation emails sent to 129

potential participants: all those teaching in the English Department during the fall

semester of 2012. It is not surprising that adjuncts (and former adjuncts) made up eight of

the interview participants, as this reflects the high number of contingent faculty teaching

composition nationally. BC is a Carnegie-classified large, four-year, public M1

institution; most of the adjunct faculty in the English department come from its Master's

programs, and many of the rest come from the CUNY Graduate Center's Doctoral

programs. This is relevant because many of these teachers were graduate students at the

time of Hurricane Sandy, and several remarked on this fact in their interviews. These

respondents' labor and student statuses impacted both the amount of teaching experience

they had, as well as their experience of the hurricane.

Once the subjects were recruited, I met them to conduct face-to-face, semi-

structured interviews. Because I intended to analyze the interviews following a grounded

theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss), while each interviewee was asked the same

questions in the same order, I also asked follow-up or additional questions as points arose

in the interviews that merited further exploration (Charmaz 15).[1] Where possible, I

conducted the interviews in person, in varying locations throughout New York City; three

of the interviews were with teachers who had since left this area, so these interviews were

conducted digitally via Skype. Each of the interviews was audio-recorded, transcribed,

and coded with goal of producing "an abstract theoretical understanding of the studied

experience" (Charmaz 4). This kind of understanding allows the insights drawn from

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[1] For the structured interview questions and consent materials, see Appendix A.

these interviews to be extended beyond the limited circumstances they describe and toward more broadly applicable principles.

I chose to conduct interviews because I was interested in these teachers' own perceptions and recollections of the events surrounding the hurricane, even five years after the storm. Indeed, the interviewees' memories were occasionally an issue, and several participants at times expressed hesitation over their ability to remember all the details fully. However, because I am studying how these teachers perceived the storm and responded to it, I am more interested in their recollections of the events, whether or not they are objectively true. As I told one teacher during our interview when she could not recall which of the two composition courses she had been teaching that semester, if the distinction was not relevant to her memory of the events, that was still useful information to me.[2] Moreover, because so many of the teachers' reactions to these events were highly affective, it is important to note the connection between memory and affect, which Pruchnic and Lacey, among others, have explored. In the case of these interviews, while many participants expressed some hesitance about remembering fully what happened, all were able to give thorough and detailed accounts of what they remembered of that time.

An advantage of studying interview data using a grounded theory framework is that it requires a cultivated openness to themes and trends that emerge from the data collection process (Charmaz 3). Though it seems obvious in retrospect, I had not fully anticipated the prominence of the emotional responses my interviewees had to the hurricane. As I noticed these reactions, I shifted my focus in an affective direction. This

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[2] Later in the interview, she remembered which course she was teaching.

was aided by my decision to conduct the interviews in person: participants may have been more likely to discuss personal concerns in conversation, as they may not have been if I had used other data-gathering methods, like surveys. Moreover, while the potential pool of interview subjects was broad, eight of the interviewees were people I knew personally, from my own time teaching at BC.[3] This familiarity requires great care, on my part, to avoid reading personal knowledge into the data. However, I believe it also led to participants experiencing greater comfort with me as an interviewer, particularly when it came to discussing negative emotional responses to the storm.

I did not select Brooklyn College as my site of analysis for purely personal reasons. Though Hurricane Sandy's impact stretched from the Caribbean to Canada, it made a direct and severe impact on the New York/New Jersey region. A report produced by the New York City municipal government describes the impact of the storm as: "43 deaths… 6,500 patients evacuated from hospitals and nursing homes… Nearly 90,000 buildings in the inundation zone… 1.1 million New York City children unable to attend school for a week… close to 2 million people without power… 11 million travelers affected daily… $19 billion in damage…" (plaNYC 11). Within the CUNY system, a report produced by the Office of Institutional Research found that 17,119 CUNY students (undergraduate and graduate) "lived within reach of the storm surge," that is, in areas which were most acutely affected, and which received on average, approximately eight feet of water above the normal sea level (CUNY 1). Brooklyn College was the most affected four-year school in the system, with 14% of its enrollment among this number

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[3] It is likely that this familiarity was a factor in these subjects' agreeing to be interviewed.

(CUNY 2). Beyond that group of severely affected people, everyone connected with

Brooklyn College was affected in some way—their children's schools shut down, their

ability to work curtailed by the extended subway system closures, and so on. Even if the

material consequences were not very significant—as was the case for many of the

interviewees—no one was entirely untouched by what happened. I asked about these

effects in the interviews. Hurricane Sandy hit New York City on Monday night, October

29, 2012; schools, subways, and many other places closed Sunday in preparation.

Brooklyn College remained closed for nearly the entire week, resuming classes on

Friday. The English Department overwhelmingly schedules courses on Monday/

Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday, so most teachers lost an entire week of class. I asked

about this in the interviews, as well.[4] Finally, during Hurricane Sandy, one CUNY

student died: Jacob Vogelman, an MFA student in Theater at Brooklyn College. This fact

came up in several of the interviews; given that many of the interviewees either taught

Master's students at Brooklyn College or were Master's students themselves, it is not

surprising that this loss impacted the emotional responses of these teachers. The impacts

of Sandy, whether severe or mild, were felt broadly, and this makes it useful as a case

study, because its widespread effects provided all teachers with an equal opportunity to

address it in their courses. But not all teachers took up this opportunity, or took it up in

the same way. Accordingly, I turn now to the theoretical frameworks that help illuminate

the dimensions of these teachers' responses, to demonstrate how conversations in areas of

affect, rhetorical failure, and academic labor bear on the responses these teachers offered.

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[4] Data for Fall 2012 is no longer available on the Brooklyn College website, but in Fall
2013, of the 164 undergraduate sections of any English course, only 4 met on Fridays.

Affective Experiences of Disaster, Failure, and Labor

In this section, I explore the connections that exist between the experiences of the teachers I interviewed in Hurricane Sandy with scholarship in areas of affect theory, rhetorical failure, and academic labor in composition. Insights developed by affect theorists illuminate trends in the interviewees' responses to the disaster, which were often couched in emotional terms. The interviewees frequently experienced negative emotions in the wake of disruption, and affect theory helps explain the social dimensions of these feelings. These negative emotions also serve as a bridge into an exploration of discourses on rhetorical failure, which help account for the challenges these teachers described in offering a response to their circumstances. Lastly, many of the interviewees worked as contingent faculty at the time of Hurricane Sandy, and so I also draw on scholarship studying academic labor and the experience of contingency to explain the relationship between these interviewees' responses and their perceptions of their work.

Affect. I begin my exploration with affect theory, the most significant theoretical frame for this chapter, and a frame that carries through the remainder of this project as well. I want to begin by recalling the definitions cited in Chapter One from many theorists who describe affect as a *moving* force. Viewing affect as a force in motion allows us to track its course more clearly through the ordinary, an ordinary which is punctured by disaster and disruption. Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg define affect as "an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation *as well as* the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities" (1). In other words, affect acts in time, and scholarship in affect therefore "attends to the hard

and fast materialities, as well as the fleeting and flowing ephemera, of the daily and the

workaday, of everyday and every-night life, and of 'experience' (understood in ways far

more collective and 'external' rather than individual and interior)" (Seigworth and Gregg

7). In its concern with both the collective and individual, as well as the challenge of

normalcy that disaster poses, Seigworth and Gregg's description prefigures much of the

relevance of affect to this project, and so it is worth exploring both the collective versus

individual and normal versus abnormal dimensions of affect.

Affect overlaps the public and the personal; it mediates between internal and

external reactions. As Kathleen Stewart notes, "Ordinary affects are public feelings that

begin and end in broad circulation, but they're also the stuff that seemingly intimate lives

are made of" (2). Within rhetoric, concepts of the balance between the internal and

external have been usefully developed by Jeff Pruchnic and Kim Lacey, in their work on

affective memory, which uses memory to "understand and respond to the intersection of

(individual) subjectivity and (collective) sociality" (475). Pruchnic and Lacey argue that

"the best way to think of such a relation between affect and sociality" is through "the

various intersections of individual and collective memory and the forces of persuasion

affecting and affected by them" (486). This explains why affect is useful for

understanding the connections between personal and collective experiences of disaster, as

well as between internally experienced emotions and externally expressed reactions.

Affect theories can provide "a generative, pedagogic nudge aimed toward a body's

becoming an ever more worldly sensitive interface, toward a style of being present to the

struggles of our time" (Seigworth and Gregg 12). Consciously cultivating such an

interface allows us to respond more carefully to disaster. Teachers experiencing disaster are forced to occupy twinned perspectives: they experience disruption as individuals, but also orient themselves both from and toward the collectivity of their class. Teachers must simultaneously represent and speak to the classroom community, an understanding which weighs on their responses.

Commonly, disasters are thought of as out-of-the-ordinary events. At the same time, however, they are increasingly present features of our lives. Certain kinds of disasters or disruptions that impact teaching are simply more common than they once were. For example, school shootings in the United States have risen precipitously, to the point that more deaths from school shootings in the US occurred between 2000-2018 than from 1940-2000 (Katsiyannis et al. 2565). Other kinds of violence may simply have become more visible, without actually becoming more widespread. Concrete data on this front is elusive, but while social media networks have helped bring long overdue visibility to police violence against black people, America's long and entrenched history of racism makes it likely that these events have long occurred, without sparking national conversations. Still other disruptions—including natural disasters—are more prevalent now due to the ongoing effects of climate change. The ecological factors that lie behind hurricanes and wildfires have been significantly exacerbated due to warming ocean temperatures and droughts. Refugee crises around the world, including in Syria, have also been attributed to food shortages occurring as a result of climate change.

Regardless of their frequency, there is now certainly a common feeling that disasters are omnipresent. This is one reason for studying the affective response to

disaster: whether or not people are directly impacted by misfortune, they may experience

its weight emotionally. Disaster is both normal and not normal, an experience Stewart

refers to as an "ordinary affect," found "in the textured, roughened surface of the

everyday," which "permeates politics of all kinds with the demand that some kind of

intimate public of onlookers recognize something in a space of shared impact" (39). The

shared impact, and the on-looking way we respond to it from afar, is crucial to

understanding the affective dimension of disaster. Importantly, however, Stewart's

"shared impact" is not limited to large-scale catastrophe, and invokes experiences both

positive and negative:

> The politics of ordinary affect can be anything from the split second when police
> decide to shoot someone because he's black and standing in a dark doorway and
> has something in his hand, to a moment when someone falls in love with someone
> else who's just come into view. Obviously the differences matter. The politics of
> any surge depends on where it might go. What happens. How it plays itself out
> and in whose hands. (Stewart 15)

Several ideas are worth noting here: first, disaster is not experienced equally. Even on a

smaller scale, the affective interactions between the police and the black man Stewart

invokes obviously carry a strongly different tenor than the irruption of love, and while the

possibility of love's irruption is present for anyone, the danger of sudden state violence is

not. Thus we find political identities "implicit within structures of feeling, sensibilities,

everyday forms of cultural expression and affiliation" (Cvetkovich, "Public" 461).

Political identities reveal themselves in affect. Second, affective irruption arrives

similarly without regard for the content of its positive or negative cast. This resembles

Lauren Berlant's observations about what she terms "cruel optimism," the entwined

possibility of loss in any promise, hopeful or dreadful, the fear of which "defeat[s] the capacity to have any hope about anything" (94). These political concerns invoke the social dimension of affect, in addition to the challenge found in the cruel optimism that the potential loss of normalcy invokes. Psychologists who study emotions likewise note that the shattering of normalcy causes emotions. Nico Frijda writes that emotions "result from the interaction of an event's actual or anticipated consequences and the subject's concerns" (6), while Keith Oatley argues that "reactive emotions occur when the appearance of the world as we assume it to be is pierced by reality" (4). In a disaster, the suddenness and unexpectedness of its arrival may accordingly be a reason it evokes such strong emotions, particularly when the disaster obliterates, even temporarily, what we know as "normal."

The loss of both normalcy and stability is a particular challenge for education that addresses emotion. Education scholar Sue Ellen Henry describes this stability, writing that "students often see themselves as parts of durable categories (middle class, well educated, well off, smart) rather than seeing themselves as *people* who *have* these qualities" (15). This desire for stability makes them "especially resistant to learning through recognizing their emotions" (Henry 16). But disaster can puncture this stability, destabilizing all these categories. The resulting uncertainty is extremely challenging for both students and teachers to face. At these moments, insights from affect theory's frequent intersections with queer theory are extremely valuable, because queer theory has consistently undertaken depathologizing work "which has made it possible to document and revalue non-normative ways of living" (Cvetkovich, "Public" 461). This work has

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been taken up pedagogically, as well, including by Stacey Waite, who argues for seeing "writing and teaching as already queer practices," in which we can use what she terms "queer forms" (6). For Waite, queer forms are "non-normative and category-resistant forms of writing that move between the critical and the creative, the theoretical and the practical, the rhetorical and the poetic, the queer and the often invisible normative functions of classrooms" (6). Such forms can prove extremely useful in the context of disaster response, a concept I explore at length in Chapter Four.

The question of normative uses of emotion in classroom contexts has been taken up educational theorists beyond rhetoric and composition, as well. Traditionally, the presence of emotion in educational spaces has been viewed as undesirable. Instead, the normative approach to education has downplayed emotion to emphasize cerebral approaches. Educational theorists Jane Kenway and Deborah Youdell, for example, claim that "education is almost always positioned as rational – as a social and epistemological endeavor, as an abstract process, as a set of reasoned and logical practices, and as a series of formal spaces the production and use of which is as 'uncontaminated' by emotion as possible" (132). Yet at the same time, Henry reminds us that the most obvious relevance of affect to education is that "*all teachers teach people with feelings and emotions*" (12, emphasis in original). These feelings and emotions are always brought into the class by the students—and teachers—who experience them. To ignore the presence of these feelings is willfully obtuse. But at the same time, Ann Cvetkovich's description of the "divided attention" she and other teachers experienced in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as "a movement back and forth between the everyday business of the semester's

beginning and the urgency of the disaster," can explain why teachers often feel vexed with responding, torn between desires for normalcy and for reaction to the atypical situation ("Public" 460). Cvetkovich also notes that this divided attention is "a split focus that constitutes the lived experience of class and race divisions," again a potent reminder that the affective experience of disaster is not distributed equally ("Public" 460). The presence of such inequality is heightened in the classroom, which is always marked by power imbalances.

Failure. The power imbalances we find in the classroom, particularly around questions of emotion, also impact the experiences of teachers trying to respond to disaster. Specifically, many of the teachers I interviewed described feeling negative emotions like failure and regret when asked to reflect on how they responded to Hurricane Sandy in their classes. Failure is, after all, an emotional experience. Moreover, like all emotional experiences, failure is also an embodied experience. The experience of failure also poses particular challenges for our ability to communicate through it, especially in the failure-averse context of the academy. In 1996, Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede noted emphasis on success in both academic work and communication; not only do they note that "success in the academy is measured by 'objective' and largely individualist criteria, such as publications and reprintings, citations, and the degree of response that writing engenders," but also that "the rhetorical tradition's focus on success in communicating with and persuading others is longstanding and enduring, discernable in the western emphasis on efficiency, 'getting the job done,' and clarity, as well as in traditional theories and definitions of rhetoric" (168, 173). They argue that such a focus

"make[s] it particularly easy for us to forget how multiple, heterodox, and situated both teaching and writing are" (177).

Because rhetorical success and academic success are bound together in notions of efficacy, situations whose conditions complicate (or prevent) efficacy are harder to integrate into our idealized understanding of how communication works. Jeffrey St. John, for example, has argued that "we do not regularly and lucidly appraise the possibility of failure's appearance in our lives, *as a fact of life*, in a clear-sighted way. After all, who would want to?" (249, emphasis in original). According to St. John, failure is the inexorable hallmark of most communicative efforts. He argues that "humans fail to communicate far more often than they succeed" and that "the rarity of communication belies neither the ubiquity nor the stunning persistence of our efforts to communicate" (250). Indeed, the teachers I interviewed frequently expressed feelings of failure in the responses they offered to Hurricane Sandy; it is worth focusing on these feelings because affect also impacts communication: "without the affective background of sensation, our epistemic exchanges are likely to miss their connections. Communication fails" (Rice 38). We can explain the interviewed teachers' failure-tinged reactions by applying Berlant's notion of cruel optimism to the circumstance of teaching in disaster. In these cases, a teacher's hope for successful communication, and thus successful teaching, as well as the hope for normalcy, is lost amid the sudden irruption of disaster. Berlant writes that "moments of optimism, which mark a possibility that the habits of history might *not* be reproduced, release an overwhelmingly negative force" (111). She adds that "one predicts such effects in traumatic scenes, but it is not usual to think about an optimistic

event as having the same potential consequences" (111). The commonplace anticipation that disaster, while omnipresent, won't affect *us*, "couldn't possibly" strike here, only occurs "elsewhere," stands in affective tension with the sense that disaster is always imminent, that at any moment a gunman could shoot into a public space, or that a plane could drop out of the sky. Berlant's observation shows us that our optimism, in which we feel that we will successfully avoid disaster, and our fear, in which we feel aware of how quickly our normalcy could all come crashing down, are not separate reactions. Instead, optimism and fear are twin responses, both of whose consequences bear a powerful emotional weight.

How, then, is a person to live "normally" if disaster can strike at any time? Should teachers conduct class on the edge of panic, in the interest of being aware of the contingency of their work? Obviously, neither of these approaches is of much use to anybody. Instead, it makes sense to follow the work of Ann Cvetkovich, who seeks to normalize traumatic feelings by depathologizing them, recognizing them as not departures from but part of the regular course of a human life. Cvetkovich describes her work in *An Archive of Feelings* as "an approach to trauma that focuses on the everyday and the insidious rather than the catastrophic and that depathologizes trauma and situates it in a social and cultural frame rather than a medical one" ("Public" 462). Though my focus on disaster appears to contradict Cvetkovich's minimizing of scope, her observation is nevertheless crucial for noting that people experience the effects of trauma more on the scale of the everyday than on the catastrophic. Even when catastrophes occur, people's experiences of them are smaller and more deeply personal. Cvetkovich

argues that when examining "small dramas" we must recognize that "their invisibility or normalization is part of their oppressiveness" ("Public" 462). I believe those I interviewed invoked their senses of failure in order to try to account for this invisibility or normalization, which otherwise isolated their experience of the disaster. This is despite the relatively common mentions of emotions that relate to failure, like regret, in the interviews. This suggests that failure is part of the sensorium of the event, a "locus of feeling" that is "not confined to presumed bodily boundaries," and which "expand[s] from individual to collective, like breath" (Hawhee "Rhetoric's" 5). In this way, emotional responses to Hurricane Sandy are simultaneously isolating and shared: though the negative emotions these teachers experienced serve to emphasize the disconnection following the disaster, the interviews reveal how commonly held these emotions are.

Though communicating emotional experience is often difficult, due to the intensely personal nature of emotions, negative emotions can be even more difficult to communicate because they feel so isolating. This means that the affective experience of failure is often related to the experience of rhetorical failure. Rhetorical failure refers to communicative efficacy more than an emotional experience, but it is not difficult to see that these concepts are still closely linked. Rhetorical failure, as theorized by Stacey Sheriff, is:

> an experience and a confluence of events in which rhetorical performance: 1) is rejected, ignored, or excluded by a significant audience, 2) causes the rhetor acute hardship and pain, 3) damages (or suppresses) the rhetor's reputation, 4) constrains the rhetor's ability to continue their rhetorical activism, and 5) impacts the rhetor's subsequent discursive and material rhetorical strategies. (6)

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Possible reasons Sheriff offers for rhetorical failure include that "the audience ignores, rejects, or denies the rhetor" or their message, that the rhetor "does not have the power, leverage, or resources to gain a platform or media channel to be heard" or that "the 'timing' is not right" (193). These reasons are relevant to the circumstances of failure in disaster, which invoke questions of audience disposition (how do the students respond to teachers choosing to address disaster?), authority (does the teacher feel able to speak out on the disaster?), and circumstances (do the specific conditions of the disaster allow for teachers and students to respond to it?). Of particular relevance is Sheriff's discussion of "failure of situation," in which "rhetoric is not enough to affect a desired change or there are no available means (for a given rhetor) sufficient to achieve certain persuasive ends" (193).[5] In the context of teaching amid disaster, we can imagine failure of situation occurring when nothing a teacher can do is rhetorically sufficient to address the circumstances. Even the fear of facing a circumstance in which nothing they can say will matter could prevent a teacher from choosing to take responsive action. From these ideas, we can see the links between affective and rhetorical failure, especially in terms of how they are experienced. The emotional experience of failure is negative and frequently marked by senses of shame, embarrassment, or regret. Rhetorical failure is marked by similar experiences, but with particular emphasis on the rejection of a message. Those experiencing rhetorical failure suffer personal consequences, which in many cases may

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[5] Sheriff develops her theory of failure of situation in relation to activist Jane Addams' pacifist efforts during World War I, particularly through her transgression of gender roles, suggesting war was not appropriate context for women's activism (172-3, 176). Sheriff also argues that "militarists and antisuffrage activists" worked to make the conditions of public discourse particularly hostile to Addams' activist message (160).

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be emotional. Often, experiencing rhetorical failure causes the rhetor to feel affective failure.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, many of the experiences my interviews described in terms of affective failure may have also been experiences of (and may have been caused by) rhetorical failure. Sheriff's theory of failure of situation emphasizes the insufficiency of rhetoric as a response to the occasion. The rhetorical situation, as first theorized in 1968 by Lloyd Bitzer, is "a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance" (5). Bitzer also notes that rhetorical situations have "constraints" which "have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (8). Keith Grant-Davie develops the idea of constraints further, to note that some constraints support a rhetor's case, while others hinder it; he calls these "assets" and "liabilities" (272). For Grant-Davie, constraints are "all the factors in the situation, aside from the rhetor and the audience, that may lead the audience to be more or less sympathetic to the discourse, and that may therefore influence the rhetor's response to the situation" (273). In particular, I am interested in these constraints as situational liabilities, because the particular confluence of factors occurring in the wake of disaster can severely limit the range of possible action available to any rhetor. Certain situations—like disaster—may be so constrained as to cause almost any rhetorical action to fail. Rhetorical resources may be insufficient to address the genuine harm of homelessness, injury, or death resulting from a disaster's impact. Yet even in this failure, a focus on affect can give us hope for some form of responsive action. This is because "emotion carries with it the idea of the contextual situation, the

ways in which one feels that are linked to others experiencing similar situations" (Henry 13). Or, as Rice has argued, "wounds created and experienced in the sensorium" can harm, but can also "[reaffirm] the connective, participatory dimensions of sensing that are endemic to rhetoric" (40). Thus while rhetorical failure may be inevitable following disaster, useful classroom responses to it are still possible. By focusing on the emotions felt by themselves and in their students, teachers can forge a stronger community, grounded in the knowledge of a shared experience.

Labor. All of these questions—how to attend to emotion, or failure, following disruption—are complicated by the actualities of any specific disaster situation. One particularly prominent factor arising from my interviews was the effect that contingent academic labor status had on these instructors' capacities to respond to the storm. It is thus important to add context regarding academic labor to this depiction, because we cannot ask teachers to take on the emotional labor of disaster response (and to risk failure in the process) without acknowledging the more traditionally-recognized forms of labor they are already engaged in. A significant portion of course sections in the English Department at Brooklyn College were taught by contingent faculty. Correspondingly, a significant number of contingent faculty (or former contingent faculty) participated in my research interviews.[6] While all participants identified their academic rank early in our conversations in response to a question regarding their role in the department, many

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[6] Approximately 73 of 143 sections offered by the English Department in the Fall 2013 semester were taught by adjunct faculty; Fall 2012 data is no longer available. 8 of 11 interviewees identified as adjunct faculty; of the eight, one was full-time, non-tenure track (NTT), and one was part-time in conjunction with an administrative position; the rest were part-time only.

returned to a discussion of it toward the end of the conversation, in response to the

question: "How do you think your departmental or institutional status affected your

response or capacity to respond to Hurricane Sandy?"[7] Labor issues were present in our

conversations frequently enough that it is necessary to address them.

The interviews make clear that contingency, like disaster, is experienced

affectively. This finding is supported in scholarship on both emotion and on academic

labor. Henry notes, for example, that emotion is tied up in questions of power,

particularly in "the tension between personal and institutional power" (14). In

emotionally fraught situations, teachers may attempt to shift roles with their students, to

mitigate their authority and approach the situation more personally. Putting aside the

complicated issue of how students respond to such moves, teachers' abilities to perform

them is also highly dependent on their own institutional security. If the role of

"instructor" is hard-won, and perhaps only tenuously held from semester to semester, it is

more challenging for these instructors to feel secure enough in their positions to cede that

role, even temporarily.

The continual pressure of winning reappointment also negatively impacts

contingent faculty's identification with their profession. Angela Bilia noted in the 2011

College English "Forum on Identity" for contingent faculty that "you never fully

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[7] This question implies but does not require a response invoking labor issues; other
possible responses I anticipated but did not receive included discussions of research/
teaching focus, service duties, or sense of workplace community. In one instance, the
question allowed me to ask about the Writing Program Administrator's supervisory and
administrative duties, which I explained to the WPA when I was asked what I meant by
the question. I also imagine that the relative prominence of labor issues on the campus
and in English, due to an active union in which several department faculty play governing
roles, influenced how interviewees responded.

experience accomplishment as a professional when you are constantly treated as an apprentice who needs supervision and direction from those on top" (388). Ann Penrose attributes this wounded identification in part to "the practical realities of contingent employment [that] inhibit participation in these critical forms of collegial interchange," noting that "even basic social connections among local colleagues are difficult to form when faculty teach at odd hours and distribute their time among multiple institutions" (118). Not only does the experience of being contingent affect faculty members' workplace efficacy, but it also affects the social experience of the work. People want to feel connected to their work, and belonging to a community of teacher-scholars significantly contributes to contingent faculty members' feelings of professionalism (Penrose 120). When these important emotional connections are not available to contingent faculty, it influences the decisions these teachers make at work, including whether or not to address disruptions.

These decisions also depend on differences in status among the group of contingent faculty members, as well. The positions and experiences of contingent faculty are extremely various, and the pool of instructors at Brooklyn College represents one very specific configuration of academic labor. Accordingly, it is worth clarifying both the national picture of contingent academic labor, and the specific manifestation of these issues on the campus I studied. Much of the existing scholarship on contingent faculty focuses on the experiences of those who may be among those most affected over the long-term by the dual-track labor system: full-time, non-tenure-track (NTT) employees. Their experience is a purgatory: they have just enough year-to-year stability, and teach

just enough classes, to become fully invested in an institution, but remain subject to

changes in staffing that will cost them their jobs. This unidirectional commitment usually

works to the detriment of NTT faculty when "colleges and universities take advantage of

the uniquely human capacity to derive satisfaction from the mere fact of functioning as a

professional" (Doe et al. 445). While the situational particularities of NTT faculty has led

to helpful scholarly attention to their circumstances, somewhat less has been given to

those who are involved in more temporary (i.e. part-time) or less obviously exploitative

ways. The status of graduate student instructional staff, for example, is premised on the

nature of their work as "apprenticeship," a distinction that few believe is wholly

baseless.[8] However, certain conditions of graduate labor begin to resemble adjunct

contingency in significant ways. As Allison Laubach Wright claims:

> an education that includes teaching a 2/2 load of FYW with minimal training, no
> private office space to consult with students, a low salary, little chance of shared
> governance, little representation on department committees, and few benefits
> sounds like an apprenticeship towards a contingent faculty position. Or, more to
> the point, like a contingent faculty position. (227)

Many of the interview respondents worked in circumstances like these, whether they

were current or former graduate students.[9] Moreover, all instructors at Brooklyn College,

whether or not they were currently enrolled as graduate students, held positions classified

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[8] One key difference between graduate student and contingent faculty labor is the relative
security of graduate students, who often have multi-year guarantees of work, tied to the
duration of their studies. In my own experience as both a graduate student and adjunct
instructor, I agree with Seth Kahn, who describes contingency as a graduate student as
"nowhere near as viscerally precarious as adjunct positions" (259).

[9] The English adjunct pool at Brooklyn College is drawn almost exclusively from its own
graduate programs (MAs and MFAs), with a few additional faculty members currently
pursuing PhDs at the CUNY Graduate Center.

as "Adjunct Instructional Faculty." For this reason, when I discuss labor issues relevant to the interviewees' circumstances, I consider them primarily as contingent faculty.

Experiences of contingency and experiences of disaster can carry similar emotional weight. In many of the interviews, teachers linked their own experiences of contingency to the experiences of those affected by the hurricane. Yet rather than seeing in these commonalities the despair of the downtrodden, I want to suggest the possibility for hopeful response emerging from these negative emotions. As an example, I look to the work of the Feel Tank Chicago. As described by Cvetkovich, this group's mission is "to depathologize negative affects so that they can be seen as a possible resource for political action rather than its antithesis" ("Public" 460). They argue, as a result, that while depression "retains its associations with inertia and despair, if not apathy and indifference," it also "become[s] [a] site of publicity and community formation" ("Public" 460). As I turn to my analysis of the interviewees' responses to the hurricane, I give special attention to the affective dimensions of their responses, and remain fully aware of the labor conditions under which these teachers responded. Nevertheless, this analysis reveals possibilities like those Cvetkovich discusses—possibilities for political action, publicity, and community formation—that are latent in these challenging moments.

How Did Teachers Respond to Hurricane Sandy?

In this section, I turn directly to the responses of the teachers I interviewed to Hurricane Sandy, as they reported them to me in conversation. The insights I offer here

build on the theoretical bases of affect, failure, and labor status to demonstrate how the actions these teachers took in the wake of the hurricane diverged between an awareness of the emotional realities of the experience and the logistical concerns of addressing it in class. Specifically, I trace the divergence in response between the awareness of the emotional reality of the storm that the interviewees reported, and the primarily practical changes they made in addressing it, leaving the emotional concerns unattended. Additionally, in my interviews I found that the amount of teaching experience the instructors I spoke with had was also a significant factor in determining the nature of their response; this impacts contingent labor status, as well. Lastly, I provide a detailed analysis of what it means to be "flexible," pedagogically and interpersonally, following a significant disruption. This analysis provides a bridge into a broader discussion of flexibility, which allows me to consider what kind of response is merited by disaster.

Emotional and logistical effects. The effect of Hurricane Sandy, for the teachers I interviewed, was overwhelmingly emotional. One interviewee, Denise, remarked that in experiencing the hurricane, "There were just more… feelings, I think, than I was expecting to have."[10] In coding the transcripts of the interviews, I defined "emotion" generally as any reference to emotion or feeling, without referencing a specific emotion. Specific emotions (e.g. fear, empathy) were also coded individually. When the frequencies of all of these codes—emotion alone and specific emotions—are combined, these references rank as the most commonly mentioned by a factor of three. While not

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[10] All interview participants chose pseudonyms, which I use to refer to them throughout.

every interviewee invoked emotion equally, emotional reactions were nevertheless widespread. All but one of the interviewees mentioned emotion in some way.

Not every interviewee who mentioned emotion did so in the same way, however. Some uses of emotion, as in the comment above from Denise, referred to personal reactions to the storm. Others, like Sylvia, reflected on the emotions of their students, saying: "Most of my students were not really logistically affected. I think everyone was shaken, obviously. But most of them could snap back and still had their books, their work." Note the breadth Sylvia describes of the emotional impact—*everyone* was shaken, *obviously*. Others commented on this as well, though the effect they described was not always negative. Beverly said that in the storm's aftermath, she thought her students "needed each other. I'm sure school felt really safe to them in the aftermath." Vincent also noted this, saying that for him and his students "just being in the room" was "a worthwhile place to be, […] there was some sense of normality that kind of felt, um, comforting, maybe." Others' responses to teaching in the aftermath were overwhelmingly negative, particularly in retrospect. Ruth reflected with regret: "I think I was oblivious to how it was affecting them." She later described this same obliviousness, in the context of a friendship, as "a huge breach of empathy on my part." Similarly, Jane said: "Looking back on it—this is not a memory, but this is the most strong emotion—is that I wasn't proactive enough in communicating with my students about how that impact may have affected them."

The range of emotional responses to the hurricane is revealing in itself, because it suggests a common frame for understanding very disparate responses to the same events.

In understanding Sandy, many interviewees worked to balance the breadth of the storm's impact with geographic differences in its severity. Harley noted that "Sandy, in a sense, was kind of unusual because it […] had an impact on the entire class." Claude echoed this, saying "There's always one kid who has some life crisis. And you need to figure out how to deal with that. But Sandy was unique in that all of a sudden I had a bunch, they all had the same thing going on. And I don't think, I can't think of anything else that was like that." Both Harley and Claude are referring to a factor somewhat specific to natural or ecological disasters: they often impact large (or even vast) geographic areas. Unlike more localized disasters, ecological disruptions can impact an enormous number of people in an instant.

But despite the breadth of the Hurricane, its negative effects were not evenly distributed, which challenged teachers wondering how to respond. Beverly summed the problem: "It wasn't like you could be, like, 'we all experienced the exact same thing that day.' It's more like, 'I don't know anything about where you go when you leave here.' And the topography, you know, the geography of this place is… some people live, like, in Sunset Park and they're up on a big hill, and other people live in Coney Island and they're at sea level." Beverly's attention to geographical distinctions among her students and herself was fairly common; Sylvia remarked of her graduate students that "I'm sure they were shaken by it, but I don't think any of them were geographically positioned in a way that they were particularly vulnerable." Ruth, a graduate student at the time, noted that her and her colleagues' geographic position "has socioeconomic aspects to it too, like, we were all north of the college"—meaning that they were in areas less severely

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affected by storm damage.[11] From these responses, we see the interviewees' accurate sense that some areas of the city, and therefore some groups of lower socioeconomic status, were much more severely affected than others. But we also see them focusing the need for response to those most physically impacted, which has a minimizing effect on the storm's emotional weight.

The emotional weight of the storm was prominent, and it arose in several interviews when respondents couched the damage to the city in emotional terms. Claude noted that "What was normally, like, a high-functioning city was, it was eerie to see it brought to its knees." Not every respondent echoed this, however. Norman, who had been teaching the longest of all the subjects interviewed, contrasted the breadth of effect of Hurricane Sandy to teaching during an earlier cataclysm in New York City, the attacks of September 11, 2001. With 9/11, Norman said,

> people's lives were changed. […] Radically changed, and changed forever. So maybe Hurricane Sandy changes people's lives forever, but […] a much more limited population. And [in] ways that can be fixed. So if your house is flooded, maybe it takes six months, and maybe it takes a year, and it's horrible, but it can be fixed. But if your father was at the World Trade Center and is dead, that can't be fixed. So I think that […] maybe for me […] a hurricane is not as traumatic. I *know*, not 'maybe.' It's certainly not as traumatic as something like a terrorist [attack].

These divergent reactions raise the question of prior experiences of disaster, and to what degree the interviewees' responses to Sandy were determined by prior disruptions they had encountered. The divergence also reveals different orientations toward teacher

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[11] Ruth was not, to my awareness, a student of Sylvia's at this time.

response: what a teacher judges to be an appropriate reaction depends strongly on their conception of how broadly affecting the disaster was.

The most common perspectival shift arising from Hurricane Sandy is attributable to this affectedness, which led several interviewees to see their students more as people, and not merely in their classroom roles. Miriam, for example, described the change in her teaching after Sandy as an "ever-so slight, perspectival shift, […] with regard to my students, maybe their personhood," adding "I don't want to call [it] 'leniency,' but maybe understanding or empathy. Just regarding any, any smaller or significant disaster might occur in a student's life." Others, like Denise, made this connection when I asked them to reflect on Sandy's lasting impact:

> My teaching has changed. I don't know if I would attribute it to Hurricane Sandy, at least consciously. But definitely, as I'm saying this, it had this emotional impact on me. And I saw it affecting my students, and of course, connecting with my students is a big part of why I'm doing this job. So yeah, I think it must have. But not probably in a way I think I thought about consciously.

Both Miriam and Denise were adjunct teachers, and cited their relative newness to the profession as part of what led to that shift, but even Sylvia, a full professor, noted a similar connection: "I just remember feeling that the experience of Sandy in a way sort of made me a little bit more… careful […] I think it sort of raised my awareness about how many things may be happening in students' lives that we don't know about, and see about." The awareness these teachers are describing is important because it suggests a change in orientation to the way they approached their work in the years since Hurricane Sandy. When teachers see their students as people, beyond the narrower view of their

academic roles, the way they relate to their students changes. The resulting empathy may allow teachers to better address students' needs in the strained circumstances of disaster, an orientation that I argue is deeply necessary.

Despite these insights and orientations, however, the most common actions these teachers took in response to the hurricane were logistical, rather than emotional. While they discussed the storm in emotional terms, they addressed it on a purely practical level. Across the interviews, there was consensus that the most significant academic result of the storm was the cancellation of a week of classes. Accordingly, when I asked about how the cancellation affected their teaching, the interviewees' responses included schedule shifts (14 mentions), dropped readings (6 mentions), dropped assignments (4 mentions), changing assignments or deadlines (3 mentions each), and slowing down the course (2 mentions). Many interviewees also mentioned offering their students an invitation to an open dialogue (16 mentions)—that they could be approached with personal issues students were encountering, if necessary. Vincent describes the problem aptly as "a logistical sort of question of just, what to do with the rest of the semester." This reaction was fairly common. Logistical responses may be so common because they are the most straightforward; Claude noted that "It's hard to know how to respond. So I think in a lot of cases, people just do what they would do anyway." Norman echoed this, saying "if you were hit by a bus, and told me you were hit by a bus […] and you'd be out for two weeks, I would try to accommodate you. So I don't, I don't think that, for me, a hurricane had any dramatic effect on my approach to teaching, or my ability to kind of change the rules mid-stream if we have to." Vincent, Claude, and Norman's reactions

show that they feel that their capacities as teachers already enabled them to respond to the storm, through traditional pedagogical areas of control over things like assignments and course pacing. But this does not also mean that the logistical responses they offered were considered in all cases ideal—note that Claude's explanation of people doing "what they would do anyway" is premised on the idea that "it's hard to know how to respond." This suggests that if teachers were enabled to see other realms of possible response beyond the traditional academic options, they might be more willing to take them.

The overwhelmingly logistical response to Sandy stands in contrast with the equally widespread recognition that the storm was emotionally affecting. In other words, while many teachers felt the emotional impact of Sandy, many of them also did not directly seek to engage its emotional range in their teaching, at least not directly. For some teachers, this later became a point of regret, further influencing the emotional tenor of the disaster. Claude says this almost directly: "I didn't address—I mean, other than logistically—I didn't address the storm at all in class. I don't think. Um… and I sort of wish that I had." Ruth also notes this: "I regret, looking back now, that I was so naïve to what that experience actually was like for those students, that we didn't do an essay about Sandy, that we didn't read essays about [it]." She added that "it would've been such an amazing opportunity, especially as someone teaching writing, to be able to make a space for them. […] I wish I had been better equipped and attuned to that differently." For Jane, this problem represented a broader uncertainty, reflecting her belief that "all of the teachers" "didn't know what to do." She concluded that "if you're a good teacher, you probably cared. And you're concerned about your students, you know that this is going to

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impact their lives, it's going to impact […] your class. But it seems like nobody really knew what to do or how to respond." Jane's discussion succinctly represents the broader divergence between logistical responses, which were fairly commonplace, and the more difficult task of offering an appropriate emotional response. The challenge of emotional response, while present for all teachers, was exacerbated for those with less confidence in their role—an issue present both for less experienced teachers and teachers with contingent labor status. A fuller exploration of how these factors influenced the interviewees' responses to Sandy will demonstrate how the logistical actions taken, and the emotional actions not taken, are impacted by concerns over workplace efficacy.

     Experience as a determinant. One of the most significant factors determining how teachers respond to disaster is the amount of prior experience they have both with teaching and with prior disruptions of any kind. This is reflected in the varying reactions of the interview subjects, who fall into several distinct categories of experience. While certainly not true nationally, fortuitously for this case, the amount of teaching experience held by the interviewees in this study corresponds directly with their academic labor status. For the purposes of this study, this coincidence allows me to eliminate one complicating variable in the picture of response by treating labor and experience together. Nevertheless, in recognition that these variables often separate—there are many contingent faculty with great depths of experience—I also attend to areas where I think either experience or labor status is a more significant factor in explaining the interviewees' responses.

In the interviews, I found that tenure track or tenured professors felt significantly more capable of responding to Hurricane Sandy than the interviewees who were contingent. Both of the full Professors, Norman and Sylvia, as well as the then-Assistant Professor, Harley, who was "confident" he would get tenure, did not express concern over lack of experience, lack of guidance, or lack of preparation in response to the storm. In contrast, all of the other interviewees mentioned at least one of these. These eight teachers included a full-time, non-tenure-track adjunct (Vincent), three part-time adjuncts who had graduated from the department's MFA program in the past two years (Beverly, Claude, and Denise), and four current graduate students, officially classified as part-time adjuncts (Jane, Lisa, Miriam, and Ruth).[12] In particular, the contingent interviewees' labor status and experience in teaching strongly influenced how they responded to Sandy.

Both Jane and Ruth described their lack of preparation to respond to the hurricane, often in emotional terms. Jane reported that she "felt at the time" that "'I'm doing the best that I can for these students,' but I was *totally* unprepared—I think there could've been so many other things that I could've done, and done better, that I regret not doing." Claude noted that his response to students in distress was purely logistical, saying "I hoped and got the sense that the university was […] aware of and reaching out to students who needed support, but I didn't… imagine myself as, like, part of that." This

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[12] I use the term "contingent faculty" to describe employees who are teachers of record but who were appointed on a semester-by-semester basis. Within the context of the interviews, I also refer to these teachers as "adjuncts," the term used to describe their position in CUNY employment documents. Though some of these teachers were graduate students during Sandy, I do not refer to them as "Teaching Assistants" or "TAs," because at CUNY all teaching graduate students were appointed as adjunct faculty. Referring to these teachers as adjuncts, and not TAs, also more accurately describes their work experience *as* contingent faculty, not apprentices (Wright).

comment reflects, in part, a sense of what a teacher's responsibility is to respond to matters falling outside the academic realm. Norman—who, again, was the most experienced teacher interviewed, and who also served at the time as Director of Composition—described the scope of response in these terms quite clearly: "I don't ever think it's my role to counsel [students], or to find resources outside the college for them, but much more to find resources, to direct them to resources within the college, to people who are trained to deal with such things."[13] Norman's point about training is well taken; counseling is a highly-trained skill, and I do not believe that teachers without that training should seek to fulfill that role for their students. I understand Norman's comment as articulating a resistance to emotional response, as beyond the responsibility of the job, and the capability of the instructor not trained as a counselor. In these regards, I agree with Norman's concern. But there is a difference between counseling students and responding to them emotionally, and I do not think that being wary of the former precludes us from sensitively attempting the latter.

Beyond the question what actions it is appropriate for a teacher to take, it is also possible to understand Claude's comment about not seeing himself as part of the effort to respond to distressed students in reference to his labor status. A comment from Miriam invokes this reading; she said that "As an adjunct at Brooklyn College I definitely did not feel empowered to, um, I guess, it's really a nebulous phrase, but, you know, 'do

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[13] Denise, as the composition program administrator (a staff position), worked closely with Norman, the Director of Composition. Denise described their differences in reaction as partly due to personality: "[Norman's] personality is much more, like, stoic than mine. I'm more emotional."

anything,' for my students."[14] In contrast, Sylvia described advising junior colleagues to make any changes necessary in adapting their classes to the storm, "based on the authority of [her own] personal instinct." In other words, the divergence in these responses can be traced in part to the status, and attendant authority, these teachers held. But authority is not only a product of rank; it is also a product of ethos, which can be built over time through confidence in one's role. Beverly said this most bluntly: "Now [I] would [respond] differently because I have that much more experience as a teacher." It is likely that, while contingent status can still negatively impact teacherly response to disruption, experience may be the more significant factor in a teacher's willingness to act.

Nevertheless, we should not wholly discount labor status as a guiding factor, as well. Several interviewees directly cast their level of response in terms of their status in the department and university. Teachers who were still graduate students at the time often linked the limited nature of their response to the challenge of balancing their other roles. Lisa, for example, said "I think I just had very, very limited bandwidth. So I think my attitude was just kind of like, 'is there anything actively on fire, if not, let's keep moving.'" This led to a minimizing attitude in relation to the hurricane itself: "Being an adjunct felt like having to put out a fire several times a week. So Hurricane Sandy only felt like an unusually large fire." The kind of "limited bandwidth" Lisa described is made clear in Jane's litany of responsibilities: "You're juggling your graduate degree, your thesis, all the research and the writing that you're doing for those things, preparing for those classes, teaching those classes, […] on top of whatever job you're doing outside of

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[14] Miriam added: "That wasn't a departmental problem for me, that was an institutional problem."

that because you don't earn enough money for that class…." It is easy to see, in comments like Lisa's, how asking teachers to respond sensitively to disaster would be a burden many would feel hesitant about imposing. For graduate students and contingent faculty, but even full-time, tenure-line faculty, as well, the range or responsibilities they already bear may limit the means they have at their disposal for response.

The interviews reveal that contingent labor status has a chilling effect on teacher's responses, even when they are otherwise disposed to do so. Claude noted this directly, saying that "Given in retrospect what a big deal that storm was, I really didn't change that much. […] And maybe if I'd been a more established member of the department I would've been more comfortable being, like, 'uh… let's, let's figure out maybe a more holistic approach to dealing with what the rest of the semester looks like.' But I don't know." At the same time, many of the adjuncts I interviewed reported *wanting* to respond to the circumstances more than they did. The challenge for them in doing so arises in a story told by Denise, who described the situation of trying to email her students about class cancellations *during* the storm. "We're all freaking out about our students," she said, describing her response as: "'I have to tell them, I have to go to campus tomorrow, even though the city is shut down'—it's ridiculous. […] They know they don't have to go to campus, they can't!" She summed up her reaction: "We're so dedicated to this job that is not very dedicated to us." Even though she was making a strenuous—and perhaps, by her own admission, unnecessary—effort to remain in contact with her students throughout the storm, Denise still marked this reaction in terms of her labor status, and whether or not, by its terms, her reaction was appropriate.

Labor status makes a difference in response to some degree due to guidance. Miriam expressed a desire for an "instructors' rights statement," and explained that if she had had "an informal discussion with the department or higher up members of the institution about what my role was," she would have found it both "helpful" and "empower[ing]." Most importantly, when I followed up by asking what she meant by empowerment, Miriam responded that "empowerment can often be, like, the conversation. Or, authorization to do or say certain things, you know. Even authorization to get emotional." Miriam believed that her response to the storm was limited to logistics precisely because she didn't feel empowered, or authorized, to be emotional in the classroom. During his interview, Harley made a comment about providing his undergraduate students who were affected by the hurricane with options for accommodation, explaining this as "a matter of trying to think for the student and expecting that they won't necessarily know what they can ask for." The same could be true of lower rank or contingent faculty, who may feel constrained in their roles for their options to respond; they may not know what they can ask for, and as a result they seek the kind of authorization Miriam desired.

Feeling disempowered to offer emotions in the classroom is a problem that can be rectified by greater experience with teaching. Miriam is now an Assistant Professor at a different school, a two-year institution in Indiana, and in her interview she discussed an instance of becoming emotional with students when she miscarried. She said that communicating that difficult experience with them affected "my ability to be in the classroom, my treatment toward my students, [and] their treatment of me." As a result,

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she said, "somehow that made me more, even more empathetic toward my students, many of whom are single parents, [and] have experienced similar personal disasters and tragedies." She also added that, following this moment, her students became "more emotionally open, themselves." I asked Miriam how this disclosure came about, and she responded that it was a "very deliberate" choice to share personal information with "anyone who I feel is affected by my personality, directly," adding, "I believe in transparency, […] both personally and pedagogically." The choice Miriam made to disclose deeply personal, tragic information to her students is one that I believe needs to be made individually; while I would advocate for an emotional response to a class affected by emotional factors, I also believe that levels of disclosure are up to those making them. Nevertheless, I want to highlight the difference in Miriam's emotional responses to disaster—personal or ecological—in just four years. The experience a teacher gains in even a short span of time in the classroom can better equip them to respond to strained circumstances, because as they gain experience, teachers become more confident in their role, and more willing to take action to respond to trying situations. For this reason, I believe that the benefits to workplace efficacy accrued by increased classroom experience can help teachers feel confident in dealing with disruptions of many kinds, and a task of disaster preparedness efforts should be to determine how to provide the benefits of this experience to teachers who have not yet gained it.

The experience that matters in responding to disaster is not only experience gained with time teaching, though, because the experience of having previously

experienced a disaster is also a significant factor in response. I asked interview subjects to consider if there were other situations since Hurricane Sandy that had similarly affected their teaching. I received a range of responses, including the 2016 US Presidential election (4 people), the September 11, 2001 attacks (3 people), Black Lives Matter/Ferguson (1 person), other extreme weather, from blizzards (1 person) to Hurricane Katrina (2 people), mass shootings (1 person), the opioid epidemic (1 person), and international political instability (2 people). Five people also made connections to incidents I coded as "personal disasters," in which the only people directly affected were the interviewee and those close to them (e.g. family members), or in which the only people affected were individual students and those close to them. This supports my belief that while large-scale disasters, because they occur more prominently, present easier cases for study, smaller-scale occurrences can invoke similar kinds of distress and response. Though several of the incidents people made connections to occurred before Hurricane Sandy, most took place afterward, and many of those who cited earlier incidents experienced these disruptions in non-teacher roles. Claude, for example, invoked 9/11 from his perspective as an undergraduate; Beverly invoked Hurricane Katrina from her perspective as a volunteer aid worker.

When I asked for connections to other incidents from the perspective of a teacher "since Hurricane Sandy," only Norman, the most experienced of the group, answered: "Since, not before?" Norman went on to invoke September 11, 2001 from a teacher's perspective.[15] As Norman explained, the 9/11 attacks were "a traumatic experience for

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[15] Norman was also the only person interviewed teaching at BC at that time.

everybody, and cut straight across everything, and […] had much more of an impact. […]

So since Hurricane Sandy, I would say no." This suggests that while Sandy may not have

been a disaster that changed everyone's teaching, *something* was. While the kind of

affecting incident may vary, in most teaching careers, it is likely that people will

encounter a disruption significant enough to change their perspective and pedagogical

approaches. This raises several questions: what does it look like when these perspectives

and approaches change? Is it possible to experience a disruption without experiencing a

change in responses? The answer to these questions depends on how we understand the

specific actions of response that teachers offer, and so I turn now to a more granular

examination of those offered by the teachers I interviewed.

  Pedagogical and interpersonal flexibility. The most common response to

Hurricane Sandy offered by the teachers I interviewed, as they described it, was

"flexibility." The actions I grouped under this code are generally logistical changes,

though flexibility also represents a stance toward response. Some mentions of flexibility

were direct, like when Vincent described the adjustments he made after the storm:

"ultimately I just had to be really flexible and expect that whatever plan was on paper

might be changed." Sylvia described her response as "just saying, 'I will be flexible and

tell me what your issues are.'" In other instances, the discussion of flexibility was indirect

or implied, as when Norman described working with and accommodating students: "the

initial response was, you know, 'don't worry about this now, we'll figure it out,' […] it

was pretty much tailored to the individual."

Flexibility was also invoked outside of the context of Sandy, as in Harley's statement: "There's a certain kind of in-built flexibility to my pedagogy, in part because, again, BC students, you can't really rely on all twenty-five students being there every time." Harley suggests that flexibility isn't only useful for responding to disruptions, but is an appropriate resource for addressing a range of pedagogical exigencies. In this case, Harley frames flexibility as useful for addressing commonplace variances in the class, particularly those arising from the context of the student population at Brooklyn College, many of whom balance commitments like work and caregiving in addition to their studies. This wide applicability captures much of the appeal of flexibility as a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing classroom issues: as an orientation and not a set of strategies, it is broad enough to apply in any number of situations, and as a disposition it necessitates the kind of teacherly behavior (kind, attentive, responsive) that reflects the ideal many hold in mind as the definition of a "good" teacher. These are sound reasons, and I agree that as a pedagogical orientation, flexibility has much to offer. However, as I demonstrate, particularly in disaster situations, there are limitations on the utility of flexibility as a response.

When we translate the stance of flexibility into concrete activities, we see that in practice flexibility takes many forms. Several teachers mentioned changing due dates (Claude, Jane, Norman, Vincent); others mentioned changing dates for class readings (Jane, Norman, Vincent). Both Denise and Sylvia mentioned flexibility in the context of developing a response as part of a dialogue with their students. Vincent also mentioned being generous with grading and encouraging students to make use of a temporary new

"incomplete" policy offered by the university. Jane discussed allowing students to adapt assignments to their needs, and Sylvia said that she tried to offer students fallback options for students in need (one, for example, didn't have access to her books). Harley's approach, reflecting his view of flexibility as an integral part of his pedagogy, involved actions taking place before the storm, like using student work in class as material for discussion (a technique that responds to work students submitted, without suffering if not all work arrives as intended), or building time into the syllabus for students to work on research projects in class. These examples show the capaciousness of flexibility as a mode of responding to disaster, which is part of what makes it so useful and appealing.
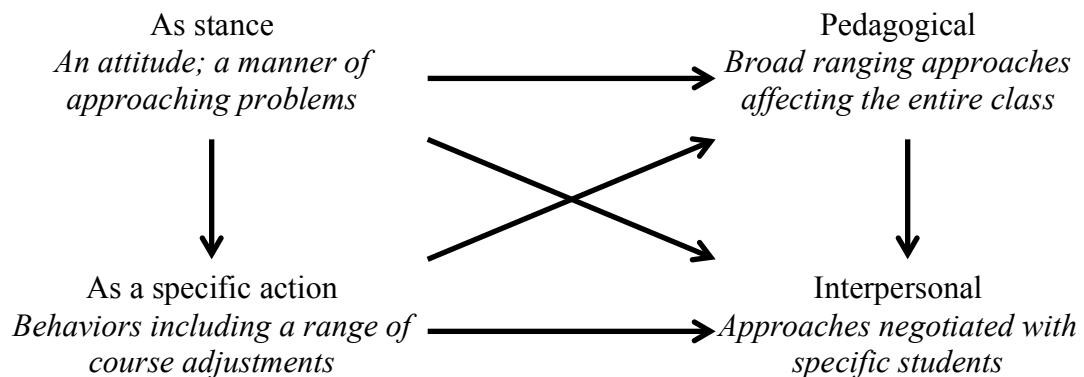
Beyond the concrete actions entailed by flexibility, several interviewees discussed what they believe flexibility requires as a stance. Claude, for example, mentioned that flexibility allows him to deal with anything unexpected that arises in class, which he suggested occurs every semester, on a smaller scale than hurricanes. Vincent's stance toward flexibility was slightly more pessimistic, but similarly, he expressed the idea that being flexible meant that he would "expect that whatever plan was on paper might be changed." Sylvia, too, somewhat pessimistically found flexibility useful as a way to deal with constraints: "sometimes you just have to be flexible because you don't really have any options." But she also linked the stance of flexibility to compassion, characterizing her approach to students in difficulty as "standing back and asking, first"—trying to determine what the situation was before electing a response. These attitudes reflect broader approaches to using flexibility when teaching, and help us to see the inclinations

the interviewees used as they attempted to solve the circumstantial problems posed by Sandy.

The kinds of responses arising in the interviews, concrete and attitudinal, can be categorized as "pedagogical flexibility" and "interpersonal flexibility." The line between these two groupings is somewhat hazy, but by dividing flexibility in this way, we can better see where it is operating and understand its efficacy in response to disruption. By "pedagogical flexibility," I mean responses applying to the entire class, and the way these responses are pursued by both the teacher and their students. By "interpersonal flexibility," I mean responses arising in case-by-case interactions, often determined by teachers in consultation with individual students about their needs. My intention is to focus on the discrete functions of these different types of flexibility, but in doing so I do not suggest that one is more appropriate or more necessary than the other. Instead, I argue that the flexibility we see in each of these categories operates in different areas of a class, and that by paying closer attention to this distinction, we can better discern what each mode offers in otherwise constrained moments.

Flexibility is applied not just on different scales, but also in different ways. The distinction between pedagogical and interpersonal flexibility is one of scale: does the flexibility impact an entire class (pedagogical) or just a few students (interpersonal)? We can also distinguish between *flexibility-as-stance*, describing a general orientation like the one Harley attributes to his pedagogy, and *flexibility-as-action*, describing specific tactics of response like changing due dates, as Claude, Jane, Norman, and Vincent did. These two schemas overlap and impact each other, but also function distinctly (See Figure 1).

This means that flexible stances and actions can each lead to pedagogical or interpersonal interventions. Similarly, these modes are not exclusive, so a teacher who employs flexibility as a stance may also employ specific flexible actions. Similarly, a teacher who employs pedagogical flexibility may also employ interpersonal flexibility.

As stance
An attitude; a manner of approaching problems

Pedagogical
Broad ranging approaches affecting the entire class

As a specific action
Behaviors including a range of course adjustments

Interpersonal
Approaches negotiated with specific students

Figure 1. Schema of Flexibility

We can see pedagogical flexibility encompasses both stances and concrete actions affecting the entire class in some of the responses described by interviewees. The attitude Vincent described himself feeling on the day after the 2016 US Presidential election, which he compared to his feelings returning from Sandy, reflects one such approach: "it became clear that we were not going to make it through whatever material we were supposed to be discussing on that day. And that there was no point in pretending otherwise." Pedagogical flexibility includes when a teacher chooses to abandon their plan for a day, or more than a day, in order to directly address exigent circumstances. It also includes changing assignments—not just deadlines, but the assignments themselves—as a result of events taking place. It also includes intentionally broad actions to address the

situation. One example of this is found in Beverly's reflections on her response, wondering, "Should I just let them talk? 'Cause everyone needs to process. And so, sure, let's just talk." Beverly moved away from a more structured discussion about the work assigned, and toward a more free-ranging conversation, attempting to allow space for students to process.

Pedagogical flexibility also means changes in approaching the entire class, regardless of effect. A comment of Vincent's evokes this idea:

> I'm sure there were some students who really had not been affected by the storm and also were happy to take advantage of whatever extra leeway, or days off, or whatever they got, but that was, you know, I'm not going to… I think that was okay, too, given the circumstances. […] I just decided that I wasn't going to try and judge who might really be affected versus who might not. […] Even my friends […] who could have been at their jobs were happy to have a day off the day after the storm. So I guess […] I did kind of decide, well, people will do what they can, and that's, and I'll try to not be, not [to] judge it too harshly.

While Vincent discusses this idea from the perspective of those who were or were not affected, I want to re-read it to suggest that he was choosing not to distinguish between those *visibly* affected and those *invisibly* affected. I am not trying to suggest that Sandy affected everyone equally, but as we have seen, the emotional aftermath of the storm was wide-ranging and hard to track. In light of this, taking an approach that does not distinguish by effect, a significant change in pedagogical stance, may be one way to account for the emotional after-effects of the hurricane without requiring students to directly engage with the disaster.

Instances of interpersonal flexibility, accounting for changes negotiated between students and teachers, were among the more common instances reported in the

interviews. The interviews clearly demonstrate wide use the technique I coded as "open dialogue." Harley, for example, described a series of emails with a student who was forced to leave the city as a result of the storm, several times describing his position as "let's just keep talking." Both Jane and Lisa recalled telling students to "let me know" about any difficulties. The advantage of these responses is that they allow teachers to tailor their responses to individual students, and their situations. They preserve normalcy for the class, as much as possible, but also allow it to adapt to the needs of those who were especially affected.

The limitations of flexibility as a response can be found in some aspects of this interpersonal approach. First and foremost, it requires disclosure. Sylvia, who used many of the techniques of interpersonal flexibility, also recognized this limitation. "I think when a student has come to me and said, 'here's what's going on,' […] I've never laid down the letter of the law, I've always worked with them," she said. But she also noted, "I don't know how often students haven't come to me. […] That concerns me." I agree with Sylvia's assumption that students in distress should be accommodated and agree that the problem is one of visibility. This led her to contrast the experience of Hurricane Sandy, which was "pretty visible," with other instances when she has found out that students were struggling: "We don't know when our students are homeless because their mothers disapprove of their sexual orientation, and, you know, I don't think she ever would have told me if I hadn't asked her to talk to me. Um, then you wonder, how many of our students have something that extreme." She added, "I have no idea how many students I have taught have been homeless, or in some other kind of severe crisis. And,

um, and that worries me." If students do not disclose a disruption they are experiencing to their teachers, then their teachers, who may otherwise intend to be flexible, cannot accommodate them. This puts teachers in the unrecommendable position of requiring disclosure. Employing pedagogical flexibility in conjunction with flexibility-as-stance avoids the problem of visibility by assuming that what affects one student affects all others. In some instances, like a disaster, this is a useful approach, but it does not account for moments like the one Sylvia described in which a single student may be homeless. I would argue that even when one student is affected, the entire classroom community is. Regardless, there is no way of knowing, without being told, that someone is unable to follow a course as planned. Outside of disaster, where we could more safely assume a broadly affected student body, pedagogical flexibility is hard to implement.

Thus, we are again faced with the matter of disclosure: many teachers invite it from students experiencing difficulty, but many would also agree that requiring it is not a sensitive or ethical approach.[16] Sylvia, again, discussed the challenges posed by disclosure, saying: "I don't know what I can do, aside from saying at the start of the semester" that she wants students to reach out to her. She added: "I suspect that a lot of it is not just in saying it, but is in ongoing tone and ambiance, and setting a tone that students believe that they will and can [be heard]. And I don't know yet how successfully I'm doing that. […] It's a work in progress." A final comment of Sylvia's reveals the problem of disclosure, as I see it. After reflecting on her own efforts to invite it, she said, "I don't know […] if you interviewed my students, how many of them would say…

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[16] For more on the fraught nature of disclosure in the classroom, much of which has been developed by scholars of disability studies, see Kafer; Kerschbaum; and Uthappa.

[trails off]." Here Sylvia references the unknown on other side of the equation: how these efforts to encourage disclosure are perceived by students, those who most need to find these invitations effective.

Thus far, three significant conclusions arise from my interviews in determining how teachers respond to the situation of disaster. First, I demonstrated that emotional effects of disaster are extremely widespread, even when only logistical changes are made in response to disasters. Second, I argued that a sense of authority, established by labor status and experience, is necessary for teachers to feel empowered to respond to disaster. Third, I have delineated the applications and utility of flexibility, both in broad-ranging pedagogical approaches, and case-by-case interpersonal ones. The stakes of these responses, no matter how they are carried out, are high. In her interview, Jane reflected on the responsibility teachers have to their students: "that's thirty people's lives that you need to take into consideration, and, like, be careful about, and respectful about, and mindful, and open to those bad things that might be happening to those people." How those factors are considered depends on the personalities and inclinations of individual teachers, but I agree with Jane's call for care, respect, and mindfulness. In her interview, Ruth expressed regret over not taking that approach to her students, saying that when "bigger-than-life disasters or upheavals [occur], I would hope that I have a lived understanding of, 'it is possible to fuck this up as a colleague or as a peer or as a teacher.' Like, it's possible to not be sensitive to this. I've seen myself do it. I'd like to do it better." In Chapter Four, I take up Ruth's implied call for ways to respond sensitively, to respond better. Before that, however, I synthesize the three significant findings from

these interviews to offer a holistic depiction of pedagogical response to disaster in the context of a class.

Flexibility and Preparedness

We have seen that responding to disruption is a challenging task for nearly all teachers, particularly those whose experiences or labor status have not prepared them to do so. Teachers who respond by being flexible, whether as a stance or a tactic, whether for the entire class or for individual affected students, have found one way to address disruptive circumstances. Yet many of these teachers remain uncertain about the effectiveness of their approaches grounded in flexibility, and if those approaches were sufficient to address such an overwhelming exigency. This raises the question: does disaster require or merit a particular pedagogical response beyond normal flexibility? By exploring and providing an initial answer to this question, I move beyond the specific context of Hurricane Sandy and toward a more holistic depiction of what happens in classrooms when disaster strikes, as well as what an appropriate response to disaster might be.

To understand the stakes of offering an effective response to disruptions, consider what, according to the interviewees, disaster response actually looks like. None of the teachers I interviewed had particularly novel solutions to the problems they were facing. Many expressed doubts during the interviews regarding the worth or relevance of the information they were providing. However, just because the actions reported were in many instances somewhat commonplace does not mean that their answers were not

valuable. These responses are useful because they provide concrete information about what teachers did in response, information that is often occluded by the closed nature of classrooms, which because of our ideal of academic freedom are not always accessible by those not present at the time. But does disaster response require or merit more than the actions or dispositions of flexibility that the interviewees described? I argue that an effective range of responses specifically tailored for use in disaster exists, and that this range lies between the two poles of novelty (which declines to employ commonplace tactics simply because they are commonplace) and consistency (which justifies commonplace tactics based on their commonness).

Flexibility is a useful baseline from which to develop a vision of disaster response because it was the most commonly reported response in the interviews. As discussed in the preceding section, flexibility can exist both as a stance and as specific actions; it can also exist as a pedagogical and as an interpersonal approach to intervention. All these responses, in various combinations, represent a range of possible "kinds" of flexibility which can be applied in many situations, disastrous or not. As a general approach to difficulties in teaching, flexibility is extraordinarily useful. While a flexible orientation toward teaching is not necessarily an innate inclination—many of the interviewees discussed acquiring a more flexible attitude as a result of the hurricane—it is common enough that it can be recommended broadly as a tool for disaster response. This is why I have framed my question as whether or not disaster requires or merits a response *beyond flexibility*.

As I have argued, in the strained circumstances of disaster, the constraints on the rhetorical situation are so significant that many options for response may not be available to teachers. Flexibility is, in some ways, an end-run around this lack of options precisely because it is so adaptable. Some of the interviewees recognized this; recall, for example, Sylvia's statement that "sometimes you just have to be flexible because you don't really have any options." To borrow Lisa's language describing working as contingent faculty as constantly "putting out fires," flexibility resembles a fire extinguisher: it is an effective, if blunt, tool that can address negative circumstances immediately when they arise. Framing this response through this metaphor recalls a broader metaphor for this project, which views teachers as a kind of first responder. In this context, we can imagine the work of "putting out fires" as part of the task of disaster response.

Extending this metaphor, what other tools for responding to "fires" are available to us? Once a fire has started, many methods for responding to it are as blunt as the fire extinguisher; torrents of water streaming from hoses and hydrants. Instead, our more sensitive tools for responding to fire—smoke alarms, fire doors, lighted exit signs—are about *preparation*. Preparedness is different from flexibility because beyond adopting certain stances (e.g. planning to be flexible if something occurs), one cannot be flexible without knowing what circumstances one is adapting to. As a response, flexibility is available only after disaster has occurred, because it is contingent on whatever has taken place. If, as Harley discussed, a student has been displaced by a hurricane and forced to leave the state, it may mean finding ways to work with that student via email. On the other hand, if, as Sylvia mentioned, a student is present but has lost belongings due to

flooding, it may mean providing them with a spare copy of the readings. Both of these are considerate responses that are not possible in preparation; it does not make sense to offer every student an extra book just in case they lose one in a disaster that might occur. Moreover, even though one can opt for flexibility as a stance prior to a disaster by, at the very least, consciously articulating to oneself, "I will be flexible if disaster strikes," this attitude does not move us at all in the direction of preparation.

Preparation is useful because it works whether or not disaster occurs. At the start of this chapter, I suggested that classrooms are prepared more materially for catastrophe than teachers are prepared pedagogically. We can rectify this problem by better accounting for the insights gained from my interviews. First, there is the role that emotion plays in disaster. Scholars from Laura Micciche to Sue Ellen Henry have noted the prominent but oft-ignored role that emotion plays in education even at the best of times, and the interviews have made clear how badly disaster exacerbates these conditions. I believe that the interviewees largely responded to Hurricane Sandy admirably, given the circumstances. There is rarely, if ever, a "right" way to respond to disaster. Nevertheless, it is worth repeating that few of the interviewees discussed attempting to address the emotional, rather than the logistical, after-effects of the disaster. The few who did attempt this expressed hesitation about the degree to which they succeeded. One way to prepare for disaster is to anticipate the prominence of emotional effects, and consciously attempt to address them when responding. This knowledge falls under the rubric of flexibility-as-stance that occurs prior to disaster. Preparing beyond a stance, for flexibility-as-action, requires a range of options from which one could select if needed.

How one prepares to respond emotionally is a particularly vexed question, however, if the goal is to be a sensitive teacher. On the one hand, there is danger in avoiding the disaster entirely, as Ruth expressed: "I regret […] that we didn't do an essay about Sandy, that we didn't read essays about [it], […] it would've been such an amazing opportunity, especially as someone teaching writing, to be able to make a space for them." On the other hand, as several interviewees who discussed attempting a "return to normalcy" suggested, engaging too forcefully or directly with a recent disaster risks re-traumatizing students (or teachers themselves). As Sarah DeBacher and Deborah Harris-Moore point out in their aptly titled article "First, Do No Harm," it is hard to ask students to explore recent disasters with the "intellectual and critical distance" required to do so; teachers too may be "in no position to read those narratives without injury," among other ethical challenges.[17] Ignoring the events is not recommendable, but neither is forced disclosure. Given these conflicting factors, I am not yet ready to recommend a specific course of action; I will save this discussion for Chapter Four. No matter what a teacher chooses to do, any response to disaster ought to account for its emotional resonances in some way, and being aware that these factors will require attention is the first step toward preparing for them.

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[17] DeBacher and Harris-Moore offer a succinct version of the many ethical dilemmas that addressing a common tragedy in class poses: "Is it better to confront emotions and difficult topics in times of trauma, or to move forward with business? If we invite the topic of trauma into our classes, should we give students the ability to opt out of particular texts and assignments? If we do allow—or perhaps even encourage—students to express their feelings about recent events in lieu of a traditional assignment, how do we grade this nontraditional reflection?"

The second insight to account for in preparing for disaster is the lack of authority felt by many teachers, particularly those who were less experienced or contingent faculty. This lack of authority led many of the interviewees to feel constrained in their response, likely limiting the extent to which they addressed issues that arose, even if they felt that it was necessary. This limitation links the situation of disaster with rhetorical failure, which may occur because "the rhetor does not have the power, leverage, or resources to gain a platform or media channel to be heard" (Sheriff 193). In this instance, the power is relative. While, as instructors of record, contingent faculty members are technically empowered to take whatever actions they find necessary, their affective senses of their position in the department and university may be a more potent force, hampering their abilities. Miriam, for example, desired to be "authorized" to respond emotionally, reflecting the sense that she did not feel she had the authority to do so.

Though radically improved labor conditions across the academy would do much to rectify the disconnection many contingent faculty interviewees felt regarding their own authority, a more pragmatic solution would be to recommend greatly increased personal contact between tenured and contingent faculty in challenging teaching situations. Placing Harley's belief that students should be provided with options after disasters because "they won't necessarily know what they can ask for," alongside the widespread desire for guidance on the part of the interviewees, we can see how more dialogue between these groups would likely help those who feel disempowered to better understand their own authority, and what responses they can take. This dialogue falls under the rubric of preparation because the channels of communication that make it

possible cannot only be established after disaster. Prior to disruption, an ongoing relationship of informal professional development between experienced and inexperienced faculty, regardless of rank, should be established. For faculty in secure positions, this means actively seeking to empower contingent colleagues to respond; the interviews suggest that this kind of authorization may be what is needed, more than specific tactics of response. For contingent faculty, this means intentionally claiming authority within their departments. Many contingent faculty have this authority *de jure*, but lack it *de facto*. This divergence is limiting, and it ought to be corrected before problems arise.

The third and final insight from the interviews that can be applied in preparation is to understand both the uses and limitations of flexibility. As the interviews have made clear, flexibility in its many forms is a useful go-to response, allowing teachers to adapt to situational factors; to apply accommodations on different scales, from the individual to the class; and to act quickly when time is a significant factor. The question arising from flexibility, around which I have been circling, is whether it is sufficient for the heightened circumstances of catastrophe. Flexibility is useful across moments and settings; does the outsized severity of a disaster merit more than a normal response? I have two contradictory answers. First, because flexibility is adaptable in scale, its techniques can apply both to disasters with small effect (e.g. affecting one person), or large effect (e.g. a hurricane affecting thousands). This belief is supported by the frequency of connections that interviewees made to personal scale disasters experienced either by themselves or by their students. Second, however, I also believe that disaster calls for something more. The

breadth of a disaster's effects changes how a class can (and may need to) respond. Recall how several interviewees invoked the rarity of finding all their students affected by the same thing at the same time. These ideas about flexibility stand in contradiction, but they also offer further possibilities for exploration in coming chapters, around questions of tactics of response specific to disaster, how to address its emotional impacts, and how to respond in the immediacy of its irruption. A fuller exploration of the situation of teaching through disaster, continued in the next chapter, will provide greater insight that develops this productive contradiction further.

In the next chapter, I continue developing my exploration of how teachers respond to disaster. However, whereas this chapter focused on responses contained within classrooms, between teachers and students, Chapter Three addresses public responses, developed and circulated on the Internet by activist educators. Specifically, it examines the genre of the "hashtag syllabus," a public text that both articulates a pedagogical response to and memorializes a disaster through counternarratives.

The stakes of responding to disasters pedagogically are high, and they often feel that way at the time. In her interview, Beverly reflected on seeing Hurricane Sandy take place, saying, "I felt like I was watching the world change in a way that I had been afraid would happen." She added, "I know that sounds dramatic, but it felt very dramatic at the time." I agree, though I find more poignant a realization she had following shortly on this comment. "Once it's over, and it's in the rearview mirror," Beverly said, "you realize […] that that *is* how humanity changes, slowly. […] There's not really a Noah's Ark moment. There's just like a series of catastrophic events that change the way that we live.

And that one—that one did and didn't…" Beverly's ambivalence captures why disaster

response matters in our classrooms: not because they are incredibly dramatic, but because

though we may recover from a disaster, each one acts in almost untraceable ways as a

course correction for our lives. In their classrooms, teachers have the power to direct

what that course correction looks like, and the responsibility to use that power ethically.

When teachers act as first responders, they build learning from a catastrophe, and help

their students move forward.

CHAPTER III

HASHTAG SYLLABUSES AS PUBLIC MEMORIALS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

How suddenly must misfortune arise for it to be called disastrous, or irruptive? With natural disasters, as examined in Chapter Two, there may be some, if limited, warning. Hurricanes and wildfires have seasons in which they are more likely to occur; the presence of fault lines may warn residents of the possibility of earthquakes. Yet these reminders do not ultimately diminish the suddenness of disaster, which, alongside its broad impact, is a key factor in terming events "disastrous." The disasters examined in this chapter are not natural (i.e. ecological) disasters, but they still occur with sufficient surprise to break normalcy, and still pose challenging teaching situations. Instead, this chapter explores violence that is both sudden and predictable, irrupting into the national consciousness with little warning, while being readily situated in a long history of racialized violence in America and around the world.

This chapter examines educational responses to the white supremacist violence that took place in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 11 and 12, 2017, resulting in more than thirty injuries and one death (Yan, Sayers, and Almasy). Through this examination, I demonstrate how many different kinds of disasters—not just ecological ones—demand responses from teachers, and call for them to act as "first responders." These different circumstances share the sense of exigency as significant, large-scale events with lasting,

wide-ranging consequences that teachers are moved to respond to. With Charlottesville and many other recent instances of disruptive violence, educators have responded to these exigencies widely. Some responses teachers have offered to violence are similar to responses offered to natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy. These similarities include employing flexibility and attending to emotion. But there are differences in response, as well, when we examine different kinds of disruptions; these differences include the forms the responses take. They also include the content of these responses, under consideration of which political aims that content supports.

While the previous chapter focused on responses teachers offered in classroom spaces, this chapter extends insights gained from that analysis to examine responses drawn from the public sphere—in this case, responses popularly known as "hashtag syllabuses," written and shared by educators and circulated on the Internet, before being taken up again in classes. In studying the actions teachers took in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the main available source of data was what the teachers reported in their interviews. The case of Charlottesville is useful because the hashtag syllabus and the messages that accompanied its spread on social media platforms provide contemporaneous textual documentation of what teachers' responses looked like. Accordingly, I view the responses studied in this chapter as bidirectional forces: teachers contribute to the public work of hashtag syllabuses by adding to them and circulating them, and hashtag syllabuses contribute to classroom responses by offering resources for teachers unsure of how to respond.

The violence in Charlottesville is a useful case for studying disaster response in educational contexts because the violence and its aftermath occurred on and around the campus of an institution of higher education, the University of Virginia. As a result, the violence had a particular impact on the institutional community there, which responded by seeking to address the events. Charlottesville is also a useful case for study because its events were so widely publicized at the time, which in its immediate aftermath led to increased circulation of responses to it like the hashtag syllabus I examine. While not a disaster in the "natural" or "ecological" sense, Charlottesville is nonetheless representative of several longstanding trends in increasingly prominent violence. One of these trends includes right-wing, pro-authoritarian violence around the world, exemplified by instances such as the 2016 murder of Jo Cox,[18] a pro-E.U. member of the British Parliament (Cobain, Parveen, and Taylor), and the 2017 Quebec City mosque shooting, in which six people were killed and nineteen injured (Poisson).[19] Another of these trends is the legacy of racial violence against people of color in the United States, perpetrated either by state actors (like police, in the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, and so many others) or private citizens (as in the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin). In recent years, with the ascendance of the Trump presidency

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[18] I have chosen, in this chapter, to omit the names of the perpetrators of the violent incidents I discuss, using omission to deny them the power of notoriety. Conversely, I make an effort, where possible, to name their victims, to emphasize their experiences.
[19] The words of the perpetrators make clear that both of these killings were motivated by far-right ideologies, particularly regarding white supremacy. The man who killed Jo Cox wrote about the "very bloody struggle" soon to be faced by "the white race" (Cobain, Parveen, and Taylor), and the Quebec City mosque shooter reportedly "made frequent extreme comments in social media denigrating refugees and feminism" (Perreaux and Andrew-Gee).

in the United States, these two trends have often seemed to converge. One incident representing this is the February 2017 shooting, in Olathe, Kansas, of two Indian men, Srinivas Kuchibhotla and Alok Madasani, by a white man who yelled "get out of my country" and "terrorist" at them (Press Trust of India). Another incident is the May 2017 stabbing, in Portland, Oregon, of three men who intervened in the harassment of two teenage girls—one Muslim, one black—by a self-described "white nationalist" (Frankel). While incidents like these continue to occur, teachers are increasingly tasked with addressing them, whether they are near or far from the violence. Not all of these events received the same level of national news coverage as the riots in Charlottesville, but teachers nearer to them may have felt the urge to address them in some way. Understanding how teachers address these moments will provide us with a more complete sense of the modes of response available to those hoping to teach through disruption.

The public responses to the violence in Charlottesville examined in this chapter are a series of online texts all designated "The Charlottesville Syllabus," and other texts from the larger group, termed "hashtag syllabuses," of which the Charlottesville Syllabuses are a representative part. Each hashtag syllabus is organized around particular thematic exigencies. I undertake a preliminary genre analysis of these syllabuses, to argue that, as a genre, hashtag syllabuses function socially to agitate for educational responses to disruptions in classrooms. Another social function of hashtag syllabuses is for them to be circulated, ensuring that the educational work of teaching about the disruptions they address continues past these disruptions' immediate aftermath.

First, I briefly establish the historical context of the violence in Charlottesville, as well as the emergence of the hashtag syllabus as a genre. Drawing on scholarship addressing the rhetorical concepts of *kairos* and genre theory, as well as Black Feminist theory and public memory studies, I analyze the rhetorical function of hashtag syllabuses. I include Black Feminist theories because they are particularly suited to addressing the contributions of women of color, especially black women, to the hashtag syllabus genre. Next, I turn to a detailed analysis of "The Charlottesville Syllabus," as representative of the broader hashtag syllabus genre, leading to discussions of the emergence of the genre, its content, and the ways genre functions socially. Finally, I propose a broader theory of the hashtag syllabus as a mode of response to disastrous exigencies. By exploring these publicly-circulating, online documents, I claim that hashtag syllabuses serve a pedagogical function in two ways. First, hashtag syllabuses agitate for disruptions to be addressed in the classroom, a function designed to ensure that teachers reading, contributing to, and circulating them take up the events around which they are organized in class. Second, hashtag syllabuses teach through public memorializing, a function designed to preserve the narratives of a counterpublic about contentious events so that they can be learned from in the future.

The Violence in Charlottesville and Its Online Responses

To contextualize Charlottesville and the response it received, I first briefly summarize the events that occurred there. In August, 2017, a coalition of right-wing activists, including neo-Nazis and Ku Klux Klan members, gathered in Charlottesville for

an event billed as the "Unite the Right" rally, which would be carried out, in the words of

a former Klan leader, "to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump" and to "take our country

back" (Stolberg and Rosenthal). [20] The ostensible reason for the rally was to protest the

proposed removal of a Confederate monument to Robert E. Lee; the Charlottesville city

council voted to remove the statue in March 2017, and in June renamed the park where it

stood from "Lee Park" to "Emancipation Park" (Fortin). On August 11, the night before

the rally, a group of white supremacists chanting slogans like "blood and soil," "white

lives matter," and "you will not replace us," marched across the University of Virginia

campus, and rallied, wielding tiki torches, at the campus' statue of Thomas Jefferson

(Pearce). While counter-protests had already been organized, the substantial media

attention the August 11 events received may have exacerbated the clashes on August 12

(Stockman).[21] On August 12, at the rally, violence quickly broke out between the right-

wing protestors and counter-protestors, and clashes continued throughout the day

(Stolberg and Rosenthal). The clashes were fought with anything from fists, to sticks, to

chemical sprays; dozens were injured (Rankin). One of the most prominent casualties of

this violence was Heather Heyer, a counter-protester who was killed when a right-wing

protester drove his car into a crowd (Caron).

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[20] It is not possible, in the space available here, to give a full accounting of the relevant contexts of the events in Charlottesville. A fuller exploration would include right-wing authoritarian violence around the world, and violence against black Americans that has spurred the Black Lives Matter movement. Other important contexts could include the history of the Trump campaign's deployment of racial tropes in the 2016 presidential race, and the ongoing, predominantly white backlash to the legacy of the Obama administration. Because I cannot discuss these fully, I focus my summary narrowly on describing the events of August 11 and 12.

[21] For examples of media coverage of the August 11 pre-rally, see Chia; Pearce; Lopez; and Gravely, Hoerauf, and Dodson.

Following the violence, in public statements offered in response to the events, President Trump validated the actions of the right-wing protesters. Trump's first statement—for which he was widely criticized—was given on the same day as the rally. The statement condemned the "hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides," but did not specifically condemn the neo-Nazis and white supremacists (Jacobs and Murray). Following the backlash to this first statement, two days later, on August 14, Trump issued a new statement, in which he said that "racism is evil," and that "those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the K.K.K., neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups that are repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans" (Thrush). However, the impact of this statement was undercut when, at a news conference the next day, August 15, Trump reverted to his first position, arguing that "there is blame on both sides" and that "You had some very bad people in that group [the white supremacists]. You also had some very fine people on both sides" (Keneally). Finally, at a rally on August 22, a week later, Trump argued that people advocating for the removal of Confederate statues are "trying to take away our culture. They're trying to take away our history" (Bradner). In the aftermath of the violence in Charlottesville, renewed attention was given to the removal of Confederate monuments around the country, and dozens were proposed for removal or removed outright in the following weeks (Bidgood et al.). I want to emphasize the prominence of Confederate monuments as both an impetus for the "Unite the Right" rally and as a component of the response to the violence, as the monuments are addressed in both the content and form of the educational responses to Charlottesville.

A significant site of educational response to the violence in Charlottesville was the rapid emergence of documents called "The Charlottesville Syllabus." These syllabuses are part of a relatively recent trend in online activism known as "hashtag syllabuses," a group of texts described by Lisa A. Monroe as "resource lists" that "promote collective study both within and outside of the academy." Hashtag syllabuses are not syllabuses in a traditional sense, but they invoke and extend this academic genre. Studying hashtag syllabuses alongside traditional academic syllabuses can thus illuminate how hashtag syllabuses function both socially and pedagogically. In this chapter, I argue that the hashtag syllabus is a distinct genre, one that emerged from academic syllabuses and that arises for the particular purpose of disaster response.

The term "hashtag syllabus" refers to the original method by which these documents were sourced and compiled, using Twitter hashtags to crowd-source and organize resources. The first instance of a hashtag syllabus is generally attributed to Georgetown University History professor Marcia Chatelain, who in 2014 started the #FergusonSyllabus hashtag on Twitter in response to the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri (see Figure 2) (Caldwell; "Public Syllabi"). Chatelain's motivations for establishing the #FergusonSyllabus hashtag were to "help other professors find a way to talk about this tragedy in the context of how it would affect our students' first day of school" (Chatelain, "#Ferguson"). This point is worth stressing: Chatelain viewed the exigency of Ferguson as one that ought to be addressed in educational contexts. She also viewed it as a situation in which other teachers might need help to know how best to respond. To coordinate such responses, and share resources that

would allow them to do so, Chatelain instructed her followers to "reach out to the educators who use Twitter. Ask them to commit to talking about Ferguson on the first day of classes. Suggest a book, an article, a film, a song, a piece of artwork, or an assignment that speaks to some aspect of Ferguson. Use the hashtag: #FergusonSyllabus" (Chatelain, "How to Teach").

Figure 2. Tweet Establishing the #FergusonSyllabus Hashtag

Twitter users responded, and alongside Chatelain herself, they compiled a list of resources—objects of analysis, activities for response, questions for discussion—that could be used to educate for a greater understanding of the police killing of Michael Brown, and the resulting violence in Ferguson. Chatelain also posed on Twitter, using the #FergusonSyllabus hashtag, a series of discussion prompts, targeted to different disciplines, to be applied to different levels of students and kinds of courses (see Figure 3 for a sampling of these questions). The many questions Chatelain posed make clear that she believed all kinds of pedagogical spaces had a duty to teach about the disaster. Chatelain ultimately published a selection of the responses she received using the hashtag on the website of the magazine *The Atlantic*, but the work of crowd-sourcing the syllabus continued; she noted that what she provided was only "a snapshot," and that "the contributions continue on Twitter" (Chatelain, "How to Teach"). One affordance of the

online nature of hashtag syllabuses is that the strategies for response they offer can

continue to be circulated over a period of time.

Figure 3. Partial Listing of Prompting Questions Posed by Marcia Chatelain Using the Hashtag #FergusonSyllabus

The hashtag syllabus as established by Chatelain is a form that has expanded

quickly, and has been used to address a range of exigencies. Many of these exigencies are

incidents implicating the long history of American racism (Monroe).[22] Since the

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[22] Monroe uses this connection to link the hashtag syllabus trend to the practice of collective black study in the 19th century.

Ferguson Syllabus, hashtag syllabuses have been organized around many other exigencies, including the mass murder of nine black worshippers at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June 2015 (the Charleston Syllabus), the Black Lives Matter syllabus, the Colin Kaepernick Syllabus, the Standing Rock Syllabus, the Trump 2.0 syllabus, the Rape Culture Syllabus, and the Prison Abolition Syllabus, among many others ("Hashtag Syllabus Project"; "Public Syllabi"). Hashtag syllabuses continue to be created in response to incidents that continue to occur, demonstrating the durability and flexibility of this mode of disaster response in our contemporary political moment, as well as the need teachers have to share resources about how best to respond to them.

While early efforts like Chatelain's Ferguson Syllabus and the 2015 Charleston Syllabus existed almost entirely on Twitter, with only their summary versions being published elsewhere (including in *The Atlantic* and *The Los Angeles Times*), many more recent hashtag syllabuses exist on discrete websites, hosted by platforms like Medium and Wordpress. While these later hashtag syllabuses still circulate on social media networks, including Twitter, it is often in the form of links to these websites. In addition, teachers reading and responding to these hashtag syllabuses on social media networks continue to contribute their own resources, as well, using the hashtags for each exigency.

Most hashtag syllabuses follow a common form. They begin with a preface explaining the exigency they are responding to, and calling for this exigency to be addressed in classrooms across the country. These prefaces also invite circulation and response, sometimes offering email addresses to which readers can send additional

resources, sometimes encouraging readers to adapt and expand on them. The prefaces

also put the hashtag syllabuses in conversation with other examples of their genre; many

directly invoke and link to their predecessors. In perhaps a nod to Creative Commons-

style fair use work that is common in certain corners of contemporary Internet culture,

the syllabuses minimize questions of authorship. Almost all hashtag syllabuses are

written collectively, and the members of these groups are frequently named only in

separate pages linked from the main page, or even not named at all. Following the

preface, the content of hashtag syllabuses usually contains readings and texts in other

media, like images, podcasts, and video. This content is usually grouped by sub-topic.

The hashtag syllabuses link to this content, for ease of access. Some of these documents

offer annotations for each resource, but just as many do not. Together, these features are

common to almost all hashtag syllabuses I have seen, though of course there are

exceptions. In addition to their shared aspects, different iterations of hashtag syllabuses

also employ features more common to academic syllabuses, though not with any

consistency. I will return to the common, anomalous, and borrowed features of hashtag

syllabuses in my analysis of their emergence and function as a genre.

By the time of the violence in Charlottesville, the trend of hashtag syllabuses was

thoroughly established, which may account for the array of documents, all labeled "The

Charlottesville Syllabus," that emerged in the days after August 12. These texts arose

from a variety of institutions and groups. For example, the University of California Press

and the University of North Carolina Press each published an "edition" of the

Charlottesville Syllabus on their websites, consisting of collections of books from their

publication lists, alongside statements about requesting desk and exam copies of the books (see, e.g., Figures 4 and 5).[23] Beacon Press also published a list entitled "Charlottesville Syllabus" on its blog, but in contrast to the other presses, this list consisted primarily of links to articles and essays published elsewhere, making it more similar to other hashtag syllabuses.[24] JSTOR Daily, the blog of the academic database, also published a list entitled "Charlottesville Syllabus," which linked to other posts from their blog, highlighting relevant readings from the database's holdings.[25]

Figure 4. The Beginning of the Charlottesville Syllabus as Posted by UC Press

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[23] For the UC Press edition, see: www.ucpress.edu/blog/29368/ charlottesvillecurriculum-uc-press-edition/. For the UNC Press edition, see: uncpressblog.com/2017/08/18/ charlottesvillecurriculum-charlottesvillesyllabus-unc-press-edition/.

[24] For the Beacon Press list, see: www.beaconbroadside.com/broadside/2017/08/a-charlottesville-syllabus-for-our-uncertain-times.html.

[25] For the JSTOR Daily list, see: daily.jstor.org/charlottesville-syllabi-history-hate-america/.

Figure 5. The End of the Charlottesville Syllabus as Posted by UC Press

All of these examples emerged very quickly after the weekend violence: UC Press and JSTOR Daily posted their lists on Wednesday, August 16; UNC Press and Beacon Press posted theirs on Friday, August 18. The immediacy of these responses' appearance corresponds to the need teachers have following a disaster to address it in their courses, and quickly. Beyond the institutionally-sponsored examples, however, the most widely circulated "Charlottesville Syllabus" was created by an ad hoc group calling themselves The UVA Graduate Student Coalition for Liberation (shortened as The UVA Graduate Coalition).[26] This list, circulated on the web platform Medium from August 11, 2017— the day the violence began—is the primary text I analyze in this chapter (see Figure 6). The UVA Graduate Coalition's list is a valuable case because it is both the most local of the Charlottesville Syllabuses—that is, it originated closest to the violence—and because its authors, an anonymous group of graduate students, represent a category of teachers who may be tasked with responding to disaster. For the purposes of articulating a

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[26] I claim this syllabus is the most widely circulated based on a Google search for "Charlottesville syllabus" (quotes included). 84 of the top 100 hits, of more than 7,000 total, referenced this syllabus specifically, if not exclusively. Many of these hits referenced other resources in addition to the UVA Grad Coalition's syllabus, including the JSTOR Daily list.

pedagogical action addressing a pressing disruption in a community, the Charlottesville Syllabus epitomizes the kind of response that hashtag syllabuses offer.

Medium

UVa Graduate Coalition [Follow]
Aug 11, 2017 · 18 min read

THE CHARLOTTESVILLE SYLLABUS

ZINE #1

12 AUGUST 2017

Figure 6. The Charlottesville Syllabus, Posted by the UVa Grad Coalition

Understanding the Forms of Immediate Response

In this section, I examine links between the form of disaster response offered by hashtag syllabuses with scholarship on the rhetorical conceptions of *kairos* and genre, as well as Black Feminist theory and publicity and public memory. *Kairos*, as a concept of "right timing," allows us to focus on the moment of response, immediate to a disaster's aftermath, that is seized by teachers. Additionally, insights from rhetorical genre studies help illuminate the nature of the hashtag syllabus as a specific form of response, because these theories allow me to connect the hashtag syllabus genre to its key antecedent genre, the academic syllabus. Studying hashtag syllabuses from a rhetorical genre perspective also raises the question of their social function, a question partly answered by Black

Feminist theories. Because the hashtag syllabus genre was founded and frequently spread by black women, and has been taken up particularly by people of color, these theories contribute to understanding how the hashtag syllabus fits into a long history of educational counternarratives. Finally, because hashtag syllabuses are designed to be shared and circulate online on open social media networks, scholarship examining publicity and public memory help explain both how hashtag syllabuses move and what their lasting impacts are. Together, these theories provide a rich context for understanding how hashtag syllabuses function as pedagogical tools for disaster response.

Kairos. Both pedagogical and non-pedagogical responses that arise immediately after disaster has occurred seize their moment to amplify their effect. Imagine the symbolic objects—flowers, photos, letters—we see placed at significant sites mere hours after a tragedy has occurred. Rhetorically, such commemorations have made swift use of the element of *kairos*, traditionally understood as the "right or opportune time to do something, or right measure in doing something" (Kinneavy, qtd. in Kinneavy and Eskin 132; see also Kinneavy 58). *Kairos* is significant because, as John Poulakos has argued, "the perception of an oration's timeliness adds to its force and effectiveness" (89). Thus, the act of leaving flowers at the site of a recent tragedy gains rhetorical resonance not just from its location, but also from its timing—allowing it to be read as a fitting response. While the response they offer may be less material than leaving flowers, teachers too can employ *kairos* to effectively respond to disasters affecting their classrooms.

It is important to complicate our understanding of *kairos* beyond a simple understanding of it as merely "timing," however. For instance, not all kinds of timing

could be termed instances of *kairos*. Instead, *kairos* is often distinguished from *chronos*, where *chronos* is understood as quantitative—meaning linear—time, and where *kairos* is correspondingly given as "qualitative" or "experiential" time.[27] *Kairos* has also been understood as relating not just to timeliness, but also to propriety, as Kinneavy notes: it was "in Stoicism, particularly Latin Stoicism," that "the concept of *kairos* merged with that of *prepon* (propriety or fitness)" (59). This is because it is not sufficient for a rhetor employing *kairos* to simply respond to situational concerns: one must also respond appropriately to them. To extend an earlier example, while it may be appropriate (and therefore kairotic) to leave flowers at the site of a recent tragedy, it would be inappropriate to leave other kinds of objects that may connect with the events, but which violate the propriety we believe is due to those affected by the tragedy. Imagine how improper it would seem to leave bullets in commemoration at the site of a shooting. A violation of propriety, then, could be timely but not kairotic. But despite connections to propriety and fitness, *kairos* can also require breaking these norms, as Poulakos suggests: "extraordinary circumstances and unprecedented conditions compel one to resort to kairotic speech, that is, speech that risks violating established norms of propriety and decorum" (92-93). In instances like those Poulakos is referring to, alternatively, *kairos* may demand that a moment be "seized" to disrupt normal decorum. We can see this in the way that calls to "not politicize" mass shootings are increasingly rejected by activists who reject the propriety some believe is due to a tragedy to highlight the political conditions that led to these events. Teachers grappling with how best to address a disaster

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[27] See, for example, Sipiora 2; Benedikt 226; Hawhee "Kairotic" 18.

must also grapple with the decorum they feel that disaster merits, and whether or not their response requires breaking propriety or upholding it.

The contradiction between preserving and disrupting propriety should give us the sense that a key component of *kairos* is flexibility—a capacity to adapt to situational concerns. In the terms developed in the preceding chapter, *kairos* is flexibility-as-stance.[28] Indeed, Eric Charles Wright, in his book *Kaironomia*, describes *kairos* as

> a radical principle of occasionality which implies a conception of the production of meaning in language as a process of continuous adjustment to and creation of the present occasion, or a process of continuous interpretation in which the speaker seeks to inflect the given 'text' to his or her own ends at the same time that the speaker's 'text' is 'interpreted' in turn by the context surrounding it. (qtd. in Siporia 6)

Wright's characterization of the occasionality inherent in *kairos* raises the question: how is the rhetor to determine the appropriate and timely way to employ *kairos* in a rhetorical situation? The answer reveals a final significant aspect of the concept of *kairos*: that it functions ethically.[29] Michael Carter, for example, has posited *kairos* as an ethical means of deciding between alternatives. In other words, *kairos* offers a means for discerning between opposing positions, either of which could be argued for.[30] Thus Carter argues that "*kairos* was essential to a rhetoric grounded in a relativistic epistemology" (105). Successfully employing *kairos*, then, required careful ethical decision-making. Amélie Frost Benedikt argues that "the decision concerning the right moment signifies

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[28] For more on the *stance* of *kairos*, see Hawhee, "Kairotic".

[29] Sipiora in particular stresses the importance of *kairos* for ethics, especially in the Aristotelian view (see Sipiora 17n1).

[30] The classical practice of *dissoi logoi*—contrasting arguments—is an example of the arguments Carter has in mind.

understanding concerning *this* moment as distinct from others, concerning *this* moment as

the culmination of a series of events" (227). Consequently, for Benedikt, "a sense of

kairos depends on a sufficient degree of *self-knowledge* to be able to assess the situational

context in the first place," even as "one cannot evaluate the kairic fit of an action to a

particular moment without considering the response of others" (230, 231). This sense of

kairos as ethics is especially important for teachers addressing disruption, because the

presence of others whose response Benedikt draws our attention to is so concrete:

teachers responding to disaster need to account for the very specific, very real context

their students present. If they fail to judge their circumstances accurately, teachers risk

offering a response that will cause distress, rather than one that produces learning.

What all of these arguments demonstrate is the degree to which a successful

deployment of *kairos* depends on a successful evaluation of a rhetorical situation,

including all of its aspects—not just the context, but the rhetor's ability to judge it, and

how others will respond to it. Thomas Rickert's more recent definition of *kairos*

highlights this element. For Rickert, *kairos* "defines a rhetor's relation to a unique

opportunity arising from an audience, situation, or time, one that calls for a proper

response in order to gain advantage or success" (75). In fact, Rickert's discussions of

kairos primarily function to de-center the rhetor in favor of focusing on the situation. He

argues for moving our understanding of *kairos* toward a more post-human and materialist

view that focuses on contexts around individual kairotic actors. Rickert's model of *kairos*

would not merely focus on a rhetor seizing the proper moment, but instead on "a series of

actions in a specific environs, of kairotic moments in a generative place, that form an

ambient whole" (93). As Rickert explains, a situation "is something simultaneously embodied, materialist, and emplaced," and that our "environment is always situating us in arrangements that simultaneously unleash some possibilities and foreclose on others" (92, 96). In Rickert's formulation, subjectivities become "condensations of probabilities realized in movement, materialized in space, and invented in place" (97). This last point highlights the role that *kairos* has often played in invention. We see this in practice with the case of hashtag syllabuses as a mode of disaster response, because the kairotic moment out of which they emerge determines how they are invented at all. When the authors who create hashtag syllabuses practice the activities that make up *kairos*—judging a situation and its many contingent factors, and responding to it in a manner that is both timely and appropriate—they engage in the process of invention.

Genre. When we begin to consider the emergence of hashtag syllabuses from the perspective of invention, we find that in addition to *kairos*, an important influence on their creation is the constraints of rhetorical genre. These constraints arise from the understanding of genre as functioning socially, and in the case of hashtag syllabuses, their social function is to enable and articulate response to disasters. Genres are both adaptable to and grounded in social contexts, as Carolyn Miller famously argued in her definition of genres as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" ("Genre" 159). Miller continued to develop her conceptions of genre's social function, later arguing that genre exists "as a specific, and important, *constituent* of society, a major aspect of its communicative structure, one of the structures of power that institutions wield" ("Rhetorical Community" 71). When we foreground the social function of genre,

it allows us to see how deeply intertwined texts are with the contexts from which they emerge—not merely as products of those contexts, but as rhetorical actions in themselves. Hashtag syllabuses exemplify Miller's theories of the social function of genre because they emerge in response to specific social circumstances, while also seeking to impel further actions from their readers, when they ask these teachers to commit to responding to the disaster in class, and to sharing the hashtag syllabus so that its call to action is extended.

For genres to function socially they must not only arise from social situations but remain integrated within them; genres are responses that generate further responses. This is the premise of the concept of "uptake"—emerging from the work of philosopher of language J.L. Austin and theorized by Anne Freadman—which describes the effects caused by genre actions. Freadman argues that "genre," as a term, "is more usefully applied to the interaction of, minimally, a pair of texts than to the properties of a single text" (40). "Uptake" is the term Freadman uses "to name the bidirectional relation that holds between this pair" of texts (40). In the case of hashtag syllabuses, their function is tied up not just in the resources they offer for addressing disaster, but also in the texts (like posts on Twitter, for example, or uses of their hashtags across platforms) that respond to and circulate them, in the goal of ensuring further responses to the disaster. The concept of uptake has been complicated in further scholarship, including by Dylan Dryer, who distinguished it into five different uses.[31] Dryer's analysis allows us to understand more finely how texts interact with one another in the social sphere, creating

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[31] See Dryer 65-66.

chains of responses and actions. By separating the functions of uptake, we can see, for example, how the violence in Charlottesville led to educational response in the form of the creation of "The Charlottesville Syllabus" (an "uptake artifact"), while at the same time impacting the affective state of those who used The Charlottesville Syllabus to respond in their classrooms ("uptake capture"). We also see how the genre of the hashtag syllabus is situated in a tradition of public and activist responses to social circumstances, drawing on these legacies to generate further social responses ("uptake residues"). Together, these uses demonstrate the complexities of disaster response as organized and articulated through hashtag syllabuses.

Because they emerge not just from academic syllabuses but from activist genres, as well, hashtag syllabuses also implicate the ideological weight carried by genres, and their relationship to institutional power. This recognition, too, has long been part of our understandings of genre; as Catherine Schryer argued in 1994, "genres are inherently ideological; they embody the unexamined or tacit way of performing some social action. Hence, they can represent the ways that a dominant élite does things" (108). But genres do not merely represent dominant modes of expression; they also shape speakers into those who are capable of speaking in these ways. Anthony Paré has developed this idea in his explorations of "the ways in which genres locate or position individuals within the power relations of institutional activity" (59). Because certain subjectivities are more able to express themselves in different genres, the genre form (and its corresponding ideological weight) may impress itself on the speaker, causing them to shift their identity to better occupy the position the genre calls for. Hashtag syllabuses are addressed to an

audience of teachers, in the hopes that they will address these disruptions in their courses. But their use also requires the respondents to hashtag syllabuses to position themselves alongside the documents' authors as activists.

The complex ways that genres interact with people in social circumstances is well-summarized by Anis Bawarshi, who argues that "genres do not just ideologically structure the way individuals conceptualize situations; they also provide individuals with the discursive means for acting within situations, so that genres maintain the social motives which individuals interpret and enact as intentions" (77). In other words, genres play an occluded role in guiding writers' actions, so that even acts writers would attribute to their own intentions can only be understood as part of a broader genre system. Genre knowledge leads writers to see certain actions as possible or not, and shapes how they pursue composition in a variety of forms. The utility of hashtag syllabuses as a mode of disaster response causes their proliferation, and accordingly, the increased availability of the hashtag syllabus as a mode of disaster response. Over time, the genre of the hashtag syllabus starts to shape disaster response to its form, so that teachers hoping to help others understand how to address disaster are moved to employ this genre themselves.

Black feminist theory. To help situate the emergence of hashtag syllabuses as part of a longer trend of disaster response, I turn to Black Feminist Theory, several aspects of which relate significantly to the trend. First, hashtag syllabuses are textual documents emerging from recent trends of activism substantially pursued by black women, including the Black Lives Matter movement, first created by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi as a hashtag on Facebook in 2013 (Garza; Day). As discussed above,

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hashtag syllabuses first emerged with the #FergusonSyllabus, created by Marcia

Chatelain, a black woman who is a professor of History and African-American studies.

While the practice of hashtag syllabuses has extended widely since Chatelain's call for

resources, they remain a genre substantially developed and employed by black women

and other women of color. This can be noted from the fact that many hashtag syllabuses

have been edited by black activists, but it can also be noted because many of the

exigencies around which hashtag syllabuses have been organized are important instances

in contemporary black political movements. These hashtag syllabuses include the

Charleston Syllabus (created in response to the June 2015 Emanuel AME Church

massacre), edited by Chad Williams, Kidada Williams, and Keisha Blain; the Black Lives

Matter syllabus, edited by Frank Roberts; and the Colin Kaepernick Syllabus, edited by

Rebecca Martinez, Louis Moore, David J. Leonard, Bijan C. Bayne, Sarah J. Jackson,

and others ("Hashtag Syllabus Project"; "Public Syllabi"). Other nonwhite groups have

embraced the genre of the hashtag syllabus as well, and organized syllabuses around

political issues including the Dakota Access Pipeline, the Puerto Rican debt crisis,

Islamophobia, and US immigration policy.[32] One partial explanation for this trend may be

the institutional barriers faced by marginalized groups in higher education, leading them

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[32] The syllabuses referenced here are: the Standing Rock Syllabus, edited by an
anonymous collective of Indigenous activists; the Puerto Rican syllabus, edited by
Frances Negrón-Muntaner, Sarah Muir, Yarimar Bonilla, Marisol Lebrón, and Sarah
Molinari; the Islamophobia is Racism syllabus, edited by Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, Arshad
Ali, Evelyn Alsultany, Sohail Daulatzai, Lara Deeb, Carol Fadda, Zareena Grewal,
Juliane Hammer, Nadine Naber, and Junaid Rana; and the Immigration syllabus, edited
by Erika Lee, María Cristina García, Adam Goodman, Madeline Hsu, Julian Lim,
Maddalena Marinari, and Evan Taparata. In addition to the editors named, almost all
these syllabuses also mention drawing further resources from other volunteers, named
and unnamed, often via social media.

to articulate responses to disaster, furthering their pedagogical work, in alternative venues. These barriers may also lead people of color to seek community online, and the existence of online communities then facilitates the sharing of hashtag syllabuses.

Given the prominence of women of color and black women in particular to the emergence of the hashtag syllabus genre, it is worth discussing further the influence that Black Feminist theory has on these documents. This discussion explains how the form of disaster response offered by hashtag syllabuses is part of a long trend of alternative pedagogical action pursued by black women, who have historically been denied access to higher education in the US. Black Feminist theorists like Patricia Hill Collins have emphasized that their work intentionally crosses divisions traditionally reified in the academy, which has placed a premium on scholarly remove. In contrast to this, Collins writes that her project bridges such distances by seeking a voice that "is both individual and collective, personal and political, one reflecting the intersection of my unique biography with the larger meaning of my historical times" (*xii*). As part of the same lineage of scholarship in which Collins is working, hashtag syllabuses similarly complicate assigning credit to a single author, separating the personal from the political, or taking an objective approach to history. We can see this in the emphases of hashtag syllabuses on collective authorship (note how many editors are listed in the above-cited examples!), a practice even further expanded through the solicitation of additional contributions from readers. Hashtag syllabuses also gather texts that speak both to personal *and* political circumstances, including—to draw examples from Chatelain's Ferguson Syllabus—canonical texts like Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a

Birmingham Jail"; practical guides like the ACLU's "Fighting Police Abuse: A Community Action Manual"; as well as separate sections for personal reflections, children's books, and poetry (Chatelain, "How to Teach"). As a genre, hashtag syllabuses provide, in Collins' terms, an "intersection" between a personal biography and "historical times." As we saw in the case of Hurricane Sandy, disaster is a circumstance where large-scale events of the kind likely to "make history" have deeply personal effects. By arguing that teachers should address disaster through attention both to history and identity, personal and political, hashtag syllabuses demonstrate that the responses they offer are a natural extension of the Black Feminist project.

Moreover, hashtag syllabuses also work toward the political ends of Black Feminist theory. While not excluding texts by white authors, the content of the syllabuses often works toward the "symbolic decentering of whiteness," as Juliet Hooker characterizes a goal of the Black Lives Matter movement (494). This decentering is an inherently political choice, one that supports the emphasis in Collins' work on the importance of "self-definition" for "individual and group empowerment" (34). Hashtag syllabuses promote a self-defined version of disaster response, not one that waits for institutional guidance, as was requested so often in the interviews in Chapter Two, but by offering guidance emerging from and directed to the community of people of color in academia. The resulting responses thus have a unique ability to privilege and perpetuate counternarratives about these disasters that are often downplayed or ignored in the national media. As Shatema Threadcraft argues, viewing "Black Twitter" as a "virtual black counterpublic" has "allowed black counterdiscourse on a variety of topics to

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register and register consistently within mainstream discourse," including "blacks' long-standing counterdiscourse regarding police brutality and lethal state violence against blacks"—exigencies that hashtag syllabuses have been organized in response to (561). Hashtag syllabuses are a politicized genre, a genre that performs political work. Highlighting the contributions of black women and other women of color to the development of this genre helps us not just to understand its ideological origins, but also the contemporary political context in which it operates. Keeping these contributions at the forefront of the analysis of the hashtag syllabus genre helps to understand the communities that the genre particularly serves as part of its task of disaster response.

Publicity and public memory. The work of disaster response that hashtag syllabuses offer serves two spheres: classroom spaces, through the call for their exigencies to be taught in classes, and public spaces, through their work to extend the counternarratives they believe should be taught. As texts, hashtag syllabuses bridge these realms, acting simultaneously in both. This function of the hashtag syllabus allows us to see the genre operating in both public and proto-public spaces. The term "proto-public" comes from the work of Rosa Eberly, who describes the classroom space as functioning in ways resembling a public, but ultimately not public, due to their "prefab" origins—i.e. classrooms are organized for institutional reasons—and because of the inherent power imbalances between instructors and students ("From Writers" 172). In contrast, public spaces are social spaces organized around "the reflexive circulation of discourse," according to Michael Warner, who notes that "No single text can create a public. Nor can a single voice, a single genre, even a single medium. […] A public is understood to be an

ongoing space of encounter for discourse" (90). Hashtag syllabuses impact both spaces by allowing for the "encounter of discourse" occurring on the public of social media platforms to directly affect how the disasters they address are taught in the proto-public of classroom.

Like the instructional spaces examined in Chapter Two, public space is also an emotional space, and thus emotional concerns have bearing on the disaster responses offered in the case of the teachers following Hurricane Sandy as well as in the cases addressed by hashtag syllabuses. As Sara Ahmed has noted in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, examining texts that "circulate in the public domain" reveals "the very public nature of emotions, and the emotive nature of publics" (14). Ann Cvetkovich has noted the presence of public emotions in responses to tragedy more specifically. Cvetkovich describes her study as examining "cultural formations that bring traumatic histories into the public sphere," but she also writes that these cultural formations "use accounts of affective experience to transform our sense of what constitutes a public sphere" (*Archive* 16). Similar to Cvetkovich's cultural formations, hashtag syllabuses use the affective experiences of disaster, like black rage at injustice,[33] to constitute a public around the task of response. That public remains a public, circulating online, while also impacting pedagogical spaces when it is taken up and taught. At other times, emotions, like grief, that are often considered private—or perhaps necessary to conceal in public—can irrupt into the public in the wake of a tragedy. As Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp and Lori Lanzilotti have argued, because "violent incidents transcend the private grief of immediate family

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[33] See D. Thompson.

and community, they blur any concept of a boundary between what has historically been called the public and private spheres" (151). Hashtag syllabuses are situated at the site of that blurred boundary between public and private (or in this case, proto-public) because they are addressed to both areas.

The negotiation between public and private space that follows tragedy is particularly important to observe over time, as tragedies are processed into narratives that can be shared and remembered. Hashtag syllabuses work in this area to preserve and promote counternarratives. For Kendall Phillips, the move of tragedy into narrative is a move from the process of "memory," meaning "the imprint left by past experiences" to "remembrance," which he defines as the "active process whereby individuals seek to align some image to this imprint" (212). In this process of remembrance, what a public believes is worth memorializing is negotiated and eventually reified. Carol Mattingly argues that this process is "anchored not only in historical narratives but also in material structures, which shape and support collective memory" (135). For Mattingly, these material structures "creat[e] identity for future generations, determin[e] how we view the past and, therefore, how we see the future, and who is important and worthy of being recognized and honored" (135). When we examine the kinds of memorializing material structures that Mattingly describes, we begin to see how narratives of—and arguments about the use of—historical events are shaped. An interesting example of emergent material structures of the kind Mattingly discussed comes from Jorgensen-Earp and Lanzilotti's discussion of "spontaneous shrines"—collections of artifacts, like notes, photos, or teddy bears—at locations where tragedy has occurred. For Jorgensen-Earp and

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Lanzilotti, these shrines make clear "the negotiated nature of public memory," demonstrating "tensions between official and vernacular expressions of collective grief and remembrance" (151). While official monuments to tragedies are often built, it takes time and institutional power to construct them. The spontaneous shrines forgo institutional backing to allow people to express public emotions they feel in the wake of a tragedy. They offer comfort by demonstrating the shared nature of impact on a community, and the respondents who participate in them act kairotically to take these opportunities to demonstrate the presence of community. Hashtag syllabuses function similarly, in digital spaces, by allowing educators who commit to teaching a disaster to know they are not alone, and to share approaches for response.

Sanctioned memorials, unlike spontaneous ones, are intended to last, and consequently the narratives surrounding the events they commemorate are perpetuated, even if counterpublics exist who disagree with the dominant narrative. The continuing online presence of hashtag syllabuses addressing exigencies that are now several years old provides a useful and complicating counter-example to the ideological function of memorials. Traditional monuments overwhelmingly represent official commemorations, and the power that supports these interpretations. Mattingly has noted, for example, that "the ability to erect such monuments speaks of power—both in the capacity to construct the monument and the authority to control public space" (135). The power associated with the creation of public monuments is also the power to ensure that those monuments serve didactic purposes. Phillips has argued that "the cultural concern over remembrance is driven not so much by the fear that we will forget but by the fear that we will

remember differently. Thus, we can say that the seemingly ubiquitous admonition to 'Never Forget' can be more accurately read as 'Never Remember Differently'" (212). Similarly, in writing about the legacies of activism in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, Kenneth Bindas has written that public memorials situated at historical sites of injustice function not only as "places of remembrance," but also "have the effect of limiting the ability of adopting a new narrative" (121). As Bindas argues, "The memorial sites serve as social and political reminders that the struggle—while valiant—is over and that the issues of the past have been corrected" (121). Conversely, groups that are historically disempowered may not be able to maintain the position of remembrance suggested by their monuments: when memorials deteriorate or are destructed, it evidences "the diminished nature of that power and the difficulty of any group to hold and maintain public space and recognition so long held by others" (Mattingly 134-5). Thus, while monuments are designed to appear stable and permanent, we can see that their social function is subject to complex negotiation over time, as people work to assert and re-assert the narratives espoused by the monuments, and through them, the institutionally powerful who constructed them.

Hashtag syllabuses serve a memorializing function, as well, and this function coexists alongside their pedagogical function. While the text and use of hashtag syllabuses argue for the exigencies they represent to be addressed pedagogically, their continuing presence and circulation online allows the counternnarratives they privilege to stand in opposition to dominant, sanctioned memories of these events. While popular discourse has argued for years, and continues to debate how to understand the Black

Lives Matter movement, the Black Lives Matter syllabus, for example, remains online to

offer its author's perspective, and to continue to advocate for pedagogical response to the

police violence that motivated its composition. Like official memorials, hashtag

syllabuses seek to provide "performative and ritualized commemoration" of specific

historical events (Mattingly 147). Like official memorials, they "frame memories within

established cultural forms that, in turn, establish enthymematic connections" between the

way events are remembered and employed rhetorically (Phillips 218). However, rather

than using these modes of commemoration to support the dominant readings of the events

around which they are organized, through their authorship practices grounded in Black

Feminist theory, and the counternarratives they foreground as their material, hashtag

syllabuses commemorate in order to resist dominant narratives, and in doing so, to

perpetuate the goal of pedagogical response.

The Charlottesville Syllabus as Public Memorial

In this section, I turn directly to a genre analysis of the Charlottesville Syllabus, as

an exemplar of the hashtag syllabus genre. My analysis in this section builds on theories

of *kairos* and rhetorical genre, as well as understandings of the role that Black Feminist

theory and public memory play in shaping the social function of the Charlottesville

Syllabus. I argue that the social function of hashtag syllabuses, and more particularly, the

Charlottesville Syllabus, is two-fold. First, hashtag syllabuses articulate forms of

pedagogical response to disaster, and advocate for teachers to take up these forms of

response in their classrooms. Second, hashtag syllabuses serve a public memorializing

function, and this function allows them to extend their pedagogical responses into the future, furthering the counternarratives they present.

Comparing academic and hashtag syllabuses. My initial approach to analyzing the hashtag syllabus genre examines its emergence as a genre, by connecting it to the genre it most clearly invokes, the academic syllabus. In this analysis, the term "hashtag syllabus" applies, as it has throughout this chapter, to documents that exist online, and that are designed and circulated in response to specific disastrous exigencies. In contrast, the term "academic syllabus" refers to documents designed primarily for use in higher education classes that carry institutionally-supplied discipline prefixes and numbers (e.g. English 101), whether or not they address specific disastrous exigencies, and whether or not they exist online. Distinguishing these terms serves as a starting point for examining how their functions differ, an issue that might otherwise be masked by the links between the hashtag syllabus genre at its emergence with the genre of the academic syllabus. For hashtag syllabuses, academic syllabuses serve in some ways as an "antecedent genre," to use Kathleen Jamieson's term. Jamieson argues that "in an unprecedented rhetorical situation, a rhetor will draw on his past experience and on the genres formed by others in response to similar situations" (408). Since the hashtag syllabus was first used by a teacher at the higher education level, Marcia Chatelain, it follows that she drew on that workplace experience to meet her present rhetorical need, and called back to the academic genre by borrowing its term, "syllabus," for her efforts. It would be erroneous, however, to take this originating link between the genres as meaning that they are serving the same function.

The differences between the functions of academic syllabuses and hashtag syllabuses can be seen more clearly from a closer examination of their features. As the "master classroom genre," academic syllabuses coordinate all kinds of activities that occur within classrooms (Bawarshi 119). Most academic syllabuses contain two portions, whose lengths and emphases vary depending on the course and teacher. One of these portions is contractual, in that it lays out expectations that the teacher holds for their students, and by which they are required to abide. Sometimes information contained in this portion is required to be included from an institutional level; examples of required information might include language about accessibility and accommodations, or academic integrity. This portion also often includes information about course grades, and how they will be assigned. The second portion of most academic syllabuses is procedural, in that it establishes a schedule the course will follow. This portion includes readings and deadlines assigned by date.[34] It is the contractual portion of the syllabus, in my opinion, that leads Anis Bawarshi to describe it as a "coercive genre," because "it establishes the situated rules of conduct students and teacher will be expected to meet, including penalties for disobeying them," and because it "establishes a set of social relations and subjectivities that students and teacher have available to them in the course" (120). Hashtag syllabuses differ most significantly in function from academic syllabuses in this regard: while they explicitly invite uptake, they have no enforcement mechanism.

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[34] It is also this section, in its provision of a summary version of the course as a whole, that most strongly follows the meaning of the word "syllabus" as it entered the English language in the seventeenth century, to mean "a compendium, abstract, summary," and as applied to academic contexts in the nineteenth century, to mean "a statement of the subjects covered by a course of instruction" ("Syllabus").

Hashtag syllabuses largely eschew the contractual portion of academic syllabuses in favor of emphasis on the procedural portion. The single most common feature of all hashtag syllabuses is the inclusion of a list of resources to be used by the reader. These resources generally take the form of readings, but also include audio and visual materials. Sometimes, in providing these resources, the originating links between the hashtag syllabus genre and academic syllabuses become clearer. Almost all hashtag syllabuses group their resources by sub-topic, but some frame these groupings not thematically, but temporally, as academic syllabuses do. For instance, the Immigration Syllabus arranges readings and resources into headings by week (e.g. "Weeks 1-2," "Weeks 3-6") that resemble traditional unit groupings found in college syllabuses (Lee et al.). This syllabus ultimately includes 15 weeks, the standard length of a semester, suggesting a strong connection to an educational setting. This connection is borne out by the fact that the Immigration Syllabus, while still collaboratively authored by a wide group of scholars at a variety of institutions, is hosted on the University of Minnesota Library's website. While a week-by-week organization suggests that this syllabus be taken up wholesale, thematic groupings allow for more flexible adoption that could be taken up piecemeal in classroom settings. The Charlottesville syllabus is organized in this manner, using topic headings like "The KKK, the Alt Right, and the History of White Supremacist Groups in Charlottesville" and "Gentrification and the razing of Vinegar Hill, Charlottesville's thriving black business district" (UVa). If a teacher wanted to employ either individual groupings of texts, or to pick selections of texts from each category, this more fluid

organization—a tactic more common to hashtag syllabuses than labeling these groupings as "weeks"—would enable them to do so.

Other features we expect in academic syllabuses appear in hashtag syllabuses, as well. The Islamophobia Is Racism syllabus, for example, includes "Goals of the Syllabus," language evoking course outcomes commonly encountered on academic syllabuses. Some of these goals, like "2. Understand the relationship of race and religion to white supremacy through the racialized figure of the Muslim," would fit neatly in academic courses in a variety of disciplines (Khabeer et al.). The Puerto Rico syllabus, which addresses the ongoing debt crisis on the island, also includes "Goals of the Syllabus" (Bonilla et al.). The inclusion of features like these demonstrate that the authors of these syllabuses continue to consider and even deliberately invoke the potential classroom contexts of their work, even as the genre they employ operates partially in an extracurricular space.

The clearest single example of the differences between academic and hashtag syllabuses comes from a document that purports to exemplify both: Frank Leon Roberts' Black Lives Matter syllabus. While Roberts' syllabus is included among some lists of hashtag syllabuses (see, e.g., "Hashtag"), it reads more as an academic syllabus. This is because it was originally taught in its entirety as a traditional college course: the top of the syllabus lists it as occurring at New York University in Fall 2016, meeting on Thursdays from 6:20-9:00pm. This is the only hashtag syllabus I have encountered that existed first as an academic course. In my analysis, one of the most significant features of hashtag syllabuses is their ability to seize their kairotic moment, as a means of disaster

response. They use the immediacy afforded by the online spaces they occupy to appear

quickly after disasters have occurred, as the Charlottesville Syllabus did, appearing on the

same day that the violence on the University of Virginia campus began. Roberts' syllabus

is able to respond to its kairotic moment because the exigency it is responding to, the

Black Lives Matter movement, is ongoing. The broader approach that Roberts takes

differentiates his syllabus from syllabuses responding to specific instances situated within

the same movement, like the killing of Michael Brown that spurred the Ferguson

Syllabus. The Ferguson Syllabus, like the Charlottesville Syllabus, employs the

immediacy required by disaster response: Chatelain posted her tweets on August 18, a

little more than a week after Brown was killed, and she chose her moment to

commemorate the beginning of the school year in Ferguson that failed to take place when

it was scheduled to, due to the continuing unrest ("How To Teach").

A final distinguishing feature between academic and hashtag syllabuses is in the

ways they manifest authorship. Though hashtag syllabuses do not carry the enforcement

mechanisms of academic syllabuses, they still "establish a set of social relations," as

Bawarshi describes the classroom genre. Hashtag syllabuses, because of their collective

authorship, construct the figure of the teacher very differently than academic syllabuses.

Here, again, the contrast between most hashtag syllabuses and Roberts' Black Lives

Matter syllabus is illustrative. While Roberts positions himself as the sole author of his

syllabus, including citations for it in MLA and APA formats that identify him as such,

most hashtag syllabuses emphasize co-editing, as the Charlottesville Syllabus does, and crowdsourcing, as Chatelain's Ferguson Syllabus does.[35]

The differences between hashtag and academic syllabuses are significant because the features that hashtag syllabuses choose to preserve and to jettison from their antecedent genre determine the different purposes they serve. By choosing to not include features of academic syllabuses like course policies, the authors of hashtag syllabuses provide for and invite a less contractual version of audience uptake. By emphasizing collective over single authorship, they align themselves with the values of Black Feminist theories that influence their social and political positioning. And by focusing primarily on resources for pedagogically addressing the disasters they rise in response to, resources that center the voices and experiences of marginalized peoples, they offer counternarratives to be used to teach these disasters in a way that resists their socially dominant commemorations.

Uptakes of hashtag syllabuses. In comparing academic and hashtag syllabuses, I have focused on features within these documents. The differences between the two genres ultimately lead to different social functions, and this is particularly highlighted when examining the uptakes generated in response to hashtag syllabuses. Like their academic counterparts, hashtag syllabuses invite specific uptakes, though they often do so explicitly, in invitations found in their prefaces addressed directly to their readers. The UVA Grad Coalition, for example, includes the invitation for its readers to email them with "questions, comments, syllabus suggestions, and requests to be added to our mailing

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[35] For more examples of co-edited hashtag syllabuses, see above, pp. 111, note 32.

list or to join the Coalition" (UVa). The website of the Puerto Rico syllabus includes a

page entitled "Collaborate with us!", which includes "various ways to help and

collaborate," including calls for additional resources and for help with expanding and

translating the website (Bonilla et al.). However, as a form of disaster response, the most

relevant form of uptake invited by hashtag syllabuses is specifically pedagogical: calls for

their materials to be used in class. Chatelain framed her goals in creating the Ferguson

Syllabus as explicitly intending for the suggestions she received to be taken up in

classrooms, writing: "Some of us will talk about Ferguson forcefully, others gingerly, but

from preschool classrooms to postdoctoral seminars, *Ferguson is on the syllabus*" ("How

to Teach," emphasis added). Similarly, the Puerto Rico syllabus' page on collaboration

invites "activist[s] or educator[s] using the Puerto Rico Syllabus as a resource" to email

"telling us about your experience using the site as a teaching tool," and inviting

"suggestions on class assignments and study guides that can be shared with the larger

community" (Bonilla et al.). Others, like the Charlottesville Syllabus, invite uptakes

extending beyond academic spaces, and into public and community ones: "A new and

ongoing project, the syllabus is meant to be expanded, revised, and copied. Use this

document as it's useful to you, support each other, and take to the streets" (UVa). At the

same time, the Charlottesville Syllabus remains grounded in the academic space—the

University of Virginia—that produced it, and includes sections of resources representing

both "Community Responses to the White Supremacist Rally" and "Student Voices"

(UVa). These explicit calls to pedagogy reflect the originating purpose of the hashtag

syllabus genre, one that carries through in its continued uses, for educators to respond to

these disasters by teaching them directly in class. This is one key way that hashtag syllabuses allow teachers to respond to disruptions, by organizing resources prompting and enabling others to respond.

Calling for others to teach disasters in their courses is not the only function of hashtag syllabuses in disaster response, however. Another key purpose served by the creation of hashtag syllabuses is for them to be circulated online, and in so doing to agitate for broader uptake of their calls to pedagogy. Circulation is key to the existence of hashtag syllabuses because of two linked functions: first, they emerge from the circulation of texts (the material included on each syllabus) and second, because they are presented as documents designed to be re-circulated. Hashtags, an eponymous feature of hashtag syllabuses, were invented on Twitter in 2007 to allow users to track related content across the platform (K. Scott 12).[36] When these syllabuses are created, they use the hashtags for the exigencies they denote to circulate to other educators. This allows teachers to coordinate responses to these disruptions. In the early case of the Ferguson Syllabus, Chatelain began sharing her tactics for response on Twitter, and used the hashtag #FergusonSyllabus. She also called for other educators to share resources relevant to teaching the current events surrounding the killing of Michael Brown. Texts were then circulated by a community of respondents, also on Twitter, suggesting additions to the content list. Both of these moves can be grouped under the heading of the first function identified above, the circulation of texts. As soon as this process began, the

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[36] Interestingly, not long after their invention, hashtags were first popularized to coordinate response to a natural disaster: the San Diego, California, wildfires in October, 2007 (Messina).

circulation of the hashtag—and thus the syllabus—multiplied, to incorporate a wider

variety of responses. Other respondents on Twitter offered encouragement and support in

lieu of additional assignments.[37] Still other respondents said that they would be

responding to the suggestions by incorporating them in their courses, as Tekla Hawkins

did: "I'm avidly following the #FergusonSyllabus as I finalize my fall visual rhetoric

course readings." From this point on, all uses of the hashtag #FergusonSyllabus, whether

they sought to add to the resources, to circulate those that had already been gathered, or

to discuss the phenomenon, can be seen as part of the second function identified above—

cohesive grouping designed for re-circulation. All of these responses represent successful

uptakes of the original Ferguson Syllabus.

By contributing to, spreading, and committing to teach the Ferguson Syllabus, the

teachers who participated in its circulation propagated this first hashtag syllabus as a

form of disaster response. This makes the circulation of the text a key part of its uptake.

As Jennifer Nish has noted, "spreadable genres" like those found in online activism

"facilitate multiple and diffuse uptakes" (247), including not just the application of those

genres (e.g. responding to the genre's requests for its readers to share resources or

teaching them in classrooms), but also the spreading of those genres, whether "passing

along the genre to someone who needs it" or "sharing a genre more generally to spread

awareness" (242). Nish goes so far as to differentiate between tweeting a link and

clicking on a link, arguing that these represent different uptake enactments. The various

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[37] For example, see Arissa Oh's August 18, 2014, tweet: "If you want to teach [about] #Ferguson (or educate [yourself]) check out @DrMChatelain's excellent [hashtag] #FergusonSyllabus. #twitterstorians #highered."

uptakes we can see around the Ferguson Syllabus suggest the importance of its circulation to the genre's function—the syllabus could not function as it does if it did not exist from its inception in online spaces. The hashtag syllabus does not exist apart from its circulation.

The emergence of the Charlottesville syllabus, three years after Chatelain tweeted her exigency that became the Ferguson Syllabus, offers a somewhat contrasting example. Unlike the Ferguson Syllabus, which began on Twitter and grew through its circulation, the Charlottesville Syllabus was authored by a group calling themselves The UVa Graduate Student Coalition for Liberation (shortened as the UVa Graduate Coalition), and posted directly on the blogging platform Medium, only then circulated on Twitter using the hashtag (see Figure 7).[38]

Figure 7. Tweet Circulating the Charlottesville Syllabus

This uptake bolsters not just the stated social goals of the Charlottesville Syllabus itself, to educate the public around the history of white supremacy in Charlottesville, but the social goals of those making and sharing it as well. Nish argues that "for many activist communities, engaging with genres involves a public performance; genres offer a way for a rhetor to (publicly) demonstrate membership within a public or connection to a public"

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[38] Nowviskie is a professor at the University of Virginia, which demonstrates that the circulation of the syllabus may have begun locally before extending nationally.

(240). In the context of Twitter, sharing the Charlottesville Syllabus or another hashtag syllabus not only furthers the spread of the educational materials included, but also helps to bolster the identity of the person sharing them as an activist. As Nish notes, "one way for participants to demonstrate this public connection is by sharing materials related to that public" (240). The many forms of uptake we have seen that respond to hashtag syllabuses enable circulation that allows the genre to be deployed pedagogically, while also representing the activist identity of those who share them. As a genre, hashtag syllabuses thus shape the responses of those who share them, positioning them as teachers who *will address* these disruptions. This process resembles Dryer's "uptake captures," a concept that highlights how "repeated encounters with genres have lingering effects on what writers see—or indeed are *able* to see—as the realm of the possible" in a variety of contexts (65). This uptake capture of hashtag syllabuses allows them to not just provide resources for disaster response but to shape teachers who take them up into disaster *responders*.

   Monumental syllabuses. At the same time as they are operating in the immediacy of disruptions' aftermaths to offer and enable pedagogical responses, hashtag syllabuses also orient themselves toward future pedagogical responses, to teach through public memorializing of these disruptions. A final function of the hashtag syllabus genre is for its iterations to function as monuments to the disasters they commemorate, so that they can preserve counternarratives about these events for future educators to take up. Carol Mattingly has argued that an orientation toward futurity is an important concern for all monuments, writing that "monuments are powerful symbols in our culture, intended to

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speak for their sponsors long after their voices are silent" (147). In the case of hashtag

syllabuses, we find this future orientation in their circulation, which enables their

persistence. This is because hashtag syllabuses are designed to be shared continually,

even after their immediate exigency has passed. The Ferguson Syllabus, for instance,

continued to circulate well after the summer of 2014. Chatelain herself redeployed the

Ferguson syllabus in a new context a year later, after Freddie Gray died in police custody

in Baltimore, Maryland. She wrote on Twitter: "Teachers, please consider searching

#FergusonSyllabus to talk about the tragedy of #FreddieGray's death as students struggle

to understand." But Chatelain was not alone in using the hashtag for the Ferguson

Syllabus at a later occasion to represent a kind of response to social political exigencies,

as the example of a 2018 tweet demonstrates: "We're working on a #MeTooSyllabus, in

the spirit of #CharlottesvilleSyllabus & #FergusonSyllabus. What readings would you

include? How would it be organized? Any thoughts & suggestions would be richly

appreciated!" (Tropics). Similarly, others invoke earlier hashtag syllabuses as a way to

constellate newer iterations as part of the same genre, as in this tweet by the American

Studies Association: "#ImmigrationSyllabus joins the #TrumpSyllabus,

#FergusonSyllabus, #StandingRockSyllabus to put pressing current events in historical

context." Together, these examples demonstrate that hashtag syllabuses not only respond

to particular moments, but are re-invoked to recall earlier responses to earlier exigencies.

As this process continues, the hashtags representing these syllabuses themselves take on

symbolic resonance that recalls other exigencies and syllabuses.

Through their continued circulation, hashtag syllabuses seek to preserve counternarratives that complicate prevailing remembrances of historical events. In the case of Charlottesville, while certain images of and fantasies about the violence in Charlottesville came to the fore in its wake as memories, including that of the "resurgence" of white nationalism in America, the Charlottesville syllabus operates as a recalcitrant public memory reminding us of the long history of white nationalism in Charlottesville. Moreover, hashtag syllabuses have an advantage over other memorialization efforts because of their ability to avail themselves of kairotic resources. Hashtag syllabuses, because they exist online, have the advantage of being able to include extremely timely material. The Charlottesville Syllabus exemplifies this perfectly, as of the 45 resources listed, 20 were published in the six months leading up to, or the week following, the August 12 rally. These resources include two sections on the aftermath of the violence, "After August 12, Pt. 1: Community Responses to the White Supremacist Rally" and "After August 12, Pt. 2: Student Voices" (UVa). The resources presented in this section exemplify the mission of hashtag syllabuses to preserve counternarratives. Messages from the University of Virginia and the city of Charlottesville presented the impending rally as an anomaly that would soon pass, and that was best dealt with by ignoring it (Jenkins 167-8). But the resources in this section, like an interview with Charlottesville community activists Luca Connolly and Emily Gorenski that "identif[ies] the local, national, and international contexts that made the violence in Charlottesville both possible and predictable," and critiques of "centrist liberal racism in town" like D. Straughn's "I Rebuke You, Charlottesville," challenge

these dominant beliefs (UVa). These resources make clear that the presence of a white supremacist rally at the University of Virginia was not an "invasion" but a "homecoming" (Woolfork 99).

On the Charlottesville Syllabus, these contemporary counternarratives are placed alongside older, historical counternarratives that have been digitized and placed online, including books on local history like James Robert Saunders and Renae Nadine Shackelford's 1998 *Urban Renewal and the End of Black Culture in Charlottesville*. These texts are situated alongside primary sources like Thomas Jefferson's 1785 "Laws," in which he offers a "pseudoscientific argument that black people are inferior to white people, providing a strong evidence to refute arguments that Jefferson was not racist" (UVa). The resources provided by the Charlottesville Syllabus are extremely kairotic, not just because they are timely, but also that they exploit the propriety often accorded to elite institutions of higher education like the University of Virginia by taking the moment of disaster to highlight unpleasant realities about the place which made a white supremacist rally possible. As the authors write, their syllabus seeks "to educate readers about the long history of white supremacy in Charlottesville, Virginia" (UVa). These resources directly challenge the role of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia in sustaining an environment where a white supremacist rally could occur, seizing the kairotic moment to challenge long-held beliefs about their surroundings and American culture more broadly.

The relationship between content of these syllabuses—the counternarratives they present—and their memorializing function can be seen through Patricia Hill Collins'

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characterization of the historical role black women educators in community activism. According to Collins, emphasis on education for justice in the black community began with resistance to the restrictions on enslaved Africans' literacy. Collins argues that for black women, "teaching becomes an area for political activism wherever it occurs" (151). In viewing hashtag syllabuses through the lens of black women's work, we can see how the responses to disaster these syllabuses enact are situated in a legacy of justice-seeking efforts. Because justice is always a goal achievable over a long-term, to successfully work as part of these efforts, hashtag syllabuses memorialize their exigencies to ensure that they are remembered through the lens of the complicated counternarratives they present. The non-dominant narratives presented in the Charlottesville Syllabus as well as its continuing circulation online as a document ensure that the public remembrance of the events in Charlottesville cannot represent their violence as entirely aberrant. Instead, these resources represent the violence as part of a long trend of racism not just in the United States, but in Charlottesville and on the campus of the University of Virginia.

Pedagogically, then, the Charlottesville Syllabus serves two distinct functions, both of which impact each other. First, it serves to organize and articulate response to the disruptive violence that occurred there. Like all hashtag syllabuses, the Charlottesville Syllabus' existence is an argument for addressing the disaster in class, and it enables teachers who agree and who elect to respond to do so by providing them resources—readings, prompting questions, definitions of key terms—to use in their courses. Hashtag syllabuses also emphasize circulation, which serves two purposes. First, it expands the reach of these documents, so that more teachers are exposed to them, and hopefully

moved to address their exigencies in class. Second, the teachers who circulate these hashtag syllabuses are led to identify with their content and messages, and the genre shapes them into people who are likely to respond to disasters in class. This process means that hashtag syllabuses do not just represent the responses of a community to a disaster, but also constitute a community through the act of responding. The second pedagogical function of the Charlottesville Syllabus is to serve as a public memorial to the white supremacist rally that took place there, to agitate for teachers to continue teaching these events, and to ensure that the counternarratives it presents remain part of the ongoing pedagogical work of response.

Theorizing the Hashtag Syllabus as a Mode of Disaster Response

In this final section, I offer more generalized reflections on the hashtag syllabus as a tool for disaster response. The particular cases discussed above, of the Charlottesville Syllabus and other hashtag syllabuses, have demonstrated how the genre has been deployed by activist educators in response to disruptions affecting their communities. This use of "community" is intended to be broad, referring not just to geographical proximity, but to publics formed through the circulation of these texts on social media platforms, where each person sharing a hashtag syllabus becomes part of the community of response. Whether we are looking at examples of early hashtag syllabuses, like the Ferguson Syllabus, or of later iterations like the Charlottesville Syllabus, the genre form of the hashtag syllabus evinces a key assumption on the part of the teachers who create and circulate them: disruptions like those that hashtag syllabuses have responded to can

and should be addressed pedagogically. From this point, I offer a more comprehensive theory of how the hashtag syllabus genre is deployed to offer an educational response to irruption. We can understand how the hashtag syllabus genre is deployed pedagogically in three key ways. Hashtag syllabuses (1) target human causes behind disruptions in the hopes of preventing future disasters; (2) are designed for recirculation, to agitate for future pedagogical responses to disaster; and lastly (3) memorialize disasters by preserving counternarratives for future pedagogical application. I explore each of these points in turn.

1. *Hashtag syllabuses target the human causes behind disruptions with the aim of preventing future disasters.*

Hashtag syllabuses offer pedagogical responses to disasters. Underlying this action is the assumption that education can in some way address the circumstances around which the hashtag syllabus has been organized. For example, in the case of Ferguson, the provision of resources related to the legacy of racism in the United States—particularly as related to segregation, white flight, and police violence—suggests that if readers understood these issues better, they would understand more why Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson, and why such powerful protests occurred afterward. The hope it evinces is that a better understanding of the legacies of racism in American life will ideally lead to a more just society—perhaps because students, who are better educated on these issues thanks to the resources they found on the hashtag syllabus, can help effect the changes necessary to remedy the circumstances. In any instance, the goal of a hashtag syllabus, at least in part, is to educate people more broadly about issues

causing the disruption, with the hope that future disasters of a similar nature could be prevented. For this reason, hashtag syllabuses are not used as a form of response to events that could not be prevented in the future.

Because hashtag syllabuses are directed at preventable events, the target of their action is the human causes behind events. Consider two contrasting examples. First, were it to take place today, I do not think it is likely that a hashtag syllabus would be organized around Hurricane Sandy. While impactful and devastating in many ways, Sandy was a storm system made particularly damaging by the fact that its storm surge corresponded with high tide; this is essentially a "natural" cause. Sandy *could* be included among the topics addressed in a hashtag syllabus dealing more directly with the ongoing effects of climate change on storm systems and other extreme weather events, as this *is* a phenomenon attributable to responsible human actors. In contrast, were it to take place today, I can certainly imagine a hashtag syllabus being organized around Hurricane Katrina. In the case of Katrina, the levees breaking and flooding New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward, in particular, is attributable to a series of human actions, including design and construction decisions made by the Army Corps of Engineers, along with the socioeconomic geography of New Orleans—a product of decades of policy—leaving the Lower Ninth cut off from and more impoverished than the rest of the city. Despite the unpreventable nature of the hurricane itself, the disaster's effects were exacerbated by the human actions taken around the hurricane. These actions could be the target of pedagogical responses articulated by a hashtag syllabus.

The example of a possible Hurricane Katrina syllabus is not as hypothetical as it seems: I am drawing substantially on the case of the Hurricane Maria syllabus of 2017, a sub-section of the Puerto Rico Syllabus. While, as discussed, the Puerto Rico Syllabus was originally organized around the island's ongoing debt crisis, there is a separate section of the syllabus' website devoted to Hurricane Maria, addressing failures by FEMA and the Puerto Rican Electric Power Authority (PREPA), the history of the island as a colony of the United States, and ongoing privatization efforts in Puerto Rico following the storm (Bonilla et al.). These issues, identified by the authors as sub-topics of the syllabus's section on Hurricane Maria, all involve human factors surrounding the hurricane. While no one could have controlled the path of the storm across the island that caused such extensive damage, the issues arising from Maria were all significantly worsened by human decisions surrounding it.

Because they target preventable disruptions in the aim of forestalling similar disruptions in the future, hashtag syllabuses offer a particularly activist form of disaster response. Responses of the kind highlighted in Chapter Two, which attend to the personal needs of students and classes, are extremely important but do not necessarily meet the same ends. In their concern not just with the disaster they address, but with future disasters their work could prevent, hashtag syllabuses demonstrate one aspect of their orientation toward the future, a key component of their memorializing function.

2. *Hashtag syllabuses are designed for recirculation, so they can agitate for future pedagogical responses to disaster.*

Another way that hashtag syllabuses orient themselves toward the future is in their function to offer not just resources for pedagogically addressing individual exigencies, but to agitate for the further deployment of hashtag syllabuses as a form for response in future disasters. This, too, is part of what situates hashtag syllabuses as not merely a pedagogical genre but an activist genre. Hashtag syllabuses perform this agitating function not just through their initial circulation, but in their design for ongoing recirculation.

Hashtag syllabuses connect to the identities of those who share them in the process of being circulated. As we have seen, most hashtag syllabuses emerge from collaboration, if not outright calls for the community-building process of crowdsourcing resources to include. When respondents contribute to this process, they bind their identities to the hashtag syllabuses they use, as Jennifer Nish has noted occurs with other activist genres. Nish notes that "individuals who take up an activist genre by spreading it—by sharing a blog post or retweeting a message, for example—are also making themselves visible to the activist public and performing their identity as an activist" (244). As these identity connections are made, activists organizing themselves around the process of creating and circulating a hashtag syllabus begin to shape their identities alongside the work they are carrying out, to become teachers who are likely to respond to disasters using tools like hashtag syllabuses. This process of circulation also implicates the collaborative nature of the hashtag syllabuses, because "when individuals share a

genre that demonstrates their relationship to an activist public, they engage in an uptake that asserts their individual agency by positioning themselves in relation to a collective" (Nish 244). Hashtag syllabuses live or die by whether or not they are shared among communities of teachers online—for a hashtag syllabus to be effective requires it to be distributed broadly. For that reason, successful hashtag syllabuses need to build both interpersonal and intertextual connections that will allow them to be circulated and perpetuated as a form. The establishment of these connections is facilitated by the online nature of the hashtag syllabus genre.

The interpersonal connections established by hashtag syllabuses emerge in two ways. First, interpersonal connections emerge from contributions offered by many people, together representing a collected perspective, on the issue around which they are organized. This includes forms of shared authorship like crowdsourcing, co-writing, and co-editing. Second, interpersonal connections arise from the different people circulating these texts online, often using hashtags. All the people interacting with a hashtag syllabus are engaging as part of its genre system, whether they are contributing to the syllabus directly, deploying it in their classrooms or their personal lives, or even just sharing the link and using the hashtag. All of these are uptakes that impact not only the circulation of the genre but also the positioning of those who use it.

The intertextual connections established by hashtag syllabuses emerge in two ways as well. The first of these is the kind of intertextuality common to academic syllabuses: by including a variety of resources, the academic syllabus constellates texts to establish its position among them and in the world around its topic and theme. In the case

of hashtag syllabuses, this intertextuality can be heightened by the emphasis on open

educational resources, whose inclusion supports the goals of the syllabuses to be taken up

in as many classrooms and circulated by as many teachers as possible. While not all

hashtag syllabuses have sought to extensively highlight publicly-accessible resources—

including public domain material, work published in popular venues, and open access

scholarship—many, including the Charlottesville Syllabus, have. Hashtag syllabuses

demonstrate their activist purpose, in choosing materials available to the broadest

possible audience. They pointedly choose to not include materials whose access may be

restricted, either behind university-subscribed databases or texts to be purchased.[39]

Hashtag syllabuses that do include restricted access materials often make a point of

assisting their audience to access them, as the Immigration Syllabus does (Lee et al.).

Though the majority of its materials are freely accessible online, the Immigration

Syllabus offers icons indicating which of its resources are restricted, and includes

instructions for its readers to set up Google Scholar accounts to aid them in accessing

these works (see Figure 8). The Immigration Syllabus also directs its readers to open

access versions of restricted works, where possible. Hashtag syllabuses that make

effective use of publicly-accessible resources can further bolster their goals to educate a

broad public—not just a class—about the disaster they are responding to.

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[39] Other texts that have sought to position themselves as hashtag syllabuses, like JSTOR
Daily's version of the Charlottesville Syllabus, are notably limited in this regard: the
resources included on JSTOR's list are restricted by access to its database.

A Note on Accessing Readings

Follow these instructions on how to set up Google Scholar to access restricted readings through your college/university/other library.

🔒 Link requires subscription access which may be available via your library.

📄 Some preview pages available.

Figure 8. The Immigration Syllabus: "A Note on Accessing Readings"

The second way that hashtag syllabuses engage in intertextuality is through their common practice of linking to one another. Many hashtag syllabuses explicitly and deliberately describe their goals as akin to other prominent hashtag syllabuses (see Bonilla et al.; Figure 9). This move not only helps to legitimate the hashtag syllabuses that include these links as instantiations of an ongoing genre, but also helps to further their circulation by recirculating their predecessors.

This project draws inspiration from and is in dialogue with other collective projects of intellectual community building such as the #CharlestonSyllabus, #StandingRockSyllabus, #ImmigrationSyllabus, #TrumpSyllabus2.0 and #IslamophobiaIsRacismSyllabus. (Greater discussion about the concept of hashtag syllabi can be found here, here, and here.)

Figure 9. A Portion of the Puerto Rico Syllabus Preface, Linking to Other Syllabuses

Together, the interpersonal and intertextual connections established by hashtag syllabuses serve to perpetuate the genre, ensuring it is deployed not just for the exigencies they are responding to in the moment, but future irruptions, as well. This allows them to agitate for responses to future disasters when they are redeployed, another orientation of hashtag syllabuses toward the future that supports their memorializing function. After their immediate exigency has passed, older hashtag syllabuses continue to circulate as links—often literally—in a chain of responses in their genre. This recirculation is a way for older hashtag syllabuses to remain current, to remain part of the ongoing conversation of disaster response. Much like memorials, though the moment they depict has passed, they extend in time to ensure that their message about this event remains present. For hashtag syllabuses, this means perpetuating the counternarratives they include, because these counternarratives bolster their activist purpose.

3. *Hashtag syllabuses memorialize disasters by preserving counternarratives for future pedagogical application.*

Aspects of hashtag syllabuses' orientation toward futurity, like seeking to prevent future disasters and positioning themselves for recirculation, allow the genre to commemorate the events around which they are organized. By seeking to preserve specific, activist visions of those disruptions in public memory, hashtag syllabuses aim to occupy the field on certain issues, ensuring that these issues cannot be discussed without recognizing the hashtag syllabus' response to that issue. In the cases of Ferguson or Charlottesville, for example, the deployment of hashtag syllabuses sought to ensure that the role of white supremacy in both of these events was cemented in the public mind by

the education they offered. In this regard, these pedagogical responses these hashtag syllabuses offer resemble courses like Rosa Eberly's, addressing the University of Texas tower shooting, described by students as "a living educational memorial to the victims" ("Everywhere" 80). This response shows how pedagogical responses to disaster can serve as ongoing forms of memorializing action. Hashtag syllabuses serve this function by seeking to generate pedagogical responses to disaster not just in the immediate aftermath of the disaster they address, but over time, as they are redeployed by other hashtag syllabuses addressing other disasters.

The memorializing function of hashtag syllabuses has the key effect of preserving the counternarratives they highlight. Due to the amount of power—in the form of access, resources, or cultural sway, among others—that it takes to establish and maintain a monument, memorials generally offer didactic representations of hegemonic views. Additionally, all monuments play a cultural role, as Kendall Phillips notes: "people look to memory, especially the memories of important events, not only to remember those events for themselves, but also to urge others to remember them, for the promise of the past presented to us" (217). Contrary to the dominant remembrances offered by institutionally-sanctioned monuments, hashtag syllabuses have consistently sought to foreground marginalized perspectives on the issues they address. This work takes place in their content, which includes the counternarratives of marginalized authors, and it takes place in their composition, because the authors of these syllabuses are frequently people of color.

By foregrounding marginalized voices, hashtag syllabuses position themselves as counterpublics, and offer counternarratives to prevailing depictions of their events. Presenting these counternarratives allows hashtag syllabuses to heighten the kairotic force of their deployment—not just by emerging rapidly following disasters, but also by breaking the propriety often accorded to memorializations representing the dominant view of events. In the case of the Charlottesville Syllabus, for example, while President Trump's comments on the violence sought to minimize the role that white supremacists had played in perpetrating it, the Charlottesville Syllabus highlights this connection by opening with a section titled "The KKK, the Alt Right, and the History of White Supremacist Groups in Charlottesville" (UVa). As the syllabus' authors write in their preface: "The 'alt-right' have been working to distance themselves rhetorically from old-fashioned racist groups like the KKK, and it is essential that we do not let them falsify the narrative of white supremacy in Charlottesville and in this country" (UVa). The Charlottesville Syllabus also presents documents contextualizing the University of Virginia as a location where white supremacist violence was not an aberration, but an extension of its racial past, including sections titled "Slavery and Thomas Jefferson's University" and "The University of Virginia Pioneers the Eugenics Movement" (UVa). Resources such as those included in these sections challenge views of the University of Virginia that would seek to sanitize its racial past, working to complicate narratives about the institution, to ensure that its more unseemly legacies are remembered.

While the degree to which the Charlottesville Syllabus itself ultimately influenced the way that the disaster it commemorates is remembered is difficult to concretely

determine, among educators, the wide circulation of the Charlottesville Syllabus demonstrates that its ideas gained traction pedagogically. We can see this in tweets by teachers who use the hashtag—circulating the syllabus—to commit to applying it in their courses. For example, on August 15, 2017, Jamie M. Jones wrote: "School has started/ starts soon-important tough discussions ahead. Here are tools to help: #CharlottesvilleSyllabus," and included a link to the Medium site. Other educators responded to questions about how to respond to the events in Charlottesville by recommending the syllabus, again including the hashtag and the link (see Luschek; Figure 10). As they are taken up in classrooms to address disasters in an activist way, the widespread circulation of hashtag syllabuses again demonstrates their impact on how events are memorialized. Hashtag syllabuses are now used as a sign of pedagogical resistance, a powerful symbolic counterweight, to other symbols—like Confederate monuments, in the case of Charlottesville—that they are often deployed in opposition to. The growth of hashtag syllabuses is ultimately recursive: as they are circulated, they gain prominence as forms of disaster response. Those who share them position themselves as teachers who are likely to respond to future disasters. This furthers the availability of hashtag syllabuses as a tool for first responder teachers to deploy in future disasters yet to occur.
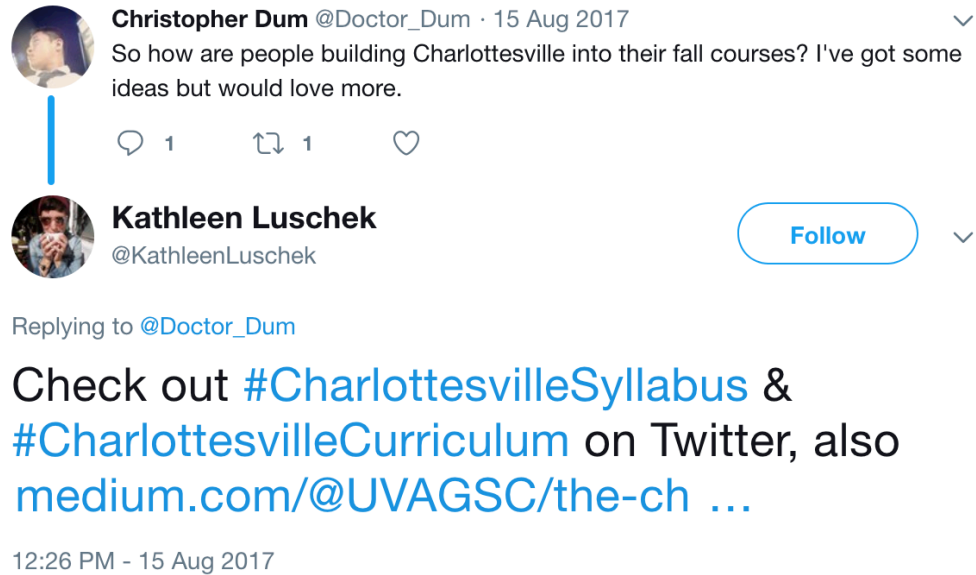
Figure 10. Kathleen Luschek Circulates the Charlottesville Syllabus with Hashtag and Link, in Response to a Question about Teaching the Events

Hashtag syllabuses have been developed and deployed in response to a range of preventable disasters, often instances of violence of a social or political nature. While hashtag syllabuses apply genre features recognizable from academic syllabuses, they are a new genre that exists to advance public, activist ends. These syllabuses emerge from collaborative authorship and circulate on social media to agitate for and support pedagogical responses to the disasters they commemorate; ideally, teachers seeing and sharing hashtag syllabuses are moved to teach these disasters in their courses. Beyond this, hashtag syllabuses also orient themselves toward the future, working to ensure that future disasters are prevented. They do so by preserving counternarratives about these disasters, counternarratives that provide education on topics like legacies of racism in higher education. The inclusion of these texts demonstrates hope on the part of those who include them that the learning resulting from pedagogical responses to disaster will stop

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similar disruptions from happening again. This is the memorializing function of hashtag syllabuses, a function premised on confronting the notion of the classroom as a neutral space. The authors of hashtag syllabuses demand that teachers talk about these disasters—including racist violence from Ferguson to Charlottesville—as an integral task of the work of education. And while disruptions like the ones hashtag syllabuses have been organized around continue to occur, instances of hashtag syllabuses are recirculated, perpetuating the genre form that allows us to respond to them again. For these reasons, the hashtag syllabus form offers valuable lessons for considering what disaster response ought to look like in classroom spaces. In the next chapter, I take up this question directly, drawing together key threads from this analysis, and my analysis of responses to Hurricane Sandy, with the aim of articulating at length a comprehensive plan for teacher training and development, to better prepare for future disruptions that may arise.

CHAPTER IV

A PEDAGOGY FOR DISASTER RESPONSIVENESS

Take a moment to imagine a disaster. We are free to imagine whatever kind of

disaster we like. Perhaps the disaster we imagine is ecological; this is a strong possibility,

given that the worsening effects of climate change are leading to more frequent natural

disasters of increased severity (Fountain; Irfan and Resnick). Or perhaps we imagined

violence, whether political or interpersonal. Both of these are also plausible. In recent

years, mass shooting deaths have increased precipitously (Arthur), and organizations

identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as hate groups openly embrace and

commit violence as a political tactic (Hatewatch). The plausibility of these and other

examples we might have imagined is a sad fact of our contemporary moment. Large-scale

disruption that impacts education exists around the world, including natural disasters,

authoritarian violence, and refugee crises from the Middle East to South and Central

America. It is no surprise that universities are not only confronting issues such as these,

but even finding them present on their own campuses. In a two-month span from late

June to late August 2018, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published articles on its

website addressing the rise of white supremacist propaganda on campuses, including at

Texas State University, the University of Virginia, and Michigan State University

(Zahneis); a fatal shooting by campus police at Portland State University (Simonton); an

alleged cover-up of domestic abuse in the athletics program at Ohio State University

(Mangan); and the toppling of a Confederate monument on the campus of the University of North Carolina (Patel). As such examples demonstrate, situations demanding to be addressed by faculty and administrators in higher education are not just at our doorstep, but already inside our houses. As a result, this chapter proceeds from the premise that nearly all teachers will eventually be tasked with responding to disruptive circumstances; it seeks to offer concrete strategies for addressing them.

The project of this chapter builds directly on the findings of Chapters Two and Three. Both these earlier chapters sought to develop nuanced depictions of what educators actually do in response to different kinds of circumstances, to understand better what options were available to these teachers. To extend a metaphor I have used throughout this project, the preceding chapters have examined what teachers who act as first responders do; in this chapter, I take up the question of how best to prepare others to fulfill the same role. Across this chapter, I develop strategies that seek to directly respond to the conditions I have described and analyzed thus far. From my research into Hurricane Sandy, I draw an emphasis on the emotional aftereffects of disaster, as well as lessons about the benefits of reflective habits and flexible dispositions for responding. From the case of the Charlottesville Syllabus, I draw insights about the usefulness of bending familiar genres to the task of response, as well as the value of immediacy and counterpublics. The purpose of this chapter is to draw these different kinds of reactions together to offer a pedagogy that accounts for disastrous exigencies. My hope is that, when necessary, this pedagogy can be deployed by teachers of writing in a wide range of unforeseen circumstances.

This chapter may also be of particular use to writing program administrators. While the insights of previous chapters certainly have utility to writing program administrators (WPAs), the concrete strategies this chapter offers are intended to be directly useful to WPAs via implementation in teacher training and development programs. The responsibility for training and developing the instructional capacities of writing program teachers is a traditional aspect of WPA work, and thus WPAs have a considerable amount of power in directing these efforts, including around what kinds of training is offered. An ethical response to the inevitability of disaster is for WPAs to incorporate disaster preparedness efforts I argue for in this chapter into the pedagogical training they provide. The program for pedagogical development I offer arises not only from the insights of the preceding chapters, but from data gathered in a piloted teacher-training intervention as well. I first discuss the context of that data, including how it was gathered and processed. I next examine scholarship in areas including theories of experience and reflective thinking in education, which offer models for grounded and responsive teaching practice, and which can positively impact habits and dispositions toward complex classroom situations; and queer theory and queer pedagogies, which offer understandings of non-normative forms that can be used to develop responsive counterpublics. I then explain the interventions I piloted, including what strategies I offered, the origins of those strategies, and how their effects were measured. From this I turn to the results of my interventions, explaining how the data I gathered led me to further refine and shape my proposed pedagogy. Lastly, I offer a cohesive account of my pedagogy for disaster responsiveness, a pedagogy that allows teachers to better prepare

for and respond to disruptions when they occur. In offering this approach, I argue that an ethical response to disaster asks teachers to embrace emotion and flexibility, through non-normative adaptations of genre forms to address their disrupted contexts.

Designing and Distributing Intervention Surveys

The pedagogical interventions offered in this chapter were developed out of the understandings generated in the previous chapters of how teachers respond to disruptions of various kinds, whether with attention to emotions in interpersonal responses, as in Chapter Two, or with attention to the responses of activist counterpublics, as in Chapter Three. Much of the data for this chapter was gathered in the process of testing these interventions through a piloted version of my pedagogical program. Gathering data from the pilot tests allowed me to measure the effectiveness of my proposed interventions and to further refine these propositions. In this section, I describe the data-gathering process of the pilot intervention, including how the pilot was implemented, what data was gathered, and how it was gathered.

The pedagogical interventions proposed in this chapter are best suited to use in introductory teacher training courses. These courses are a natural fit for adaptation because they are a common and longstanding feature of preparing graduate students to teach writing at the college level (Wilhoit). Consequently, incorporating models of disaster response in these courses may be a more feasible option than designing separate,

standalone programs, like professional development workshops.[40] In this instance, I

arranged to conduct the pilot intervention during a regularly scheduled class session of

the course "Teaching College Writing" at UNC Greensboro (UNCG). At UNCG, this

course, which is co-taught by the Director of College Writing and the graduate student

serving as Assistant Director of College Writing, is required of all graduate students who

hold teaching assistantships through the English Department. Graduate students must

enroll in this course during their first semester teaching in the UNCG English

Department, and all of these Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are assigned to teach

one section of College Writing I (English 101) and to work in the University Writing

Center during the semester they are enrolled. These instructors also receive training in the

form of a multi-day "Teaching of Writing Orientation" conducted in August, before the

beginning of the semester. The new instructors also share the orientation with newly

hired lecturers who have not previously taught in the department; these lecturers are not

graduate students, and consequently do not enroll in the practicum course.

As a result of their disparate backgrounds and trainings, the people in the

Teaching College Writing course represent a range of pedagogical experience. While

graduate composition practicum courses are generally intended for new instructors, it is

also relatively common for students enrolled in them to have previous teaching

experience, either at the college level (usually at a different institution), or at the

secondary level. This was true of the section in which I piloted my interventions, as well.

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[40] As I will later discuss, an ongoing series of professional development efforts, including
workshops, can also be useful in preparing instructors to address disasters. However,
practical barriers, like issues of attendance, scheduling, and the labor of conducting
trainings, make siting interventions in pre-existing training structures less burdensome.

The data consequently represents potential differences in response that can arise with greater experience teaching—which also implies more time as a teacher who may have been exposed to disruption. This is relevant because, as we saw in the responses reported to the interviews in Chapter Two, when new teachers gain experience with their profession, they feel more capable of addressing circumstances when they arise.

The pedagogical intervention took the form of conducting a forty-five-minute workshop for the GTAs enrolled in the practicum course. The activity prompted the GTAs to consider possible disasters alongside what responses they might offer if these disasters occurred. The activity is described in more detail below. Data from this intervention was gathered using two methods: by comparing pre- and post-tests taken by GTAs before and after the workshop, and by recording observational notes during discussions occurring as part of the activity. These sets of information contextualize one another, producing a richer depiction of the attitudes and responses of teachers addressing hypothetical disasters.

The pool of potential subjects for this study were the nine GTAs enrolled in the practicum course during the semester I piloted my interventions. The pre-test, a survey conducted through Qualtrics, was administered by email sixteen days before the class intervention, and re-sent nine days before. Ultimately, eight GTAs completed the pre-survey. On the day I attended the course, seven of the nine enrolled GTAs were present, along with the WPA and Assistant WPA. The post-test survey, again administered using Qualtrics, was distributed by email immediately following the intervention, and re-sent twenty days later. The text accompanying the post-test instructed GTAs not to take this

second survey if they had not been present for the intervention. This aims to ensure the reliability of the change in results. The surveys, both pre- and post-test, were taken anonymously, but I was able to match responses by asking participants to enter a unique identifier at the end of each. Six GTAs completed the post-test survey; two who had taken the pre-test survey did not take the post-test.

The pre- and post-tests asked the same questions and in the same order, so that responses could be compared across the intervention. The surveys consisted of four sections shared among both versions, and one section unique to each test. The four common sections were:

1. An assessment of respondents' attitudes regarding pedagogy and flexibility, ranked on a Likert scale from 5, "Completely Agree" to 1, "Completely Disagree,"

2. An assessment of respondents' sense of their own capabilities to implement different potential responses to class disruptions, ranked on a Likert scale from 5, "Completely Capable" to 1, "Completely Incapable,"

3. Descriptions of hypothetical situations of pedagogical disruption, accompanied by checkboxes describing different tactics for addressing the disruptions, offering respondents the opportunity to detail what responsive actions they would take in each circumstance, and

4. Two open-ended questions, asking: "what criteria would you use to determine whether or not you should depart from your course schedule as offered in your

syllabus?" and "what criteria would you use to determine whether or not you

should address current events or circumstances in your class?"

In the pre-test, the fifth section asked respondents to list how many semesters they had

taught writing at the college level, any subject at the college level, and any subject at the

K-12 level. This information would not change between the pre- and post-tests, so it was

not necessary to ask again. In the post-test, the fifth section was an additional open-ended

question that asked respondents to reflect on the intervention itself: "how did the activity

you participated in affect your sense of your own readiness to respond to unexpected

circumstances that might affect your classes?"[41] This question sought direct commentary

from respondents about the intervention and the effects it had on their readiness.

I derived several sets of data from the pre- and post-test responses. First, I

developed aggregate data representing the answers of all respondents from both Sections

1 (agree/disagree) and 2 (capable/incapable) on the pre- and post-tests. This data allows

me to compare overalls trend in participants' responses between the pre- and post-tests.[42]

I noted, for example, in which of the hypothetical scenarios four of the six respondents

did not change their attitudes at all, and in which where the sense of capability was stable

or improved among all respondents. Next, I developed comparative data by matching up

individual respondents' pre- and post-tests, using the unique identifiers they created at the

end of each survey. This data allowed me to see where a respondent's attitudes had

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[41] For the complete survey text and consent materials, please see Appendix B.

[42] I include with the summary of pre-test responses the answers of the two GTAs who did
not complete the post-test, as their attitudes are still valuable for representing overall how
GTAs who had experienced no intervention felt about the circumstances described in the
survey. The cumulative post-test data includes the responses of all six GTAs who
completed it.

shifted, either positively or negatively, and where they had remained consistent across the intervention. I also generated comparative data from the checklist of responses to hypothetical situations, looking to see if respondents' senses of what actions they would take following a disruption changed as a result of considering disruptions and planning responses as part of the intervention. Across all the comparative data, I correlated how many semesters respondents reported having taught with the answers they provided, to see if their attitudes and habits for disaster response correlated with degrees of experience, as was suggested by Chapter Two. Lastly, the answers the GTAs provided to the open-ended questions helped me interpret this data, as can be seen in my analysis.

Dimensions of Pedagogy in Experience, Reflective Thinking, and Queer Failure

In this section, I provide context for the intervention activities and surveys, and for the pedagogy of disaster responsiveness I offer, by drawing connections to scholarship on theories of experience in education, work on reflective thinking, and concepts of normativity developed in queer theories. Theories of experience in education help me to address the thorny issue of how to design a pedagogical program that is able to address disaster, which manifests in a wide range of circumstances not easily covered by a cohesive set of strategies. Drawing especially on the work of educational philosopher John Dewey, and other, more contemporary pedagogies of experience, I apply "experience" as a Deweyan concept to the context of disaster to explain how a pedagogical program flexible enough to meet a range of disaster circumstances can exist. I connect these theories directly to work on teacher training that addresses habits of

reflective thinking, as a way to situate pedagogies of experience in training and development efforts like those tested in the intervention workshop. Lastly, I turn to queer theories of normativity as an alternative means to addressing disaster than directly confronting their conditions. Taking cue from the example of counterpublics established by hashtag syllabuses, as examined in Chapter Three, I see the non-normative forms of response to circumstances offered by queer theories and pedagogies as a way to engage productively with the inevitable failures disaster incurs.

The problem of pedagogy. A basic challenge facing any pedagogy that seeks to address disaster is the particularity of every disaster. It would be useless and irresponsible for me, or any other scholar, to recommend a course of action that purported to be foolproof in such a wide variety of circumstances—especially as those circumstances are by definition unexpected. How could I recommend a program of response that would equally meet the challenges of a tornado in Missouri or a hurricane in Florida, let alone a school shooting in whichever place one next occurs? Thankfully, the applicability of pedagogy to local contexts, even outside of disaster, is not a new one. Educational theories grounded in the concept of experience provide crucial models for teaching through the radical indeterminacy of everyday life.

I draw the notion of experience as a key pedagogical concept from the work of John Dewey, who throughout his lengthy career made the incorporation of students' experiences into their curricula an abiding focus of his work. As early as 1897—almost twenty years before his landmark *Democracy and Education*—Dewey wrote an essay entitled "My Pedagogic Creed," in which he argued that "education must be conceived as

a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing" (91). In a later work, *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey explored this concern more directly, prompting educators to see "teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience" (87). I want to use Dewey's concept of experience to interrogate disaster as a type of experience that is valuable for educational purposes—both for students and teachers.

Though Dewey wrote copiously about the best procedures by which to incorporate experience as part of education, he too struggled with the question of pedagogy, even at times resisting the term. In *How We Think* (1933), he cautions against an overly logical and overly systematized approach to education, writing that "the adoption by teachers of this misconception of logical method has probably done more than anything else to bring pedagogy into disrepute, for to many persons 'pedagogy' means precisely a set of mechanical, self-conscious devices for replacing by some cast-iron external scheme the personal mental movement of the individual" (81).[43] Like Dewey, I resist any pedagogy that operates as an inflexible, broadly applicable scheme. Instead, any approach to teaching and learning that is grounded in experience must be responsive to the nature of those experiences, even as this responsiveness has the irksome side-effect of making the approach less translatable from one context to another. For Dewey, the problem of setting down a transferrable pedagogy was intractable:

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[43] The overly systemized approach Dewey is critiquing offers students an arrangement of basic concepts to analyze, so that when they understand these concepts through analysis, they gain the desired knowledge and skills. Dewey illustrates this with the example of learning to draw (the desired skill) by first learning how to draw a variety of straight and curved lines (the basic concepts), since all drawings are logically built of lines.

educational philosopher Sarah Stitzlein characterizes Dewey's "pragmatist spirit" as extending so far that "he would not want to pin down specific habits or guidelines outside of particular real-life contexts" (61).

Despite his resistance to providing guidelines, Dewey was nevertheless concerned that pedagogy should *necessarily* concern itself with experience. He wrote that experience could be used to generate pedagogy, saying that "an experience, a very humble experience, is capable of generating and carrying any amount of theory (or intellectual content)" (*Democracy* 144). Clearly, Dewey thought that the material necessary to educate others was found *in experience.* At the same time, he warned that "a theory apart from an experience cannot be definitely grasped even as theory. It tends to become a mere verbal formula, a set of catchwords used to render thinking, or genuine theorizing, unnecessary and impossible" (*Democracy* 144). I agree with Dewey's insistence on the situatedness of all teaching work, and the experience that consequentially must form its guiding theory. So rather than preparing educators to respond to specific disasters, we must intervene in pedagogical practice before a disaster occurs, to build habits of response that can be called upon when the exigency arises. We must prepare teachers to *use* the contexts that occur to them when they occur. As Dewey wrote, "occasions which are not and cannot be foreseen are bound to arise wherever there is intellectual freedom. They should be utilized" (*Experience* 79).

Can we teach educators in a general way to respond to the particularities of experience—and to disaster as an especially confounding experience? I believe the answer is yes, through methods that build habits of reflexive thinking. To better define

reflexive thinking, we must first understand Dewey's particular conception of experience, and its role in his view of reflective thinking. From that point, I will then explore further developments in scholarship that follows Dewey's use of reflective thinking, like Donald Schön's reflective practice and Donna Qualley's reflexivity. Lastly I will trace contemporary pedagogies whose grounding in experience places them as part of a common lineage with scholarship on reflexivity. Together, these provide a basis for developing my pedagogy of disaster response.

Experience and reflective thinking in Dewey. Deweyan reflexive thinking is a process of translating experiences into learning. In Dewey's work, experience and education are linked through reflexive thinking. His view of experience was totalizing—according to Dewey, all education, and even all thinking, is grounded in experience. It is therefore worth exploring what he meant by the concept. According to Stitzlein, "for Dewey, experience is all-encompassing, involving the entire individual—mind, body, reason, thoughts, habits, and emotions—as well as the socio-cultural environment" (67). Dewey's concern was thus how best to employ these experiences in a productive manner as part of a program of education. He was clear, for example, about the limitations of using experience: "The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other" (*Experience* 25). Instead, he articulated a "principle of continuity," as a rubric to determine whether or not an experience could be educative. For Dewey, the principle of continuity means that education is a process of growing. As he writes, "every experience is a moving force. Its

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value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into"—in other words, "does this form of growth create conditions for further growth, or does it set up conditions that shut off the person who has grown in this particular direction from the occasions, stimuli, and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions?" (*Experience* 38, 36). A valuable and educative experience is one that can be linked to others in a longer chain of experience and thought. The process of cognitively linking moments to others in a greater understanding is the process of learning.

Dewey calls the cognitive linking I am describing "reflective thinking," and it is the crux of Dewey's conception of learning more broadly. Dewey defines reflective thinking as "*active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends*" (*How We Think* 9, emphasis in original). Without reflection, "we see *that* a certain way of acting and a certain consequence are connected, but we do not see *how* they are" (Dewey, *Democracy* 145, emphasis in original). This is because "reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a *con*-sequence—a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each outcome in turn leans back on, or refers to, its predecessors. The successive portions of a reflective thought grow out of one another and support one another" (Dewey, *How We Think* 4, emphasis in original). The value of Dewey's reflective thinking for teaching in situations of disaster is that it allows teachers to connect those experiences—abnormal as they may be—to other, previous experiences, and to apply insights from those disasters to later exigencies, disastrous or not. In this way, even seemingly unrelated situations can be

linked through the transfer of knowledge. While the experiences of Hurricane Sandy and the violence in Charlottesville are of different kinds, my knowledge of emotional consequences and pedagogical flexibility applies in both circumstances, along with other tactics for response. Thus reflective thinking allows us to skirt the problem of broadly applicable pedagogical schemes by building a mindset that adapts to a wide variety of experiences, and that is capable of drawing connections between disparate circumstances.

The end result of reflective thinking, according to Dewey, is creating habits of action. This occurs because reflective thinking requires us to consider both the past and the future. As Dewey explains: "Reflective thinking involves a look into the future, a forecast, an anticipation, or a prediction, […] every intellectual suggestion or idea is anticipatory of some possible future experience, […] it is both a record of something accomplished and an assignment of a future method of operation. It helps set up an enduring habit of procedure" (*How We Think* 117). What Dewey means is that, when working successfully, reflective thinking requires us to understand past experiences, and use them anticipate future experiences of a similar nature. If we engage in this process enough, the anticipation reflective thinking requires becomes a habit, and we naturally go through our lives applying our experiences to future situations. At this point, we are engaged in a continuous process of self-education. This habit of anticipatory thinking that Dewey describes is crucial for disaster response. In order to be truly prepared for disaster, teachers need to be able to imagine how their experiences can be applied toward exigencies before they occur. To effectively respond to disaster, teachers need to build reflective thinking into a habit in their professional lives. The habits Dewey describes are

also useful for disaster response because, like pedagogies of experience, Deweyan habits are not "an inclination to repeat identical acts or address content precisely" but "a predisposition to act, or sensitivity to ways of being" (Stitzlein 63). According to Stitzlein, Deweyan habits "shape and precede the generation of ideas. They provide us with know-how, 'working capacities' that help us know how to act in the world" (63). As a result, "when formed tentatively as hypotheses in light of intelligent foresight into future, unpredictable circumstances, habits can be flexible agents of change whose form emerges as situations unfold" (Stitzlein 64). Stitzlein helpfully encapsulates Dewey's habits as flexible and emergent, and responsive to situations; these qualities are precisely what makes Deweyan habits so useful for a pedagogy that seeks to respond to disaster.

Habits of reflective thinking in practice. The pedagogy I offer in this chapter aims to establish and support the growth of Deweyan habits as a tool for disaster response. One way to support these habits is to ask teachers to engage in the anticipatory practice of reflective thinking, as I did in my intervention workshop. But my methods for fostering habits of reflective thinking does not only arise from the work of Dewey; they also arise from the work of scholars who have sought to inculcate reflexive thinking as part of the practice of teaching and learning. Here I draw on two key models, both of whom continue Dewey's work (and draw on him repeatedly in their own arguments): Donald Schön's influential concept of the "reflective practitioner," which specifically attempts to educate for habits of reflective cognition, and Donna Qualley's "reflexive pedagogy," which extends beyond mere reflection to embrace challenging and ambiguous situations.

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The concern for temporality—when the act of reflection is to take place—is a

significant question for disaster response, because if reflective thinking is to be of any use

in situations of disruption, teachers must be able to engage in it almost immediately.

Donald Schön's theory of reflection addresses this concern because he builds his theory

around the idea of "reflection-in-action," which starts first from a place of "knowing-in-

action," in which "the knowing is *in* the action. We reveal it by our spontaneous, skillful

execution of the performance; and we are characteristically unable to make it verbally

explicit" (25, emphasis in original). Reflection-in-action builds on this knowledge in

order to better communicate (and teach) the action we practice to others. Schön's

emphasis on simultaneity is important for applying his theory to the messy contingencies

of disaster. He distinguishes reflection-in-action from "reflect[ion] *on* action, thinking

back on what we have done in order to discover how our knowing-in-action may have

contributed to an unexpected outcome," which "has no direct connection to present

action" (26, emphasis in original). Instead, reflection-in-action occurs "in the midst of

action without interrupting it. In an *action-present*—a period of time, variable with the

context, during which we can still make a difference to the situation at hand—our

thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it" (26, emphasis in

original). We can imagine, as an example, the way that hashtag syllabuses are

perpetuated as a mode of disaster response simply because their authors have seen the

form used to address disaster before—the form presents itself as available for

pedagogical action, and adept practitioners choose to employ it in a process of reflection-

in-action.

Though it can be applied in the immediacy a disaster requires, Schön's reflective thinking poses another temporal challenge: how do we teach people to reflect in an "action-present"? Schön encountered the same problem; he understood reflective thinking in the cases he studied as "learnable" but "not teachable by classroom methods" (157).[44] I argue that teaching people *to teach* functions similarly to Schön's examples— while instruction in pedagogical theory is useful for new instructors, until they are able to put this theory to practice in the classroom, its utility is painfully limited. Schön's model, which tasks students with learning by doing and then engaging in the process of reflection-in-action to build habits of mind, goes by a familiar name to those in composition studies: he advocates for a "practicum." At their best, graduate teacher training courses, which often go by this name, already successfully implement the kind of reflection-in-action Schön advocates for, and consequently can serve as a natural venue for implementing strategies of reflective pedagogy. In my own pedagogical model for disaster response, I argue that composition practicums are an ideal (though not the only) site where preparedness interventions can occur, and I conducted my pilot tests in a practicum course for this reason.

While I find Schön's reflective thinking useful for its immediacy, and its model of instruction through practicum courses, it does not fully account for the upheaval that teachers are likely to encounter in a disaster's aftermath. Schön helpfully illuminates how reflective thinking works in professional settings, but what about when those settings are

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[44] Schön's primary example is the practice of architectural design, though he also applies his theories to instruction in the practices of musical performance, psychoanalysis, and counseling.

thrown into disarray? Donna Qualley's pedagogy of reflexivity—which she positions as an extension of reflection—addresses this question. Qualley writes that "reflexivity is a response triggered by a dialectical engagement with the other—an other idea, theory, person, culture, text, or even an other part of one's self" (11). Another example of an othering experience could be disaster, which estranges us from our normal experiences of our environments. Disaster changes the ways we move through the spaces we know best, and changes how we feel our relationships to them. Consider the experiences of the teachers from Chapter Two who did not know what to do with their classes, and how different this is from a normal teaching situation. In a normal teaching situation, the teacher's job is premised on *knowing* what do to with a class, but disaster turns that knowledge on its head.

Qualley's formulation is useful for more than just attention to how thinking works in moments of self-estrangement. Reflexivity also requires a "dialectical engagement," which she defines as "an engagement that is ongoing and recursive as opposed to a single, momentary encounter" (11). Here we can imagine hashtag syllabuses, in their repeated circulations, representing the kind of dialectical engagement with a disaster that Qualley is calling for. This repeated engagement also resembles Dewey's reflective thinking, which looks both backward and forward. Qualley notes this directly, saying: "I believe the most educative experiences—in Dewey's sense, the ones that deepen or transform thinking and lead to learning and further inquiry—are reflexive as well as reflective" (13). Qualley's concept of reflexivity offers a valuable complication of the process of reflection, through its emphasis on repeated engagement with what she calls

"the messiness and uncertainty of between"—a situation reminiscent of the liminality of

disaster (22). Disaster epitomizes this messiness and uncertainty in its paradoxically

banal abnormality. On the one hand, many disasters destabilize our lives to the extent that

they must be addressed pedagogically. But on the other, the questions we often address in

the wake of disaster reckon with the simplest details: do I have electricity?, is it safe to go

outside?, and what do I say to my students? Like choosing to respond to disaster,

Qualley's reflexivity is a provisional act that must "remain tentative, open to further

inquiry," that must respond to its circumstances as they change (158). What a pedagogy

of reflexivity allows us to do, according to Qualley, is to "momentarily turn our attention

from the text or situation back to these subjective frames, beliefs, assumptions, and

theories" that the text or situation makes visible (151). If as teachers we turn away from

the disaster itself—the text or situation—to its frame, we can engage in a process of

reflexivity that allows us to better respond to its circumstances. Hashtag syllabuses enact

this process by focusing on the human causes behind events, rather than just their

immediate consequences. When we attend to its frame, instead of becoming trapped in a

disaster's particularities, reflexivity allows us to find commonalities across different

situations, where pedagogical approaches may better translate or apply from one to the

next.

Contemporary pedagogies of experience. In my model, the pedagogies of

reflection and reflexivity offered by Schön and Qualley are complemented and

augmented by contemporary pedagogies building on notions of experience. Particularly

useful for this project are Paul Lynch's work on casuistry, Matthew Heard's work on

sensibility, and Kendall Gerdes' work on sensitivity. Though they use different terms to describe their approaches, all three of these scholars ground their theories in experience, and grapple with the issue of how best to teach responsively to the particular challenges of the contemporary world. Heard, for example, argues for an emphasis on "sensibility" in WPA work, which he defines as "a disposition of ready awareness to how writers—and, I would add, teachers—negotiate the daily conflicts and tensions that shift and shape the influence of writing on our lives" (38). In Heard's formulation, sensibility attunes us to the material and experiential aspects of our lives; it attends to the emotional and sensory resonances present there. From a disaster preparedness standpoint, it is also significant that Heard describes sensibility as a "posture": sensibility "describes readiness and adjustment rather than knowledge and belief" (40). We may not know exactly how to respond to disaster, but the kind of sensitivity for which Heard argues would prepare us to adjust to exigencies when they occur.

Other recent pedagogies that highlight the role of experience in the classroom have also embraced a more adaptive mode of response to situations that arise in teaching. Heard's recommendations resemble Lynch's call in his book *After Pedagogy* for a mode of teaching premised on casuistry, a "method of case-based reasoning" which can "balance the (sometimes) competing claims of *kairos* and pedagogy" (*xxi*). The competition Lynch describes between *kairos* and pedagogy is perfectly exemplified by the situation of disaster, where the need to teach effectively and the need to respond quickly stand in tension. I argue that this situation supports Gerdes' call for pedagogical "sensitivity," which refers to "a fundamentally rhetorical exposedness, a vulnerability to

being affected in language that impairs the self-containment of the rhetorical subject," a vulnerability heightened in disruptive circumstances (2). For Gerdes, "sensitivity can be understood as a condition of possibility for one to be affected by an/other's address"; it, "like rhetoricity, is rather an incapacity or inability to stop oneself from being affected in language" (3, 13). Like sensitivity, a pedagogy of disaster response is premised on the inevitability of being affected, and asks instead what we do with this necessary openness.

The approaches offered by Heard, Lynch, and Gerdes offer valuable models for a pedagogy addressing disruption because all three reject systematic approaches to challenging teaching situations, and instead ground their theories in experience, asking how we can act ethically when our values are challenged. This is of paramount importance in the aftermath of disaster, when traditional pedagogical values like stability, consistency, and growth are shaken. Casuistic, sensitivity-, or sensibility-based approaches offer possibility because they reject static principles in favor of contingency, which allows us to take advantage of constrained situations with responses based only on the affordances those varying circumstances offer. As Heard argues: "cultivating sensibility within my own writing program gives me hope that instructors will be able to sense their own limitations and be more ready to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves, limited and local as these opportunities might be" (45). The terms Heard uses to frame his argument—limitations and opportunities—are equally present in the highly-constrained circumstance of disaster, and the cases examined in earlier chapters demonstrate how disaster response cuts across their division. The contingent instructors in Chapter Two saw their lack of guidance as a limitation, but the teachers in

Chapter Three took a lack of guidance as an opportunity to offer some, in the form of the

hashtag syllabus. These teachers also worked across the limitation of institutional

boundaries to coordinate responses together, in recognition of their common affectedness.

On an even more basic level, pedagogies grounded in experience help us prepare

for disaster by reminding us of the potential for disruption to occur. Gerdes argues to this

effect, making the point that we should expect our shared vulnerability to become part of

classroom reality:

> I am not saying that we are equipped by our training to handle mental health
> crises in (or as a result of) our classrooms—only that we should not be shocked or
> insulted to learn from our students that such crises can and do occur. […] But it's
> not just our sensitive students: we are *all* vulnerable to and even defenseless
> against the trauma that is rhetorical affection, the fact that language does wound
> and open us all, and anyone can touch us with an address, be they a teacher, a
> student, a campus preacher, a friend, an intimate, or a stranger. (15)

Disaster, more than most situations, drives this shared vulnerability home when it

suddenly arrives and impacts a classroom. I have argued throughout this project

that it is appropriate for a teacher encountering that situation to take responsive

action, to pedagogically address the circumstances they are in. But Gerdes

reminds us that orienting our pedagogies *a priori* toward the shared vulnerability

of experience prepares us better to respond than simply anticipating disaster and

waiting for it to happen. I believe that a pedagogy that takes up this premise, and

which seeks to address contingencies from that point, is best suited to respond to

the realities of disaster. We can better prepare for disaster by cultivating habits of

response grounded in sensibility, sensitivity, or casuistry.

Pedagogies of queer failure. It is not easy for teachers to adopt a stance that automatically recognizes the shared vulnerability of any classroom space the moment they step into it. Nevertheless, at its most effective, a pedagogy of disaster response asks us to adopt precisely this orientation. To address the difficulty such a proposition poses, I turn to queer theories of normativity, and queer pedagogies. Both of these areas of scholarship have long articulated ways of living that resist normative versions of living, and of teaching. As a model for a pedagogy of disaster response, the non-normative forms privileged in queer theory can help teachers to adopt and occupy the discomfiting position of vulnerability it requires.

Many queer theorists have recognized a similar vulnerability to the kind Gerdes has described. Ann Cvetkovich, in writing about affect and trauma in *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, notes that "the unpredictability and contingency of affective life trouble any systematic presumptions about identity and politics, including models of political liberation that depend on the repudiation of the normal or the embrace of it" (47). One such repudiation of the normal that Cvetkovich undertakes is to depathologize trauma, an approach that takes "the same depathologizing perspective that has animated queer understandings of sexuality" (47). The result is to understand trauma "not as a medical problem in search of a cure but as felt experiences that can be mobilized in a range of directions, including the construction of culture and publics"—and, I would add, pedagogy (47). Such an approach is grounded in queer life, because "queer approaches to trauma can appreciate the creative ways in which people respond to it" (48). Indeed it is the creativity of queer response, creativity

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that often goes hand-in-hand with anti-normativity, that makes it such a commendable model for disaster response. The abnormality of disaster situations, like the trauma Cvetkovich examines, calls for an anti-normative approach which can better address their oddness and particularity.

Queer pedagogies, which have applied the findings of queer theories like those Cvetkovich articulates, have engaged directly with the question of how teachers should best deal with the many classroom-shaping norms we commonly find in educational spaces. These classroom norms include "class discussion (requiring normative understandings of participation), group work (requiring normative ideas about collaboration and sociality), sustained engagement with texts (requiring normative notions of attention)," and queer pedagogies seek to account for and resist them (Waite 83). A pedagogy of disaster response must similarly be able to operate outside of classroom norms, as these norms are often ruptured as a result of its impact. The model of pedagogy Stacey Waite provides presents a useful example for how these norms can be resisted. In her work, Waite develops "queer methodologies, thinking of queer pedagogies as sets of theorized practices that any student or teacher might engage, sets of theorized practices that as practices were, or could be, queer" (5). These methodologies lead her to see "writing and teaching as already queer practices," and to argue for a writing pedagogy that employs "non-normative and category-resistant forms of writing that move between the critical and the creative, the theoretical and the practical, the rhetorical and the poetic, the queer and the often invisible normative functions of classrooms" (6). I want to take up Waite's notion of anti-normative composition,

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composition that resists composure. In the context of disaster response, this may mean embracing the failure of our own abilities to rise to the circumstances—but to seek to respond in whatever capacity we can, regardless.

Queer pedagogy's embrace of the necessity of failure makes it a fellow traveler to a pedagogy of disaster responsiveness. Waite writes that her "attempt […] to teach queer, to develop and cultivate queer methodologies in my classroom and in my writing, to experiment with what happens when I invite my students to take queerer approaches as well" also "involves my inevitable and deeply necessary failure" (23). Because of the tension between systematizing pedagogies and the values of a queer ethos, Waite concludes that "inevitably, queer composition would indicate a failure to compose. Likewise queer pedagogy would signal a failure to teach" (57). What would it mean to embrace a "failure to teach" in the aftermath of a disaster? I have advocated throughout this project for a *responsibility* to teach, but it is worth considering what teaching-by-failing would look like in the context of disaster. Drawing on the work of Jack Halberstam, Waite writes that "where there is 'failure,' we might look to the system that set the scene for the failure in the first place. And that perhaps the failure is a radical critique (whether it knows it or not) of the very system that produced it as a failure" (58). Such an interrogation of systems could lead to a better understanding of the context of disaster, one that would ideally allow us to better respond to it. It would also mean dwelling in the uncertainty that is a condition for Qualley's reflexivity. This means that we need to live with our failures, and the challenges they pose, rather than trying to strategize our way out of them.

What would a teacher hoping to live with the failure of disaster pedagogically do in the classroom? As an example, we could take the instances of the aftermaths of Hurricane Sandy and Charlottesville. Many of the teachers whose responses to Hurricane Sandy I report felt that those responses were failures, but they felt this way retrospectively, not in the distraction of the moment. For these teachers, the sense of failure was connected to their inability to respond sufficiently, or to address the emotional impacts of the situation. In contrast, while we do not know how they feel about the disaster, the group who organized the Charlottesville Syllabus clearly felt moved to offer a response in the form of the resources, annotations, and definitions of key terms they provide; but they also marked this response as provisional by leaving it open to changes. The Charlottesville Syllabus offers a response, but it also invites other responses. These other responses can come from the authors, who describe the syllabus as a "new and ongoing project […] meant to be expanded, revised, and copied" and include both "sections in progress (with resources)" and descriptions of revisions they have made since it was first posted. These other responses are also welcomed from others, who are invited to email the authors with corrections and revisions. These reactions to Sandy and Charlottesville each represent, in their own way, the recognition that a complete or perfect response to disaster is not really possible. Rather than regretting not offering an "adequate" response to a disaster, as in the case of Sandy, embracing our failures means recognizing that all responses are likely to fall short somehow. Rather than taking this as a license for tremulousness, embracing this failure allows us to take a response *anyway*, in the hopes that we can do some good. But no matter what we do, when we offer that

response, we ought to recognize, as in the case of Charlottesville, that the action we take cannot be a final statement. Instead, it must be tentative—we must prepare for this response to fail in some way, and use that failure as an opportunity to offer a new one.

These actions of response that embrace failure thus ask us to forgo trying to solve the pedagogical problems that a disaster's aftermath raises and to instead embrace their contradictions. Waite writes that "the temptation with contradictions is to *resolve* them. But in writing, as in life, some tensions are not resolvable. And sometimes that impossible resolution is perfectly productive" (187, emphasis in original). Embracing failure is messy, uncomfortable, and transgressive, but when we are liberated from a concern with success, it allows us to depart from classroom norms in favor of responding to our students as people who are vulnerable and affected in the same ways that they are. We meet them on level ground—though perhaps only because the ground around us has been leveled by catastrophe. In a disaster's aftermath, we can embrace queer pedagogy's call for alternative modes of response, and embrace the necessary failure that accompanies these actions. A pedagogy of disaster response seeks to build habits of response in teachers so that they feel capable of enacting anti-normative pedagogies and embracing failure to address disaster. As Waite notes, "habits (like orientations) are more mutable than we imagine"—they are adaptable to situations that arise; they are "more conceptual than skills" (90). The pilot intervention I conducted was designed to test the influence that disaster-preparedness interventions could have on teachers' dispositions toward flexibility, in the hopes that these dispositions could form over time into habits,

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and I turn to those interventions and how they were affected teachers' inclinations toward disaster response next.

Pedagogical Interventions to Foster Disaster Responsiveness

Intervention design. If a pedagogy for disaster responsiveness is to be of any use in actual disaster circumstances, teachers must be able to implement it. Since, as I have discussed, this pedagogy cannot be reduced to a definitive schema but is grounded in habits of reflexivity and flexibility, we face the challenge of ensuring that teachers develop these habits in advance. Accordingly, the pedagogical interventions to impact teachers' preparedness that have the most effect will take place outside the context of disaster entirely. To assess if teachers' dispositions regarding disaster could be affected by pedagogical intervention, I designed and conducted a workshop on disaster preparedness for teachers of college writing. I also administered surveys prior to and following the workshop, to measure what effect it had made. In this section, I will detail my intentions for the interventions as designed, including who the subjects were for my tests, what my survey questions were written to measure, and what activities I conducted to influence teachers' dispositions. I will then discuss my results, found by comparing responses from the pre- and post-test surveys, highlighting key areas of continuity and change. I also augment this numerical data with comments from notes I recorded during the workshop. My goal in this section is to provide an analysis of the key trends from my interventions that have the most relevance for implementing a pedagogy of disaster responsiveness, including the dispositions of teachers toward flexibility and disaster

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response, the kinds of responses teachers would offer along with the degree to which they would offer them, and the role that prior teaching experience plays in addressing disruptive circumstances.

The intervention I conducted was intended to see what effect a targeted workshop could have on the dispositions of teachers toward flexibility and reflexivity in the context of disaster, as these are the habits most useful for a pedagogy that responds to it. The intervention I conducted was a pilot project, and as a result was limited in two ways: first, I only measured the responses of a limited group of participants—fewer than ten graduate teaching assistants enrolled in a pedagogy practicum—and second, I only conducted one workshop, lasting approximately forty-five minutes. A fuller implementation of the kind of training I am advocating, with any number of people, would take place over a longer period of time, in the recognition that habits of mind are never fully developed, but must be continually cultivated and exercised if they are to function effectively. Nevertheless, I believe that my interventions demonstrate the potential change that even a limited but direct engagement with disaster preparedness pedagogies can offer teachers.

As previously discussed, the subjects for my intervention were all GTAs currently enrolled in a pedagogy practicum course, a requirement for their first semester teaching in the College Writing Program at UNCG. As is often the case in graduate pedagogy practicums, the actual experience levels of these instructors varied. Of the eight GTAs who completed the first round pre-test surveys, four reported that the fall semester of 2018, when I conducted the intervention, was their first semester teaching composition

(or any subject) at the college level.[45] The remaining four reported having taught

composition at the college level for amounts varying from three to eight semesters.[46]

While the exact nature of their prior experience was not reported on the surveys, to begin

teaching at UNCG, all graduate students must for accreditation reasons have at least

eighteen hours of master's level credit. It is likely that many of the experienced GTAs

taught previously as part of acquiring this credit. It is also possible that the experienced

GTAs worked as instructors (perhaps on a contingent basis) before enrolling in the

program that led them to teach at UNCG. What is most relevant for this study, however,

is that the results reflect the responses of a mix of experienced and novice instructors.

Because my interviews, as discussed in Chapter Two, highlighted the difference that

greater teaching experience made in responding to disaster, I compared the subjects' self-

reported levels of experience with their pre- and post-test responses, to see if these levels

affected their dispositions. This was also an ideal group of subjects because of their

enrollment in the composition practicum, which is a key site where pedagogical

interventions for disaster preparedness can occur. This is because it is a pre-established

structure already focused around developing pedagogy, and because it often takes place

at a crucial juncture early in a teacher's career, when they have not yet developed the

habits (productive or unproductive) that they will carry throughout their careers. In this

way, the intervention as piloted mirrors the realities of implementing teacher training to

address disruptions.

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[45] Two of these four also reported teaching "any subject at the K-12 level" for one
semester each.

[46] One of these latter four also reported teaching "any subject at the K-12 level" for six
semesters.

I began by gauging the dispositions of the intervention subjects generally toward flexible teaching, and more specifically toward situations of disaster. I first asked participants to rank their agreement or disagreement with statements about teaching practice, centered on the adaptability of their courses and their openness to pedagogically addressing exigencies from outside the classroom. Statements about adaptability included items like: "There is room for change in my class schedule" and "I would prefer not to deviate from the course calendar in my syllabus." Statements about openness to external exigencies included items like "Composition classrooms should focus on writing and rhetoric, not contemporary issues" and "I routinely adapt my course, including my readings, assignments, or schedule, to the students and their circumstances as we go." After responding to a total of twelve statements like these, subjects moved to a new screen of the survey where they were asked to consider their level of comfort (on a scale from "completely comfortable" to "completely uncomfortable") in addressing "current events in the news" or "unexpected circumstances," in class. The statements about addressing current events in the news were framed to arise from slightly different configurations of this exigency. For example, one posed the circumstance as "*Your students express interest* in deviating from the scheduled material to address current events in the news" while another framed it as "*You feel it is necessary* to discuss current events in the news during class" (emphases added). The questions about unexpected circumstances asked subjects to consider changing different aspects of their courses in response to these undefined exigencies, including "cancel[ing] a week of class," "select[ing] new readings for your course mid-semester," or "redesign[ing] a major

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assignment in your course mid-semester." When combined with the earlier section's

questions about dispositions toward adaptability and outside exigencies, the responses to

these questions allow me to judge in a general sense how the subjects might approach

disruption if it were to occur.

In the third section of the survey, again appearing on a new screen, I posed

questions about specific tactics of response to concrete (though hypothetical) situations.

The respondents were given four different exigencies to determine their responses to:

1. A tornado crosses through Greensboro, destroying some of your students' houses, and leaving them temporarily homeless.
2. A police officer shoots a black man in Greensboro. The man dies. Students at universities around Greensboro protest.
3. The Greensboro City Council proposes building a memorial for the Greensboro Massacre, the 1979 killing by KKK members of five members of the Communist Workers Party who were protesting the Klan. Alt-right activists plan a rally to protest this decision. Leftist activists also plan a counter-protest.
4. A well-known and well-liked professor in the English department at UNCG dies suddenly and unexpectedly. The administration plans a vigil and a memorial service.

These four circumstances share several important commonalities. Firstly, each is

explicitly framed as a local issue, situated either on the campus or in its immediate

community. Secondly, while they are hypothetical, all were designed to be sufficiently

reminiscent of real circumstances to generate realistic responses from the subjects. The

first case evokes a real event: a destructive tornado had occurred in Greensboro in April

2018. Because of my examination of responses to Hurricane Sandy, I wanted to ensure

that I asked about responses to a natural disaster. The second case was intended to evoke

the killing of Keith Lamont Scott in nearby Charlotte in September 2016, though it could

all too well describe any number of instances of police violence against black people, many of which have been highly-publicized in recent years. The third case was designed to be reminiscent of the protests around memorials in places like Charlottesville, as explored in Chapter Three—though the political ideology represented by the monument is reversed from one supported by white supremacists to one they oppose. This third case was also designed to commemorate a historical occurrence; the 1979 Greensboro Massacre it describes is real. The fourth case does not have an immediate referent, but was intended to test subjects' responses to a more localized and smaller-scale exigency. It is included to offer a different kind and scale of exigency. Together, the four asked participants to respond to natural disasters, political and social unrest, and tragedy and grief.

For each of these cases, respondents were given a selection of check boxes and asked to "identify what actions you would feel comfortable taking as a teacher to address" the circumstances. Some options included forms of discussion, like talking with individual students or the entire class "about their ability to continue with the class as set out in the syllabus" (a practical response) or "about their feelings" (an emotional response). These options were designed to test divergences in attending to practical and emotional reactions, as explored in Chapter Two. Other options included changing course readings or schedules, and offering additional or redesigning either low-stakes or high-stakes assignments. The option to change course readings was designed to explore the utility of providing resources for response, as is practiced by hashtag syllabuses explored in Chapter Three. Respondents were also given the option to provide their own answers

in a text-box labeled "Other," though this option was not widely employed. On the pre-test, no respondents filled in the "other" box, while on the post-test, only one respondent used it, and wrote in response to Situations 2 and 3, "I'm not sure if I would address it." The answers subjects gave in this section allow me to determine what actions they feel are appropriate to address the circumstances I have posed, and they also allow me to distinguish between the responses they would offer to different situations, which further helps me refine my understanding of how teachers judge their own willingness and capacity to address disaster.

Lastly, I posed two open-ended questions to respondents, again given on a new screen. In text boxes without character limits, respondents were asked to address:

1. What criteria would you use to determine whether or not you should depart from your course schedule as offered in your syllabus?
2. What criteria would you use to determine whether or not you should address current events or circumstances in your class?

The answers provided in this section offer more narrative data that allows me to better interpret the responses recorded in earlier sections. Additionally, in the post-test only, and again on a new screen, I included an open-ended question prompting respondents to address:

1. How did the activity you participated in affect your sense of your own readiness to respond to unexpected circumstances that might affect your classes?

This question directly engages with the utility of the intervention, and provides further context for exploring the subjects' reactions to the workshop. When put alongside the

comparative data from the pre- and post-test surveys, the answers to this question offer

more comprehensive context for the intervention and its effectiveness.

The disaster preparedness workshop I conducted was intended to equip the

subjects for disasters that might arise by tasking them to plan responses to potential

disruptive situations. The three situations provided in the workshop differed from those

provided on the surveys, but were intended to resemble them. Working in small groups of

three,[47] participants considered the following scenarios:

> *Scenario 1:* A school shooting occurs at a high school in Winston-Salem. Several
> students are injured, and two are killed.
> *Scenario 2:* It is discovered that coal ash pits are leaking in Wake County, North
> Carolina. They are contaminating the drinking supply. More than 500,000 are
> given a boil water advisory. Twenty-six people report to the hospital with
> unexplained digestive ailments.
> *Scenario 3:* A news story breaks that a UNCG athletics coach has been quietly
> dismissing sexual harassment allegations against one of his assistant coaches over
> a period of three years. The University fires the assistant coach, and suspends the
> coach. The administration issues a statement claiming they were not aware of this
> issue.

As with the scenarios on the surveys, these scenarios were modeled on real events: the

Marshall County High School Shooting in Benton, Kentucky in January 2018; the

ongoing drinkable water crisis in Flint, Michigan, combined with North Carolina electric

utility Duke Energy's well-publicized reluctance to address coal ash pit pollution; and

Ohio State University football coach Urban Meyer's suspension in August 2018 due to

his handling of spousal abuse allegations against one of his assistant coaches, combined

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[47] Seven GTA participants, along with the practicum teacher (the Writing Program
Director) and co-teacher (the Writing Program Assistant Director, a graduate student).
The responses of the teacher and co-teacher were not recorded for this study.

with attention to sexual harassment and assault in the wake of the #MeToo movement. These scenarios were also designed to evoke different scales of effect and proximity. The most local example, Scenario 3, takes place on the UNCG campus. While the circumstances it describes are troubling, it is possible that they could be limited to the athletics program. Moving up in scale, Scenario 1, which involves fatalities, as well as the emotional consequences of gun violence, takes place nearby but not in-town—Winston-Salem is about half an hour's drive from Greensboro. The most broadly affecting example is Scenario 2, where half a million people are at risk of drinking contaminated water. This example takes place still further away, in Wake County—about an hour's drive. Wake County is the location of Raleigh, the state capital, and has a population of more than a million people, so this scenario suggests a broad but not total effect. Nevertheless, because many students at UNCG are from North Carolina, and many more are commuters, it is likely that any of the workshop's participants would have students directly affected by all of these scenarios. Students living on campus could still have family affected by drinking water contamination in Wake County, or students commuting from Winston-Salem could have siblings in that city's school system, for example. The scenarios were also intended to evoke different kinds of damage: interpersonal violence, ecological (though man-made) danger, and sexual misconduct. Cumulatively, these scenarios were designed to lead the subjects to consider a range of responses they might offer in various circumstances; ideally this would help them imagine—and therefore begin planning to address—an array of possibilities, not just any single likely occurrence.

In the workshop, after arranging the participants in groups and presenting each

with a scenario, I asked them to decide how they would respond, prompting them to

"Imagine yourself responding as a teacher to the circumstances of the class you're

currently teaching." After they had time to work through their responses, we shared them

briefly as a group. I then prompted them to reexamine their assigned scenarios, adding

the following questions for consideration:

1. In any of these circumstances, both you and your students are likely to be feeling strong emotions about the situation. Does your response address these emotions in any way? How?
2. In any of these circumstances, it is likely that you will have students who strongly believe that it is important for you to address the situation, as well as students who strongly believe that it is either not appropriate or not necessary for you to address the situation. How will you balance these competing interests?
3. In any of these circumstances, it is likely that some of your students will have different needs from others; for example, some may need a lot of support and guidance, while others may need very little. There is likely to be a range of responses between these two positions. How can you best address these different needs?
4. In any of these circumstances, you will have strong reactions—emotional, pedagogical, and personal—that also need to be considered. How is your own response to the situation factored into your decisions about how to respond with the class? Are your own needs taken care of in addressing these situations? How, and in what circumstances?

I then asked the participants to consider "how these questions might change or not change

the way you said you'd respond to your scenario." Following some time for groups to

work on this re-framing, participants again had the opportunity to share and discuss their

responses. This second set of questions was intended to focus participants' responses

around key insights from my analyses in the preceding chapters, including the

prominence of emotion in disaster situations, as explored in Chapter Two, and the

challenges of responding ethically while balancing one's own responses to what has happened, which might include activist commitments like those explored in Chapter Three.

Findings from the surveys. The results of my intervention workshop were measured by comparing the responses offered in the post-test survey to those offered in the pre-test. Four key trends emerged from the surveys, which together summarize the effects of the intervention on its participants. The trends reveal two significant findings of the intervention. First, the surveys reveal that when teachers experience disaster preparedness interventions, they may express a greater reluctance to engage with disaster. This is not as negative as it seems, because the respondents' reluctance to addressing disaster does not mean that they will not address it at all. Moreover, if a disaster had occurred prior to any intervention, the surprise these same teachers would likely have experienced as a result of not being prepared may have led them to offer responses they came to regret, as many of the teachers who experienced Hurricane Sandy did. In fact, the survey data reveals a growing discernment toward pedagogical disaster response among the participants, suggesting that increasing their awareness of the challenges such circumstances pose is a beneficial result of the intervention. Second, the surveys reveal that following the intervention, participants expressed the desire to leave the decision of whether or not to address a situation to their students. This relatively safe option, even when emerging benignly, can be understood as a manifestation of participants' increased reluctance. Unfortunately, deferring the task of response to students has the effect of burdening those students with articulating their needs to their teachers, who continue to

occupy positions of relative authority in the classroom over those students. The burden on

students will only be exacerbated for those more vulnerable to the negative effects of

disruption, often because of their racial, gendered, or social-classed experiences. It is

extremely valuable to note these findings not just for what they reveal about the results to

the intervention, but also for the suggestions they offer for further areas of intervention

that future disaster preparedness efforts should address. To demonstrate these conclusions

more completely, I first detail the four major trends in the survey responses that produced

these results, and then explain how they lead to and support the two findings above. I use

this analysis as a basis to offer the fullest articulation of a pedagogy for disaster

responsiveness.

By comparing the results from the pre- and post-test survey answers that the

intervention participants provided, I noted four overall trends, which track the different

sections of the survey's arrangement. The first section of the survey asked respondents to

rate their dispositions toward flexibility and addressing current events in class.

Accordingly, the first trend demonstrated that both before and after the intervention, the

participants valued and practiced flexibility in their teaching, and that following the

workshop, they became slightly more flexible in disposition. The second trend, however,

showed that participants showed a moderate disinclination toward incorporating current

events in their classes both before and after the workshop, and that this disinclination

increased slightly following the intervention. These trends support the finding of a

growing reluctance, as respondents seemed less likely to incorporate current events in

their courses, though they also show that the workshop positively impacted these teachers' flexibility.

The second section of the survey asked respondents to rate their capability of addressing situations, and following the workshop, subjects largely reported feeling less capable of responding to current events in class, but also reported feeling more capable of responding to unexpected circumstances leading to course redesigning. Like the previous two, this third trend shows a complicated picture as a result of the intervention—though participants felt less capable of addressing one kind of exigency, they felt more capable of addressing another. The contrast in results is borne out by the fourth and final trend, which emerges from the section of the survey that asked participants to select actions of response to hypothetical situations. This trend notes that after the intervention, the changes in the amounts of actions selected by each participant corresponded to how experienced they were: first-semester teachers selected fewer options of response, and more experienced teachers selected slightly more. As I will explain, this data supports an interpretation of growing discernment among the teachers about how they might react to disruption. Together, these trends demonstrate that even a limited intervention like the one I conducted can have a complicating effect—a positive complicating effect, I argue—on teachers' responses to disasters. They also demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions for disaster responsiveness on new and experienced teachers alike. But they also suggest avenues for further development when planning future interventions, such as attending more to the question of why teachers might elect to respond to disaster, even when not prompted by students. These trends, and the conclusions they support, also

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provide a compelling case for more sustained efforts at training and intervention, to more fully and more effectively prepare teachers for unexpected exigencies.

To illustrate my conclusions more clearly, I want to examine these four trends in more detail. As evidenced by their agreement with statements like "There is room for change in my class schedule" and "I value adaptability in my teaching practice," the respondents viewed themselves as flexible teachers. Of the six teachers who completed both the pre- and post-tests, none disagreed with or had no opinion on these statements. Belief in the value of flexibility in teaching remained fairly constant surrounding the intervention: for both of these statements, two respondents agreed slightly more (a movement of +1 on the positive-negative scale),[48] two agreed slightly less (a movement of -1), and two gave the same answer (a movement of ±0). This is a satisfying outcome to me; pedagogical flexibility is an important orientation for disaster response, and while not all teachers value flexibility, because this group did, I am pleased that the workshop did not negatively impact their attitudes toward it.

In contrast to their attitudes toward flexibility, the respondents experienced greater shifts in their views of the role of external events in the classroom, moving notably toward disagreement with the idea that it was important or appropriate to examine external exigencies. The pre-test responses found participants more open to the idea of incorporating external events in their classes. Respondents initially tended toward

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[48] To track how the respondents' dispositions changed between the surveys, I converted their Likert-scale answers to numerical ones, on a positive-negative scale, which assigned "Completely Disagree" a numerical value of -2, and "Completely Agree" a numerical value of +2. The response "Neutral/No Opinion" was 0. This allowed me to represent numerically how respondents' answers moved after the intervention, as well as whether they were moving toward agreement or disagreement with the statements.

slight disagreement with the statement "My students' performance in class is best when we all focus primarily on the course material," with three stating "Somewhat Disagree," two stating "Neutral/No Opinion," and two stating "Somewhat Agree," and more strongly disagreed with the statement "Composition classrooms should focus on writing and rhetoric, not contemporary issues," with one outlier completely agreeing,[49] but with the remainder somewhat disagreeing (three respondents) or completely disagreeing (two respondents). This changed after the workshop. Four of the six respondents moved toward agreeing with the idea that students' performance in class is best when focused on the material, with two respondents now completely agreeing and another two now somewhat agreeing. While half of the respondents did not change their beliefs about it being inappropriate for composition classes to focus on contemporary issues, two stated that they now somewhat agreed (representing movements of +1 and +2). Furthermore, though most respondents still agreed with the statement "I routinely adapt my course, including my readings, assignments, or schedule, to the students and their circumstances as we go," this too saw one of the more pronounced moves toward disagreement, with two disagreeing slightly more (a movement of -1) and one disagreeing much more (a movement of -2).

Together, these responses suggest that the specific and potentially daunting scenarios presented during the workshop may have increased these teachers' awareness of the complexities of responding to disastrous situations in class—leading in turn to a

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[49] This respondent elaborated on their beliefs in the narrative questions, writing: "If students feel the need to address an issue, we can talk about it. I don't feel it is my job to address current events in the classroom."

growing *reluctance*, rather than willingness, to engage with disruptive exigencies in the class, a move that is reflected in the narrative comments. One respondent, for example, wrote: "After the activity I felt pretty unprepared and very unaware of others' emotions and how they may need time […] to process a traumatizing current event." While this reaction is strong, I would much rather a teacher experience it in the context of a preparedness workshop than in an actual disaster. Another respondent echoed the concern over the complexities of disaster response, writing that the activity "made me realize that though I thought I may be comfortable discussing some current issues in class, I do not think I would have the capability to hold such discussions because of my fear of making things worse." These are important concerns, and I argue that the growing reluctance to adapt to circumstances these answers demonstrate reflects a corresponding growth in awareness of the complexity of responding to disasters. This conclusion is supported by the answers respondents gave regarding tactics of response they might use in hypothetical disruptions. But before turning to those answers, I want to elaborate this point with more data from respondents' assessment of their capability to address generic disasters.

The answers to a series of eight questions about respondents' capability to address unspecified circumstances broke down fairly neatly along two categories, both of which confirm the move toward reluctance to engage with exigencies in class. The first four of eight questions asked respondents about addressing "current events in the news," while the latter four questions asked respondents about reacting to "unexpected circumstances" that required various kinds of course redesigns. Regardless of what their starting positions were on these issues, following the workshop, and across all four questions in

each group, respondents reported feeling less capable of addressing current events (see

Figure 10) and more capable of reacting to unexpected circumstances (see Figure 11).
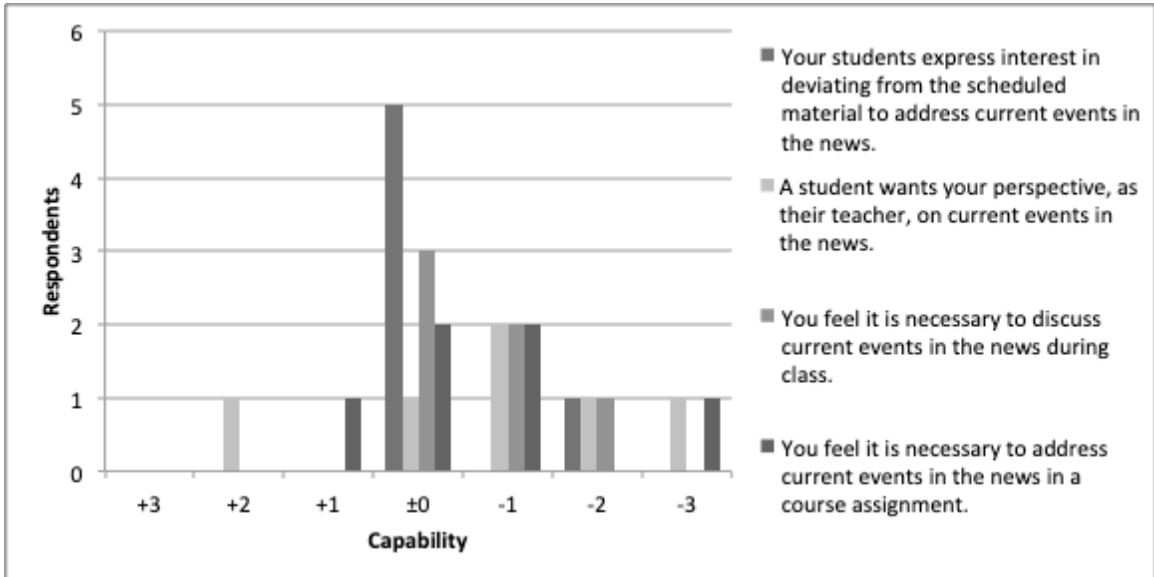
Figure 11. Change in Respondents' Capability to Address Current Events
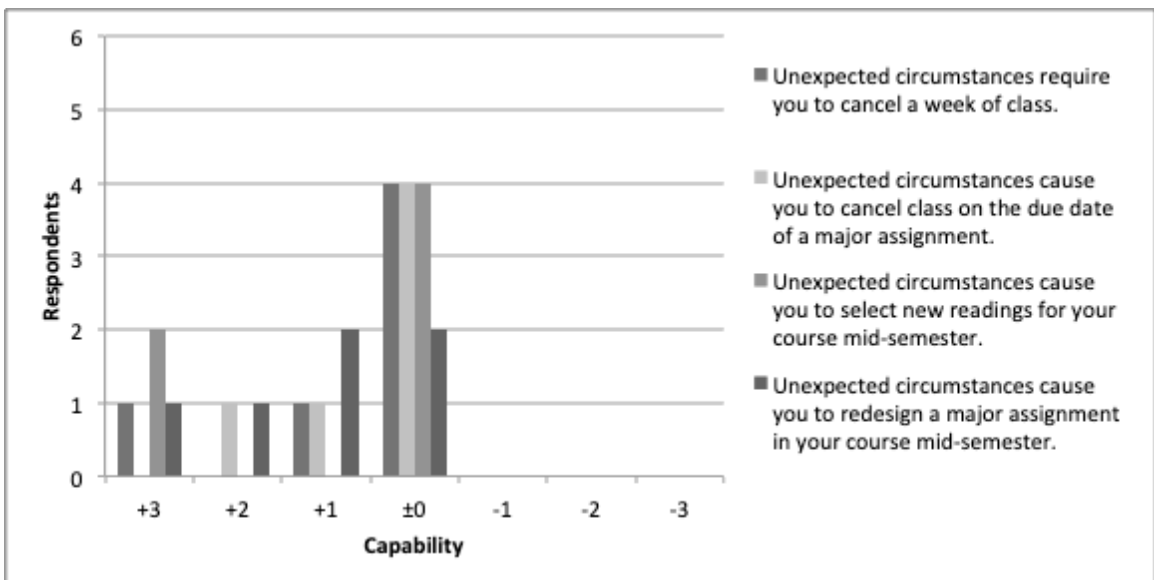
**Figure 12. Change in Respondents' Capability to Address Unexpected
Circumstances**

As can be seen from these charts, while with one exception,[50] respondents either

remained steady in their feelings of capability or felt less capable of responding to current

events in the news, the opposite was true of reacting to unexpected circumstances, where

all respondents remained steady or felt more capable to react. I take the former as further

evidence for the conclusion offered above, that a growing awareness of the complexity of

disaster response decreased respondents' felt senses of readiness to do so. And though the

latter trend of increased capability looks promising, I am hesitant to take any credit for it.

Hurricane Florence moved from the Atlantic into the Carolinas between the time when I

opened the pre-test survey to responses and the intervention workshop. While UNCG and

Greensboro were spared the worst of its destruction, Florence nevertheless caused the

cancellation of nearly a week of classes. Consequently, I believe that the most significant

factor in bolstering the participants' feelings of capability in addressing unexpected

circumstances was having to actually address course changes resulting from them, as the

hypothetical scenarios ask. Moreover, this conclusion supports the positions reported in

the interviews from Chapter Two that prior experience of disruption is likely the quickest

way to acquire workable strategies of response.

In fact, according to the surveys, the area in which the intervention workshop had

the most effect was on the tactics of response that respondents chose to employ. The

surveys offered respondents a list of tactics to choose from in addressing four

hypothetical scenarios,[51] and across each scenario, respondents preferred approaches that

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[50] A single respondent accounts for both the +1 and +2 capability moves regarding addressing current events in Scenarios 2 and 4.
[51] See above, p. 181.

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were less invasive to their courses. Each option could be selected a maximum number of 48 times;[52] among the options for response, strategies that addressed individual students, such as talking with them about "their ability to continue with the class as set out in the syllabus" or "about their feelings," were chosen 30 and 27 times, respectively, while these same strategies, framed as addressing the entire class, were chosen 17 and 21 times, respectively. Across all scenarios, the least chosen strategy was the most invasive: "Offer additional high-stakes assignments to address the situation," which was chosen just 9 times, 8 of which were by a single respondent.[53] These results clearly indicate a preference on the part of the intervention participants for their courses to proceed as planned. If disaster makes that outcome impossible, the results show that participants would still prefer to hew as closely to normal as possible.

Regardless of what tactics they chose to employ, what emerges from a comparison of the pre- and post-test data is remarkable decrease in the number of tactics deployed overall. With only the exceptions of "Talk[ing] with individual affected students about their ability to continue with the class as set out in the syllabus," selected twice more, and "Offer[ing] additional high-stakes assignments," chosen once more, every other option was chosen less frequently after the workshop than before it, up to seven instances less, in the case of talking with individual affected students about their

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[52] Each option appears in all four scenarios in both the pre- and post-tests for a total of eight appearances, multiplied by six respondents. Thus each option could be selected up to 48 times.

[53] This respondent's answers for this section are outliers, as they selected all possible options for all possible scenarios on both the pre- and post-tests. It is possible that this respondent wanted to indicate a radical willingness to do whatever possible to respond to disaster circumstances, though this respondent's narrative comments do not indicate whether or not this is the case.

feelings. When examining all possible actions of response together, we find an almost

10% reduction between the pre- and post-tests for all responses across situations;

respondents changed from opting to employ 43.5% of the possible responses on the pre-

test to selecting 34.5% of the possible responses on the post-test. Rather than seeing this

as respondents feeling disinclined to act, however, I understand this change as reflecting

a growth in discernment. While the total number of responses decreased when examined

cumulatively, a more granular depiction, observed from the perspective of individual

responses, reveals that respondents were not merely shedding options. Four of the six

respondents both lost and gained tactics of response, to varying degrees, meaning that

depending on the situation, they deselected some actions and chose new ones in their

place. For example, in choosing how to address the circumstance of a tornado leaving

students homeless, one respondent elected to no longer change the course schedule or

pacing, but also chose to talk with the entire class about how to continue with the class as

set out in the syllabus. In addition to the four who both lost and gained tactics, another

respondent only gained tactics in the post-test.[54] This respondent also selected the fewest

total options in the pre-test (4 out of a possible 40 actions per respondent),[55]

demonstrating that they moved toward greater engagement from an initial position of

reluctance. Rather than regarding the overall decrease in tactics as mere winnowing, I see

participants engaging in a careful process: selecting fewer options, total, and better

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[54] The final respondent, who checked all options for all scenarios on both tests, did not exhibit any change. See above, p. 195, note 53.

[55] Each respondent could choose up to 10 options per scenario in 4 different scenarios.

honing their responses based on what they think will be most effective in the situation they are facing.

When we correlate the shifts in tactics chosen with levels of teachers' experience, we find further support for seeing these changes as representing growing discernment. In the comparative survey data, there was a clear and significant division between the responses offered by four first-semester teachers and the two more experienced teachers, who had taught for three and seven semesters at the college level. On average, first-semester teachers were much more likely to recommend a wide array of responses in their pre-test surveys, and saw notable reductions in the number of strategies they chose in their post-tests. In contrast, experienced teachers chose many fewer strategies in their pre-test surveys, and actually saw slight gains in their post-test surveys, though these gains did not come close to closing a wide gap between the two groups (see Table 1).

Table 1. Average Number of Strategies Chosen by Respondents

	Pre-tests	Post-tests	Change
First-semester teachers	25.5	17.5	-8
Experienced teachers	4.5	7	+2.5

Out of 40 possible

This further supports the idea that one of the biggest determinants of responsiveness to disaster is experience—not just with prior disasters, but with teaching in general. It is therefore not surprising to learn that one of the two experienced teachers is also one of the two respondents to gain in cumulative ratings of their capability to respond to generic disruptions between the pre- and post-tests. While the clear importance of experience to disaster response could be seen as a challenge for preparedness efforts, in that even the

most successful efforts cannot provide actual experiences of disruption, in my view there are two ways to understand this significance that make it useful for training interventions. First, this data demonstrates that even experienced teachers' responsiveness can be positively impacted by targeted interventions. Second, it reminds us of the importance of long-term interventions, carried out over a period when participants are building and gaining experience, not a mere forty-five-minute workshop, as in the pilot program. No evidence in the survey data suggests that it is ineffective to begin interventions with first-semester teachers; instead I understand these findings as stressing important considerations, in the form of issues raised by this initial intervention, to consider in future training and preparedness efforts.

Two key considerations for future efforts emerge with surprising clarity from respondents' narrative comments: (1) that they would prefer to leave the decision of whether or not to respond to their students, and (2) that they are afraid of doing more harm than good by addressing the disruption in class. In both the pre- and post-test responses, subjects reported that deferring to student preference was their primary criterion in deciding whether or not to respond to a disruption in class. On the post-tests in particular, respondents seemed reluctant to choose to address an issue themselves, framing it more as a circumstance thrust upon them by their students: "The only time I would really depart from the schedule is if students were impacted to the point being distracted or unable to complete the work," one wrote. Another wrote that they would address a disruption in class "If students need to know something about current events to maintain their safety or if something has occurred for which students need time to process

emotions." But an issue this poses, as another respondent mentioned, is that the burden of response that students put on their teachers is often unevenly distributed along lines of identity:

> All professors will engage with unexpected circumstances in different ways. However, a lot of these circumstances will produce more work for minorities and women. It illustrates, perhaps, a hidden form of white male privilege/power in times of disaster. If a black student is killed, more burden is on black instructors to alleviate tensions. If students are feeling sad/depressed, they will look to motherly figures for support, due to societal norms. How do men step up in these circumstances? I find that they often employ a "rhetoric of silence" and this option is often not available or not acceptable for women and people of color.

As this respondent notes, choosing not to respond is not necessarily an option for all instructors. The unequal burden is extended to students as well—if minority or women students feel affected by a disaster but their teacher seems disinclined to address it, how likely are they to speak up to that teacher?

Beyond the unequal burden that deferring to students causes, there may be other reasons for teachers to actively address disruptive circumstances. As a teacher, I have experienced moments when an event felt so overwhelming—not just to me but to the class—that it caused me to feel a responsibility to discuss it with my students, whether or not it would be comfortable to do so. I also doubt that in many of these situations my students would have prompted a discussion, because they are often deferential to their teachers, due to the in-built power dynamics of the classroom. They expect their teachers to set the agenda. While I think responding to students' needs is a valuable approach for a pedagogy of disaster responsiveness, I do not believe that we should let the absence of their prompting serve as an out for us—particularly if the "us" in this instance is a teacher

who students are less likely to ask to respond, because their identity is read as representing normative categories of race, gender, or sexuality. To address the issue of deferring to students, future interventions would do well to prepare participants for the possibility that they will feel the pressure to provide a response; that they will feel the kind of exigency, in other words, that motivates this project. During the intervention workshop, one participant aptly described this as feeling a mood in the classroom so strongly that it would be "disrespectful" not to talk about it. Thus we should also ask participants to consider whether or not as teachers, in the position of power they occupy, they have a *responsibility* to respond, though in a capacity of their own determination.

I do not think that the participants in my intervention are afraid of the responsibility of response. In fact, their answers suggest that an overwhelming concern for their students is what motivates their reluctance. Again and again in the narrative questions, when asked to reflect on the workshop, respondents discuss their anxiety over causing harm for their students, with comments like: "It made me realize that though I thought I may be comfortable discussing some current issues in class, I do not think I would have the capability to hold such discussions because of my fear of making things worse." They write that they consider the decision to respond depending on "the degree to which it would do more good than harm." Similar ideas emerged in comments made during the workshop itself, when several participants discussed their wariness of addressing issues that might trigger their students. I appreciate the sensitivity of these responses, which reflect an admirable awareness of how the things they say and do as teachers can affect the people in the classroom. But as Kendall Gerdes reminds us, in

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trauma there is possibility as well as pain. Gerdes writes that "the power of language to wound is one and the same as its power to open; we can no more control our sensitivity in and to the pleasures of language than we can control our sensitivity in and to its injuries" (13). Living in the space of this opening, we find that "sensitivity opens one toward trauma instead of shutting down and closing oneself off from it" (Gerdes 15). A pedagogy of disaster responsiveness seeks to remain sensitive, to remain attentive to the wound, but to elect alongside it for the openness of connection that can result. The wound is not one the teacher opens for their students (intentionally or not) by triggering, but is one the world opens through disruption. In its ideal form, the response a teacher offers their students after disaster works its way through the wound and to the openness that can build a stronger classroom community.

A Pedagogy for Disaster Responsiveness

The structure of the intervention I detailed above gives a sense of what training teachers to anticipate disasters and responding to them might look like. It would ask teachers to consider disruptions that might occur, and to plan possible actions that could address them. It would ask teachers to attune to the material and experiential conditions of their work, and would judge their efficacy based on the array of possible responses they can imagine. Whether or not they actually employ these specific responses in a genuinely disruptive scenario is irrelevant; the aim is less to build specifc strategies for response than to develop habits of responsiveness that will allow them to generate situationally-appropriate interventions of their own. In the analysis of the workshop

above, I devoted more attention to the question of whether or not participants were choosing to respond than to the specific strategies they chose to employ. This is because the specific strategies they chose matter less than their choice to respond at all. Different teachers may choose to respond to the same circumstances in different ways; it would be wrong to suggest, for example, that Scenario 1 *called for* the response of redesigning a high-stakes assignment, any more so than Scenarios 2, 3, or 4. The same is true of the cases examined in Chapters Two and Three. While I believe it would have been useful for the teachers responding to Hurricane Sandy to attend to the emotional impacts of the storm, it is not my place to prescribe how they should do so. And while hashtag syllabuses are a form of response to the disruptions they address, they remain open to being applied in classes in a wide variety of ways.

The goal of the intervention workshop I conducted was to lead instructors to consider that there would be situations to which they would respond, and to imagine how they might do so if the need arose. In this regard, the intervention was successful: participants were made more aware of the complexities of responding to disaster, and of the emotional, not just logistical, stakes of doing so. The workshop also began to build connections among the teachers as a community that they could employ in a later disruption, as one participant noted: "I think that [the workshop] helped to think through actual scenarios if only because it created a shared conversation with other teachers that I could return to should something actually happen. The mere fact of having us think about it is a step in the right direction, I think." Nevertheless, the intervention also had several serious implications that would need to be addressed in future trainings. These

implications also reflect understandings of disaster response from previous chapters, as well, including its emotional, public, and genred dimensions. Thus in this section, I will respond to these implications in detail, with the aim of presenting the fullest possible rationale for a pedagogy of disaster responsiveness. I also extend this exploration directly into the area of ethics, by suggesting that teachers engage in ethical work by considering the responsibilities they have to their students in a situation of disaster. Those seeking to implement this pedagogy either administratively or in their own teaching should ensure that teachers understand these stakes, which provide a guiding ethos for disaster response.

As a culmination of this project, I argue that in any unexpected circumstance that calls for a pedagogy of disaster responsiveness, teachers must consider the following three questions:

1. What is my responsibility to address this situation as a teacher?

2. What forms should my response take?

3. What is the value of choosing to engage with these circumstances?

I will address each of these questions in turn.

What is my responsibility to address this situation as a teacher? Concerns about the appropriateness of teachers responding to disaster have been present throughout this project. Consider the statements of one participant in the intervention workshop, who wrote:

> It made me feel more comfortable in a general sense. Knowing that I don't have to take responsibility or dedicate my own personal emotional work to dealing with these events. Simply expressing my awareness of a difficult situation and sharing the resources available to students on campus shows my engagement and directs students to professionals rather than to myself. This also shows that I'm not

ignoring the situation and voices my concerns for students' well-being—but I'm not the right person to help guide students through a trying time.

This statement bears similarity to one made Norman, in Chapter Two, who said that "I don't ever think it's my role to counsel [students], or to find resources outside the college for them, but much more to find resources, to direct them to resources within the college, to people who are trained to deal with such things."[56] I agree with these concerns in two ways: firstly, I recognize the limitations of the kinds of responses teachers can offer students; teachers are not counselors. And secondly, I also recognize that asking teachers to respond to their students in a situation of disaster means asking them to take on additional emotional labor, which I do not recommend lightly. I think these concerns can be allayed by both the kinds of response teachers offer—i.e. a pedagogical response, that can co-exist with but does not seek to offer professional counseling—and by the potential value that can result from choosing to address exigent circumstances.

Before I address those questions more specifically, however, I want to make the case for disaster response as an ethical act, one that teachers can take as part of the responsibility of their authority in the classroom, and as part of sharing a community with their students. This project has made glancing encounters with ethics since its beginning, but now I want to stress those connections directly. Michael Carter, for example, stressed that "crucial to the understanding of *kairos*, however, is its ethical dimension" (105). Cynthia Sheard similarly developed this idea, noting that "*kairos* 'contextualizes' or 'situates' human activity; it delimits choices and sets the boundaries of action by

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[56] See Chapter 2, p. 64.

supplying the circumstantial (although often assumed universal) criteria or 'codes'—
conventions, values, ethics, customs—that guide and confirm decisions and actions"
(292). Donna Qualley writes that as opposed to mere reflection, reflexivity has an
"ethical component, the attention to the other, that [makes] it reflexive" (17). Sara Ahmed
also attends to this dimension of emotion, writing that "an ethics of responding to pain
involves being open to being affected by that which one cannot know or feel" (30). We
can imagine here the ethics of understanding and responding to others' pain that we may
not have access to, ourselves. All of these identifications with ethics provide models for
this project.

Disaster response is ethical in two ways: it is a moral act, an act of kindness and
care for one's students, and it is a rubric by which we can measure our responsiveness to
our students. All teachers have a responsibility as part of their jobs to manage their
classrooms in some way, and they are given authority in their classrooms to do so. While
theorists of critical and progressive pedagogies have sought to mitigate the negative
effects this authority can have, a teacher's authority cannot be removed completely. The
pedagogy I am advocating views disaster response as part of the task of managing the
classroom, positioning teachers as a kind of "first responders" in the way that emergency
medical technicians or cleanup crews might be. Each of the many kinds of first
responders attends to people's needs in a particular area of disaster response—from
rescue work, to medical attention, or food and shelter. Teachers of writing can take up the
task of serving as first responders in the area most relevant to their own skills: applying
the questions of critical thinking and rhetorical awareness to help their students and

themselves process what has occurred. It is true that not every situation requires a pedagogical response. But throughout this project I have framed these circumstances as exigencies, because they call to be addressed in some way. I cannot say if individual teachers will all experience the same exigencies, but if a teacher feels a need to respond, then it is an ethical act on their part to use their classroom authority to address it alongside their students.

What forms should my response take? I have argued since the start of this project that disaster response can fit naturally into composition classes, to a degree greater than courses addressing other subjects. This necessarily involves assumptions about what composition classes are for. Certain possible assumptions about the course were framed for the participants in my intervention by questions on the survey. For example, the dispositions section included statements like "Composition classrooms should focus on writing and rhetoric, not contemporary issues," which frames the course as being situated separately from these undefined "contemporary issues." Other statements in this section took the opposite approach toward the same end: "It is important to me that my class is able to respond to current events," and "I routinely adapt my course, including my readings, assignments, or schedule, to the students and their circumstances as we go." These, too, do not specifically define "current events" or the "circumstances" students face, but offer a vision of what a composition classroom is capacious enough to include. Proponents of hashtag syllabuses, for example, argue that it is natural for courses of all kinds to take up the exigencies they commemorate, and I wanted to explore, albeit indirectly, whether or not the participants in the intervention agreed. Unsurprisingly, the

responses I received in the surveys also revealed particular assumptions about the content

and attentions of composition courses. On their pre-test, one respondent wrote:

> My problem is that my students are NOT PASSIONATE about the issues you
> outlined. God, I wish they were. I have seen a professor add a current events
> Friday to the syllabus. My students are invested in social media. This makes me
> think I should engage social media stories in the classroom, but how, and does
> this relate to preparing them for academic discourse? Also, if they are on social
> media, and they still do not care about issues, how can I make them?

This statement frames the course as a dichotomy: composition classrooms are about

"preparing [students] for academic discourse," while the instructor strains against this

restriction in the hopes that students will care more about the "issues." Without

attempting to completely re-litigate the decades-long debates in the field of composition

and rhetoric around the purpose of first year composition courses, for my argument, I will

frame one version of a purpose for composition that allows it to organically incorporate

disaster as follows. If a composition course is designed to instruct students in rhetorical

situational awareness such that they can respond communicatively (in written, spoken, or

visual form) to circumstances in which they find themselves (academic, workplace, or

public), then the prevalence of disaster and disruption in contemporary life means that,

should disaster occur, it is appropriate for students to consider how they might

communicate in these circumstances.

How, then, would teachers invite students to consider the role of rhetoric, writing,

or communication in the midst of disaster? One approach would be to frame the question

to students as directly as I just have. Direct engagement is the approach favored by

hashtag syllabuses, but it was also an approach consistently shied away from by the

teachers in Hurricane Sandy. While direct engagement is certainly an option, I do not

think it is always best suited to the difficulties of an actual disaster situation, including

the logistical and emotional after-effects that students and teachers alike may be facing.

Instead, we can imagine a sensitive response to disaster, grounded in its circumstances,

that emerges from many of the themes I have addressed across this project:

foregrounding emotion, highlighting counternarratives, and embracing failure as a way of

resisting classroom norms. While the way in which these strategies are pursued should

always adapt to the particular exigency being addressed, we can still trace some

possibilities for how they might be applied.

As an example, foregrounding emotion does not only mean providing space for

negative feelings. This is still important, but recalling descriptions of affect as "in

motion," we can also see how emotion allows us to work *toward* things. Writing about

the relationship between feminism and anger, Sara Ahmed notes that "women's

experiences of violence, injury and discrimination have been crucial to feminist politics,"

and that "feminist collectives […] have mobilised around the injustice of that violence

and the political and ethical demand for reparation and redress" (172). But Ahmed goes

on to argue that "feminism cannot be reduced to that which it is against, even if what it is

against is irreducible. Feminism is also 'for' something other, a 'for-ness' that does not

simply take the shape of what it is against" (178). Ahmed names the thing that feminism

is *for* as "wonder," which is "to see the world *as if* for the first time," and about "learning

to see the world as something that does not have to be, and as something that came to be,

over time, and with work" (180, emphasis in original).[57] Thus Ahmed concludes that "feminist pedagogy can be thought of in terms of the affective opening up of the world through the act of wonder, not as a private act, but as an opening up of what is possible through working together" (181). This description of wonder suggests a possibility that in the wake of disaster, positive emotions like wonder and hope can serve a generative role for classroom communities to build new understandings. They take the disaster as an opening to interrogate the world that made the disaster, to see it as a world that has been made, and to imagine new, different possibilities.

One avenue by which this interrogative work could be pursued would be through drawing on familiar genres to develop new ones that meet the task of disaster response, as activists employing hashtag syllabuses have done. Responses relying on a familiar genre can be seen as a form of ritual, in much the same way that public memorials to tragedies provide "a structured response to insupportable feelings that, without outlet, might prove overwhelming" (Hedrick, qtd. in Jorgensen-Earp and Lanzilotti 158). Genre forms can offer continuity in abnormal situations that serves as a way in for people unsure about what to say or do in their circumstances. Adapting or bending these genre forms is a process common to the methodologies of queer theory. Such work is often bound up in the devastation of disaster or tragedy. As Cvetkovich writes, "trauma puts pressure on conventional forms of documentation, representation, and commemoration, giving rise to new genres of expression, such as testimony, and new forms of monuments, rituals, and performances that can call into being collective witnesses and publics" (*Archive* 7). But

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[57] Ahmed also writes that "wonder is what brought me to feminism; what gave me the capacity to name myself as a feminist" (180).

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Cvetkovich, like Ahmed, sees possibility arising from this difficulty as well, and she writes about her desire "to hold out for the presence and promise of cultural formations that bring traumatic histories into the public sphere and use accounts of affective experience to transform our sense of what constitutes a public sphere" (*Archive* 16). In a pedagogy of disaster responsiveness, we might seek to bend familiar classroom genres—assignments, discussions, activities—to the strange, new purpose of accounting for the loss and difficulty that is hyper-present in disaster's aftermath. These adaptations would seek to work with and through emotions, not just against the negative feelings, but for the positive ones that can emerge out of these challenges. The process of bending genre forms to meet these circumstances allows us to more readily respond by employing familiar tools in new ways, finding that they continue to function—albeit changed—in our disrupted situations. Moreover, thinking of the work of hashtag syllabuses to highlight counternarratives, we might explore how these other academic genres might be able to constitute a counterpublic to the one damaged by disaster, in much the same way that activist educators who teach through hashtag syllabuses have done with that academic genre. These possibilities are as yet unexplored, but a sustained engagement with a pedagogy of disaster response would provide a valuable space in which to pursue this work.

What is the value of choosing to engage with these circumstances? By turning to the question of what positive emotions and outcomes we could hope to obtain, and what the role of a counterpublic is in the wake of disruption, I have arrived at my ultimate point: what I believe to be the value of engaging pedagogically with disaster. I argue that

communities can be formed and strengthened by disaster, and that many of the

pedagogical strategies I have recommended to this point are directly suited to doing this

work. In this idea, I again return to the work of Dewey, who in his twin commitments to

democracy as "primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated

experience" and to education grounded in that experience, makes a compelling case for

pedagogies of experience to build communal orientations (*Democracy* 87). According to

Stitzlein, Dewey's version of democracy "foregrounds the importance of collective

decision-making and the building of social intelligence through group problem-solving,

communication, and the sharing of experiences" (62). Dewey applied this commitment to

life in groups as part of his educational theories, as well. In "My Pedagogic Creed," he

writes:

> I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of [a
> person's] powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds
> himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of a unity, to
> emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling and to conceive of
> himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs. (84)

Dewey's idea of understanding one's position from the standpoint of group welfare is

even more paramount in the aftermath of disaster, when the health and safety of various

members of a group are imperiled. Stories of heroism in the face of disaster focus on

selfless acts, like the firefighter rushing into a burning building, taken against one's own

interests and for the interests of others, and through them, for the society. Why should not

the same be true in an educational context? Writing about Holocaust-survivor and

psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's concept of "tragic optimism," educational pragmatist Judith Green describes it as the idea that

> in the face of tragedy […] we must existentially claim and actively employ our human potential to reshape the meaning of events, […] we must take our own and others' suffering as a spur to action, take our sense of guilt as evidence that we must change our habits in living, and take the rude shock of human mortality that hits us in times of great loss as a wake-up call to live responsibly in time […] so as to make our own lives count for something more ideal. (246)

I want to forcefully align myself and the pedagogy of disaster response I am recommending with the notion of using catastrophe as a call for action. Frankl's phase, "tragic optimism," perfectly joins the senses of loss and hope that we encounter following disasters, in a theory of action that calls us to take pain and turmoil as grounds for reflective thinking and growth. I know that in writing this, I run the risk of being dismissed as an idealist, but I genuinely believe that good can come from disaster, if we address it pedagogically in a sensitive and appropriate way, using the difficulty it presents as grounds for imagining newer, better modes of conjoint living. In this sense, the process of responding to a disaster might be construed as a process of re-building—working as a classroom community to make a better world, not just out of but amid the physical, emotional, or institutional rubble. Teachers of writing who choose to implement these strategies are thus committing to act ethically in the present, and to prepare themselves, their students, and their colleagues to offer, one day, ethical emotional and failure-embracing responses to disasters.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: BEFORE THE AFTERMATH

All thinking involves a risk. Certainty cannot be guaranteed in advance. – John
Dewey, *Democracy and Education*

In the context of teaching, the work of disaster response is ongoing. Like many

teaching situations, from those as benign as the start of a new semester, to those as

frustrating as academic dishonesty, disruption represents an endlessly recurrent problem.

Disaster is also a problem that calls to be addressed in the moment—its conditions are so

exigent that they need to be dealt with immediately. This does not leave much time for

planning the best response. In the time since I began this project, there are teachers who

have already encountered and responded to disruptions—too many and various to name,

or to count—that I could not have accounted for when I set out to research and write

about it. My aim throughout this project has been to give the situation of disaster the

same sustained critical attention we give to other pressing pedagogical issues like starting

a class or understanding plagiarism. Accordingly, I have worked to develop nuanced

depictions of how teachers facing exigent circumstances choose to respond educationally,

and to articulate a version of what response might look like for those facing similar

disruptions yet to occur. In this concluding chapter, I draw together insights from across

this project, to highlight further implications and avenues for continued study of this

issue. I close by offering a heuristic for disaster response, so that teachers facing the

immediacy of response can have a resource to employ at a critical juncture. I hope these tools will be useful to teachers seeking options at a time when they may seem least available.

Available Means of Disaster Response

As we have seen, disasters are emotional experiences, and call for emotional responses. This begins from the recognition that classrooms are already emotional spaces, not just from the emotionally-laden content they may or may not incorporate, but from the presence of bodies and people in proximity to one another inside them. As Laura Micciche argues, "emotion is dynamic and relational, taking form through collisions of contact between people as well as between people and the objects, narratives, beliefs, and so forth that we encounter in the world" (28). Though many of the teachers who experienced Hurricane Sandy recognized this, they failed to respond in kind. Perhaps this was because, as some of them said, they did not believe it was their place to address the emotional difficulties of disaster in class. But engaging with these emotions carries with it possibility as well; as Sue Ellen Henry notes, "emotion [is] a location for connectivity" (12). In the context of disaster response, the common emotionality of the circumstances can be seen as a burden to teachers, who ought to address it, but also as a site of possibility, offering the chance of connection to others through a shared vulnerability. This includes vulnerability experienced by teachers whose contingent labor status may make it otherwise difficult for them to respond, as was the case of many teachers who experienced Hurricane Sandy. Teaching through disaster is a way for these instructors,

too, to build the kinds of meaningful connections with their students that their employment status often frustrates. Teachers responding to disaster can thus mobilize emotion to forge stronger, more adaptive and resilient classroom communities. In fact, despite their many challenges, disrupted circumstances may be an ideal time to undertake such work, as the destabilization that marks these moments also marks an opening to foreground emotional approaches to teaching.

However, disasters do not only take place in the semi-enclosed space of the classroom that Rosa Eberly calls "proto-public." Consequently, teachers responding to disruptions that take place in the public sphere also work within that realm to help shape the educational responses offered beyond their classrooms, as well. The resources generated and shared in response to disaster serve a dual function: they enable teachers to adopt these resources pedagogically, to address the circumstances they are facing; and they preserve counternarratives about the disruptions to ensure that the work of educational response is ongoing. We can understand these teachers as taking up the role of first responder in an educational context, pursuing a vocational commitment to educating in response to disaster not just for their own students, but also for future students and the public. This work, especially as taken up by activist educators online, is also a site of conflict over how specific disruptions are remembered. In that process, the disruptions are crystallized as hashtags, and in that form are circulated: #Ferguson, #BlackLivesMatter, #Charlottesville. To argue for specific memorializations of these disruptions, these activist educators turn a familiar corner: the genre of the academic syllabus, which is adapted to a new genre, the hashtag syllabus. The hashtag syllabus

genre serves as a conduit for the provision of educational resources that will lead those who read and share them to teach the disasters they commemorate in their courses, and to remember those disasters in ways that acknowledge the histories of injustice and racial violence that dominant narratives seek to downplay or forget. The case of Charlottesville is particularly illustrative on this point for the contrast it offers: the white nationalist violence in Charlottesville occurred due to conflict over a Confederate memorial whose existence is an argument to forget the racist past of its cause and location. The Confederate monument in Charlottesville therefore stands in direct opposition to the digital monument in #Charlottesville, which calls those who encounter it not just to remember but to foreground and to share the experiences of black people in Virginia from the legacy of slavery to the present. The lesson this offers teachers who wish to understand how to respond to disaster is threefold: (1) it demonstrates that response can productively occur in public in addition to the classroom when we view the classroom as a permeable space, open to outside influence and contributing to it; (2) it demonstrates that familiar educational genres like the syllabus can be adapted to new genres that suit the purposes of response; and (3) it demonstrates that the counternarratives that teachers' work to preserve can help determine how these disasters are remembered.

When we apply the lessons of these cases to the question of how best to prepare teachers to prepare for disruption, we find that it is often extremely challenging for teachers to consider taking up the task of response, but that targeted interventions can positively affect their preparedness to address disaster. Asking teachers to actively consider and prepare for hypothetical situations can help them prepare, and we can then

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judge their preparedness, as E. Shelley Reid has argued, by "how many variables [teachers] can identify in a dynamic situation and how many reasonable alternate paths [they] can imagine" (137). Reid argues that this builds teachers' tolerances for "productive uncertainty" (137), certainly a key factor in confident and effective disaster response that allows teachers to navigate the murky contingency of an aftermath. Such efforts also raise questions, however, including about teachers' willingness to cede the decision of whether or not to address a disruption to students. This often occurs for benign reasons, like uncertainty over whether or not a situation should be addressed, and concern over causing harm by addressing painful circumstances. But deferring to students also has the undesirable effect of burdening these students with the task of response, an unfair burden when the teacher retains the institutional power. Instead, teachers should consider what their responsibilities are to address disruption in a sensitive way, and to consider what benefits may arise from doing so. I have argued throughout this project that despite the challenges and tragedy they present, disasters are also a hopeful moment for educators, who can use disrupted conditions to build stronger communities whose learning enables them to be resilient to future incursions. By approaching disasters reflectively and ethically, in full awareness of the burden shared by all those affected, teachers, in conjunction with their students, can learn renewed ways of living in otherwise devastating times.

The Problem of Recurrence: Implications and Further Research

A sad truth of contemporary life is that the disasters that have become such a common presence are likely to remain common, if not to worsen. From this fact, two especially significant implications of this project arise for scholars of rhetoric, composition, and writing studies. First, if disaster is likely to continue to occur, then we need to institute broad preparedness efforts to equip teachers to address it. Second, the spread of disaster circumstances impacts not just studies like this one, which directly address it, but other, adjacent areas of research; these studies, too, need to address the disasters that impinge on their subjects.

This project impacts all teachers of writing by suggesting that it is incumbent on them to be prepared for disruptions that may impact their teaching in the future. It is even more incumbent on those responsible for the training and development of teachers' pedagogical capacities, like Writing Program Administrators, to consider how they might prepare those they supervise. While this is a task that could apply in any number of disciplines and courses, it is particularly relevant to writing instruction for several reasons. First, writing classrooms often have small enough enrollments that this task becomes feasible; while still challenging, it is significantly easier to address a disaster in a writing class of twenty-five students than in a lecture hall of two hundred. Second, many writing courses have the capacity to respond because their subject matter addresses critical literacies necessary to navigate such circumstances. An email thread posted to the WPA Listserv following the mass shooting in Las Vegas, Nevada in 2017, with the subject line "Responding to Las Vegas in Class?" can serve as an example. In one reply,

Monica Orlando wrote that she has "found it important to give students the opportunity to respond to tragedies like the Las Vegas shooting in class." One reason for this, she explains, is because "many of their classes will not offer that opportunity, leaving students with confusion about facts (because their news is often filtered through social media sites)." Orlando's explanation takes understanding the events as an opportunity for inquiry. A later reply to the same thread by Bryan A. Lutz offers a similar suggestion: "View Las Vegas as a problem to solved [sic] and deliberate on solutions." This suggestion, too, takes the disaster as a case to be studied in the course, following the course's normal methods. These and similar suggestions make clear that asking writing courses to address disruptions when they occur is not beyond their normal purview, if approached in careful ways.

A third and final reason that I ask writing courses to address disruption is because this work has already begun. We see it in the impulse to email the WPA Listserv, asking for ways to respond, when disaster impacts the place we work. We see it in the spread of resources for teaching these disasters, like the Charlottesville Syllabus. And we feel it in the low thrum of urgency that seems to suffuse our living, a thrum that echoes alternately, "what is it this time?" and "how long until the next one?" When I ask writing courses to respond to disaster, I am not asking them to do anything they are not already doing. Instead, this project asks teachers who take it up to consider new ways of pursuing that work, in the hopes of responding ever-more effectively.

This project also impacts scholarship studying areas that do not directly address disaster. Because of the broad creep of disaster's presence, as a result of its frequency,

scholarship in adjacent areas needs to account for how disaster impacts its work. In this project, I have drawn on work in affect and queer theories, as two examples, both areas that have long accounted for the rupturing of actuality that often marks experience. Affect theory has demonstrated that when our expectations and ideals are not borne out, the resulting dissonance creates emotions (Berlant; Frijda; Oatley). Queer theory has investigated failure not as a disappointing deviation from the path of experience, but as an integral part of it (Halberstam; Waite). Both of these lines of inquiry have touched on disaster, and future work in these areas could take disaster up directly. Similar links can be found in other areas of scholarship. For example, the impact of disaster has been repeatedly demonstrated to have strongly unequal effects, especially on people of color (Davies et al.) and people with disabilities (Weibgen). Rhetorical scholarship in areas of equity and accessiblity could also directly take up the effects of disaster on these groups, and how pedagogical efforts could address these asymmetrical effects. A final impacted area of study is environmental rhetorics, which is obviously concerned with the ongoing climate disaster. Some work in environmental rhetorics directly engages this exigency (e.g. Eubanks), but other critiques from within the subfield have argued for increased attention to the pressing and practical concerns of, for example, conservation (Cryer). Environmental rhetorics, too, would benefit from sustained attention to disastrous exigencies.

Within the discipline, the array of research areas that are impacted by disaster demonstrates a need not just for greater critical engagement with the subject but also for increased research into its effects on teaching and learning. There is a particularly

pressing need for qualitative research of the kind I have undertaken, but on a much broader scale. I would welcome, for example, longitudinal studies tracking teachers who experience disaster over a period of years, to determine whether increased teaching experience or exposure to disruption affects their responses, as I have theorized. I would also welcome research examining disruptions on a smaller scale than I have been able to address in this study. My findings have suggested that disruptions on a personal scale, like death and tragedy, can similarly have important effects on classes, whether these disruptions are experienced by teachers or by students. The community shared between teachers and students reflects the wounding that occurs in small-scale disruptions. It would be useful to study how disruptions that are felt significantly but that do not make national news impact those closest to them in educational contexts. A final area of further study on the impact of disaster would be research that addresses a group that, to my mind, has been noticeably absent from this study: students. I have focused on teachers because they occupy positions of authority that allow them to choose to address disruptions, and I have not had room in this study to gather sufficient data to characterize students' experiences of disruption. Nevertheless, students are obviously crucial to the task of responding to disasters in the classroom. This project would be greatly enriched by future investigations into the experiences of disaster that students in writing courses have, both when their teachers choose to address it and when they choose not to. Scholarship along these lines would beneficially augment the depiction of disaster response I have been able to offer, and would allow us to target our interventions even more precisely, with fuller knowledge of whom those interventions serve.

Hurricanes Florence and Michael

Across this project, as I have discussed how best to enable teachers to address disaster, I have also sought to emphasize that response is not confined to emotional or logistical concerns, or classroom or public spheres. Disaster response is a labor of ethics. The ethics of disaster response is not a mere cognitive exercise, but a practice of presence that a teacher offers to their students in extraordinarily challenging moments. I take as my closing example two hurricanes—Florence and Michael—that made their way in the fall of 2018 to North Carolina, where I write this. If the earliest ideas of this project were germinated in the experience of Hurricane Sandy in New York City in 2012, its conclusions were formed under the influence of these twin disruptions, just weeks apart in September and October.

What would a teacher facing these circumstances do? How might they respond? As a result of this project and my own experience teaching in the years between Sandy, and Florence and Michael, I felt more prepared to do what I could to address the circumstances I faced, both on my own campus, and for my colleagues across the UNC system. This included colleagues at UNC Wilmington, which was devastated when Florence made landfall directly in their coastal city. I tried, in these moments, to be present to my students, and to be adaptive to their needs as they arose. While Greensboro was not ultimately hit by Florence, many of my students were still affected by its impact on the state. When one of them stood up in the middle of class, a few days before the storm's arrival, and told me she had to leave immediately to evacuate her sister from another college several hours toward the coast, what could I do but tell her to go?

The recommendations I have offered in this project hold true in circumstances like these: I encouraged teachers encountering these disruptions to be cognizant of their students' emotions, to consider taking an active response to the events, rather than waiting to see if their students would prompt them to, and to try to employ non-normative forms of writing to help them come at the difficulty of their experiences in a new way. I encouraged them to share resources with one another, because in such strained circumstances, many people struggling to know what to do would leap at the chance to know anyone's ideas for addressing the moment. Though impossible to measure concretely, I found techniques like these effective for the circumstances we were in. I hope that other teachers felt the same.

For me, the value of having these experiences—two hurricanes passing over as I finalized this project—was in the lesson I learned as a result: it can happen at any time. I had every reason to be prepared. I am well aware of North Carolina's proclivity for hurricanes; I spend my days writing about disaster preparedness. But despite these facts, when the hurricanes came, first one and then the other, simply put: I was not ready. In my mind, this drives home the value of preparing for disaster to occur, because even at our most prepared, its suddenness can take us aback. Given the increased and ongoing risk, it is continually important for all teachers of writing to prepare to address disruptions before the aftermath that follows in their wake. Disasters are exigencies we are unlikely to ever escape, and so the best we can do is to prepare ourselves for their impact. Our lives may be perpetually marked by disruption, but I believe in the capacity of teachers to rise to the challenge of response.

A Heuristic for Disaster Response

Disasters are extremely challenging circumstances to face both personally and pedagogically. To better help teachers address these situations when they occur, as I have argued they have a responsibility to do, I have summarized findings from across this project here. In particular, the findings I have highlighted below emphasize practical actions that teachers who may be struggling to address disasters in their courses can use to help determine their responses. These recommendations are written for teachers turning to them in moments of need, so actions taking place prior to a disaster's irruption (e.g. preparedness efforts) are not included. Following the recommendation to keep responses provisional, I encourage anyone who takes up this heuristic to revise and adapt it to their own inclinations and circumstances; there is no "right way" to address a disaster, and so the list of recommendations below is not intended to be foolproof or exhaustive. Nevertheless, I hope this heuristic will prompt teachers to take up the task of disaster response in their courses, to address disruption in whichever of its many forms.

Recommendations for Facing with a Disaster that Calls to be Addressed Pedagogically:

- In any disaster, some students will be more affected than others; when planning your responses, consider whether or not these actions burden the most affected students with the need to disclose their affectedness to you.

- Consider the emotional needs of yourself and your students, in addition to the logistical needs, and plan to address both.

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- If you decide to be flexible with your students, consider actions that address both individually affected students and entire classes.

- If you decide on a response you feel is appropriate, consider sharing this response with other impacted teachers in the forms of resources and guidance.

  o Especially consider sharing your responses with less experienced colleagues and graduate student teachers, who may be seeking authorization to respond.

  o A disaster may have broad impacts beyond your institution, so consider mobilizing professional social media networks to share your responses.

- If the situation allows for it, consider responses that may mitigate the likelihood of similar disasters in the future by addressing the causes of these events.

- Consider highlighting the stories and experiences of the disaster from non-dominant groups, which are likely to be significantly affected by its disruption.

- While not a reason in itself to not engage with the disaster, consider the potential risks your response poses to your students or yourself.

  o You want to avoid re-traumatizing people who are affected by the disaster.

  o You may not be able to engage critically with a disaster in its immediate aftermath.

- Keep your responses provisional, in the recognition that your inclinations for how best to respond to the situation will change as it develops, or in response to influences from your institution or students.

- Embrace failure—the circumstances of disaster are so fraught that no response you can offer is likely to succeed completely; use this as a reason to engage anyway, and to do the best you can with the limitations and opportunities the situation provides.

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APPENDIX A

HURRICANE SANDY IRB MATERIALS

Interview Questionnaire Survey

I am interested in understanding how pedagogical strategies employed by college-level teachers adapt to moments of crisis that intrude on the classroom, specifically explored through interviews with teachers who experienced the impact of Hurricane Sandy on their classrooms. The goal of this research is to gain an understanding of how teachers change their classrooms and their approaches to them in the wake of disaster, in order to propose pedagogical strategies that are better situated to respond to such exigencies. This interview is confidential and you can withdraw at any time.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- What was your role in your department and university in the Fall 2012 semester? (e.g. Assistant/Associate Professor, Adjunct Faculty, Full-Time Lecturer, Administrator)
- What department/subject area do you generally teach?
- How would you describe your pedagogy?
- What classes were you teaching in the Fall 2012 semester?
- What do you remember about how Hurricane Sandy in Fall 2012 affected the classes you were teaching at the time?
- During and immediately after Hurricane Sandy, what would you say were the main challenges you faced as a teacher?
- During and after the Hurricane, were there any particular resources that you sought out to enable you to respond to these challenges?
- How did the lengthy cancellation of classes due to Hurricane Sandy affect the way you conducted your semester?
- Once classes resumed after the hurricane, did you make any specific changes in the day-to-day practice of teaching your classes, either large- or small-scale?
- Once classes resumed, do you feel that your general stance toward your pedagogy changed?
- How do you think your departmental or institutional status your response or capacity to respond to Hurricane Sandy?
- How did the impact of Hurricane Sandy in Fall 2012 affect you personally (i.e. outside of your teaching career)?
- Do you think that the impact of Hurricane Sandy has changed how you approach your teaching in the years since?
    - o If yes, how so?
    - o If no, why do you think this is the case?

- In the years since Hurricane Sandy, have you experienced other events or occasions that similarly disrupted your classes and affected your pedagogy in a significant way?
- Have you applied some of the strategic or pedagogical lessons from Hurricane Sandy in any other teaching situations since then?

Participant Recruitment Email/Listserv Post for Interview Participants:

I am interested in understanding how pedagogical strategies employed by college-level teachers adapt to moments of crisis that intrude on the classroom, specifically explored through interviews with teachers who experienced the impact of Hurricane Sandy on their classrooms. The goal of this research is to gain an understanding of how teachers change their classrooms and their approaches to them in the wake of disaster, in order to propose pedagogical strategies that are better situated to respond to such exigencies.

I am seeking teachers at the college level who experienced the impact of Hurricane Sandy to participate in this study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will conduct an interview which will consist of approximately 15 questions and which will take about 40-50 minutes. I will record the audio of these interviews, which will then be transcribed and coded for research purposes. All participants will be identified using pseudonyms.

If you agree to participate in an interview, I will provide you with an informed consent to sign. You can stop or withdraw at any time.

If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Carl Schlachte at cpschlac@uncg.edu.

PREPAREDNESS INTERVENTION IRB MATERIALS

Pre- and Post-Test Survey Text

[Screen 1]
Directions: On a scale from 5 (completely agree) to 1 (completely disagree), please describe your attitudes toward the following statements, which refer to your dispositions as a teacher of college writing.
[5 = completely agree
4 = somewhat agree
3 = neutral/no opinion
2 = somewhat disagree
1 = completely disagree]

1. There is room for change in my class schedule.
2. I want to have all the major pieces of my class, including assignments, policies, and readings, figured out before the semester starts.
3. Composition classrooms should focus on writing and rhetoric, not contemporary issues.
4. I always have a clear plan for each class before I begin it.
5. I value adaptability in my teaching practice.
6. My students' performance in class is best when we all focus primarily on the course material.
7. I would prefer not to deviate from the course calendar in my syllabus.
8. My class schedule does not have any "slack" in it.
9. It is important to me that my class is able to respond to current events.
10. I routinely adapt my course, including my readings, assignments, or schedule, to the students and their circumstances as we go.
11. It is important to me to consider the extracurricular lives and activities of my students when planning my classes.
12. I teach best when I improvise in class.

[Screen 2]
Directions: On a scale from 5 (completely capable) to 1 (completely incapable), please identify how cable you would feel as a teacher to successfully implement any of the necessary changes stated below.
[5 = completely capable
4 = somewhat capable
3 = neutral/neither capable or incapable
2 = somewhat incapable
1 = completely incapable]

1. Your students express interest in deviating from the scheduled material to address current events in the news.
2. A student wants your perspective, as their teacher, on current events in the news.
3. You feel it is necessary to discuss current events in the news during class.
4. You feel it is necessary to address current events in the news in a course assignment.
5. Unexpected circumstances require you to cancel a week of class.
6. Unexpected circumstances cause you to cancel class on the due date of a major assignment.
7. Unexpected circumstances cause you to select new readings for your course mid-semester.
8. Unexpected circumstances cause you to redesign a major assignment in your course mid-semester.

[Screen 3]
Directions: these questions ask you to identify what actions you would feel comfortable taking as a teacher to address any of the specific hypothetical situations listed below. Check any and all answers that apply.

Options:
- Talk with individual affected students about their ability to continue with the class as set out in the syllabus
- Talk with individual affected students about their feelings
- Talk with the entire class about their ability to continue with the class as set out in the syllabus
- Talk with the entire class about their feelings
- Change course readings to address the situation
- Change course schedule/pacing to address the situation
- Offer additional low-stakes assignments to address the situation
- Offer additional high-stakes assignments to address the situation
- Redesign low-stakes assignments to address the situation
- Redesign high-stakes assignments to address the situation
- Other (please describe)

1. A tornado crosses through Greensboro, destroying some of your students' houses, and leaving them temporarily homeless.
2. A police officer shoots a black man in Greensboro. The man dies. Students at universities around Greensboro protest.
3. The Greensboro City Council proposes building a memorial for the Greensboro Massacre, the 1979 killing by KKK members of five members of the Communist Workers Party who were protesting the Klan. Alt-right activists plan a rally to protest this decision. Leftist activists also plan a counter-protest.

4. A well-known and well-liked professor in the English department at UNCG dies suddenly and unexpectedly. The administration plans a vigil and a memorial service.

[Screen 4]
[Open-Ended Questions]
1. What criteria would you use to determine whether or not you should depart from your course schedule as offered in your syllabus?
2. What criteria would you use to determine whether or not you should address current events or circumstances in your class?

[Screen 5 – pre-test only]
[Drop Downs w/Numbers]
1. Including this semester, how many semesters have you taught college writing?
2. Including this semester, how many semesters have you taught any subject at the college level?
3. How many semesters have you taught any subject at the K-12 level?

[Screen 5 – post-test only]
[Open-Ended Question]
1. How did the activity you participated in affect your sense of your own readiness to respond to unexpected circumstances that might affect your classes?

[Screen 6]
Directions: Because these surveys are anonymous, in order to match up pre- and post-tests, please enter a unique identifier here, consisting of the last two numbers of your Social Security number, a hyphen, and the number of month in which you were born, given as two numbers. For example: 82-01. Please enter your identifier here.

Participant Recruitment Email:

I am interested in understanding how pedagogical strategies employed by college-level teachers adapt to moments of disaster that intrude on the classroom, and in seeking to better prepare teachers to respond to such moments if and when they occur. The goal of this research is to test interventions in the teacher training process that are designed to foster dispositions of pedagogical flexibility and emotional awareness, in order to more fully prepare teachers of college writing to respond to disastrous exigencies.

I am seeking students enrolled in the English Department practicum, "Teaching College Writing" to participate in this study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any

reason, without penalty. Choosing not to participate or withdrawing from the study will have no effect on your grade in the class.

If you agree to participate in this study, please follow the link included below to take an anonymous pre-intervention survey through Qualtrics. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary. Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

I will attend the Teaching College Writing course on [date] to conduct the intervention lesson. Participation in this lesson is voluntary, and you will be given the opportunity to choose not to join again at that time. I will take notes during the intervention. No identifying information will be recorded.

Lastly, following the intervention, I will issue an anonymous post-intervention survey through Qualtrics. This survey will also take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary.

If you take the surveys, you will be given consent information to agree to. If you participate in the in-class intervention, I will read consent information and give you the opportunity to decline to participate by leaving the class for the duration of the intervention. You can stop or withdraw at any time.

Intervention Lesson Plan
(45 minutes, total)

1. Brief description of study + directions (5 minutes)
   - PI reads study description and consent form
     - o Subjects wishing to not participate are free to leave at this time
   - Explain the plan for the activity:
     - o Subjects arranged in three groups of three people, each.
     - o Each group is given a different scenario to respond to
     - o Imagine yourself responding as a teacher to the circumstances of the class you're currently teaching.
     - o The situations you're responding to are deliberately designed so that they are not addressed by programmatic or departmental policies. Instead, you are tasked with determining how you would respond in the absence of a guiding policy.
     - o I will stress: in these scenarios, you should understand yourselves as fully-empowered to do whatever you think is necessary to respond to the circumstances with your class.
2. Activity: Responding to Scenarios (10 minutes)

Scenario 1:	Scenario 2:	Scenario 3:
A school shooting occurs at a high school in Winston-Salem. Several students are injured, and two are killed.	It is discovered that coal ash pits are leaking in Wake County, North Carolina. They are contaminating the drinking supply. More than 500,000 are given a boil water advisory. Twenty-six people report to the hospital with unexplained digestive ailments.	A news story breaks that a UNCG athletics coach has been quietly dismissing sexual harassment allegations against one of his assistant coaches over a period of three years. The University fires the assistant coach, and suspends the coach. The administration issues a statement claiming they were not aware of this issue.

3. Discussion of Activity / Findings (10 minutes)
   - PI provides time for each group to describe their situation and what solutions to it they arrived at.
   - PI highlights important themes from the responses for further discussion.
   - PI takes notes on the results for use in the research.
4. Activity continued: Second prompt (10 minutes)
   - Now that we all have a sense of what our reactions are, I want to ask you to reconsider your situations based on the following questions:
     o In any of these circumstances, both you and your students are likely to be feeling strong emotions about the situation. Does your response address these emotions in any way? How?
     o In any of these circumstances, it is likely that you will have students who strongly believe that it is important for you to address the situation, as well as students who strongly believe that it is either not appropriate or not necessary for you to address the situation. How will you balance these competing interests?
     o In any of these circumstances, it is likely that some of your students will have different needs from others; for example, some may need a lot of support and guidance, while others may need very little. There is likely to be a range of responses between these two positions. How can you best address these different needs?

- In any of these circumstances, you will have strong reactions—emotional, pedagogical, and personal—that also need to be considered. How is your own response to the situation factored into your decisions about how to respond with the class? Are your own needs taken care of in addressing these situations? How, and in what circumstances?
- Take a few minutes to think about how these questions might change or not change the way you said you'd respond to your scenario.

5. Discussion of Activity / Findings (10 minutes)
- PI provides time for each group to describe how these later prompting questions affected or didn't affect the responses they would offer.
- PI highlights important themes from the responses for further discussion.
- PI takes notes on the results for use in the research.