

Fall 12-7-2012

Composing on the Screen: Student Perceptions of Traditional and Multimodal Composition

Jeannie C. Parker Beard Ph.D.
Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_diss

Recommended Citation

Parker Beard, Jeannie C. Ph.D., "Composing on the Screen: Student Perceptions of Traditional and Multimodal Composition." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2012.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_diss/98

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

COMPOSING ON THE SCREEN:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL AND MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION

by

JEANNIE PARKER BEARD

Under the Direction of Mary Hocks

ABSTRACT

When college composition teachers carefully consider the role and function of multimodal composition in their classrooms, they can enhance the teaching of writing and communication, engage and empower students, and better prepare students for the challenges and possibilities of life in our rapidly changing digital age. To meet this teaching challenge and study the impact of multimedia on student writers, I designed this mixed-methods case study to examine how video documentary essays function as a form of multimodal composition in first-year composition courses and how these types of texts may enhance the teaching of traditional composition skills, as well as contribute to the academic and professional communication skills of students. The study was designed to determine how students react to multimodal composition and how they view the benefits as well as pitfalls of composing new kinds of texts in their first-year writing courses. This teacher research was conducted at a mid-sized, urban community college located in southern Tennessee. I used surveys, interviews and reflection essays to collect the data from student participants. I then analyzed the collected data for this project. My

conclusions are that students learn valuable skills in the multimodal composition process, such as organization and time management, in addition to learning how to use movie-making software. Students also develop a keener sense of audience and purpose when they compose video documentary essays. Multimodal composition can be used to teach traditional writing and rhetoric. Multimodal composition can be used to enhance the teaching of writing and communication, engage and empower students to participate in convergence culture, and better prepare them for the challenges and possibilities of life in our rapidly changing digital age.

INDEX WORDS: Multimodal composition, Composition pedagogy, Composition and rhetoric, Teacher research, Educational technology, Multimedia

COMPOSING ON THE SCREEN:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL AND MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION

by

JEANNIE PARKER BEARD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2012

Copyright by
Jeannie Parker Beard

2012

COMPOSING ON THE SCREEN:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL AND MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION

by

JEANNIE PARKER BEARD

Committee Chair: Mary Hocks

Committee: Beth Burmester
George Pullman

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

December 2012

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the teachers who have the courage to stand for change.

It is also dedicated to my students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my committee members for their knowledge, expertise and encouragement throughout this process. I'd like to thank Mary Hocks for taking me on when I was in a difficult situation, for keeping me focused, and for always providing me with exactly the kind of feedback I needed to keep going even when times were tough. I'd like to thank Beth Burmester for her contagious love and enthusiasm for our discipline and the profession of teaching. And I'd like to thank George Pullman for his reliable support and responsiveness, and more specifically, for always, always responding to emails, usually with an incredibly direct and cheerful quickness. I hope he knows how many people he makes happy by doing this.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge some other folks that have helped me get through this entire process. I could absolutely never have finished this onerous task without the help and support of my parents, Carlton and Jean Parker. The list of the things they have done is too long to include here. I'm so grateful to all of my family members for always believing in me and encouraging me. My husband, Matt Beard, just makes life worth living and that goes a long way when writing a dissertation. This would not have been possible without his love and support. So many of my dearest friends have encouraged and supported me along the way, and I am thankful for each and every one of them because they make my life complete. If I'm showing you this, I'm referring to you. I'd also like to acknowledge my son, Brodie Parker Beard who has had to sacrifice a lot of his mommy time in the past two years. Every day I'm thankful for his sweet smile and his even sweeter spirit. Last but not least, I'd like to thank the Universe because my life is pretty awesome.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER 1: COMPOSING IN THE 21ST CENTURY	1
Introduction	1
Definition of Terms.....	4
Significance of Study.....	7
Purpose of the Study.....	11
Research Questions.....	12
Methods of Inquiry	13
The Journey Here.....	15
Conclusion.....	28
CHAPTER 2: MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION, MULTILITERACIES AND THE EVOLUTION OF COMPOSITION	31
Introduction	31
The Time is Now: Multimodal Composition.....	32
Remediation and “The Late Age of Print”	47
Hybridity and Composition	49
Semiotics and Meaning Making in a Sensory World	54
Multimodality and Evolution of Literacy.....	56
Multiliteracies, Critical “Prosumers” and The “Design of Social Futures”	59
The Power of Prosumers.....	66

Preparing Students for “Lifeworlds”	70
Convergence Culture and Social Change.....	77
Design-Centered Pedagogies	80
Visual Rhetoric and Multimodal Composition.....	82
Video as Text in Composition Studies.....	87
Video as Pedagogy in the Teaching of Composition.....	97
Conclusion.....	108
CHAPTER 3: TEACHER RESEARCH THROUGH MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY.....	110
Introduction	110
A Contextualist Paradigm and Pragmatist Worldview	110
Teacher Research	116
Case Study Method of Inquiry.....	118
Rationale for Mixed Methods Case Study	122
Convergent Mixed Method Design	124
Selection of Participants	126
Instrumentation: Surveys, Interviews and Textual Analysis.....	128
Analysis of Survey Data	132
Interviews	138
Interview Analysis.....	139
Final Reflection Essays.....	140
Textual Analysis of Reflection Essays.....	140
Pilot Study	143
IRB Approval	143
Limitations of Study.....	145
Conclusion.....	148

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF KEY FINDINGS.....	149
Introduction	149
Concerns & Interest Levels.....	149
Comparing Traditional & Multimodal Composition	156
Value of Traditional and Multimodal Composition.....	163
Putting Multimodal First.....	168
Overview: Attitudes & Perspectives on Traditional and Multimodal Composition.....	169
Access.....	172
Audience Awareness	174
Deeply Exploring Topics	177
Enjoyment & Expression	178
Empowerment & Activism.....	180
Skills Learned.....	181
Problems and Frustrations	184
Technical Difficulties.....	188
Overview: Positive & Negative Aspects of Multimodal Composition	192
Conclusion.....	194
CHAPTER 5: TRADITIONAL AND MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION AT WORK FOR	
TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS	196
Introduction	196
Summary and Conclusions	197
Suggestions for Future Research.....	202
WORKS CITED.....	204
APPENDICES.....	211

Appendix A	211
Appendix B	213
Appendix C	214
Appendix D	215
Appendix E	225
Appendix F	232
Appendix G	233
Appendix H	234
Appendix I	238
Appendix J	245
Appendix K	248
Appendix L	253
Appendix M	254
Appendix N	258
Appendix O	259
Appendix P	261
Appendix Q	262
Appendix R	263
Appendix S	266
Appendix T	270
Appendix U	271
Appendix V	272

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Instruments Used, Data Provided.....	125
Table 2: Example of Survey Table.....	133
Table 3: Example of Table Coding Open-Ended Survey Questions.....	134
Table 4: Example of Code Sheet.....	135
Table 5: Sample of Code Table Used for Reflection Essays	142
Table 6: Sample Tables of Reflection Essays and Assigned Codes.....	142

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Print Pre-Survey Questions from Survey Monkey.....	130
Figure 2: Example of Color-Coded Survey Responses.....	136
Figure 3: Example of Color-Coded Survey Responses Using Numbers.....	137
Figure 4: Coded Reflection Essay in Dedoose	141

CHAPTER 1: COMPOSING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, media saturates every aspect of the average college student's life. Because digital technologies are readily available via personal laptops, smart phones and the Internet, students can now be active producers rather than passive consumers of the digital texts that encompass their lives. In their introduction to *Passions, Pedagogies and 21st Century Technologies*, the pioneers of computers and composition, Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher, contend that society is changing so rapidly that we must prepare students for experiences that we ourselves have never had. Selfe and Hawisher, Gunther Kress and the members of The New London Group, among others, argue that literacy has evolved to include multimodal avenues of communication. In the past ten years, scholars within rhetoric and composition's subfield of computers and composition have successfully established that there is a place for new media productions in composition studies. Daniel Anderson, Cheryl Ball, Jody Shipka, and Diana George, Kathleen Yancey, among others, have been at the forefront of the push to integrate multimodal composition into the curriculum of traditional writing programs.

In a webtext published in the online journal *Kairos*, Daniel Anderson argues for "prosumer approaches to new media composition" (2003). By introducing multimedia texts into the writing curriculum, Anderson recalls how his students become active producers of media as part of the composition process. His term "prosumer" embodies the concept of a shift to production and conscious consumption when students become creators of their own multimedia texts. In his 2008 article, "The Low Bridge to High

Benefits: Entry-Level Multimedia, Literacies, and Motivation,” Anderson argues that “Unknown technical things create ideal situations in which literacy-enriching problem solving activities might play out” (43). According to Anderson, the new technologies that are readily available to students allow compositionists to expand the notion of literacies and create a motivational learning environment for our students.

Today, first-year composition students are able to compose in ways that were unimaginable to students only two decades ago. As such, the landscape of composition studies has been opened to new media, as discussed by Anne Wysocki and the contributors of *Writing New Media* (2003). In her “Openings and Justifications” to the collection, Wysocki writes, “Writing teachers can thus fill a large gap in current scholarship on new media; they can bring to new media texts a human and thoughtful attention to materiality, production, and consumption, which is currently missing” (7). As a composition scholar and a college writing teacher with six years of experience on three different campuses, I designed my research to collect and analyze data directly from student writers to provide other instructors and faculty with practical insight into how students react to, struggle with, and succeed in composing new media within the requirements of a first-year writing course.

If compositionists are to successfully integrate multimedia into the curriculum of first-year composition programs, it is important to understand how students respond to the challenges of multimodal composition. Although I have much enthusiasm for assigning video documentary essays in my classes, in the past six years that I have done so, I have found that I am not always met with equal enthusiasm. In fact, often students express anxiety, frustration, and in some cases despair when they are faced with the complex task

of composing a multimodal text. On the other hand, I have also found that many students are interested and engaged with the project, excited by the opportunity to do something different in their writing class, and many express a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment when they complete the project. Many students have also indicated that they will use their multimodal skills in the future and that they appreciate the skills they acquired through the duration of the project, while others complain that they would rather write a paper and that they did not benefit much from the experience of composing a video documentary essay. The range of emotions that my students express when they go through the process of multimodal composition has been the inspiration for this empirical research study. These various emotions are warranted and instigated by a variety of circumstances, and they are worthy of further inquiry and investigation. I have taken this opportunity to explore more thoroughly what my students go through, their thoughts, reactions and overall impressions of multimodal and traditional composition in order to enhance my own teaching practices and also contribute to the pedagogy of multimodal composition in the process. In this dissertation, I will add to the scholarship of computers and composition by assessing student attitudes and perceptions of multimodal composition and revealing how students compare traditional composition to multimodal composition.

Through this project, I have concluded that students encounter many challenges and obstacles when they are asked to produce digital texts; however, the experiences of my students reveal that the process of multimodal composition is a rewarding enterprise that allows undergraduates to develop new competencies and an increased sense of rhetorical purpose in the texts that they produce. My research demonstrates that multimodal composition may be used to teach traditional writing due to the fact that students learn and

develop organizational strategies, time management, and develop an enhanced sense of audience and purpose in the composing process. Students value multimodal skills as professional whereas they value traditional writing skills as more academic in nature. Finally, multimodal composition has the potential to empower students to take part in participatory culture and use multimodal compositions to become agents of social change. This dissertation will contribute to the conversation of how student-produced multimodal compositions may play an important role in the development of a pedagogy of multiliteracies that, according to members of The New London Group, is essential to 21st century educational practices. By understanding the challenges and obstacles students face, the value they place in multimodal composition, and investigating how traditional composition intersects with multimodal composition, compositionists may better understand how to successfully navigate the current shift in literacy practices that is indicative of our digital age. My hope is that my research will contribute some understanding to how students feel about creating new kinds of texts and the rhetorical value the students themselves place on multimodal texts in the context of traditional first-year writing courses.

Definition of Terms

There are several key terms that are essential to the discourse of my research study. Though the term *new media* is imprecise in that what is considered “new” in 2012 will likely be outdated in the not-so-distant future, the term has been adequately defined by scholars in the field (Wysocki 2004, Selfe 2008). In *Writing New Media*, Wysocki defines new media texts as:

... those that have been made by composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who then highlight the materiality: such composers design texts that help readers/consumers/viewers stay alert to how any text—like its composers and readers—doesn't function independently of how it is made and in what contexts. Such composers design texts that make as overtly visible as possible the values they embody. (15)

In the framework of my role as a teacher of composition and researcher within the field of computers and composition, Wysocki's definition is valuable in that it highlights the importance of considering how these new media texts are created and composed and the relationship the producer has with the multimodal composing process itself as well as the context in which these productions take place. For the purpose of this study, the term *new media* refers to the digital technologies that allow for text, audio, and visual images to coexist, generally through the medium of the screen, though others would argue that new media could extend into three-dimensional spaces as well (Selfe 2007, Shipka 2005). However, in my study, *new media* refers to digital technologies that allow for the production of multimedia texts. As such, the terms *perceptions*, *attitudes*, *multimedia* and *multimodal* should also be defined for the purpose of my research.

I define the term *perceptions* to describe the cognitive reactions students have to the multimodal assignment; the term is used to describe how students perceive the demands or expectations of the project before, during and after its completion. I use the term *attitudes* to describe students' emotional responses before, during and after the assignments, as well as their feelings about the work of the project throughout the composing process and after the project's completion. *Multimedia* and *multimodal texts* are those that incorporate textual, visual and aural elements to communicate meaning, usually through the vehicle of computer technology. Websites, blogs, podcasts, and videos are all examples of multimedia or multimodal texts. Claire Lauer notes that the terms *multimedia*

and *multimodal* can be used interchangeably, but that often the context in which the terms are used determines which term is most appropriate. She notes that *multimedia* is most often used in industry settings, whereas *multimodal* has become the preferred term in the theoretical and practical discourse of composition studies. However, she warns that:

If instructors want to make sure they are able to communicate the importance of this work to their students, to others in their departments, to university administrators, to journalists, to grant-finding agencies, and to business and government leaders, they would do well to keep the term multimedia in play as a gateway term because that is the term members of those communities are already familiar with and that describe the kinds of texts they value. (Lauer 238)

Because the terms are interchangeable, I often use the term *multimedia* when referring to the video projects my students create. I also use the term *video documentary essay* to describe these projects, and this term emphasizes not only the informative and argumentative structure of this type of text, but also the research and organizational aspects of this type of video that are similar to traditional academic essays. I more often use the term *multimodal* in reference to the process of composing in multiple modes in order “to describe the cognitive and socially situated work students do in the classroom” (Lauer 238). In her scholarship on the subject, Cynthia Selfe has established that the term “multimodal” is the most appropriate term to use in relation to the use of new media and digital technologies from a pedagogical perspective.

I use the term *traditional composition* to describe composition practices that are focused solely on alphabetic literacy and the process of writing linear, print-based texts in a standardized format, which is most likely MLA or APA styles within the context of first-year composition courses. Similarly, the term *traditional academic essay* is used to describe this standardized format of argumentative writing that is the central focus of most first-year writing courses within the general education curriculum. In contrast, I use the term

multimodal composition to describe the process of composing new media texts such as video documentaries within the context of the composition curriculum, specifically within the first-year composition courses where I have taught for the past six years.

Significance of Study

Each year the journal *Research in the Teaching of English* publishes an annotated bibliography of the recent research published in areas related to the theory and practice of teaching English. A review of the annotated bibliographies published from 2005-2010 demonstrates how new media studies is gradually becoming the subject of research in the teaching of English; however, it should be noted that within the past five years there has been very little empirical research in the area of student attitudes or perceptions on the creation of video as compositions or the process of multimodal composition in first-year composition. A review of the three major journals related to the field of computers and composition, *Computers and Composition* (print and online), *Kairos*, and *College Composition and Communication*, reveals that there has been some published research studies that explore the function of video production in composition courses and they are as follows:

- “Big Questions, Small Works, Lots of Layers: Documenting Video Production and the Teaching of Academic Research and Writing” by Bump Halbritter *Kairos* 16.1 (2011)
- “Interaction of Author, Audience, and Purpose in Multimodal Texts: Students’ Discovery of Their Role as Composer” by Beth Powell, Kara Poe Alexander, and Sonya Borton *Kairos: Praxis Wiki* 15.2 (2010)
- “A Break in the Transaction: Examining Students’ Responses to Digital Texts” by Ellen Evans and Jeanne Po *Computers and Composition* 24.1 (2007)
- “Picturing Work: Visual Projects in the Writing Classroom” by Virginia Kuhn, *Kairos*, 9.2 (2005)

These publications are similar to my own work in that they specifically address the use of video in the teaching of composition, and I will examine some of the more recent publications in the following chapter's literature review. The research study most similar to my own is "Interaction of Author, Audience, and Purpose in Multimodal Texts," in which the authors come to some similar conclusions about students' sense of audience and purpose in the production of multimodal texts. However, my own research adds to the discussion in that I examined the anxieties and frustrations experienced by students and asked them to compare traditional composition with their newfound multimodal skills in order to better ascertain the attitudes and perceptions students have about multimodal composition before, during and after the process. I also asked students to compare traditional composition with multimodal composition, and this is a valuable element of my research that contributes to the overall discussion about the use of multimedia in first-year writing classes. As such, my research will help fill a gap in the lack of classroom-based research on the use of new media assignments, how students react to the challenges of such projects, and their perceptions of the downfalls and benefits of multimodal composition. Although the theoretical principles for the evolution of our concepts of literacy to include the terms digital, visual and multiliteracies are evident, the practical application of these theories in the classroom setting is now in the hands of the instructors willing to forge new territory in the writing programs of their institutions. The research presented in the following chapters allows us to take a pragmatic look at how students feel about taking on the challenges of new media texts throughout their composing process.

The field of composition and rhetoric has been opened to the digital technologies that allow for students to create multimedia texts at the most basic levels of composition (Anderson 2008; Wysocki et al 2004). Within the subfield of computers and composition, scholars have established that there is a valid place for new media texts in the study of composition and rhetoric (George 2002; Meeks & Ilyasova 2003; Ball 2004; Shipka 2005, Sheppard 2009). The theories of semiotics and design-centered pedagogies have led the field of composition studies into the realm of multimodal texts (Kress 1999, 2003; Hocks 2003; George 2002). However, there is still much to learn about how these new texts can be successfully integrated alongside traditional academic essays in first-year composition courses.

A recent online article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* declares, “Across More Classes, Videos Make the Grade.” In this article, Jeffrey Young writes:

Now a few colleges and universities are considering adding video-making to a list of core skills required for graduation. Recording may take its place among the age-old R’s of education: reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic. (May 2011)

If the production of video documentary essays is being integrated into the general education curriculum, particularly within first-year composition courses, it is important to consider how students respond to the demands of composing in multiple modes in order to best prepare them and support them through an often unfamiliar practice.

While studies have been done to gauge the effect of electronic literacy practices on digital natives and non-natives (Hawisher & Selfe 2004; DeVoss et. al. 2003), and an investigation has been made into “Integrating Multimodality Into Composition Curricula” from the perspective of teachers of composition (Anderson et. al. 2006), little empirical research has been done in order to determine the concerns and anxieties students have

when asked to create multimedia texts or to gain a more in-depth understanding of how students view the place of multimodal composition in their traditional first-year composition courses. In order to better facilitate the process of integrating new media texts into the curriculum of first-year writing courses, it is important that teachers understand the hurdles students must overcome, the technical skills and knowledge they bring to and develop within their composition courses, and the ways traditional and multimodal composition may enhance the communication skills of students in their academic and professional lives.

Though the integration of new media into composition studies has been touted as a logical progression in the field, there is still a need to understand the difficulties many students face when they are asked to compose multimedia texts. There is a gap between the theories of computers and composition scholars and classroom-based research that adequately demonstrates what students experience when they are introduced to the challenges of new media. In this dissertation, I will address how students navigate the challenges inherent in multimodal composition and make suggestions as to how multimodal composition may be successfully integrated into the curriculum of first-year composition programs without displacing the necessary components of traditional composition in the process.

Through my research, I will address the demands of multimodal composition on students with a varying range of technical skills and examine what value students place in both traditional and multimodal composition, and I will explore how students view the similarities and differences of traditional and multimodal composition in the context of a first-year composition course. This will help bridge the gap between theories of new media

and best practices in first-year composition.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my research study is to gain an in-depth perspective of student experiences with multimodal composition, specifically the composing of an argument-based documentary within a first-year writing course. Though the technologies to produce multimedia texts are readily available, often students have not been asked to compose these types of texts in the setting of a higher education course. As such, when students are asked to compose new media texts, often they face a new set of challenges unlike those they have experienced in the past, and it is worthwhile to investigate student reactions at the onset of a multimedia project as well as how their attitudes and perceptions change and develop throughout the process of composing in multiple modes. I have designed this mixed methods case study in order to address the following gaps in the scholarship of new media:

- The lack of empirical research examining student attitudes and perceptions about traditional and multimodal composition
- The lack of empirical research investigating student learning outcomes in multimodal composition and how students see the similarities and differences between traditional essays and multimodal texts in the form of video documentary essays

Through this empirical study, I will provide insight into the place of the video documentary essay in the teaching of composition, and at the same time, I will explore some of the shortcomings and problems that arise when we ask students to compose outside the norm.

Research Questions

Several questions motivated the inquiry of my research study. I wanted to know the initial technical skills students had before they composed their multimedia video project in order to determine some of the skills they developed in the process of creating an argumentative video project from a traditional research paper. I also wanted to determine student interest levels in composing new media texts as part of their first-year composition course, and I wanted to know how students compared the process of composing a traditional research essay with the process of composing a multimodal text in the form of an argumentative video documentary essay. I was also interested in the value students placed on both traditional and multimodal composition for their future academic and professional lives. Finally, I wanted to understand how the integration of video documentary essays into a first-year composition courses may complement the teaching of traditional academic essays and further enhance the literacy skills of students enrolled in first-year composition. The research questions that my study will address are as follows:

- 1) What are student attitudes and perceptions of multimodal composition, and how do they compare traditional composition with multimodal composition?
- 2) What do students convey as the positive and negative aspects of multimodal composition?

There are multiple components of each of these research questions all of which helped to establish the foundation for my study and provided an in-depth understanding of student attitudes and perceptions when faced with the task of composing a multimedia text in the context of their first-year composition course. Through the analysis of data collected in

surveys, interviews, and final reflection essays, I am able to present a view of student experiences with creating a video project beginning with its earliest stages and continuing through the duration of the project up until its completion.

If students understand the similarities and differences between composing traditional academic essays and video documentary essays, then perhaps teachers can utilize the process of multimodal composition to enhance students' understanding of the rhetorical aspects of communicating in various circumstances across various modes. As Lester Faigley suggests in "The Challenge of the Multimedia Essay," multimodal composition should not replace the traditional academic essay; however, my study will contribute to a greater understanding of ways in which multimodal composition can contribute to the teaching of composition in the 21st century.

By addressing my research questions, I will present information that will give insight into ways in which teachers of composition can adequately prepare their students for the challenge of multimodal composition. I will also contribute to the discussion of what the function of multimodal composition is in relation to traditional composition in first-year composition courses.

Methods of Inquiry

In order to investigate how students deal with the challenges of multimodal composition and gain a better understanding of how new media texts compare to traditional academic essays, I conducted teacher research in two sections of my first-year composition courses using a mixed methods case study approach. According to Creswell, mixed methods research "... combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms ... it involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a

study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research” (4). In this case study, I have used a pragmatic worldview as the philosophical underpinnings for this mixed methods approach. Creswell explains that:

Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This applies to mixed methods research in that inquirers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research. (10)

Creswell notes that the pragmatic worldview allows researchers to “choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best suits their needs and purposes” (11). In line with the pragmatic worldview Creswell describes, in the strategies of inquiry for this mixed methods study, I incorporated the use of surveys, interviews, as well as the textual analysis of student reflection essays. I administered a pre-survey, midpoint survey and final survey in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data that would indicate student skill levels, as well as attitudes and perceptions about multimodal composition before, during and after their completion of the video project. The final survey also served as a tool to collect data on the value students place on traditional and multimodal composition and determine how students compared their traditional research essays to their final video documentary essays.

I also coded reflection essays that students completed after submitting their video projects in order to determine their attitudes and perceptions of their overall experience with multimodal composition and as a means of gaining insight into the academic and professional value students place on traditional and multimodal texts. The reflection essays also provided information about the skills students adapted and acquired in the process of composing argumentative video essays.

Now that I have presented an overview of my research, I am compelled to reveal the circumstances that brought me to the subject of this dissertation. Of course, any research project of this magnitude is driven by personal motivations and insights, and while those are always there in every stage of the project's development, it can often seem that the formality of the dissertation as a genre limits one's ability to convey the more personal aspects behind one's drive and inspiration as a researcher. However, there is value in knowing the narrative behind how a teacher-researcher comes to her research and seeing some of the challenges and obstacles that have led her to a sense of purpose and urgency to conduct a study that is ultimately designed to improve teaching practices. If nothing else, knowing this narrative can help others feel less isolated as we are faced with the challenge of incorporating multimodal composition into our writing programs and into our future research endeavors. This is my story.

The Journey Here

In 2003, I began working on my master's degree in professional writing and quickly realized my passion for the field of composition and rhetoric. My first semester I discovered the online journal *Kairos*, and specifically became enamored with Daniel Anderson's work, "Prosumer Approaches to New Media Composition." After interacting with Anderson's text through the course of the next couple of semesters, I knew that I wanted to someday experiment with using student-produced videos as texts in my own composition courses. I was very excited by the prospect of using multimedia in this way in freshman composition, and I had all the enthusiasm and idealism that comes along with finding one's chosen field of interest and high hopes of eventually doing something new and innovative in my own classroom. I also became familiar with Jay Bolter's *Writing*

Spaces early in my graduate studies, and the tenants of the remediation of text would be a foundation of my inquiries throughout my graduate career. I would eventually return to both of these texts numerous times throughout my graduate experience. I was fascinated by the idea of transforming the traditional academic essay into something different, something more, but I wasn't sure exactly what that meant or how to go about doing it.

In 2005, I put together my portfolio for my master's and entitled it, *Discovering 21st Century Composition Studies*. I have been fortunate in that since early in my graduate studies, I have always had a focus on implementing non-traditional, specifically multimodal texts, into first-year composition classes. In short, all of my graduate work has led me to my research.

I completed my master's in professional writing and two weeks later began teaching at the same university where I had completed my degree. The following spring, I was given the opportunity to incorporate an optional video assignment into a freshman composition course. To put it simply, the project was a complete disaster. I wrote about the shortcomings of the assignment and all that I had learned in the process in an article that was eventually published in *Computers and Composition Online* in spring of 2010.

In the years since that first disastrous attempt at incorporating video as student text in freshman composition, I have refined the assignment, asking students to grapple with the rhetorical elements of creating compelling arguments in video format. I have done this by establishing a framework that such an assignment requires in order to be successful. Students do in-class freewrites, research their topics, and write a formal research paper on their chosen subject before moving on to the various written assignments related to the video project, such as storyboard and outlines, interview questions, and scripts. The

objective is of the assignment is for students to propose viable solutions to local, national or even global problems. They must propose solutions that can be implemented by their audience: average citizens, students, faculty and staff members in their communities. Eventually, their arguments are broadcast to the world via YouTube, giving them a heightened sense of creating a purposeful message that will be seen by a wider audience.

The proposal argument transfers well to a video presentation. Students often choose topics that are significant to them, like crime in their community, the pollution of a local river, or the homeless population in their metropolitan area. Many students take the opportunity to address a local problem so that they can use their own video and pictures, or interview someone they know who can speak as an expert on the subject.

As the semesters have gone by, I have become convinced that this project is helping my students become better communicators, or in the very least, teaching them practical technology, research and information literacy skills. For example, students learn how to acquire digital media under the Creative Commons license, learn how to convert files to different formats, and how to organize their media effectively for ease of use. They also adapt to complications and troubleshoot technical difficulties through various outlets, whether it is through entering terms in a search engine or visiting a librarian for assistance.

Each semester the final productions convince me that students can effectively construct meaningful arguments through the venue of multimodal composition. In many instances, they seem to effortlessly harness the rhetorical power of image and sound. Likewise, after completing their video documentary essays, many students demonstrate a thorough understanding of their topics and successfully adapt their thesis-driven arguments to include visual and aural elements of persuasion.

But my confidence in the project has not always been met with equal enthusiasm within the departments where I have taught. To be frank, I have been met with subtle if not outright opposition in nearly every teaching location where I have implemented the project within the past six years.

Regardless of the time and effort I have put into organizing and refining the assignment, ensuring the rigor of the work (translate “ample writing”) and the success of my students, it seems that I am constantly faced with the question, “But what does making movies have to do with writing?” It is this question that has led me to the subject of this dissertation. I wanted to know what skills students acquired in the production of multimedia texts, how these texts are both similar to and different than traditional academic essays, and what attitudes students have about composing such texts before and after the process. I wanted to know if there is a place for the emerging genre of video documentary essays in the context of first-year writing courses.

On the one hand, the resistance from the various departments where I have taught has not quelled my enthusiasm for the multimedia project I assign in all of my classes. Somehow, I instinctively know that these multimodal projects are doing something more in composition, something needed, and something good. At the end of the semester, the work my students produce always leaves me excited and reinvigorated, leading me to believe that there is value in allowing students to compose their arguments through not only text, but image, video and sound. I see the intrinsic value of including these types of involved multimodal projects at the basic level of freshman composition.

As I have progressed through my graduate studies, I have found a wealth of support for the use of new media in composition studies. Within the past ten years, computers and

composition scholars have demonstrated the successful use of multimedia as student text within their composition classes (Selfe 2007, Hocks & Comstock 2006, Wysocki 2004, Anderson 2003 & 2008, George 2002). Recent theorists advise that the 21st century has ushered in the age of multiliteracies, an age in which the dominance of the screen has created a shift to a focus on design (The New London Group 1996; Kress 2000 & 2003, Hocks 2003). As the literature reveals, it has been substantiated that teachers in the field of composition should embrace the multimodal shift to a design-centered practice (George 2002, Hocks 2003, Kress 2000). Although a shift to pedagogies which focus on multiliteracy and design is evident in the titles of conference presentations, articles in the most current journals, and in recent titles of book-length publications in the field, there is a disparity between what the leading scholars in the field are reporting and theorizing and the reception of multimodal composition as a viable exercise in freshman composition courses in traditional English departments.

As recently as May of 2011, an online article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* generated a response that perfectly demonstrates the debate between the proponents of using new media and those who think these types of activities fall short of the critical standards that should be reserved for the serious academic work of writing. As the article's title suggests, "Across More Classes, Videos Make the Grade: In Some Science and Writing Courses, Final Papers are Giving Way to Multimedia," the author, Jeffrey Young, touts the benefits of adding multimedia projects to courses across the disciplines, stating that some colleges and universities are even "considering adding video-making to a list of core skills required for graduation." He goes as far as to say that "Recording may take its place among the age-old R's of education: reading, writing and 'rithmetic."

While the article puts a positive spin on this innovative practice “among tech-savvy professors,” Young does point out that problems can exist when professors are uncomfortable with the technology or uncertain about where video projects fit appropriately into the curriculum. The article itself is notable, but the real interest lies in the reader responses left as comments at the end of the article. While the discussion initially included enthusiastic accounts of professors using video projects in their own classes, it quickly manifested the ongoing debate about using multimedia as academic text. Though the user name is telling, curmudgeon58 has this to say:

What may be a dated concept is the belief that one of the major responsibilities of educators is to train their students to be able to create an intelligible and logical WRITTEN essay. We seem to be retreating into an image driven expression of intellectual thought. A resurrection of, albeit sophisticated, era of cave drawings . . . I am concerned that our tech directed academics outside of the media disciplines are relatively illiterate themselves.

Curmudgeon58 first accuses the tech-savvy professors of being illiterate themselves and then goes further to suggest that assigning videos is just lazy, arguing that “Sitting at a computer or TV is not the most rigorous intellectual activity.” But the self-professed curmudgeon is not the only one who had something similar to say about using video as student text. Vlynn43 writes:

Most of today’s students have woefully low writing skills. Instead of addressing that problem with the hard work it would take (from professors and students), now we’re eliminating it altogether and substituting “video arguments.” . . . Creating videos has value, too, but it does not yield the same type of discovery process that writing does. Also, creating video arguments will not help students develop their language skills.

Of course, curmudgeon58 and vlynn43 elicited vehement retorts rejecting the notion that we teach video because we are lazy. One reader responded, “the assumption that the

presence of video means the absence of writing is just plain wrong” (gossettphd). Perhaps even more telling than the online debate surrounding the article is the fact that nine readers “Liked” curmudgeon58’s comment, whereas only one or two people “Liked” the responses in favor of using multimedia in this way. This recent public demonstration of this debate is what I see as the problem of multimodal composition that I hope this dissertation will help to address.

The fact remains that *making videos* is still a suspect activity within the first-year writing curriculum. It has yet to be determined what place, if any, the new genre of video documentary essay has in basic composition courses. It is particularly relevant that this dissertation addresses the place of multimodal texts in first-year writing courses because the reality is that many composition programs are still operated under stringent curriculum guidelines in which assigned topics and mandated end-of-term, timed writing assessments are still very much the reality. I know this from experience. Generally speaking, there is a feeling within most freshman composition programs that there is already too much to do, the students are already too far behind, and that we need to focus on the basics. Having taught composition for six years, I can attest that many of us feel a sense of accomplishment (and rightly so) at the end of the semester if our students can use a semicolon correctly or write a four-page paper with no fragments.

On the one hand, the resistance to the use of multimedia has not quelled my enthusiasm for the video project I assign in all of my classes. Somehow, I instinctively know that these multimodal projects are doing something more in composition, something needed, and something good. I look at the work of my students at the end of every semester

and I am excited and reinvigorated, and always convinced, that the business of multimodal composition at the basic levels of composition is a worthy enterprise.

And yet, on the other hand, I am challenged by the inevitable question, “But what does making videos have to do with writing?” Questions like this are often issued from a chair of the department or peer committee member, and they are valid and warranted concerns. I am discouraged, and to be honest *worried*, by comments that appear in teaching portfolios such as, “. . . she has a creative approach to integrating film and writing that can and should be improved to ensure that the film scripts have strong written content so that writing rather than film making is the prime activity.” This quote is lifted directly from my own recent peer committee recommendation, and it is pertinent to mention the insecurity that such recommendations instill in me as I navigate the debate of what place multimodal composition has in freshman composition courses. It is worth mentioning that I elected to quit my tenure-track job at the institution where my study took place in part because of their lack of support and outright disdain of my use of video as student text. Based on their response to my work with multimodal composition, it is unlikely I would have had the opportunity to advance in the department.

To put it simply, the theory that supports my practice is ample, but if my superiors at the teaching institution where I earn my pay do not understand or recognize the value in such endeavors, then not only is my practice in jeopardy, but so is my position within the department. I suspect other composition teachers are facing similar challenges at their own institutions, and some of the literature I’ve encountered does validate the tension between theory and practice when it comes to teaching multimodal composition. I have therefore found it relevant and necessary to explore this debate through the research of this

dissertation and come to some conclusions about the place of the emerging genre in writing studies, the video documentary essay.

Based on my personal experience teaching at a large university, a small, rural state college, and a mid-sized, urban community college, there is a huge inconsistency between the ample theories of new media and the actual practices within the English departments in which we teach. Judging by the current theories in the field (Bolter 2001; Bolter & Grusin 1999, Kress 1999, 2000; The New London Group 1996; Cope & Kalantzis 2000), the time has come for composition studies to change. But as Todd Taylor speculates in his, “Dozens of scholars and researchers have speculated about this moment, but no one has yet articulated a specific pedagogy of multimedia composition” (150). Though Taylor made this assertion in 2001, and there have been a few studies published on the use of video in the teaching of composition since that time, as I discussed in Chapter 2, there is still a need for more empirical research that explores the function of video as student text in composition. The research of this dissertation will serve as a needed addition to the scholarship of multimodal composition as we begin to develop a more efficient, sustainable and comprehensive pedagogy for the use of video as academic text in first-year composition programs.

It is important to note the distinct line in the sand between the theories which support multimodal approaches to composition and the entrenched belief that the first-year composition instructor’s position and responsibility is only to teach writing, which translates grammar, paragraph structure and organization, perhaps critical thinking through writing, but most definitely the standardized, MLA formatted, 12-point font, traditional academic essay. Many of the scholars presented in the literature review of this

dissertation have also written about the hesitancy of the faculty within traditional English departments to embrace multimodal composition (Cheryl Ball, Ellen Cushman, Kathleen Yancey, and Anne Wysocki among others). While scholars continue to publically support multimodal composition in recent journal publications, books and conference presentations, many also acknowledge the backlash that innovative teachers continue to face at this time of transition within our discipline.

There is not really a war going on between the proponents of the traditional academic essay and those who support the use of the digital texts of the 21st century. As I have previously noted, Faigley claims, “The point is not that we have to abandon teaching the traditional essay in writing classes . . . However, we do not have to restrict our definition of the essay to what we have come to know as a school form” (187). I have not read any new media scholar who argues to completely do away with the traditional academic essay. But out in the trenches, where most departments are staffed and run by astute faculty members with specialized degrees in literature, the reality is that teachers and scholars of computers and composition are facing a debate in which the new genre of the video documentary essay is in question. In all honesty, it seems that we should either find a school where multimedia composition is an accepted practice in first-year composition, or teach comp in the appropriately prescribed way. After all, do we really have enough time to play with movie making software when students arguably cannot compose an adequate five-page research paper? The fact remains that many first-year composition instructors are often prescribed a curriculum in which the “master syllabus” leaves little or no room for a multimodal genre of writing. And in most cases, based on my

personal experience, we are expected to stay true to the mandated curriculum or face the consequences.

I am not under the impression that my research will solve the ongoing debate of whether or not the practice of integrating new media texts into composition courses is the right thing to do. Based on my experiences, I think this debate will continue well into the 21st century within English departments across the nation. What I do hope is that my work will contribute to the conversation about what exactly we are doing when we ask students to compose new kinds of texts and that this dissertation helps to illuminate the function of the emerging genre of the video documentary essay within the context of first-year writing programs in a world that is increasingly digital and driven by multimodal communication.

My primary claim at the onset of my research is that video documentary essays are an emerging genre that is connected to critical thinking and professional communication. As of now, this genre can be closely associated with technical writing. But, as Faigley argues, “Until recently the field has enforced this distinction in writing courses by confining instruction in design, images, and graphics to technical writing. A neat and unproblematic compartmentalization of genre, however, is no longer possible” (187). The drive of my inquiry has been to understand the place of this new genre in the context of the general education composition requirement. Video documentary essays are public and when they are published to YouTube, they reach a wider audience than a traditional paper would. It is therefore necessary to examine what students are learning, gaining and doing when they broadcast their digital arguments to the world in this way. As such, this dissertation will help me contribute to the ongoing conversation about new media texts and their place in first-year writing courses.

Previously mentioned scholars within the field of composition and computers have established a niche for new media applications in the teaching of composition. In the several years that have led me to the development of my research project, I have consistently found myself writing to validate the use of student videos in composition courses, but there has always been the underlying tension that I was arguing for something that has already been established as a worthy pursuit. And yet still, I have stubbornly continued to view my position as one of validation of these texts. I now see where the tension lies between my own teaching experience and the experience of a graduate student becoming specialized as a scholar of new media within the field of computers and composition.

I have taught full time for five of the past six years, during which time, as a doctoral student, I have become well versed in the scholarship of new media within the parameters of computers and composition as a subfield of composition and rhetoric. The problem lies in what I see as a disparaging gap between the theoretical principles of composition studies and the pedagogical practices of teaching new things in an increasingly outdated system. In short, it is difficult to be an entry-level instructor and implement changes in curriculum, particularly when there is a good deal of controversy surrounding a new practice, as is the case for the assigning of multimodal texts in a traditional, basic writing course.

The relatively new field of composition studies has already experienced numerous overhauls within just the past thirty years. As noted by Richard Fulkerson in his article, "Composition at the Turn of the 21st Century," the paradigm shifts within the field vary from the current-traditional mindset to process theory and the post-process movement, all the way up to the development of recent critical teaching practices. These paradigm shifts

have been the hallmarks of the changing tides of our field within the past two decades. However, just within the past ten to fifteen years, the subtext of the field of computers and composition has compounded the impact of changes, creating a staggeringly enormous shift that demands the inclusion of digital literacies in the teaching of composition.

In a sense, we have gone from Composition 1.0 to Composition 2.0 in the time it took to make YouTube and Facebook global phenomena. In short, it is taking a while for the rest of the Humanities world to catch up with 21st century composition studies. But as Kurt Spellmeyer notes in “Education for Irrelevance? Or, Joining Our Colleagues in Lit Crit on the Sidelines of the Information Age:”

When compositionists emulate English studies, we are emulating irrelevance, world evasion, and failure, but why haven't we noticed what by now ought to be obvious? I suspect that we remain so thoroughly enclosed within the horizon of English studies because we keep aspiring to be embraced at last as 'one of us.' (82)

Fulkerson concludes that “We will never be successful in the effort to walk backward out of English studies, with our eyes still turned to our unlucky institutional origins; we really need to turn our eyes away” (87). In order for composition studies to remain relevant and useful within the realm of higher education, it is necessary to actually evaluate the multimedia productions students are composing in this context. An investigation into student responses to video documentary essays as an emerging genre in composition studies is my effort to turn my eyes away from the traditional academic texts of English departments and gain insight into the dimensions of multimodal composing within the field of composition and rhetoric.

This takes me back to the lament that many faculty members within English departments “just don't get it.” This has been a common refrain in all of my graduate work.

And again, this is because I spend one half of my scholarly life focused on the scholarship that supports the use of multimedia as student text, and the other half of my professional life explaining to the people that I work with that I really do not spend the last six weeks of the semester allowing my students to “just make movies.” And yet, that is, in a sense, what I do. But the basis of this dissertation is my assumption that more is happening when students take on multimodal composition. After conducting my research, I feel that there is a lot more to learn about both the benefits and complications of assigning multimedia projects in composition courses. This leads me to make some final suggestions for future research that will continue to support pedagogies of multiliteracies and continue to establish best practices for the implementation of multimodal composition in the English departments of various institutions of higher education

Conclusion

In chapter one, I have briefly explained how my research project was initially inspired by the work of Daniel Anderson’s “Prosumer Approaches to New Media Composition” and is the culmination of my interests in the field of computers and composition in combination with my application of the theoretical principles of new media scholars, such as those of the New London Group, to my own pedagogical practices as I have taught first-year composition over the past six years. I have outlined my implementation of a mixed methods case study approach to my research that I used in order to gain an intimate picture of the feelings of a group of students when they were asked to take on the challenges of multimodal composition.

By collecting both qualitative and quantitative data through surveys, reflection essays, and interviews, I have been able to obtain insight into the psychological demands

students undergo in the composition process and determine how students perceive the rhetorical elements of multimedia assignments. Through my research, I have come to some understandings about how students approach new media assignments, how they might benefit from these types of assignments academically, professionally and personally, and how these assignments can be used pedagogically to further student understanding of rhetoric in first-year writing programs. Put simply, my research has given me insight into how students feel and what they are doing when asked to produce multimodal compositions. I hope to use this research to further develop my own pedagogy in the use of new media in composition studies and to contribute to the practice of others wishing to do the same.

In Chapter 2, I will provide a review of the literature that provides a theoretical basis for the use of multimodal composition as a 21st century approach to writing studies and as a benefit to the teaching of rhetoric in the setting of higher education. As my experience teaching first-year composition has been the catalyst for my inquiry into the use of new media, I have examined new media scholarship as an instructor of composition within the context of the general education curriculum.

As I present in the literature review, new technologies have resulted in the remediation of print (Bolter & Grusin) and the need for design-centered pedagogies which take into consideration the types of texts students will encounter in their daily lives, academically and professionally. Some of the theoretical principles of semiotics, multiliteracies and visual rhetoric will be presented as a backdrop for the creation of multimedia assignments. As discussed by the New London Group, a pedagogy of multiliteracies will better prepare students for the “design of social futures” and present

them with the opportunity to become engaged citizens through the conscious consumption and production of the diverse texts that they encounter daily.

Next, in Chapter 3, I will present the methods and methodology that I used in my research project. I will explain why I was drawn to do teacher research and my use of a pragmatic/contextualist lens in order to conduct a mixed methods study. I will explain why I chose to use a mixed-methods case study in order to obtain a comprehensive data set that includes both qualitative and quantitative data in order to fully answer my research questions.

In Chapter 4, I will present both the data and assessment of the findings of this mixed-methods case study, including the survey data, the data obtained from the analysis of reflection essays, and analysis of the findings obtained from personal interviews with three of the study participants. The data and assessments presented in Chapter 4 will answer my research questions and present a clear picture of how students both value and compare traditional and multimodal composition practices. I will explain the attitudes and perceptions of the students who participated in this research and determine how these findings can be used to improve pedagogical practices in the implementation of multimedia assignments in composition courses. I will also draw some conclusions about how students see the rhetorical similarities and differences in traditional verses multimedia texts and how these comparisons might be useful in the teaching of composition.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I will situate the findings of my research in the larger conversation of the pedagogy of multiliteracies and consider how these research findings provide a foundation for further inquiry into the use of new media assignments in composition programs, particularly within the context of general education requirements.

CHAPTER 2: MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION, MULTILITERACIES AND THE EVOLUTION OF COMPOSITION

Introduction

As a review of the literature in computers and composition illustrates, within the past ten years the value of integrating new media texts into composition programs has been established; however, much remains to be determined as to how multimedia texts can best be incorporated into the already rigorous demands of first-year writing programs, how students respond to these new types of assignments, specifically the value they place on multimodal composition as both an academic and professional skill, and how the production of new media texts might inform the teaching of writing in composition classrooms. It is also important to continually consider how to best maximize the benefits of multimodal composition while at the same time minimizing some of the inevitable negative experiences that occur when we ask our students to create new kinds of texts. The research presented in this dissertation will contribute to an understanding of how students respond to new media assignments and how we might best prepare and support them for the challenges of multimodal composition. A thorough examination of scholarship related to new media, particularly the use of new media within the field of computers and composition, has prepared me for the work presented in this dissertation and much of this scholarship will be reviewed in this chapter.

In this literature review, I begin with a look at our unique place in history as we have shifted into the digital age and show how scholars within the field of computers and composition emphasize the significance of this historical moment in time and the transition composition programs must undergo in order to remain relevant in the 21st century

technological landscape. I then present the theoretical foundations that support the integration of multimodal composition into first-year writing programs by discussing remediation, semiotics and multimodality, multiliteracies, and the principles of design that can prepare students for their working, public and private lives. The significance of “participatory culture” and media convergence (Jenkins 2006) will be discussed as a catalyst for developing pedagogies that can empower students to be critical, engaged producers and consumers of multimodal texts, and the importance of visual rhetoric and visual literacies within the composition curriculum will also be explored. I will then present recent scholarship that directly addresses the use of video as a rhetorical and pedagogical tool within composition studies and explore how some scholars suggest the emerging genre of the video documentary essay may be integrated into writing programs. Finally, I will review some of the most relevant and recent research that supports the use of multimodal composition, specifically in the form of video production, within writing programs.

The Time is Now: Multimodal Composition

Within the past decade, scholars within the field of computers and composition, theorists, educators and the like have well established that it is time to consider the multiple modes of communication that inundate our students lives as we develop new pedagogies within this very different world consumed with digital media. As we shift to pedagogies that focus on the multiple modes of literacy in the 21st century, there are still concerns about how writing is taught and what actually constitutes writing in a world dominated by electronic communication.

Marshall McLuhan and Quinten Fiore could see how this electronic revolution was changing humanity. In *The Medium is the Massage*, a unique work that is as relevant today as it was when it was published in 1967, the authors accurately predict the impact of the technological advancements that have come to define the latter half of the 20th century:

The medium, or process, of our time—"electric technology"—is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life. It is forcing us to reconsider every thought, every action, and every institution formerly taken for granted. Everything is changing—you, your family, your neighborhood, your education, your job, your government, your relation to "the others." And they're changing dramatically.

(McLuhan, Fiore 8)

Electronic communication has not only changed the world in the way we do business, learn, interact with each other and entertain ourselves, it has also changed *us*, the way we process information, create meaning out of the multiple texts we encounter, and the way we see the world and participate in a global environment that seems ever more connected with each passing day. My research study allows me to investigate how students interact with multimodal composition, the meaning they derive from producing new media texts, and demonstrates how students react to the changes in communication strategies through the avenue of "electronic technology."

Lev Manovich echoes the sentiments of McLuhan and Fiore in *The Language of New Media*, when he comments on the "impact" of the "new media revolution." He writes:

... just as the printing press in the fourteenth century and photography in the nineteenth century had a revolutionary impact on the development of modern society and culture, today we are in the middle of a new media revolution—the shift of all culture to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution, and communication. The new revolution is arguably more profound than the previous ones, and we are just beginning to register its initial effects. (Manovich 19)

As Manovich notes, shifts in previous generations made significant impacts on society and culture, just as the shift we are experiencing now is leaving a lasting mark on our civilization. It is not surprising that such a radical and “revolutionary” shift would be a cause of concern for educators who must prepare students for a future that is difficult to imagine or fully understand.

Jay Bolter chronicles the evolution of text in *Writing Spaces*, noting the social and cultural developments that accompanied each transition in composing: “Each culture and each period has had its own complex economy of writing, a dynamic relationship among materials, techniques, genres, and cultural attitudes and uses” (21). We are faced with an amalgam of progress and tradition, a fusion of the old technologies with the new, and it has always been this way. This is why the subject of this dissertation is a critical step forward in understanding how students respond and adapt to the tasks of combining old technologies (the traditional academic essay) with the new (video documentary essays).

Every time there is a shift in the mode of communication, there is the debate between the proponents of the old and new technologies. The advent of writing itself was of concern to the intellectuals of the time. Plato argued that writing would destroy the faculties of memory. The novel was predicted to cause moral decay in 17th century Europe. Photography would replace portraiture. Film would cause the demise of photography. Television would kill the radio star, and so on. Though these fears may seem unwarranted today, in most cases they indicate the natural turbulence that accompanies technological shifts in any age. As Henry Jenkins, (touted as the McLuhan of the 21st century) notes in his opening to *Convergence Culture*:

Printed words did not kill spoken words. Cinema did not kill theatre. Television did not kill the radio. Each old medium was forced to coexist with the emerging media . . . old media are not being replaced. Rather, their functions and status are shifted by the introduction of new technologies. (14)

Because “each old medium” is “forced to coexist” with the new media, it seems relevant to consider how traditional writing exists or can coexist alongside of multimodal texts, and how students compare and value these composing processes. When students are asked to compose new types of texts, how might these compositions inform their more traditional texts and the composing process? What can be gained from these transitions between the old and new media? My study has been designed to specifically address these concerns within the context of first-year writing programs.

In “Made Not Only In Words: Composition In A New Key,” Kathleen Blake Yancey asks us to consider the previous questions by evoking our imaginations. She writes, “Fast forward to the 21st century: imagine that in composition classes students, like Victorian novelists before them, focus on remediating their own texts” (Yancey 314). It is exciting to think about how our students might “remediate their own texts” and in so doing, change the field of composition as we know it today. Yancey continues with her metaphor of the earth-changing rumblings we are now enduring in all aspects of our lives:

These are structural changes-global, educational, technological. Like seismic tremors, these signal a re-formation in process, and because we exist on the borders of our own tectonic plates-rhetoric, composition and communication, process, activity, service and social justice-we are at the very center of those tremors. Understand how pervasive our current challenges are, how necessary our efforts to adapt. (321)

As Yancey points out, if we are to prepare our students to communicate effectively in the future, we must endure the “tremors” that come with technological changes and adapt our

pedagogies accordingly. By asking students about their attitudes and perceptions of multimodal composition and giving them the opportunity to compare traditional and multimodal composition processes, I am able to offer some suggestions as to how our pedagogies can best be adapted to serve the needs of our 21st century students.

In “Metamedia Literacy: Transforming Meanings and Media,” J. L. Lemke notes the difficulties we face as educators in such a swiftly changing culture of technology. Like Yancey, he also emphasizes the responsibility we have to prepare our students to the best of our abilities:

No one can predict the transformations of twenty-first century society during the information technology revolution. We certainly cannot afford to continue teaching our students only the literacies of the mid-twentieth century, or even to simply lay before them the most advanced and diverse literacies of today. We must help this next generation learn to use these literacies wisely, and hope they will succeed better than we have. (91)

Though we cannot fully comprehend or predict what the future will hold for our students, it is still necessary to anticipate what the demands of being literate will be as we progress through the next century, and multimodal composition inevitably will play a role in the developing literacies of the 21st century. Exploring both the positive and negative experiences of the participants of my study as they progressed through the stages of a multimodal assignment allows me to convey a message about how students acquire, develop and evolve their literacy skills and provides insight into the challenges students face as we prepare them to be more completely literate in our culture that is dominated by digital media.

Although predictions may be difficult to make, Kurt Spellmeyer reminds us in “Education for Irrelevance,” one thing that is certain is “. . . the widespread perception that

print literacy is in trouble” (81). This does not necessarily mean that we will no longer communicate via print or alphabetic literacy, but it does present us with the challenge of restructuring how we teach literacy and literate practices in a world that is shifting from the dominance of print to the dominance of the screen.

In *Literacy for the New Media Age*, Gunther Kress concurs that the reign of print is on the way out, yet he does offer a prediction of what the future will be like as we shift away from more traditional concepts of literacy. He postulates that:

Language-as-speech will remain the major mode of communication; language-as-writing will increasingly be displaced by image in many domains of public communication, though writing will remain the preferred mode of the political and cultural elites. (Kress 1)

Indeed, the ubiquity of image and sound and the proliferation of digital media have already permeated the lives of our students to such an extent that in “From Analysis to Design,” Diana George argues:

For students who have grown up in a technology-saturated and image-rich culture, questions of communication and composition absolutely will include the visual, not as attendant to the verbal but as complex communication intricately related to the world around them. (32)

If students already see communication and composition as intricately tied to the visual, it seems a worthy enterprise to ask them to reflect on the value of traditional and multimodal composition in their lives, as I have done through my research.

Charles Hill also emphasizes the importance of “Reading the Visual,” noting that “Our students may have been exposed to more ‘texts’ than any other generation in history, and many of these texts are dense with cultural information (107). Although students are constantly inundated with information presented in multiple modes, Hill concludes that “So

far, our educational system has failed to take seriously and to adequately respond to the fact that so much of this information is in visual form” (107). The need to integrate the visual into composition practices drives a need for empirical studies that explore aspects of multimodal communication in the teaching of writing, and my study helps to fill a gap in empirical research that addresses how students respond to, value, and benefit from their creation of new media texts.

In the first chapter of *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*, entitled, “Thinking about Multimodality,” Cynthia Selfe and Pamela Takayoshi also recognize that education has thus far failed to take into account multimodal composition when one considers the assignments given in most traditional composition classrooms. They write:

Although composition theories have evolved to acknowledge and study these new *multimodal* texts . . . the formal assignments that many English composition teachers give to students remain alphabetic and primarily produced via some form of print media. And the papers that students submit in response to these conventional assignments have remained essentially the same. (Selfe & Takayoshi 1)

English assignments have not changed, and “Yet, for most people, and especially for younger people, the exclusion of readily available images from a text seems unnatural,” as Lester Fagiley stresses in “The Challenge of the Multimedia Essay” (177). Because I have integrated multimodal assignments into my first-year composition courses, I was able to devise my research study as a means of shedding light on what happens when teachers do adapt their assignments to reflect a multimodal approach to teaching composition.

The fact that most students are still asked to compose texts that are very much the same as those that students created at the turn of the last century (with the exception of being composed on a computer screen using word processing software) seems antiquated

if not irresponsible. Selfe and Takayoshi argue that our students' future success may very well depend on their ability to communicate in multiple modes:

In an increasingly technological world, students need to be experienced and skilled not only in reading (consuming) texts employing multiple modalities, but also in *composing* in multiple modalities, if they hope to communicate successfully within the digital communication networks that characterize workplaces, schools, civic life, and span traditional cultural, national, and geopolitical borders. (3)

Selfe and Takayoshi stress that “If composition instruction is to remain relevant, the definition of ‘composition’ and ‘texts’ needs to grow and change to reflect peoples’ literacy practices in new digital communication environments” (3). In order to ensure that the field of composition remains not only current but also relevant, it is important to consider what kind of texts our students are capable of producing, and this includes a discussion of the use of video as text in writing courses. For these reasons, the subject of this dissertation—student attitudes and perceptions of multimodal composition—will provide a valuable addition to the conversation of best practices in the use of multimodal assignments in the teaching of writing.

Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher have written extensively about the changes that have come about in how compositionists think about computers and writing and the skills that will be necessary for students who are “Becoming Literate in the Information Age;” in their article of this title, they discuss, “Cultural Ecologies and the Literacies of Technology” and emphasize the significance of teaching our students to communicate in a digital age dominated by the screen:

Today, if students cannot write to the screen—if they cannot design, author, analyze, and interpret material on the Web and in other digital environments—they may be incapable of functioning effectively as literate citizens in a growing number of social spheres. The ability to write well—and

to write well *with* computers and within digital environments—we believe will continue to play an increasingly important role in determining if students will be able to participate and succeed in school, work, and community. (642-643)

In asking our students to contemplate how to best “write to the screen,” it is necessary to reconsider not only the assignments we give them, but also open the discussion to how the assignments of the past, particularly the traditional academic essay, might be redesigned, resituated, and remediated to best serve the communication needs of 21st century citizens. If we do not have this discussion and make the necessary shifts within our composition programs, beginning with the first-year writing courses that all students are required to take, then we run the risk of the field as whole losing relevance if not becoming obsolete entirely. Because my study is designed with an emphasis on best practices through a better understanding of how students react to and value traditional and multimodal composition skills, it allows me to make valuable suggestions as to how we can maintain the relevance of composition through the integration of multimodal composition, particularly within first-year writing programs.

The relevance of English studies is of particular concern to teachers of composition. In “‘English’ at the Crossroads’: Rethinking Curricula of Communication in the Context of the Turn to the Visual,” Gunther Kress notes that:

If English is to remain relevant as the subject which provides access to participation in public forms of communication, as well as remaining capable of providing understandings of and the abilities to produce culturally varied texts, then an emphasis on language alone simply will no longer do. English will need to change. (Kress 67)

Assigning video documentary essays in my first-year composition classes is my response to a “need to change” the way English is taught and valued as a subject that allows students to

acquire and develop communication skills that will be of value to them not only in their academic lives but also in their professional and personal lives. As a teacher, I have used video documentary essay assignments as an attempt to address this point of intersection that Kress highlights in “English at a Crossroads.” As a researcher, I designed my study with the intention of learning from students who are with us at this pivotal point of transition.

Charles Hill announces, “Ignoring graphics and visual design elements in writing classes, even in first-year composition, is quickly becoming anachronistic” (127). The ongoing debate about what and how to teach the visual in first-year writing programs may stifle what kind of texts students are asked to compose as Diana George contends. She writes, “In the end, I argue that the terms of debate typical in our discussions of visual literacy and the teaching of writing have limited the kinds of assignments we might imagine for composition” (George 13-14). I agree that an ongoing debate about the place of the visual in the teaching of composition limits what kind of assignments we ask our students to produce. If we continue to limit the types of texts available to our students for academic research and work, we limit the possibilities to enrich the practices of 21st century composition studies. The relevance of composition studies relies on the ability of teachers to successfully integrate multiple literacies into their writing programs. The work of this dissertation is my contribution to understanding how students view the integration of multiple literacies in their writing classes and allows me to offer some suggestions as to how we might shape our pedagogies for success.

Though many changes have already taken place, restructuring curricula and teaching philosophies is not always an easy or welcome task and will require new research and theories to support an evolving praxis. In a chapter of *Writing New Media*, “Toward

New Media Texts: Taking Up the Challenges of Visual Literacy,” again Selfe recognizes the need for a shift to take place in composition studies in order to make the field more useful for our students:

By adding focus on visual literacy to our existing focus on alphabetic literacy, we may not only learn to pay more serious attention to the ways in which students are now ordering and making sense of the world through the production and consumption of visual images, but we may also extend the usefulness of composition studies in a changing world. (72)

In order to reinvent the way we see and teach writing, it will take not only the redesign of basic first-year writing programs, but it will also require us to rethink how we see ourselves as teachers and compositionists, as Andrea Lunsford recognizes in her 2006 *CCCC's* Chair Address, “Writing Technologies and the Fifth Canon. She comments, “What strikes me today is the fact that writing teachers have had to reinvent themselves and their discipline several times during my career and that more change is definitely in sight” (170). While on the one hand there is plenty evidence that a shift to multimodal composition is needed in order for composition studies to remain relevant in institutions of higher learning, there is still uncertainty and reluctance within the hierarchy of many English departments about making this transition and this is well documented in much of the work of the scholars presented in this review. I have faced this uncertainty and reluctance in my own experiences teaching multimodal composition, and this has been the foundational motivation and drive behind conducting my research. As Wendy Bishop notes in “Because Teaching Composition is (Still) Mostly About Teaching Composition:”

It seems crucially important to rediscover what is fundamentally sound about what we do when we support our writing students: make meaning,

engage minds, improve practices, tap deep and meaningful rituals, inculcate life-changing habits of thinking and persuading, reflect, and revise. (69)

In order to “rediscover what is fundamentally sound about what we do,” it will be necessary to consider the many types of compositions our students encounter and need to analyze, interpret, and compose throughout their lives. This process of rediscovery should involve multimodal communication practices. This is not to say that traditional academic writing should fall by the wayside, or that a shift to multimodal composition will supersede the need to teach research-based, argument-driven writing in first-year composition programs. As many of the scholars presented here contend, the traditional academic essay is not going anywhere. Integrating multimodal composition into the teaching of writing should not displace the teaching of traditional composition, but rather should expand our practices to include a variety of texts and a variety of modes of communication that are valuable and relevant in today’s world. This is why more empirical research on the use of multimodal composition in the teaching of writing is needed in order to best determine how new ways of composing can best be utilized and integrated into the systems that already exist, and my intention for my research study is to contribute to this discussion.

As Kathleen Yancey states in her NCTE publication, *Writing in the 21st Century*, “. . . it's meaningful to ask how people compose in the 21st century because the answers can be used to create new models of composing” (29). Including both discussion and production of multimodal texts in writing programs will provide our students with a more complex foundation of skills for communication in our highly advanced technological age. In this dissertation I have looked closely at the success and failures students encounter when they produce multimodal texts as a means of understanding how to best prepare them for these

“new models of composing.” The future composition programs that successfully integrate multimodal and traditional composition will be the most successful and relevant for our students. In Doug Hesse’s 2005 *CCCC’s* Chair address, “Who Owns Writing,” he envisions what these future programs may look like:

The richest programs of our futures features writing in a welter of circumstances and genres, creative, journalistic, and professional, as well as civic and academic. They feature work in design—visual and aural as well as verbal. They fully imagine students in complicated worlds of school and work and politics, yes, but also passions, relationships, and art. (347-348)

An update to composition curricula, particularly in first-year writing programs, will be critical in not only maintaining the relevance of English programs but also in preparing students to be engaged citizens.

Computers and composition scholars have been particularly concerned with the role of technology and writing in empowering and engaging students. As Michael Knievel notes in “What is Humanistic about Computers and Writing:”

Computers and writing’s recognition of the need for an active, productive humanities that develops citizen-rhetors capable of thinking and composing within the logic of the media of the day suggests the possibility of a growing legitimacy that may, interestingly, more readily find validation outside the academy. (104)

In order to effectively communicate across a multitude of platforms for a myriad of purposes, new media should be integrated (as new media itself changes and continues to develop) within the context of teaching writing. As Yancey notes in *Writing in the 21st Century*:

Historically, like today, we compose on all the available materials. Whether those materials are rocks or computer screens, composing is a material as well as social practice; composing is situated within and informed by specific kinds of materials as well as by its location in community. We have simply never seen it quite so clearly as we do now. (8)

There is a need to teach students to not only read new media, but also to write new media.

Cheryl Ball and Ryan Moeller stress this need in their online article for *Fibreculture*,

“Reinventing the Possibilities: Academic Literacy and New Media.” In explaining why they teach new media, they state:

The short of it is because there is a need. Students, and people in general, encounter nonwritten forms of communication all the time, every day. One hour of television presents, on average, 12 minutes of commercials. One hour on the Internet presents an entire 60 minutes of visual, aural, interactive texts.

The sheer volume of digitized media that inundates our lives restructures how we make and interpret meaning and redefines what we consider useful writing in today’s world, and as Stuart Selber notes in *Multiliteracies for the Digital Age*, the stakes are high. He writes:

In English studies, computers are implicated in a wide range of crucial literacy issues no matter the view of any particular teacher or program. And the stakes could not be higher. For at issue is the future shape of writing instruction and its significance to students. (Selber 3)

As Kress indicates, we are at a monumental crossroads and in order for English studies to continue to be useful to our students, our concept of what it means to be literate in today’s world must change. In *Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism and a New Literacy*,

Kathleen Welch boldly summarizes the significance of our unique time in history:

We stand at a powerful historical moment, at a time when we are able to make substantial changes in how language is deployed (and understood) particularly by the general population, most of whom believe, partly as a result of school literacy, that thought and articulation is a secondhand representation

of the real and prior phenomenon of thought. If we grasp this opportunity . . . then we will be able to accomplish many things, one of which is a revivification of the humanities as a series of connected activities and intersubjective performances for mass groups, rather than the commodified, unsatisfied desires of the midcultists who think of themselves as more 'literate,' more 'cultured,' than their masscult cousins. (27)

At this moment in time, it is possible for us to revivify the humanities, specifically the within field of composition and rhetoric, and in so doing, we can move towards a curriculum that will begin to prepare students to be more completely literate in our evolving world. The subject of this dissertation is my contribution to the caravan that is moving forward past these symbolic crossroads.

Multimodal composition can be used as a tool to teach traditional writing and inform the writing process and also as a means of thinking about how to remediate the traditional academic essay so that it is relevant to the 21st century. If part of the process of remediation is that the old medium adapts from the new, then we should be able to use video documentary essays to inform how we write essays in general and adapt the strengths of multiple modes to reinvent how we write, academically and professionally. Though there are inherent challenges in the teaching of multimedia essays, Faigley reminds us that "In spite of these difficulties, student work will be increasingly in multimedia forms" and he warns that ". . . If composition studies is to become an important player among liberal arts disciplines, it will have to take leadership in this larger project" (179). Teacher research, such as the research presented in this dissertation, will help us move forward in our roles as leaders in the field of computers and composition as we integrate multimodal composition into our own teaching practices.

In this section I have provided an overview of the scholarship that situates our unique

position in history as concepts of literacy continue to change with the advent and advancement of digital technologies. This scholarship indicates that multimodal composition will be a necessary component of first-year writing programs if English studies are to remain relevant in this rapidly changing landscape. The research presented in this dissertation is my both my response and contribution to this inimitable point in our history. In the following segments, I will present scholarship that supports a need for the remediation of the traditional academic essay and the use of multimodal composition to incorporate design-centered pedagogies and critical multiliteracies in first-year writing programs.

Remediation and “The Late Age of Print”

In the past decade, education and new media scholars have come up with several key tenets of the pedagogies of multiliteracies: education is social and should prepare students for the conditions of their working, public, community and private lives; the term literacy should not be restricted to the ability to read and write, but should also include understanding and communicating knowledge in multiple modes, as well as information and technological skills; and finally, pedagogies of multiliteracies should be design-centered allowing students to become active and critical producers of knowledge rather than just consumers of information (The New London Group, Gee, Luke, Selfe, Hawisher & Selfe, Luke, Lemke etc). A key element of implementing pedagogies of multiliteracies into composition programs will be to consider how traditional academic texts may be remediated to better reflect the changing concepts of literacy in today’s world.

Remediation, the subject of Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s 1999 book of the same name, is the process by which a new media encompasses and overtakes an older media,

borrowing from, adapting, and improving upon the older media in the process.

Elements are always lost in the movement from one mode to the next, but many fundamentals of communication are also transferred, built upon, and gained in the process of what Bolter and Grusin call “remediation,” a term they “have adopted . . . to express the way in which one medium is seen by our culture as reforming or improving another;” in this process of remediation “[e]ach new medium is justified because it fills a lack or repairs a fault in its predecessor, because it fulfills the unkept promise of an older medium” (59-60). As explained by Bolter & Grusin, remediation of all media has been happening rapidly in the past century, particularly in the case of print, film and photography through the advent and development of the Web.

In his 2001 edition of *Writing Space*, Bolter declares, “Today we are living in the late age of print” (2). He explains that in the process of remediation, the new media both pays homage to and rivals the old media. According to Bolter, “Remediation involves both homage and rivalry, for the new medium imitates some features of the older medium, but also makes an implicit or explicit claim to improve on the older one” (23). The process of remediation is reciprocal in that the older media will often imitate (remediate) the new media out of fear and appreciation for the new form, and, “When in the history of writing a new technology appears, it may supplement an established technology or replace it” (Bolter 22). If, as Bolter and Grusin suggest, the remediation of one medium to the next denotes an enhancement in the modes of communication, the video documentary essay as a new genre of composition may be a viable way to ask students to consider how they might remediate the academic texts traditionally represented by the standard print-based essay. The purpose of my research study is to determine how students respond to the

demands of creating new kinds of texts so that we can be better prepared to support them when we ask them to reinvent the way academic discourse is communicated.

Remediation can be seen in an online edition of a newspaper. Some aspects of the traditional printed text are present, such as headlines and photos, but the dynamics of the Web allow the new media to supersede the old by including film clips and the capability for hypertext. Bolter notes that the past century has been marked by a distinct move toward the visual, “Thus, in the 19th and 20th centuries, the desire to capture the world in the word has been gradually supplemented by the more easily gratified desire to see the world through visual technologies” (58). Taking into consideration that new “technology may supplement an established technology or replace it,” I argue that it is vital to consider how multimodal compositions, specifically the genre of video documentary essays, may “supplement” rather than totally replace the traditional academic essay. How might multimodal composition allow students to remediate the academic essay and what might a remediated essay look like? In my research, I have asked students to compare traditional and multimodal composition and express the value they place on each mode of communication, and I argue that assessing student attitudes and perceptions is a necessary and valuable first step toward the process of remediating the traditional academic essay. We must give students the opportunity to participate in this process by paying attention to their concerns, insights and values.

Hybridity and Composition

The concept of hybridity is useful as we contemplate the future of academic writing. According to The New London Group in, “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures:”

The term hybridity highlights the mechanisms of creativity and of culture-as-process as particularly salient in contemporary society. People create and innovate by hybridizing, that is by articulating in new ways, established practices and conventions within and between different modes of meaning. (30)

Bolter argues that: “The treatment of text as image becomes even more popular and more culturally compelling with the rise of digital media, because of the ease with which images and words can be combined” (52). I have found that the resources students need to combine music, image and text are readily available and this has contributed to my success with the use of video documentary essays in my classes. According to Carmen Luke, in “Cyber-Schooling and Technological Change: Multiliteracies for New Times:”

Language and conventional concepts of text, reading and writing—all of which are derived from print culture and print-based textual forms and practices—are changing and blending into new ‘hybrid’ terms, textual forms and practices. (83)

The inherent hybridity of new modes of communication is relevant to the discussion of the value and function of new media texts in an academic setting. As Cheryl Ball argues in her seminal work, “Show, Not Tell, The Value of New Media Scholarship,” “Valuing these texts—and making them less rare, which will increase our analytical and interpretational strategies for them—is important for new media scholarship to move forward” (422). In reality, there has never been such a clear-cut distinction between alphabetic and print-based literacy and visual communication.

The visual has always been a part of text-based communication. Mary Hocks and Michelle Kendrick argue in the introduction to *Eloquent Images* that the correlation between visual and print literacy has existed all along and to elevate printed text over visual images is problematic:

[T]o attempt to characterize new media as a new battleground between word and image is to misunderstand radically the dynamic interplay that *already exists* and has *always existed* between visual and verbal texts and to overlook insights concerning that interplay that new media theories and practices can foster. (1)

Essentially, new media has been remediating how we communicate from the very beginning as far back as etched images on cave walls, but this does not necessarily mean that the new modes of writing within the field of composition and rhetoric can be considered the modern equivalent of a reversion back to a primitive level of solely visual communication. The research of this dissertation will explore how students respond to complex hybrid forms of writing and will demonstrate both the pitfalls and possibilities that students encounter when they create hybrid texts.

Gunther Kress emphasizes the folly in continuing to support the dominance of print literacy in “Design and Transformation: New Theories of Meaning.” He writes:

[T]o put it provocatively; the single, exclusive and intensive focus on written language has dampened the full development of all kinds of human potentials, through all the sensorial possibilities of human bodies, in all kinds of respects, cognitively and affectively, in two- and three-dimensional representation. (157)

Here Kress argues that when we neglect to recognize the hybrid nature of writing and visual communication, we limit the human potential to interpret and create meaning in a world that consists of a slew of sensory perceptions. Further, Hocks and Kendrick note that:

The relationships among word and image, verbal texts and visual texts, ‘visual culture’ and ‘print culture’ are interpenetrating, dialogic relationships. The contradictions, overlaps, and paradoxes inherent in the rhetorical use and interpretation of words and images have been with us since the earliest verbal and visual communication systems; these complex relationships exist in ancient rhetoric and persist in rereadings of the classical rhetoricians, in

cultural studies of technology, and even in the binary code distinctions of digital environments. (2)

Access to digital technologies is changing the way we consume and produce text, suggesting that educators should provide students with rhetorical strategies that allow them to succeed in not only alphabetic print modes of literacy (the traditional academic essay), but also in the literacy of new media that is an integral part of the electronic age. The question remains as to what elements will be lost or gained in the remediation of the traditional academic essay, and how the concept of hybridity can best be utilized to reconfigure our concepts of what academic writing is and should be. It is important to not only examine the new theories that have emerged and will continue to emerge on the function and utilization of hybrid forms, but also to consider how students interact with the hybridization of academic texts, as I do within the scope of this dissertation, and these types of inquiries will enhance our praxis. Looking to the future, Carmen Luke acknowledges that new media texts that are considered hybrid forms will one day be the norm:

What today appear as hybrid and frontier media forms and content will be commonplace in the near future, and will generate new text-based social repertoires, communication styles, and symbolic systems for accessing and participating in new knowledge and cultural configuration. (79)

It is necessary to first recognize the innate hybridity of all communication before we can consider how hybrid forms of composition may be used to reinvent or reinvigorate academic writing in first-year composition courses.

The fact that the way we write is increasingly electronic and, therefore, a remediation of writing must take place in composition studies is well established in the work presented

here. Scholars argue that the field of composition and rhetoric should incorporate the pedagogies of multiliteracies in order to adjust to the communication demands of the 21st century. The work of this dissertation will contribute to the pedagogies of multiliteracies.

In a world increasingly focused on the multiplicities of literacy, scholars argue that educators should provide opportunities for students to expand their compositions beyond traditional print-based texts and welcome multimedia productions as part of the academic process. Digital video deserves a place in the composition experience. However, it is important to consider how digital video productions fit into the realm of scholarly, academic writing, or more importantly, whether or not multimedia texts should be considered a hybrid type of *written composition in a non-traditional form*. It is my aim in my research study to explore the use of multimodal composition within the context of first-year composition courses and present how student participants interpreted the function and usefulness of video documentary essays as an emerging genre and hybrid form of communication.

The discussion of the hybridity of new media is relevant to my research because it is important to validate student videos as academic work. Video documentary essays are hybrid texts containing elements of written text as well as visual, aural and spatial argumentation. Video projects are time consuming and they involve writing, research, and editing, just as a traditional paper would. In many ways, a multimodal text is much more complex and involves much more work. As the findings of my research presented in Chapter 4 demonstrates, in most cases, students become more engaged with their writing and research when they see it coming together visually and audibly. In "Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments," Mary Hocks writes:

We need to recognize that these new media and the literacies they require are hybrid forms. Historical studies of writing technologies have demonstrated how all writing is hybrid—it is at once verbal, spatial, and visual. Acknowledging this hybridity means that the relationships among word and image, verbal texts and visual texts, ‘visual culture’ and ‘print culture’ are all dialogic relationships rather than binary opposites. (630-631)

The video documentary essay represents a hybrid form of writing in composition courses and the purpose of my research is to investigate ways in which this new genre can be effectively situated within the practice of teaching composition through examining how students responded to the task of creating these types of texts. In order to better understand the value of the video documentary essay, it is necessary to explore the rhetorical elements of composing in multiple modes. The concepts and theories of semiotics also lend insights into how hybrid compositions create meaning and communicate knowledge in our sensory-driven reality.

Semiotics and Meaning Making in a Sensory World

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols in the meaning-making process. Semiotics considers how communication and knowledge is conveyed through multiple modes with the understanding that we make meaning in our daily lives with more than just the application of language skills. The field is relatively new, but has come to have more significance in our present age of information and hypermedia.

Roland Barthes used semiotics to explicate how images convey meaning by analyzing the literal, connotative, denotative and symbolic messages of images in a Panzini ad in his influential work, “The Rhetoric of the Image,” published in 1977. More recently, Gunther Kress has used semiotics to theorize *Literacy in the New Media Age*. Kress argues

that the shift from the dominance of print to the dominance of the screen requires the application of semiotics to the concepts of literacy in the 21st century.

My personal example that helps me to understand semiotics is the stop sign. An average driver living in the Western world instantly recognizes a red octagon as the message to “STOP,” regardless of whether or not the word is written on the sign. However, if a hiker stumbles upon a stop sign propped up by rocks in the middle of the woods, far removed from any roads or vehicles (as I did a few summers ago), the message is distinctly different. Why is the sign there in this context? Who put it there and what were they trying to say? Stop and enjoy the scenery? Don’t venture any further down this steep ravine? Semiotics helps us understand these types of messages within the context of their surroundings (environment, society, public and private constructs etc.).

Although Kress outlines the variations in image versus print modes of representation, and the transitions from page to screen, he does not discuss aspects of video (print, image, moving image, and sound combined) as a multimodal form of communication. He focuses instead on how the dominance of the screen is pushing a focus on design, and how image in conjunction with writing is now dominant in our literate culture. Kress emphasizes the importance of recognizing the shift from print to screen dominance:

Writing will be subordinated to the logic of the screen, to the spatial logic of the image. Writing will inevitably become more image-like, and will be shaped by that logic. It then remains to understand what it will mean for writing to become image-like. (48)

Kress uses the metaphor of show and tell to describe the semiotic shift in writing and reading practices. He writes:

The current landscape of communication can be characterized by the metaphor of the move from *telling the world* to *showing the world*. The metaphor points to

a profound change in the act of reading, which can be characterized by the phrases ‘reading as interpreting’ and ‘reading as ordering.’ The metaphor and the two phrases allow us to explore the questions that reading poses—narrowly as ‘getting meaning from written text,’ and widely as ‘making sense of the world around me’—through a new lens. . . . New forms of reading, when texts *show the world* rather than *tell the world* have consequences for the relations between makers and remakers of meaning (writers and readers, image-makers and viewers). (Kress 140)

This metaphor skillfully illustrates how multimodal composition might inform the way we show, tell, write and read new texts in the “new media age.” Kress’ theories about semiotics and the shift of literacy are applicable to the hypotheses that video is a multimodal extension of the writing process and that video can be used to rethink how we compose essays and teach composition the 21st century. A discussion of semiotics leads to a discussion of how meaning is constructed in multiple modes and the role of multimodality in the changing concepts of literacy today.

Multimodality and Evolution of Literacy

Multimodality is the communication of knowledge, information, ideas etc. across multiple modes, for example through spoken or written language, image, sound, bodily gesture, or spatial relationships. In “Multimodality,” Gunther Kress explains that all messages are inherently multimodal, though often only one mode will dominate. For example, an invitation can be written in print, say in calligraphy. Though print is the dominating mode, the fact that the messenger chose a highly stylized, visually pleasing writing style conveys a message of formality and that the event is a special occasion. Kress uses the example of a water bottle. Yes, we read the label of the water bottle, but we also make decisions about the water based on the bottle it is in, the picture on the label, and

even its place on the shelf in the store or the store itself. Language can even be conveyed through touch, as is the case with Braille. According to Kress,

The interaction of different modes and of different possibilities of expression in multimodal texts and multimedia production poses questions not only at the level of text but also at the level of cognitive processing: new demands are made cognitively and no doubt affectively by the new technologies and by their textual forms. (159)

In *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Kress explains how the concepts of multimodality can have a profound effect on how we create knowledge: “Knowledge changes its shape when it is realized in the different modal material. Multimodality, and multimodal design, has therefore deep epistemological effects” (50). Further, Kress exemplifies the complex nature of “multimodal ensembles” to create meaning:

In multimodal ensembles, of writing and image, or of writing, speech, image, music and so on, the possibilities of supplementing messages with meaning multiply, and incorporate the demands and potentials of imagination of all the modes involved. (170)

Asking students to evaluate, analyze and compose in multiple modes enriches their learning experience and better prepares them to interpret and create knowledge and meaning in a multifaceted world of signs and symbols. Asking students to reflect on their experiences with making meaning in multiple modes, as I have done in my research, gives us a view into what is happening when students create arguments through new kinds of texts.

The participants of the WIDE Research Center Collective, in their 2005 publication for *Kairos* entitled, “Why Teach Digital Writing,” argue that:

Writing no longer means merely words on the printed page. Today, writing means selecting among and scripting multiple media, including photographs, charts, video, images, audio, diagrams, hyperlinks, and more. Students need

to understand how these media signify and how to layer and juxtapose media to create sophisticated messages. (WIDE)

The many ways of communicating information requires a more complex, multimodal approach to the teaching of writing. The members of WIDE conclude, “Writing isn’t just scripting text anymore. Writing requires carefully and critically analyzing and selecting among multiple media elements” (WIDE). One aspect of the research presented in this dissertation is a demonstration of how the student-participants responding to making such decisions and how they perceived the outcome of those decisions.

The capacity of new media to create knowledge and meaning through multiple modes is possible because no one mode of communication is privileged over another. Ellen Cushman highlights this fact in her 2011 publication for the journal *Pedagogy*, entitled, “New Media Scholarship and Teaching: Challenging the Hierarchy of Signs,” when she states:

New media compositions privilege all sign systems equally to the alphabet; thus, new media composition potentially can change the cultural practices of knowledge production and teaching in English studies. (66)

This suggests the possibilities for multimodal composition to change the very function of English studies in future generations. If multimodal composition has the capacity to change the function of English studies for future generations, empirical research studies, particularly those which focus on student experiences as this one does, will be critical in contributing to our knowledge of what changes need to take place for the greater good of our students.

In “A Methodology of Our Own,” Todd Taylor presents an important question when considering how new media might impact the compositions of students when he asks,

““What happens when students no longer compose exclusively or primarily through the written words?” The purpose of my study is to discover some possible answers to this question by comparing how students view traditional and multimodal texts. In this comparison, it will be possible to postulate ways in which multimodal composition can reshape the ways we teach writing using multiple modes of representation.

Because with the concepts of multimodality comes a change in how we view literacy, it is important to consider how multiliteracies will play a productive role in the future “lifeworlds” of our students and how we might best prepare them to be critical producers and consumers of knowledge in the coming decades (The New London Group).

Multiliteracies, Critical “Prosumers” and The “Design of Social Futures”

The ideal purpose of education is to create a literate, engaged citizenry capable of supporting and contributing to their community in various ways and participating in civic discourse and responsibilities. In their opening to “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies,” The New London Group declares:

If it were possible to define generally the mission of education, one could say that its fundamental purpose is to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life. (9)

Essentially, education prepares students to effectively participate in what The New London Group terms “lifeworlds,” a concept that encompasses most aspects of our public and private lives. They write:

In an economy of productive diversity, in civic spaces that value pluralism, and in the flourishing of interrelated, multilayered, complimentary yet increasingly divergent lifeworlds, workers, citizens, and community members are ideally creative and responsible makers of meaning. We are, indeed, designers of our social futures. (TNLG 36)

Becoming literate in the sense of being able to read and interpret meaning in various modes as well as successfully communicate meaning in various situations appropriately is vital to empowering people in all walks of life and in all areas of their lives as they become “designers of our social futures.”

Throughout the ages, ideas of what is considered “literate” have changed along with societies and civilizations and the technologies they use to communicate and share meaning. In “Students Who Teach Us,” Cynthia Selfe reminds us what all these changes mean for English composition programs:

New forms of literacy don’t simply accumulate. Rather, they have life spans. In different social contexts—different portions of the larger cultural ecology—they emerge, accumulate, and sometimes compete with pre-existing forms of literacy . . . and they also sometimes fade or disappear. We need to understand the effects that such contested landscapes have on students working in specific English composition programs. (49)

This is a new age of literacy, as argued by Selfe, Hawisher & Selfe, Kress, Lemke, and many others. No longer can the skill to read and write be considered the extent of literacy for fully capable and socially responsive citizens.

As Kress argues, since we have shifted from the dominance of print to the dominance of the screen, an emphasis on spatial relations is more prevalent now than ever before. Lev Manovich also emphasizes the dominance of the screen in today’s culture when he states:

Today, coupled with the computer, the screen is rapidly becoming the main means of accessing any kind of information, be it still images, moving images, or text. We are already using it to read the daily newspaper; to watch movies; to communicate with co-workers, relatives, and friends; and, most important, to work. We may debate whether our society is a society of spectacle or stimulation, but, undoubtedly, it is a society of the screen. (Manovich 94)

Given how much time most individuals spend in front of screens, whether they are computer screens, television screens or the screens of smart phones, this shift to a “society of the screen” indicates the need for students to be skilled in composing on the screen with the various modes that are available.

Just within the past five years, the dominance of the screen has shifted again to include the vast communications of mobile technologies as noted by Justin Hodgson in his article for *Enculturation*, entitled, “ ‘Small Screen’ Culture, Pedagogy and YouTube.” He writes, “As such, for us to understand what these ‘new’ skills and abilities might entail, and/or how we might teach them, we need a better sense of the implications of this ‘small screen’ shift” (Hodgson 2010). This “small screen” shift will be important to consider when dealing with the possibilities presented by media convergence and what Henry Jenkins terms “participatory culture,” as will be discussed in a later section.

The group of scholars that comprise DigiRhet.org also recognize how the shift to the screen impacts and changes writers, the way they compose, and the texts they produce. In a chapter from the 2006 publication, *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, entitled, “Teaching Digital Rhetoric: Community, Critical Engagement, and Application,” these scholars write:

For many modes and spaces . . . writers create documents and craft texts that draw upon multiple media elements and that require them to attend to the possibilities and limitations of the spaces in which they publish and distribute their work. Writers quickly find that writing for and reading on screens, for instance, is very different than writing for and reading on paper. And screens certainly vary — the screen of a cell phone is different from the screen of a PDA; the screen of a typical desktop computer monitor is different from the screen of an information kiosk. (DigiRhet 239)

Certainly, the dominance of the screen will continue to have an impact on how we compose and the types of texts we will interact with on a daily basis. As such, composition programs of the 21st century should be designed to teach students how to effectively compose on the screen and utilize the communication avenues that this shift to digital production entails. Because meaning can so easily be communicated in so many ways (text, tone, bodily gestures, spatial relationship, musical sounds etc.), to be literate, we must know how to interpret communications in these multiple modes. The New London Group has termed this evolution in literacy “multiliteracies.”

J. L. Lemke uses the term “Metamedia Literacy” to convey the same principles of multiliteracies in “Metamedia Literacy: Transforming Meanings and Media.” Lemke states, “Literacies are legion” (71). They are wide and grow with changes in society, technological advancements, and changes in commerce and workplaces.

It is only natural that our ideas about literacy change as our society changes so rapidly. This means concepts of literacy fade away, evolve, or change completely. Like Kress and Selfe, Lemke argues that reading and writing are no longer the only skills needed to be considered literate and that students need to be well-versed in multimedia authorship, critical analysis of multimedia, cyberspace exploration and navigation skills, and be able to interpret, analyze and *produce* in multiple media. Lemke specifically notes that multimodal texts will play a significant role in the composition processes of multiliteracies:

Multimedia authoring skills and multimedia critical analysis correspond closely to traditional skills of text writing and critical reading, but we need to understand how narrowly restrictive our literacy education traditions have been in the past in order to see how much more students will need in the future than we are now giving them. (77)

According to Lemke, “metamedia literacy” involves “multimedia authorship,” “critical analysis of multimedia texts,” “cyberspace exploration strategies” and “navigation skills.” He argues that these multiple dimensions of literacy will now be the skill set required for literate individuals in our information age. Ultimately, Lemke argues that students should become critical producers and consumers rather than just consumers of knowledge and information. One purpose of this dissertation is to shed insight into how students make this transition from producers to consumers and explore the range of emotions that they go through in the process. Getting a view of the scope of the experiences of my study’s participants will enable me to offer suggestions as to how we can facilitate a shift from the consumer mindset to the producer mindset in our classrooms.

Daniel Anderson echoes Lemke’s sentiments in “Prosumer Approaches to New Media Composition: Consumption and Production in Continuum,” and his work has been a pivotal inspiration for my own teaching practices and research interests. Anderson successfully presents how in the production of multimedia texts, students become more conscious, critical consumers of such texts. Anderson’s multimedia, multimodal conglomeration that inspired me early in my graduate career is an innovative academic publication, indicative of the non-traditional discourse propelled by the online, scholarly journal *Kairos*, a journal dedicated to technology, pedagogy, and composition studies.

Using multimedia applications on a Mac, Anderson produced a pedagogical piece that integrates fixed and scrolling text, interactive links, digital video, music and still frames. It is a busy, thought-provoking text in design alone, but Anderson goes further by demonstrating his success in allowing students to analyze, produce and edit digital videos as part of the composition process. He successfully argues that in production of multimedia

texts, students become more conscious, critical consumers of such texts. Like Anderson, I have found that students do become more conscious as consumers of media when they are given the opportunity to become producers themselves. By analyzing how students responded to their experience as producers, I am able to add support to Anderson's claims through the research of this dissertation.

Anderson's 2003 production is a demonstration of multimedia scholarship, the very kind that Bolter calls for in *Eloquent Images* (2003) and that Cheryl Ball argues for in, "Show Not Tell: The Value of New Media Scholarship" (2004). If students are acquiring new skills as well as becoming critical consumers of media through the production of multimedia texts, then perhaps the difficulties of incorporating these types of projects into the curriculum of first-year composition courses will be worth the effort. Although there are plenty of difficulties associated with the teaching of multimedia essays, Selfe and Takayoshi encourage teachers that:

Grounded in the knowledge that comes from authoring multimodal compositions themselves, students can constructively respond to audio and visual compositions, developing critical perspectives that will serve them well as citizens who respond to any texts. (3)

When I ask my students to become authors of multimodal texts, specifically the producers of argument-based video documentaries, I am asking them to critically analyze the rhetorical dimensions of multimedia. As a result, they are able to focus on the power of media to both influence and persuade. They are able to become active, critical *producers and consumers* of media, rather than continue to be acted upon by the powers of media as passive observers/readers/viewers. The purpose of my research is to explore how students react as they make this transition from passive to active consumption and

production. If the leading scholars in the field can adapt to a new genre of academic writing, then it is worthwhile to investigate how students adapt to creating these new types of texts. It is also important to consider how multimodal composition may play a role in the teaching of rhetoric, a primary aim in most first-year composition courses today.

The interpretation and analysis of multimedia is enhanced when students become critical producers rather than passive consumers of these texts as Lemke and Anderson argue. If this is the case, the research of this dissertation will help provide insight into how students view the skills of multimodal literacy when they are asked to compose arguments in video format. As I have presented here, scholars agree that the change in literacy requires new pedagogies that can accommodate the literate practices of our 21st century students.

As I have previously emphasized, The New London Group argues that “a pedagogy of multiliteracies” is necessary for the “design of social futures.” They write:

[W]e argue that literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies . . . It may well be that we have to rethink what we are teaching, and, in particular, what new learning needs literacy pedagogy might now address. (TNLG 9-10)

The underlying message of The New London Group’s pursuit of the “pedagogy of multiliteracies” is the fact that as educators, we have the social and moral responsibility of equipping our students to actively participate in designing the future to be a place that is perhaps better than the world we live in today. And the means to accomplish this will be educating citizens to be critical producers and consumers, to *empower* them with critical multiliteracies. One function of the research of this dissertation is to ascertain how the students themselves perceive the value of both traditional and multimodal composition,

and through understanding their positions as composers we may get a more comprehensive view of *if* and *how* they are empowered by the production of academic texts new and old, traditional and multimodal. Such insights can enhance our knowledge of what we can do to empower students through multiple modes of communication.

Most teachers would agree that they want to empower their students. So, how might we empower students to be what Daniel Anderson has cleverly termed, critical “prosumers” of new media texts? Understanding how students view these texts and asking them to analyze the role and function of multimodal composition may allow students to think more critically both about their own consumption and production of these texts. I hope to explore this possibility further in my analysis of participant responses to multimodal composition in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. As presented in this section, a persistent theme throughout the literature relevant to my research is the fact that new literacies require new pedagogies that will equip students with the tools they need to succeed.

The Power of Prosumers

The concept of empowering students to be critical “prosumers” is the driving inspiration behind my research study. By examining how students respond to multimodal assignments, the positive and negative experiences they encounter when composing on the screen, and the way they view the professional and academic value of these texts, I intend to provide a snapshot view of how students become prosumers of multimodal texts and the possible advantages and disadvantages that are presented when students are asked to compose in new ways.

When students are aware of their roles as prosumers of new kinds of texts, they may become empowered communicators and interpreters of meaning in all areas of their lives. Scholars of computers and composition and new media agree that we are at a critical turning point where the ability to produce powerful texts that can reach a wide audience has never been easier. Perhaps we are moving away from the age of consumption and into the age of prosumption, as the following excerpts suggest.

As Jay Bolter notes in *Writing Spaces*, we have entered an age in which the general public has access to authorship as never before in times past. He writes:

In the late age of print, however, we seem more impressed by the impermanence and changeability of text, and digital technology seems to reduce the distance between author and reader by turning the reader into an author herself. (Bolter 4)

The phenomenon of blogging culture is evidence of the mass public's access to a potentially vast audience right at the tip of their fingers. Composition teachers should explore these digital venues further and teach students how to responsibly and effectively convey their arguments across a multitude of platforms and through multiple modes. James Gee agrees when in, "New People in New Worlds: Networks, New Capitalism and Schools," he asserts that "Students have a right to be allowed to produce and transform knowledge, not just consume it" (Gee 68). Like Gee, Anne Wysocki believes that students have a right to become critical producers of new media texts.

In the opening to *Writing New Media*, Wysocki argues, "... people in our classes ought to be **producing** texts using a wide and alertly chosen range of materials—if they are to see their selves as positioned, as building positions in what they produce" (20). But Wysocki also writes of the challenges she has faced as a proponent of new media texts in

the teaching of writing. In “Seriously Visible,” Wysocki recounts the story of a colleague at CCCCs asking her if we are just asking students to produce Levi’s 501 advertisements when we ask them to compose new media texts, to which her response is as follows:

If we want our students to value active engagement with texts and each other, we cannot expect that our texts will do that in and of themselves. If we find our students making Levi’s 501 ads when we ask them to make multimedia, it is not the technologies of multimedia determining the outcome, but rather, in no small part, what we have taught them about the potential complexities and contexts of texts that incorporate multiple media. If we want there to be more complex texts in the world and more complex and active readers and citizens, then let’s work with people in our classes to make such texts and to develop together the abilities and concerns to help us be the latter. (Wysocki 57)

Here Wysocki reminds us of our responsibility to teach students to not only be producers of new media texts, but active, engaged, and critical prosumers of these texts. Analysis of an array of different types of texts has no doubt become commonplace in many classrooms across age groups and disciplines. Today it is not uncommon for students to analyze films, photos, songs and even YouTube memes in a typical composition classroom. But as Wysocki suggests in her opening of *Writing New Media*, the analysis is important but not enough:

The analysis of new media texts is important, necessarily for it is in analysis that we see the produced positions of others. But the production—crafting—of new media texts is equally important, too, for it is how we produce and can see our own possible positions within the broad and materially different communication channels where we all now move and work with others. (22)

Similarly, in “New Media Scholarship and Teaching: Challenging the Hierarchy of Signs,” Ellen Cushman argues that the production of new media texts can create a catalyst for a higher order of thinking, the type of critical thinking that we aim to elicit from our students throughout their college experience. She writes:

When we ask our students to produce and teach them how to produce these new media compositions, they begin to engage in precisely the kinds of intellectual activities that textuality demands. (Cushman 76)

As the findings of my study presented in Chapter 4 suggest, students report an enhanced sense of engagement with their topics and an improved understanding of the way media works and the rhetorical dimensions of multimodal texts after producing their own multimedia texts. What better way to teach students the ways meaning is crafted in a screen-dominated society than by asking them to compose in the many ways available to them rather than restricting them to print-based texts?

Perhaps in creating multimodal assignments in composition classrooms, we can allow our students to experience a more nuanced sense of what media does, what makes new media texts effective or ineffective, and how they can compose their own arguments successfully in the age of digital media. But in creating these assignments, there is much to consider in how to best allow students to critically produce and interpret new media texts, as Cynthia Selfe notes in *Multimodal Resources*:

Effective composing assignments, we believe, involve students in reflection about not only the processes, but the products of composing. Finally, and perhaps most important, effective assignments count on the fact that each student contributes ideas and approaches, interests and perspectives, skills and understandings that change composing tasks and personalize composition. (29)

In line with Selfe's advice to teachers assigning multimodal assignments in composition courses, I have created this research study as a means of investigating student reflections on the process and products created when they were asked to compose an argumentative video documentary in their basic composition course. I hope the findings presented in Chapter 4 will provide some insight into how students react to these types of assignments

and will also offer some understanding of both the rewards and obstacles that students may encounter as they become prosumers of multimodal texts.

By presenting research on how students react to these assignments and how they perceive the role of multimodal and traditional composition in their academic and professional lives, I hope to contribute to the conversation of how new media assignments, particularly in the form of video documentary essays, may encourage students to become active prosumers of a variety of texts, and perhaps this evolution of their literacy skills will help prepare them to be more effective and engaged citizens in all aspects of their lifeworlds.

Preparing Students for “Lifeworlds”

In “Design for Social Futures” and “Changing the Roles of Schools,” Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope state that literacy is a form of symbolic capital. This means if we are not teaching the appropriate literacy skills, we are denying students an important chance to succeed. They also note that education is a social process and should not only teach students how to perform certain skills, but should also prepare them to communicate and participate successfully in their working, community, public, and private lives. The concepts of multiliteracies will allow them to do this.

In “Multiliteracies and Language: Orders of Discourse and Intertextuality,” Norman Fairclough states that there are two key shifts in our society today 1) cultural hybridity and 2) multimodality. Multiliteracies will prepare students to work in a global society where cultures are mixing and multiple modes of communication knowledge and information are necessary. James Paul Gee furthers this idea in “New People in New Worlds: Networks, the New Capitalism and Schools.” Gee explains that future workers will have to be

collaborators, possibly interacting with a number of people in a number of places all over the world in a single day. They will have to share knowledge and know when to specialize their expertise. No longer is the majority of the working class standing in automated lines pressing a button on an assembly line day after day. We have machines for that now. Now the average worker must have a new skill set that has much to do with multiliteracies.

Asking students to produce multimodal texts as an extension of the composing process gives them the opportunity to develop the multiple literacy skills that are required in the new working world, and also may encourage them to redefine traditional texts so that they are relevant to present times. According to Gee, we have entered into the age of “fast capitalism.” In this environment, no longer will the assembly line approach/metaphor be appropriate in education. In the 21st century, people are seen as portfolios, composites of skill. They will need experience working in teams, sharing expertise knowledge and information, redesigning and repurposing information as necessary, and adapting to new environments appropriately. Multiliteracies will prepare them for this. Gee argues that:

The new capitalism seeks to leverage knowledge in a fast-changing world without having to explicate everything—in fast times knowledge is often out of date by the time it is explicated. It seeks, too, to train workers who can produce in collaborative practice, not just in isolated theory. And, finally, it seeks to empower workers while still ensuring that they ‘buy into’ the core goal, values, and understandings of the business—without being coerced to do so, which is bad for empowerment. (Gee 52-53)

According to Gee, it will be more useful for college graduates to be able to work in a diverse environment, adapt to the needs and demands of that environment, seek out relevant information, determine the best available means for communication and delivery of information, and share it with others rather than for them to be able to simply follow instructions or create documents in a standardized format. The video documentary

assignment that is the basis for the research of this dissertation represents how composition assignments can be scaffolded to build upon the various skills that Gee argues are necessary in our “Post Ford” world.

As we have entered a new age of capitalism, in order to prepare students to work in an environment where knowledge becomes outdated nearly as soon as it is produced, they must be encouraged to collaborate with others, seek out new information, and produce and process knowledge in the classroom, just as they will have to in the workplace. Multimodal composition skills allow students the opportunity to develop problem-solving skills, and work and collaborate with others in ways that emphasizes and maximizes the strengths of individuals within the context of working towards a common goal. Further, the practical skills acquired in the production of new media texts also prove to be beneficial for 21st century students, as noted by Carmen Luke in “Cyber-Schooling and Technological Change: Multiliteracies for New Times.” Luke declares that because we are living in an “information revolution,” we must prepare students for the best and most judicious use of multiple resources. He describes the need for “critical literacy” in which students acquire a “metaknowledge” of information and symbol systems, understanding how they work in socio/cultural contexts; a mastery of technological and information skills, and an understanding of the power relations across systems. Luke notes that:

The ability to import, download, drop and drag text and imagery from an inexhaustible global library of information creates new skills, processes and multimodal forms of ‘textual’ production that encourage interdisciplinarity, creativity and imagination, collaborative authorship, editing, reading and writing, and problem-based learning. (87)

Equipping students with the skills advocated by Gee and Luke will prepare them for their working lives. The importance of imparting these skill sets to our students is obvious as

Bolter argues in, “Critical Theory and The Challenge of New Media.” Simply put, “If business and technical communication is increasingly electronic, then one must teach students to use the new digital tools available for writing” (Bolter 25). As the scholars of computers and composition remind us, teaching writing seems to have been extended to teaching computer and information literacy skills as well, and the importance goes beyond the need for students to be capable of using a computer to enter data or type memos at work. In *Multiliteracies For A Digital Age*, Stuart Selber argues that computer literacy does in fact fall within the realms of teaching writing and communication when he states:

Computer literacy is certainly a worthwhile project for teachers of writing and communication. Not only are teachers obligated to prepare students responsibly for a digital age in which the most rewarding jobs require multiple literacies, but students will be citizens and parents as well as employees, and in these roles they will also need to think in expanded ways about computer use. Teachers obviously have the potential to help enact productive change if they think about computer literacy in the right ways. (4)

In line with this thinking, the members of WIDE state:

Teaching software is technical training that may meet immediate needs, but it does not expand students' intellectual capacity. Thus our instruction teaches composing with technologies as an integrated process and as a liberal art—that is, we see our task as helping students acquire the intellectual and critical capacities they need to critique and choose among available options and to acquire new knowledge for themselves as tools develop and evolve. (WIDE)

Teaching digital literacy requires a critical pedagogical approach that expands our “students’ intellectual capacity.” The research of this dissertation will contribute to this critical pedagogical approach to multiliteracies.

The National Council of Teachers of English establishes our role of teaching technology and digital literacy in their 2008 Executive Committee statement that declares

what teachers should be preparing readers and writers of the 21st century to do. According to NCTE, we should be facilitating students to:

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes
- Manage, analyze and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments (NCTE Executive Committee 2008)

Clearly computer literacy, information literacy and multiliteracies now fall within the jurisdiction of teaching composition, though the entire field is faced with many challenges as we learn how to best incorporate the teaching of this vast array of skills into our relatively short composition courses. But as Lester Faigley argues in “The Challenge of the Multimedia Essay,” it is crucial that we face these challenges if we are to adequately prepare students for the world we live in today. He reminds us that:

Employers, administrators, and even accrediting agencies want more technology-intensive courses, not to mention the growing percentage of students who believe that their ability to communicate using new media will be critical to their futures . . . The ability to compose multimedia documents gives students an awareness of the advantages of text over other media. (Faigley 179)

As Faigley notes here, students increasingly see the value of producing new media texts in their professional and personal lives, regardless of whether they interpret these skills as particularly useful in their academic lives or not. We must ask ourselves what we are preparing our students to do in first-year composition courses. Is it our intention to instruct them to read and write solely for academic purposes or communicate effectively across the board? As the scholars of DigiRhet.org bring to light, it is not enough to simply

teach students digital rhetoric, but it is important to also convey a sense of how these skills are applicable in their lives beyond the classroom. They write:

Even if students manage to find the most supportive, nurturing learning communities imaginable and even if students are well versed in critical, analytical approaches to digital writing and rhetoric, all the effort put toward helping students learn digital rhetoric is wasted if those same students aren't also able to see the relevance of digital rhetoric to their own lives once they leave their digital rhetoric classroom. (DigitRhet 247)

Here the members of DigitRhet.org emphasize the importance of considering how digital rhetoric and digital literacy skills will extend beyond students' lives in the academic world. Students should develop an understanding of how multiliteracies will be useful to them in their working, public and private lives. In my study, I have asked students to convey how the value digital literacy skills academically and professionally and this information will provide insight into how we can maintain a lasting sense of relevance and purpose for the teaching of multimodal composition.

In "Writing by Any Other Name," Kathleen Yancey presents what features an appropriate 21st writing assignment should have:

It is a real task (has meaning beyond the classroom)
 It has a real audience (in addition to the teacher)
 It's located in a real genre (not a school-only genre)
 It allows for discussion about the topic at hand. (29)

Video documentary essays fulfill the above requirements and give students an opportunity to compose for a "real audience" and produce texts "in a real genre." One valuable aspect of this case study is that it provides a glimpse of how several students view both multimodal and traditional composition as professional and academic skills; as a result, I am able to offer some suggestions as to how teachers of composition might best utilize video

production to prepare students for communication in the various aspects of their academic and professional careers.

The scholars presented in this section argue for the professional and social aspects of pedagogies of multiliteracies. As previously noted, in *Electric Rhetoric* Kathleen Welch warns that the humanities must catch up with these ideas or risk being left behind and considered insignificant or obsolete. Since the functions of literacy are transforming, the scholars presented here argue that we must prepare both our students and the academy for further acclimation into a new age of composition studies in which the focus becomes increasingly tied to the multiple modes of literacy in our digital age.

Education is a social process in which students should be prepared for their work, community, and public lives. Research is needed in order to examine how multimedia texts fit into the structures of academic writing and whether allowing students to compose in multiple modes through written, visual and aural arguments could be an effective way of addressing the needs of the changing function of literacy today that includes multiple dimensions for creating and interpreting meaning in our lives. Likewise, research is needed to determine how multimodal composition may inform the teaching of writing and how students might transform their traditional academic texts to reflect the literacy demands of the 21st century. The research presented in this dissertation is intended to contribute to our understanding of how students compare, value and integrate traditional and multimodal composition in first-year writing programs, and in so doing, I hope to make a small contribution toward filling a current gap in research that presently exists.

Today many students are already composing in multiple modes and engaging in what Henry Jenkins terms “convergence culture,” whether we are asking them to in the

classroom or not, and whether they are thinking critically about these processes or not. The exciting potential of participatory and convergence culture cannot be ignored when we contemplate how students are developing and using new types of literacies both inside the classroom and out.

Convergence Culture and Social Change

In the 2008 special edition of *Computers and Composition* devoted to issues of media convergence, Jonathan Alexander opens the discussion by explaining how students are mixing and matching media and creating their own content across multiple platforms. He notes that media convergence is the convergence of media across these various modes (film, television, computers, hand-held gadgets) and that it is also the convergence of media across platforms of education, high and low culture, popular culture, and consumer industries.

In the introduction to *Convergence Culture*, entitled, “Worship at the Alter of Convergence: A New Paradigm for Understanding Media Change,” Henry Jenkins states that media convergence is simply the flow of media content across mediums. For example, I can capture a movie clip off of YouTube, right-click and save pictures from Google Image, type up some quotes from my favorite author, take some of my own video footage, and combine all of this on the movie-making software that comes free on my laptop, presumably with the intention of making my own message, then upload the video to Facebook, a social networking site, where my friends can watch it from their smart phones: “Welcome to convergence culture, where old and new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways” (Jenkins 2).

Jenkins highlights the social, political and economical impact that the culture of media convergence is having and will continue to have on the world in nearly all areas of existence. For the first time in history, consumers have the power to create and share the media that has been previously restricted to an elite group of media moguls and industry experts. He writes:

Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers . . . consumers are fighting for the right to participate more fully in their culture. (Jenkins 18)

This sense of “fighting for the right to participate” alludes to the possibilities that new media technologies offer our students (and the citizens of the world at large) to become more active, engaged citizens in all areas of their lives.

In 2006, *Time* magazine nominated “You” the “Person of the Year.” What better testament to the power of media convergence in the hands of the people than this tribute? More recently, in 2011, *Time* declared “The Protester” as “Person of the Year.” The protests seen worldwide in 2011 were largely fueled by new media outlets, particularly through social networks and the widespread self-reporting efforts of the protesters themselves as they took the responsibility of journalism into their own hands, quite literally, by wielding thousands of smart phones and recording the news as it happened, reporting it to the millions watching, supporting, and speculating what will happen next.

Without question, the age of media convergence has given a new sense of power to the people to participate in the culture of media, and as Jenkins again emphasizes, “Audiences, empowered by these new technologies, occupying a space at the intersection between old and new media, are demanding the right to participate within the culture”

(24). Perhaps the potential for new media outlets to effect positive social change in our communities, schools, and global society as a whole should be considered the most significant driving force behind integrating multimodal composition into 21st century composition programs. In fact, empowering students to become agents of social change could possibly be one of our greatest responsibilities as both rhetors and compositionists within the realms of higher education.

Early in my graduate career, Ellen Cushman's "The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change" inspired me. Cushman argues that teachers of composition not only have the responsibility to teach writing, but that they also have the opportunity to create positive changes in their community through the avenues of their discipline. Similarly, The New London Group argues that allowing students to become literate in multiple modes will empower them to become "active participants in social change," and Daniel Anderson illustrates how students can become critical producers rather than passive consumers of new media in "Prosumer Approaches to New Media Composition." It is important to equip students with the multimodal skills that will empower them to become active participants in the convergence culture that Jenkins writes about in order to prepare them to communicate effectively in today's digital landscape. As Jenkins notes in the closing chapter of *Convergence Culture*:

The advent of new production tools and distribution channels have lowered barriers of entry into the marketplace of ideas. These shifts place resources for activism and social commentary into the hands of everyday citizens, resources which were once the exclusive domain of the candidates, the parties, and the mass media. (293)

Multimodal composition seems to be vital to critical teaching practices in the 21st century composition classroom. Empowering students to take part in the critical production of

media is a responsible step forward in first-year composition programs. Design-centered pedagogies will help set the stage for preparing students to be critical consumers and producers of a variety of texts and allow them to become active participants in the media rich landscape of today's world.

Design-Centered Pedagogies

The concept of design can refer to how we construct society, create our own realities, and access and use the available resources to communicate knowledge and understanding. It can also refer to practical skills in communicating a message. According to Kress, "Design does not ask, 'what was done before, how, for whom, with what? Design asks, 'what is needed now, in this one situation, with this configuration of purposes, aims, audience, *and with these resources*, and given *my* interests in this situation?'" (LNMA 49). In line with this interpretation of design, Diana George states, "To talk of literacy instruction in terms of *design* means to ask writers to draw on available knowledge and, at the same time, transform that knowledge/those forms as we redesign" (26). Design is an essential aspect of literacy in the 21st century and, according to The New London Group, there are six components (grammars) of design that allow meaning to be conveyed: linguistic, audio, visual, spatial, gestural, and multimodal design (a combination of the previous five).

Kress furthers the definition of design in "Design and Transformation: New Theories of Meaning." He states that design is the ability to assess and access all the available resources and determine the best method to communicate our interests and intentions across multiple modes. Richard Buchanan, in "Rhetoric, Humanism, and Design," notes that the design process is innately rhetorical in that designers must make rhetorical decisions when they choose their methods to convey meaning. In "Seeing the Text," Stephen

Bernhardt demonstrates how design is the process of making decisions about the visual representation of communication, such as what typeface or font to use in a document, or the design of a page's layout. Though definitions and applications of design vary, computers and composition scholars agree that it is an important aspect of becoming literate in the Information Age.

From the perspective of design-centered theorists, allowing students to become designers of multimodal texts gives them the power to use new media to voice their opinions, state their arguments, and become involved in a discussion. No longer must they sit back on the couch and mindlessly consume the media of the masses. They are given the skills to produce their own media and enhance their critical thinking skills in the process, and:

This approach to pedagogy asks teachers not only to incorporate new kinds of texts into our classrooms but new kinds of multimodal compositional processes that asks students to envision and create something that perhaps does not yet exist. (Hocks 645)

The video documentary essay can be considered a new type of text that has not previously existed in the curriculum of first-year composition and my research addresses how students feel about the challenges and benefits of creating these new types of texts.

Continuing the discussion on a shift to design-centered pedagogies, Diana George notes that there is a need for more inquiry into the role of new media texts in the field of composition. She writes, "our students have a much richer imagination for what we might accomplish with the visual than our journals have yet to address" (12). In line with the theories of Gunther Kress and The New London Group, George argues that "[t]o talk of literacy instruction in terms of *design* means to ask writers to draw on available knowledge

and, at the same time, transform that knowledge/those forms we redesign” (26). This inclusion of the visual in texts is becoming increasingly important, as we have shifted from a culture of print dominance to a design-centered culture of the screen. Because writing is changing, the teaching of writing must also change. Danielle Nicole DeVoss and Cynthia Selfe write:

English-composition teachers and programs must be willing to address an increasingly broad range of literacies . . . if they want their instruction to remain relevant to students’ changing communication needs and experiences within the contemporary cultural ecology. (169)

The video documentary essay may address the changing tides in composition studies, but more inquiry into the structure and function of this new genre is required. If we are to incorporate design-centered pedagogies into our composition classrooms, it will be important to continue to emphasize visual rhetoric as an important aspect of teaching first-year composition.

Visual Rhetoric and Multimodal Composition

Visual rhetoric takes into account how the visual persuades and influences people’s ideas, thoughts, beliefs, feelings and emotions. In “The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments,” Anthony Blair notes that visual images are innately persuasive, comparing them to the traditional rhetorical concept of enthymeme where information is deliberately left out of the argument so that the audience can participate in their own persuasion. He also notes that images can be shown in rapid succession and this delivery method makes them effective persuaders. Similarly, Charles Hill notes that images are persuasive because they vividly communicate information and leave a lasting impression on the viewer (“The Psychology of Rhetorical Images”). He notes that seeing a picture of one starving child is

more effective as persuasion than just reading a statistic about thousands of starving children because the image conveys a more vivid sense of pathos to the viewer.

As previously mentioned, in “The Challenge of the Multimedia Essay,” Faigley argues that despite the inherent challenges of assigning multimedia projects in composition courses, “student work will be increasingly in multimedia forms,” and “[i]f composition studies is to become an important player among liberal arts disciplines, it will have to take leadership in this larger project” (179). Yet Faigley’s concern is that “[t]he rhetorical dimension of putting images together with text is being lost in the interface” (181). More recently, the scholars of DigiRhet.org express a similar concern that students are not receiving the training necessary to understand the rhetorical complexity of digital texts and this is creating a new kind of digital divide. They write:

Although the digital divide has been spoken of as an issue of material access to technology, we see the divide expanding to include problems specific to digital literacies and rhetorical abilities. We see a divide where students may download complex, multimodal documents but lack the training to understand how to construct similar documents. We see a digital divide where the rhetorics of digital documents become increasingly layered in new technologies and are engaged by one-way reception rather than through true interactivity and collaborative meaning making. (DigitRhet 236)

In line with this thinking, it is important to consider how students perceive the persuasive power of visual media and then apply their understanding of visual rhetoric to their own visually persuasive texts. In Chapter 4, I will present findings of how students in my study conveyed their understanding of visual rhetoric and the power of the visual to persuade when they reflected on the outcomes of their multimodal texts.

In “The Rhetorical Work of Multimedia Production Practices,” Jennifer Sheppard argues that producing multimedia is “more than just a skill.” Designers must make careful,

rhetorical decisions about context, audience, delivery and purpose when composing in multiple modes. In “Reading the Visual in College Writing Courses,” Charles Hill recognizes that while we must get students’ writing up to par, we might be their only exposure to the concepts of rhetoric, and as such, we must give them the opportunity to both analyze and produce visual texts of their own.

Hill explains the psychological effects images have when they are used rhetorically as arguments of persuasion. According to Hill, the vivid nature of images gives them their rhetorical power:

The relationship between the creation of mental images through reading text and the process of developing or revising one’s beliefs and attitudes based on these mental images has been studied by psychologists as the concept of *vividness*. In psychological studies, *vivid information* is identified as information that is emotionally interesting and concrete . . . *Vivid information* takes the form of concrete and imagistic language, personal narratives, pictures, or first-hand experience. (31)

The most vivid information is actual experience, but the next best thing to personal experience is “moving images with sound” (Hill 30). The innately persuasive function of images supports the use of multimodal texts to teach the rhetorical strategies that are critical in first-year composition courses. Hill argues that the rhetorical use of images presents worthwhile cognitive challenges:

Images, like verbal text, can be used to prompt an immediate, visceral response, to develop cognitive (though largely unconscious) connections over a sustained period of time, or to prompt conscious analytical thought. (37)

Challenging students to analyze and also produce multimodal texts allows instructors “to prompt conscious analytical thought.” Hill puts our responsibility as instructors into perspective: “Rhetorical images are ubiquitous, powerful, and important. We need to

embrace them, not only as scholars, but also as educators, and teach students to use them effectively and responsibly” (38). The embrace of rhetorical images is central to the use of video as student text. My analysis of student reflections in Chapter 4 will provide insight into how the student participants in my study comprehended the use of visual rhetoric in the process of composing their video documentary essays.

Anthony Blair further supports the rhetorical power of the image in “The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments.” He writes:

The advantage of visual arguments over print or spoken arguments lies in their evocative power. Part of this power is due to the enormously high numbers of images that can be conveyed in a short time. (51)

Videos demonstrate this “evocative power” through the students’ careful selection and presentation of multiple images. Likewise, students are challenged to make their visual argument effective by considering their audience, and carefully choosing material appropriate to their argument. Blair states:

To be effective, the visual properties of a visual argument must resonate with the audience on the occasion and in the circumstances. The visual system must register immediately, whether consciously or not. The arguer must know and relate not only to the beliefs and attitudes of the intended audience, but also to the visual imagery that is meaningful to it. (52)

Students must consider how to most effectively present their argument visually, audibly, verbally, and through text when working with multimedia. Blair reveals the value of such arguments:

Because pictures, and especially films, both fictional and documentary, are wonderfully suited to telling believable stories, they provide an excellent medium for visual argument by means of narrative construction. What the visual element adds to film or video, over, say, a novel or short story, or over documentary prose alone, is that with film or video, we don’t just imagine the narrative, we “see” it unfolding before our eyes. Seeing is believing, even if what

we are watching is invented, exaggerated, half-truths or lies. (56)

Based on Blair's assumptions, by composing such visual texts, students become more critical consumers of the mass media that they encounter in their daily lives. By taking action in the creation of multimedia texts, they are no longer merely acted upon by the arguments that are presented to them through media. Often images can be more powerful persuaders than text or data alone. It is worthwhile to examine if and how students deliberately use this rhetorical power of images in their multimedia compositions. If students recognize the rhetorical use of images in this way, their understanding of rhetoric may even improve, and as a result, they may become stronger writers and adapt aspects of visual rhetoric into remediated academic essays. Enhancing their understanding of visual rhetoric also allows students to effectively take part in the participatory culture Jenkins writes about.

Stephen A. Bernhardt also makes the case that it is beneficial for students to recognize the visual power of their texts in "Seeing the Text." Bernhardt argues that presenting ideas visually enhances writing and improves the skills of the writer:

Writing, especially when visually informative, encourages the writer to be exact about grouping related ideas, delineating beginnings and endings, and using cues to signal to the reader a graphic representation of cognitive organization. (67)

This view of visual information as a compliment to textual information provides the theoretical basis for seeing the production of multimodal texts as a compliment or supplement to the writing process. Organizational strategies are as important to visual texts as they are to traditional print-based texts. Bernhardt continues:

We can assume that visually informative texts achieve rhetorical organization,

just as do texts which are relatively non-informative visually. Both types must provide direction to the reader as to how the text is to be read: what transaction is intended, what the major divisions are, what is considered important, and what relations exist amongst the various subpoints. (67)

Bernhardt argues that presenting ideas visually actually enhances writing and improves the skills of the writer. Like Hill and Blair, he provides a theoretical basis for the use of student videos to teach aspects of rhetoric and argues that the visual may inform students in developing critical rhetorical practices.

Applying traditional concepts of rhetoric to the composition of new media texts is yet another dimension of integrating a pedagogy of multiliteracies into composition studies. If we are to conclude that the audiences of visual texts are readers of those texts, as Hill, Blair and Bernhardt indicate, then it is appropriate to consider those who produce such texts as composers, even writers of visual texts. The video documentary essay can help students develop their understanding of rhetoric in both traditional and nontraditional, academic and professional texts. Multimodal composition can be used to teach rhetorical strategies to students and enhance their understanding and use of rhetoric in their own texts.

Video as Text in Composition Studies

In “The Problem of Electronic Argument: A Humanist’s Perspective,” Michele Shauff argues that new media should be open to language of rhetoric and that students should be allowed to produce their own multimedia arguments. Lawrence Lessig reports that the “Just Think” project, a mobile digital video lab, allows students to create their own videos resulting in doing, thinking and learning. Meeks and Ilyasova report how Cynthia Selfe, Daniel Anderson, Don Payne, Lee Honeycutt, and Allison Crocket successfully use video production with their students. Hocks and Comstock write about the use of video

production in their advanced composition courses to teach the value of voice and the rhetorical power of sound. Bump Halbritter argues for the inherent rhetorical value of music in integrated multimedia productions. The work of these scholars supports the use of student-produced documentary assignments in the composition classroom.

The video documentary essay is an emerging genre in composition studies, and there is an ongoing discussion about the need for new genres of writing to be considered, as Lynn Bloom points out in "The Great Paradigm Shift." She writes, "Radical changes are occurring and the ways we think about genre . . . We will continue to rethink and revise what it means to write and to teach writing in and beyond the classroom" (Bloom 41). In line with Bloom, Hocks states that, ". . . new technologies simply require new definitions of what we consider writing" (630). If we are to "rethink and revise" what constitutes writing, video productions may be considered a viable form academic writing in 21st century composition studies.

Because of the rapidly changing communication practices available through digital technologies, new genres of composing have emerged and are being embraced by the writing public, though academia has yet to fully integrate these new genres into the curriculum, as Kathleen Yancey stresses in, "Made Not Only In Words: Composition In A New Key." She writes:

Never before has the proliferation of writings outside the academy so counterpointed the compositions inside. Never before have the technologies of writing contributed so quickly to the creation of new genres.
(Yancey 298)

Most would agree that it is problematic when students are not prepared for the types of compositions and genres that will be useful to them outside of the academic realm. As the

analysis in Chapter 4 will show, participants of my study did view multimodal composition as a professional skill but still viewed traditional composition as the dominating mode of communication in the academic setting because they believed that their professors only valued traditional academic essays as valid texts.

In her 2011 book entitled, *Toward a Composition Made Whole*, Jody Shipka argues that introducing students to new genres is not a new concept and that the changes in the way we communicate have brought into question what skills we should equip students with:

While debates over whether students gain much of anything from exploring different discourse forms and genres is not, technically speaking, new, technological changes—that is, the rate at which the communicative landscape is changing—have fueled discussions about what twenty-first-century students of discourse should know and be able to do. (5)

The ability to create complex multimodal texts in the form of documentary videos is a viable move toward preparing students for what they “should know and be able to do.” Ultimately, Shipka argues that providing students with the “frameworks” necessary to compose multimodal texts will equip them to be effective communicators and will give them the intellectual and interpersonal skills they will need in their academic, professional and personal lives. Her passion for creating this environment for her students is clear. She writes:

I firmly believe that students who are encouraged to make informed, rhetorically based uses of sounds, video, still images, animation, textures, scents and so on are well positioned to better understand and respond to the ways written language works with and against the affordances associated with other representational systems . . . frameworks that provide students with the opportunity to move between—while reflecting upon—the affordances and constraints associated with different representational systems and ways of knowing may better prepare students for the variety of intellectual and interpersonal tasks and activities that they will likely

encounter in other classes, in extracurricular spaces, as well as in their future professions. (Shipka 107)

Shipka's passions and beliefs resonate with my own in that I see the potential of multimodal composition to prepare students with a variety of skills they will need in many of their future endeavors. My passion for the possibilities for multimodal composition to enrich the lives of my students is what has led me to the subject of this dissertation and has prompted me to contribute an empirical research study to the discussion of what students experience when they are asked to compose different kinds of texts.

In "The Challenge of the Multimedia Essay," Lester Faigley reminds us that the video documentary essay as a new genre will not eradicate the traditional academic essay, but instead, this new form of writing will better prepare students to participate in public discourse. He asserts that our notion of what is considered an "essay" should not be restricted by the traditional concepts of writing within the academy. He writes:

The point is not that we have to abandon teaching the traditional essay in writing classes. I am confident that essays will continue to be written long into the future just as short stories are today, even though their readership has vanished. However, we do not have to restrict our definition of the essay to what we have come to know as a school form . . . We have no justification aside from disciplinary baggage to restrict our conception of rhetoric to words alone. More important, this expansion is necessary if we are to make good on our claims of preparing students to engage in public discourse.

(Faigley 187)

In this passage, Faigley inadvertently brings to light the underlying debate that many compositionists face when they attempt to incorporate new types of texts into the curriculum of first-year writing programs. If we have little time to teach the many components of composing traditional academic essays in a sixteen-week semester, then

how are we supposed to fit in video documentary essays as well? As Fagley argues, the traditional essay is not going anywhere at this point, but we can no longer limit our ideas about what writing is and “restrict our conception of rhetoric to words alone.”

Peter Fadde and Patricia Sullivan also touch on the importance of keeping a focus on writing when incorporating video into composition classes in their chapter from *Technological Ecologies and Sustainability*, entitled, “Toward Sustainable Processes for Incorporating Video into Multimedia Composition.” They argue:

If teachers are going to edit their current pedagogies to include video-based (or video- enriched) multimedia composition, they need to have confidence that they can keep the focus on the writing dimensions of the multimedia project. There are many permutations in ideating, locating, evaluating, and integrating multimedia—all of which are amplified when dealing with video.
(Fadde & Sullivan 5)

Asking students to reflect on their composing process and write about their experiences creating argumentative videos may be a solution to maintaining a focus on writing. Videos can motivate students, provide a catalyst for critical thinking, and present them with an opportunity to write about their experiences.

Based on my review of recent literature in the field of computers and composition, only in recent years has video production been gaining traction as an emerging genre in the teaching of composition, and the video documentary essay as a form of academic writing has yet to be fully embraced in more traditional writing programs. In *Electric Rhetoric*, Kathleen Welch writes:

Video remains untheorized across the curriculum, across the academy, and across North America . . . Both video and its cousin the computer are now hegemonic. Rhetoric is now electric. Writing is now electric. Nevertheless, video exists in the academy as another kind of madwoman in the attic. (4-6)

Though Welch's argument here, published in 1999, may seem somewhat outdated, there is still a need for video production to be theorized and for the genre of the video documentary essay to be substantiated within the context of first-year writing programs. Asking students to create video documentaries just for the sake of making videos is problematic as well, as has been established by Anne Wysocki, Cynthia Selfe, Lester Faigley and others.

As Ellen Cushman points out in "New Media Scholarship and Teaching: Challenging the Hierarchy of Signs," creating effective video assignments has the potential to impact students in a more significant way by allowing them to participate in "intellectual activities" which help them understand how meaning is made through the use of composition and rhetoric and media. She writes:

[T]he intellectual activities centered on a "production of meaning" might include film and digital video production *and* composition and rhetoric — any discipline of English studies that, in other words, explores and reveals how individuals use multiple media to teach and create meaning.

(Cushman 64)

The video documentary essay as a new genre in composition studies can be used to enhance the teaching of both writing and rhetoric, and when critical teaching practices are used in the creation of video assignments, students may reap the benefits of being critical producers of media—meaning makers and interpreters in the age of convergence culture.

Fadde and Sullivan come to similar conclusions. They write:

We see video-inclusive multimedia compositions poised to further bring writing into these emerging public forums—social computing that builds community by making and sharing videos. Video publishing on social networking sites, including YouTube, provides students with models of and a target audience for socially engaged multimedia compositions.

(Fadde & Sullivan 4)

Here Fadde and Sullivan stress the importance of the social connections that are made possible by the ease of video production and distribution via social networking platforms. Similarly, in *Writing in the 21st Century*, Kathleen Yancey also emphasizes the significance of an enhanced sense of audience awareness that naturally comes with multimodal assignments like the video documentary essay when she states, “The concept of audience is influential in all these assignments, not only in shaping the assignment, but also in motivating students” (29). As Yancey, Anderson and Faigley stress, these types of assignments can be powerful motivators for our students. The research of this dissertation also provides insight into levels of student motivation and engagement when they are asked to produce videos as academic texts.

The emergence of the video documentary essay as a new academic genre within first-year composition studies opens student compositions to a wider audience, gives students an enhanced sense of purpose, and allows them to become participants in the “emerging public forums” only recently made possible by digital technologies. In a recent 2012 publication in the journal *Pedagogy* entitled, “The H1N1 Virus and Video Production: New Media Composing in First-Year Composition,” Michael Pennell asserts, “While the digital turn in writing looks different on each campus and in each classroom, digital video production may prove to be a turn that more writing instructors make” (570).

In “A Review of Digital Video Production in Post-Secondary English Classrooms at Three Universities,” published in *Kairos*, fall 2003, Melissa Meeks and Alex Illyasova interview three professors who are using digital video production in their classrooms; they examine the production of digital video as academic text and illustrate the pedagogical implications of this practice by highlighting the need to explore new avenues of literacy.

Meeks and Illyasova showcase the work of these teachers, demonstrating how they validate production of digital video as academic text. In this article, Cynthia Selfe's use of iMovie and VideoWave in her undergraduate Adolescent Literature class is examined. Selfe uses these applications to "give students a basic introduction to composing in the literacy of movies," and "the goal is to get students playing, thinking, and communicating in different modes." This idea of play, critical thinking and composing in different modes is an exciting prospect. Ultimately, Meeks and Illyasova come to the following conclusions:

Digital video production is a powerful way to engage many literacies at once.
 Digital video production stimulates collaboration and participation.
 Digital video production involves students in a rich composition process.
 Digital video production puts students in a variety of social spaces.
 Digital video production takes a village.
 The relationship between digital video and academic discourse is problematic.
 Knowing rhetoric may not license us to create and critique anything and everything.
 Teaching digital video production means learning as you teach.
 (Meeks and Illyasova)

The process of "learning as you teach" is integral to the design of my research study as I have implemented teacher research as a means of learning more about how students respond to the challenges of multimodal texts and come to some conclusions about best practices when we assign videos in first-year composition courses.

As Meeks and Illyosava state, "The relationship between digital video and academic discourse is problematic." There is a concern that student-produced videos do not qualify as the serious academic work of traditional print-based essays. But academic rigor is not all that is at stake in the production of these new kinds of texts. There is also an element of critical pedagogy, or teaching to enact social change, that can be fostered by introducing new media into composition courses as the scholarship presented in this literature review

exemplifies. Allowing students to plan, produce, and publish video documentary essays gives them the opportunity to explore topics within their learning communities, critically analyze current issues, and utilize the skills learned in their coursework. The video documentary essay gives students the skills needed to be participants in convergence culture, to make their arguments visible, to share their ideas with the world, to be *heard* and *seen* as well as *read*.

Can the production of a video be considered composing similar to the writing process? When students create video documentary essays, are they composing arguments in ways that are similar to traditional papers? Is a video's argument the equivalent of an argument in a research paper? Is a video more or less effective, or in some ways both? These are relevant questions when considering the integration of video documentary essays as a new genre in the curriculum of first-year composition, and these are the questions that have driven the inquiry of my research project as can be seen in the findings presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

I hope to use my research to gain insight into how video documentary essays compare and differ from traditional print essays from the perspective of student composers. Based on the literature presented in this chapter, it can be asserted that students who engage in the multimodal composition process of creating video essays can build on the rhetorical strategies of writing while enhancing valuable design, production, and editing skills required of multimedia texts. These skills prepare students to be active producers of media so that they are able to participate in the media saturated landscape of convergence culture. As Elizabeth Clark argues in "The Digital Imperative: Making the Case for a 21st Century Pedagogy," "... the current focus of multimodal composition is to help

students build on traditional writing skills and translate them into skills in composing digital media” (32).

The literature presented in this review indicates that video documentary essays could be as valuable as traditional academic essays because they allow students to apply their developing writing skills to the digital technologies that are now readily available. According to the scholars presented in this chapter, allowing students to produce their own multimedia texts helps them make the shift from print literacy to digital literacy, and thereby encourages them to become critical producers and consumers of the digital media that is ubiquitous in our public and private lives. As Cynthia Selfe reminds us in *Multimodal Composition*:

In short, whether instructors teach written composition solely or multimodal composition, their job remains essentially the same: to teach students effective, rhetorically based strategies for taking advantage of *all available means* of communicating effectively and productively, to multiple audiences, for different purposes, and using a range of genres. (9)

Video production is a tool that provides students with the “available means of communicating effectively,” and as such, the video documentary essay is a useful new genre in the teaching of composition. Further research will be needed in order to best facilitate the incorporation of video as academic text in the composition curriculum. Fadde and Sullivan argue that:

[A] sustained rather than a merely fashionable use of video in multimedia composition teaching and practice requires that video be used within our accepted pedagogies and curricula. Composition teachers must see the value, the appropriateness, the context, and the feasibility of incorporating video in composition. (4)

Through the work of this dissertation, it is my aim to provide some insight into the “value,

the appropriateness, the context, and the feasibility of incorporating video in composition” that Fadde and Sullivan call for here.

In the previous sections I have presented the literature within the field of computers and composition that supports the integration of multimodal composition into first-year writing programs. In the following section, I will present some of the more recent research that specifically addresses the use of video in the teaching of composition.

Video as Pedagogy in the Teaching of Composition

In reviewing recent scholarship that addresses the use of video in the teaching of composition, I have identified several research studies published from 2005-2011 that relate to the use of video in the teaching of composition. Following, I will provide a brief overview of some of these research projects and comment on how these studies compare to the research presented in this dissertation.

Michael Pennell’s essay, “The H1N1 Virus and Video Production: New Media Composing in First-Year Composition,” published in the journal *Pedagogy* in 2010, describes his experience assigning a video Public Service Announcement assignment in his first-year writing course. This project was in response to a competition held by the university in which students were invited to create PSAs addressing the health issues of the virus and ways to prevent its spread.

Pennell mentions that the videos produced in his class did not place in the university’s competition; however, he highlights some of the social and rhetorical possibilities that such an assignment provides. According to Pennell:

Illustrating the process of creating such video compositions allows an examination of the potential for multimedia projects in writing courses, especially projects that respond to a public call or exigence. This project

pushes students not only technologically but also rhetorically. (568)

As I have found in my own research, Pennell sees the value of video assignments to create a sense of social agency in first-year composition courses. However, he also recognizes the concern students face when they are asked to create these types of texts. He writes:

Initially many of my students expressed concern when asked to compose a video PSA for their first-year writing course. This concern related to the production of such a project — many of them indicated a lack of technical expertise or appropriate equipment. (Pennell 570)

Because his students lacked the “technical expertise or appropriate equipment,” they understandably had anxiety about the project. In my own research, I have more fully addressed these types of concerns by surveying students at the onset of their video projects and analyzing the specific comments students made in anticipation of completing such a task. Ultimately, Pennell concludes:

Looking vertically, beyond first-year composition, we might see that the infrastructure of new media composing includes a curricular layer. This layer asks us to address when and where students experience new media composing in our curriculum as well as how that composing fits into the larger learning outcomes on campus. And in this investigation, we might see a digital turn that is both technological and rhetorical. (Pennell 572-573)

Part of the work of this dissertation is an attempt to “address when and where students experience new media composing in our curriculum” and shed light on the concerns that students have about their experience composing videos for a writing course. Because I assign video documentary essays in my classes, I can shed insight into *where* students are encountering new media assignments and also depict *how* students may react to these assignments and *what* value they place on these texts and the skills necessary to create them. In so doing, I hope to contribute to the pedagogy of best practices for the use of video

documentary essays in first-year composition.

In addition to the concerns students have about producing videos, they also express frustration throughout the composing process, which Bump Halbritter discusses in his recent 2011 *Kairos* publication entitled, “Big Questions, Small Works, Lots of Layers: Documenting Video Production and the Teaching of Academic Research and Writing.”

Like Michael Pennell, Bump Halbritter relates his experiences assigning video projects in an undergraduate course; however, rather than a first-year writing course, Halbritter’s article describes a documentary project assigned in his WRA 417 course entitled Multimedia Writing. In “Big Questions, Small Works, Lots of Layers,” Halbritter includes the documentary videos of two of his students alongside articles that each student wrote in response to their experience with the project. Halbritter concludes with his own reflections on the responses of these two students and their video projects. Two prevailing themes emerge from Halbritter’s work that mirror the themes of my own research: 1) Students encounter significant frustration/failure when creating videos and 2) Video projects give students the opportunity for social agency by allowing them to discuss and solve problems that are important to them. The theme of frustration is of particular importance to my own work in that I designed my study to specifically address what frustrations students encountered throughout the duration of their video projects.

In each of the articles written by Halbritter’s students, a sense of the struggle of composing videos is conveyed. In his conclusion, Halbritter remarks:

I feel bad each time I read these stories of struggle. Both . . . talk openly about frustration and failure. They both took on projects that they cared a great deal about and rode those projects directly into moments of despair; ones that made them wonder why they had even bothered. Ones that challenged them to dig deep--to ask not only how to keep going, but why. I don't want my students to have to feel the sting of struggle, yet I know they must.

Adversity is the food of accomplishment.

As indicated here, Halbritter has empathy for his students knowing that they inevitably encounter difficulties, particularly when they are faced with producing multimedia texts for the first time. Also, he acknowledges that his students care deeply about their projects and this fact only enhances their sense of failure and frustration when they are unable to create the project that they had initially envisioned in their proposals. Like Halbritter, I too feel empathy for my students as I see them struggle with their video projects, yet as he states, "Adversity is the food of accomplishment," making multimodal composition worth the effort for both teachers and students alike. Halbritter concludes:

Making movies . . . is hard. There are layers and layers of technical and rhetorical concerns to address. Students who take on these kinds of projects--especially for the first time--find themselves mired in not only the problems of inquiry-based writing, but in figurative and literal tangles of audio-visual equipment and software. There is just so much to learn.

Because there is so much to learn, it is important for teacher researchers to identify some of the specific challenges students face, their concerns before beginning such a project, and their struggles throughout the composing process, regardless of whether these problems have to do with access, technology or timing. I hope to provide some insight into these frustrations and concerns and offer some suggestions of how to support students in the process of composing video documentary essays through the research of this dissertation.

Halbritter echoes my own sentiments about the power of video to give students an opportunity to explore and solve problems that are important to them, and in effect, give them a platform for making their arguments heard by a larger audience. He notes:

Consequently, my goal for their work was a bit different from their goals. My operational goal was to get my students to use multimedia authoring as a means for addressing/solving problems that matter to them. More than teaching these students how to use specific media--hardware and software applications that are seemingly moribund the day they are released--my approach attempts to target the need for technological applications rather than the applications themselves.

As seen here, Halbritter finds that teaching multimodal composition prepares students to become participants in a media rich culture that promotes social activism through digital technologies. In the findings presented in Chapter 4, I will explore how the student participants of my study perceived video projects as a tool for social change. An enhanced sense of audience awareness is critical to this theme, and is explored in the *Kairos* article by Beth Powell, Kara Poe Alexander and Sonya Borton entitled, published in the *Praxis Wiki* in 2010.

The research presented in “Interaction of Author, Audience, and Purpose in Multimodal Texts: Students’ Discovery of Their Role as Composer,” explores student motivation for creating multimodal texts. The authors of the study state:

In our research study reported in this essay, nine out of fifteen students (60%) commented on their high levels of motivation for the multimodal project. Part of the reason for this enthusiasm is that students find multimodal composing relevant for both academia and the workplace.

Similarly, I explore student motivation for creating multimodal texts and analyze how students view multimodal composition as both a professional and academic skill in the findings presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

The method of inquiry for this study is very similar to the design of my own research project. The authors “collected and analyzed both print and multimodal essays, interviews, and questionnaires from twenty-four students enrolled in first-year

composition classes at two different universities” (Powell et. al.). They state that the purpose of the study is to address “some issues we see in students’ multimodal projects, with the hope that teachers will be better prepared when faced with similar issues” (Powell et. al.). The research presented in this article aims to add to the discussion of best practices for teachers integrating multimodal assignments into first-year writing programs, and these intentions mirror my own project in that regard.

According to the authors, students were motivated by the prospect of “creating a project different from the typical essay,” and they enjoyed the creative expression that such a project affords;” students also “found that multimodal composing was relevant for future jobs.” The analysis and discussion of my findings in Chapter 4 reveal similar outcomes, but with some key differences in that in my research student frustrations were explored more thoroughly and the way they compared traditional writing with multimodal composition was emphasized. The authors of this study find that:

Overall, the responses to composing in multiple modes were positive, and several students actually mentioned that they shared their multimodal projects with people beyond the classroom, including parents, friends, and former teachers. (Powell et. al).

Students’ enhanced sense of audience and purpose for multimodal composition is made evident in the research presented in this article, and is further supported in my own research.

Ultimately, Powell et. al. conclude:

Our examination shows that students, without any prompting from the teachers, demonstrated an understanding of how purpose and audience in their projects needed to change depending on the medium, modes, and genre they used. However, in spite of student choice to shift the rhetorical situation, some students were more successful than others at making this move. Our study also finds that students draw on familiar genre conventions when

making a shift from print-based to multimodal essay—sometimes successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully.

The authors of this study found that students drew from their knowledge of traditional genres when they composed their multimodal essays, and this illustrates remediation taking place when students transition from traditional to multimodal texts. The research presented in “Interaction of Author, Audience, and Purpose in Multimodal Texts,” is the most similar to my own project of any of the published research I have encountered to date. The authors’ have the same intent and purposes of adding to the conversation of best practices and contributing to a pedagogy of multiliteracies that is pervasive throughout my own research. As the analysis and discussion of Chapter 4 will illustrate, the research of this dissertation corroborates and supports the findings of this study and adds to the dialogue presented by Powell et. al. This particular research study proves to be a valuable resource that compliments my own research in that the authors examine what happens when students become authors of multimodal texts and they point to the benefits of an enhanced sense of audience and purpose when students compose multimodal essays. My own research supports these findings but also adds to the discussion in that I more thoroughly examine some the negative experiences students have when they are given these types of assignments as well the positive experiences, and I more thoroughly explore how students value and compare traditional and multimodal composition skills.

Though “remix” often takes the form of parody, it can have an impact on political opinions and “have a substantial influence on how candidates and issues are viewed” (Dubisar & Palmeri 77). Abby M. Dubisar and Jason Palmeri’s 2010 article, “Palin/Pathos/Peter Griffin: Political Video Remix and Composition Pedagogy,” published

in *Computers and Composition*, reports the findings of a case study they conducted in order to “analyze students’ composing of political video remixes.” The purpose of the study was to examine the rhetorical work of students who compose remix videos, and “the kinds of rhetorical choices” that students make when composing such texts. They also wanted to know what “students report learning from the process of composing and distributing remixes” (77).

When students take place in this type of rhetorical discourse they are able to take part in “an important form of citizen action” and perhaps become more engaged with the political process and the participatory culture of democratic societies (78). This study mirrors my own in that the participants were first-year students enrolled in a writing course with a focus on rhetoric but with an extra emphasis on politics and new media. Dubisar and Palmeri gathered data primarily from interviews and the analysis of student texts, also similar to the design of my own case study, and their intentions were to value student voices as the heading of their methodology section suggests. Similar to my own conclusions that will be discussed, the research indicates the complexity of creating these types of texts and that multimodal composition requires careful rhetorical decisions and elicits an enhanced sense of audience and purpose. My research differs in that I focus more on the specific difficulties students encounter in the multimodal process and the genre of video documentary essay explored in my work differs from the genre of remix in form and often in function. Both genres can be informative and persuasive; however, remix is usually infused with a more satirical tone whereas video documentaries may or may not use humor to this end. It is interesting to note that remix is another genre of video essay worthy of further inquiry and exploration and that there are many video essay genres

emerging as pedagogies of multimodal composition continue to evolve.

The emergent themes of the three case studies presented in my research reveal that multimodal texts are innately rhetorical, time consuming, provoke a sense of accomplishment in creating a new kind of text, and provide opportunity to reach a larger audience. The authors conclude that:

[W]e should recognize and value the role of political video remix in composition pedagogy . . . we should pair video remix activities with rhetorical analysis and reflective writing . . . we should craft flexible assignments and activities that account for the diverse activist and technological literacies student bring to class, taking care to avoid assumptions about what students already know . . . we should help students attend to the delivery and circulation of digital texts. (88)

This case study is similar to my own in approach and scope, and the authors come to some similar conclusions about the agency and engagement provided by multimodal assignments as well as the inherent issues and outcomes that occur when students are asked to compose new kinds of texts in their writing classes. The study is useful to my own work in that it validates my methods of inquiry and instruments, and corroborates some of my own findings. The authors conducted interviews and analyzed student texts, creating a mixed-methods approach. I also conducted interviews and did textual analysis; however, I added a third method, surveys, to my mixed methods study. This provided me with the opportunity to solicit anonymous responses from my participants and this sense of anonymity provided participants with a safe place to voice their opinions, particularly for those who wanted to express more negative reactions to the project.

In this section I have presented some of the most recent published research on the use of video as text in first-year writing courses. There are other studies that address the

use of video in the teaching of writing; however, many are focused on K-12 research and pedagogy. Other noteworthy studies include the following:

- "Multimodal Composition In A College ESL Class: New Tools, Traditional Norms." *Computers & Composition* 25.4 (2008): 376-395. By Dong-shin Shin and Tony Cimasko.
- "Talking Back to Teachers: Undergraduate Research in Multimodal Composition" By Ball, Cheryl E., et al. (in progress). In Debra Journet, Cheryl E. Ball, and Ryan Trauman (Eds.) *The New Work of Composing*. Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press. <http://tinyurl.com/TalkingBack-Ball>
- "Re-articulating the Mission and Work of Writing Programs with Digital Video, By Drew Kopp and Sharon McKenzie Stevens; *Kairos* 15.1 Fall 2010

The studies presented here are by no means exhaustive, but do represent the most current and relevant empirical research related to the work of this dissertation.

There have also been several recent dissertations on the use of multimodal composition and the teaching of writing, including the following:

- *Creating a Connected Classroom: Engaging Students with Multimodal Texts in the Community College Composition* By N. L. Aitken; Illinois State University (2009)
- *Crossing Over to the Multimodal Side: A Study of the Consensus Building Strategies Employed by Miami University in Support of a Multimodal First-Year Writing Curriculum* By Michele Ninacs; Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2009)
- *Examining the Influence of Multimodal New Media Texts and Technologies On First-Year Writing Pedagogies: A Cross Sectional Case Study* By Daniel Lee Bizzaro; Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2010)
- *Multimodal Media Production in the Development of Multiliteracies* By Nat Kofi-Charu; University of California, Berkley (2008)
- *How Students use Multimodal Composition to Write about Communities* By Mandy Beth Smith; The Ohio State University (2008)

- *Bringing Ecocomposition to a Multimodal Composition Course: Critical Literacy and Place at Work in English 250* By Londie Theresa Martin; Iowa State University (2008)
- *Multimodal and Print Composition: An Examination of Instructors and Students Transferring Rhetorical Knowledge in First-Year Composition* By Sonya Compton Borton; University of Louisville (2008)
- *Multimodality is...: A Survey Investigating how Graduate Teaching Assistants and Instructors Teach Multimodal Assignments in First-Year Composition Courses* By Claire Lutkewitte; Ball State University (2010)
- *Mobility and the Digital Page* By James Alan Haendiges; Washington State University (2010)
- *Between Abolition and Reform: First-Year Writing Programs, e-Literacies, and Institutional Change* By Melissa Graham Meeks; The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2006)
- *Embracing Lives through the Video Lens: An Exploration of Literacy Teaching and Learning with Digital Video Technology in an Urban Secondary English Classroom* By Suzanne Borowicz; State University of New York at Buffalo (2005)
- *From Page to Screen: Multimodal Learning in a High School English Class* By Evelyn M. Connolly; Hofstra University (2008)
- *Reel Literacies: Digital Video Production as a Literacy Practice* By Brian Baile; University of Rochester (2009)
- *Multimodality and Composition Studies, 1960--Present* By Jason Palmeri; The Ohio State University (2007)
- *From Real to Reel: Performances of Influential Literacies in the Creative Collaborative Processes and Products of Digital Video Composition* By Deborah Kozdras; University of South Florida (2010)
- *Examining the Influence of Multimodal New Media Texts and Technologies on First-Year Writing Programs* by Daniel Ruefman; Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2010)

As the titles of these dissertations suggest, inquiry into multimodal composition, specifically the use of video, in the teaching of writing, is gaining traction among educators as a practical move forward in the development of sustainable pedagogies for the 21st

century. Several of the dissertations listed above have served as models and points of intersection for my own work as I have navigated the research and analysis process over the past several years. This body of research has helped inform and shape my own study and provides a clear venue for the discussion of my research, findings and analysis, all aimed at contributing to the conversation for developing and integrating a pedagogy of multiliteracies.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an extensive review of scholarship within the field of computers and composition that addresses aspects of multimodal composition relevant to the use of video as text in first-year composition programs. This literature situates the position of my research within the ongoing discussion of new media in the field of computers and composition and demonstrates how this study can offer a contribution to the dialogue of best practices as the field continues to shape pedagogy for the teaching of rhetoric, writing, communication and critical literacies in the coming decades.

The work presented in this chapter illustrates a need for English studies to be reinvented in order to maintain relevancy and address the communication and literacy needs of students living in a world dominated by mass media and digital technology. The scholarship here also establishes the need to reestablish the definition of literacy and literate practices at this time as we consider how students process, assimilate and create meaning in multiple modes and across multiple platforms.

The remediation of traditional academic texts will be inevitable as we redefine writing and the types of texts that are useful in the context of our students' academic and professional lives. Design-centered pedagogies, focused on hybrid compositions that

integrate visual, aural, print as well as spatial relationships into the process of production, will best prepare students for interactions in their public and private lives and equip them to be engaged citizens in the participatory culture of media convergence.

As this body of work suggests, preparing students to be active producers of media can empower them to become designers of social futures, encourage them to solve problems that are important to them, and provide them with an audience and sense of engagement beyond the scope of traditional academic texts. Finally, the research studies reviewed in the final segment of this chapter demonstrate the current tone and scope of recent empirical studies aimed at establishing best practices for the integration of multimodal composition into first-year writing programs. In the following chapter, I will present the methods and methodologies I have implemented for this mixed methods case study, and provide an overview of the study's scope and design.

CHAPTER 3: TEACHER RESEARCH THROUGH MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter I will present my basis for using a contextualist paradigm and a pragmatic approach for this study and will explicate why I chose to do teacher research. I will also describe methods used to collect data for the study and the strategies employed for data analysis. I begin with a discussion of the research rationale, demonstrating how my study may contribute to the scholarship of computers and composition. Next, I will establish why I chose concurrent mixed methods case study approach for my research. I will then present the details of the methods implemented in the research, including surveys, interviews, and textual analysis of reflection essays that students wrote in response to multimodal composition. By presenting the design of the study's methods and methodology, I hope to show how my research lends some insight into the challenges and benefits presented to students in the process of multimodal composition and how students compare multimodal compositions to traditional texts in first-year composition courses.

A Contextualist Paradigm and Pragmatist Worldview

The field of composition and rhetoric is open to a wide array of methods, theories and worldviews. There is no need to be pigeonholed into one mindset, method, or reality. In "A Methodology of Our Own," Todd Taylor supports a pluralistic approach to research in our field:

Like a growing number of academic disciplines, we embrace a wide variety of methodologies in the purest sense of the term, meaning that researchers use a wide variety of strategies for gathering evidence and constructing their arguments. (143)

Though there is ample support for a variety of methodological approaches in the research of comp studies, there is still debate between proponents of qualitative and quantitative methods. In recent years, it has been well established that qualitative research is the preferred methodology in composition research (Johanek 2000, MacNealy 1999). This makes sense as the rich, descriptive details that can be gleaned from this type of research works well in the study of writing and writers. Often composition researchers are interested in giving voice to their research participants and allowing participants to become active makers of meaning in the research process. The case study has proven to be a useful mechanism for research conducted in composition studies because it has been designed to give the participants an opportunity to reveal the circumstances of their experiences and express the particulars of the given contexts of the research settings that they take part in.

In my research project, I have adopted the contextualist paradigm, which allows the researcher to consider the context of the study and its participants and determine the best variety of methods to collect data under the circumstances presented. Employing traditional research methods to collect quantitative data in combination with the qualitative characteristics of anecdotal evidence or narrative structure creates a diverse methodology for composition research, one which is neither strictly qualitative nor strictly quantitative but one that functions “as a multi-modal design that is simply necessary in the context of a particular research question “ (Johanek 7).

The design of this mixed methods study allows for both an objective look at student skills, attitudes, frustrations and outcomes, and also a more in-depth and descriptive analysis of the specific experiences of participants as revealed in reflection essays at the

close of the semester as well as further investigation into the specific experiences of three of the study's participants through the pre and post-interview process. According to

Johanek:

A Contextualist Research Paradigm allows us to see not only the process of our research, but also the products of that research differently. A new lens such as this will enable us to see more clearly the bridges that already exist in the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy. (114)

Collecting survey data in conjunction with conducting interviews and asking students to reflect on their composing process, allowed me to construct the bridge between quantitative and qualitative data, showing me, concurrently, how the statistical information collected from the surveys of the study told a similar story as the individual narratives obtained through the interviews and the personal reflections of a the participants of the study at large. I was able to look, for example, at a percentage of participants who expressed having anxiety about the project in its beginning stages, and then evaluate that number in relation to the percentage of students who reported that they would likely make another video in the future after completing the project. In addition to this information, from the interview process I was able to get a more thorough explanation of the attitudes and perceptions of three students based on their personal experiences and skill levels.

Because I am doing teacher research as a means of coming to conclusions about best practices for the implementation of multimodal composition into first-year writing programs, the use of a contextualist paradigm best serves my study's purpose for considering the circumstances (context) students are asked to produce new kinds of texts and the range of emotions, difficulties and positive outcomes that they have with such projects at each stage of the composing process. As a result, this project, through the mixed

methods approach, provides an adequate snapshot view of how students respond to multimodal composition, and how they see both traditional and multimodal composition as traditional and professional skills. The analysis of the data collected in this mixed method study allows me to make some suggestions about how multimodal composition can be successfully integrated into the curriculum of general education where first-year writing programs are an integral part of the academic experience of students.

A contextualist paradigm, when applied to research in composition, allows for more than personal story or anecdote to reveal subject matter, opening the doors to a more rigorous research study that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to depict a more thorough understanding of the research participants and the issues addressed by the research questions. Johaneck elaborates on the benefits of employing a contextualist paradigm in the research conducted by those in the field of composition and rhetoric, stating:

The Contextualist Theory of Epistemic Justification is grounded in the assertion that all justification of beliefs is a social act. In a social act, we always have 1) individuals with their own individual experiences and beliefs, 2) other people around the individual who may object to or accept the individual's belief, and 3) issue-related facts, data, demonstrations, and observations that will help refute or confirm both the individual's belief and the group's beliefs. Because justification is a social act, the contexts in which it occurs will vary and . . . some contexts naturally include numerical data or the need to understand probability. (105)

The need to include numerical data in order to enrich the findings of my research is supported by the context of the parameters of my research project. It is not oversimplifying to note that in order to come to conclusions about best classroom practices, it is important to conduct research in actual classroom settings, thereby obtaining data within

the context of the environments we desire to improve. Similarly, a pragmatic lens allows the researcher to seek practical answers that will inform the practice of teaching.

When adopting the lens of a contextualist paradigm, one must consider “The Social Audience, The Personal Researcher, and The Factual Evidence” presented in the context of the research study (Johanek 112). In the design of my research, I have considered my role as researcher, participant observer and teacher; I have considered my research questions and the type of knowledge I am seeking; I have evaluated the place where I have conducted the research, and considered who my participants are as well as my relationship to them, and I have also considered the positioning of my research in the field of computers and composition and contemplated what kind of contribution my research could make in the field.

The pragmatist worldview is typical of a mixed methods researcher. According to Creswell, Pragmatism:

[I]s not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This applies to mixed methods research in that inquirers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research.
(Creswell 10)

From the pragmatist perspective, I have tried to utilize the best methods in my research that will help me portray a picture of what students experience when they are asked to create new kinds of texts, specifically video documentary essays, in the context of first-year writing programs, and in so doing, provide readers with a practical analysis of those experiences and how we might better facilitate the process of multimodal composition in first-year writing programs. My intentions are to determine more efficient ways to integrate new media theories with multimodal composition practice in my own classroom,

and in so doing, contribute to the praxis of multimodal composition in the teaching of first-year composition

The pragmatist lens is particularly appealing to me in that it allows for a variety of methods as a means of finding practical answers or for deriving practical theories that can be applied to real-world settings. As Creswell states,:

[F]or the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis (11).

The pragmatist abandons the false dichotomies that are often the center of debates surrounding philosophies (postpositivism versus constructivism for example) and instead subscribes to a more practical approach to conducting research as a means of coming to rational conclusions about practice rather than coming to some theoretical concept of “truth” or “reality.” A pragmatist view also lends itself well to teacher research, which often is activist by its nature and driven by a desire to improve practice at the basic level within the classroom and enhance the educational experience of students in the process.

(Creswell 44)

My role as a teacher-researcher informed the decisions that I made about the questions I would ask my students in order to find some practical solutions to the issues they encountered while composing a multimodal text. Because I had been assigning multimodal texts for several years in my first-year composition class, I had witnessed firsthand that students have anxiety about the project and I was also well aware of the challenges and frustrations they faced. As a teacher, I wanted to better understand the circumstances students face and also gain a more nuanced sense of how students value both traditional and multimodal composition skills.

I set out to discover knowledge that would inform my own practice and contribute to the field of computers and composition by giving students a voice and allowing them to point out their anxieties, frustrations, sense of value and purpose, and overall impression of multimodal composition. In this sense, this project could be seen as having an activist influence in that I hope to empower students not only through the practice of multimodal composition but also through a more thorough understanding of the process of composing in multiple modes and how these modes may enhance the communication strategies of our students overall.

In order to provide a more objective view of student attitudes and perceptions, and distance myself as a participant observer, I administered surveys so that students could communicate their feelings openly and anonymously. Collecting data through anonymous surveys allowed participants to express their frustrations more freely in a way that was non-threatening and not based on a graded assignment or the teacher-student dynamic that is often difficult to supersede in the classroom setting and under the terms of my roles as teacher-researcher and participant observer. In considering all of these different circumstances surrounding my research, the purpose of the research, and my location and purpose as both teacher and researcher, the value of integrating both qualitative and quantitative strategies in my research design is evident.

Teacher Research

Perhaps the greatest strength of teacher research is the fact that its primary purpose is usually to enact meaningful change in the classroom practices of the teachers who conduct it. "In "Composition from the Teacher-Research Point-of-View," Ruth Ray writes, "The revolutionary nature of teacher research has to do with its emphasis on

change from the inside out—from the classroom to the administration, rather than the other way around, as is typical in most educational institutions” (173). This transformative nature of teacher research and the desire to strengthen my own pedagogy has been the driving force that led me to the subject and design of my research project.

As expressed by Ray, teacher-research is pivotal in linking theoretical assumptions with the pedagogical practices of teachers in the field. A particularly appealing aspect of teacher research is that it “challenges the conventional belief in the separation between researchers (those who make knowledge) and teachers (those who consume and disseminate it)” (Ray 174). Often in my graduate studies I have been frustrated by the sometimes difficult task of integrating theory with practice, and it is this need that has inspired me to conduct teacher-research as a means of enhancing my own pedagogical practices and working toward a more integrated praxis of multimodal composition.

Teacher research can be complicated on several levels, but it is worth the effort because usually the primary aim of teacher research is to improve our practice and thereby improve the lives of our students. It is, however, difficult to draw non-biased conclusions in research when the researcher becomes so involved with their participants as their teacher for the duration of the semester. One issue of teacher research lies in a propensity towards bias on behalf of the researcher. MacNealy writes:

Bias error can also result when the researcher is acquainted with the subjects (*subject/researcher relationship*). In this case, the researcher may interpret the results differently because he or she ‘understands’ the subjects, or the subjects may perform differently because they understand what the researcher is looking for. (68)

Because we become so well acquainted with our research participants, often teacher-researchers find it difficult to separate our subjective knowledge of our participants from the objective data collected in our research process.

It is difficult to draw a clear distinction between my role as researcher and my role as a teacher. I do not think I have to make the distinction clear in order to produce good research, but I do think it is beneficial that I have utilized some research methods that will help me take a more objective look at the work of my students, so that in researching their work, attitudes, skill levels and levels of learning, I'm not only relying on my observations and experiences as their teacher. I chose to do a mixed methods case study in order implement methods that would allow me to present some of my subjective views as a teacher-researcher, through my analysis of interviews for example, and also as a way of distancing myself as a biased researcher by using data collection methods such as anonymous surveys and textual analysis of student reflection essays.

Case Study Method of Inquiry

The narrative structure of the case study provides researchers with an opportunity to tell the story of their research participants, often through their own words, and the reflective nature of case study research often positions the role of the researcher as storyteller, one who weaves a descriptive scene as told by both the participants and the researcher herself. The stories of case studies are useful because they aptly convey the attitudes and perceptions of the both the researcher and the research participants, and they are valid and useful in the inquiry process.

The research of Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher has been particularly influential within the field of computers and composition. They have conducted numerous case studies in order to reflect the individual experiences of their students particularly in relation to literate practices in the age of digital technologies. Specifically, the article, “Becoming Literate in the Information Age: Cultural Ecologies and the Literacies of Technology,” has been influential in the case study design of my research. In this 2006 article, published in *CCC*, Hawisher and Selfe demonstrate the value of narrative information obtained in case studies. This particular case study reveals the literacy narratives of two women “who came to computers almost a generation apart” (Hawisher & Selfe 642). As Hawisher and Selfe demonstrate, the case study method is an effective means of gaining insight into the acquisition of multiliteracies experienced by our students in the twenty-first century. In reporting their research, the researchers present the literacy narratives of their co-authors, Melissa Pearson and Brittney Moraski, and in the process, they reveal two distinct stories of individuals from different age groups and backgrounds developing the literate practices that have come to be essential in the 21st century. Hawisher and Selfe successfully weave the narrative of these two women, providing in-depth background information and also allowing their story to be revealed from quotes taken directly from the interview. My study provided a good model for my own construction of the narratives of the three women I interviewed.

But case studies need not only rely on the narratives provided by participants and the researcher. Quantitative measures may also be used to depict the stories within our case study research, as can be seen in the analysis of survey methods in the collaboration between Daniel Anderson, Anthony Atkins, Cherly Ball, Krista Homiez Millar, Cynthia Selfe

and Richard Selfe in the study, "Integrating Multimodality Into Composition Curricula: Survey Methodology and Results From a CCCC Research Grant," published in *Composition Studies* in 2006. Anderson and his colleagues note:

Composition researchers have used survey methodologies to answer a range of questions, gathering information about a large population by questioning a smaller sample . . . surveys provide a means for teachers to learn what others are doing, thinking, or feeling about a particular subject. (60)

I elected to conduct a mixed methods case study in order to utilize survey methodology as a means of learning about student attitudes and perceptions of multimodal composition, the inquiry that is at the core of my research questions.

Finally, the mixed method form of inquiry employed by Abby Dubisar and Jason Palmeri in their study, "Palin/Pathos/Peter Griffin: Political Video Remix and Composition," which is discussed in the previous chapter, served as a good example of how two methods of data acquisition, interviews and textual analysis of student work, can be utilized to depict a picture of a particular research setting when the use of multimodal texts is in question. In this study, published in *Computers and Composition* in 2010, the researchers interviewed three students about their creation of video remixes in their first-year writing class that focused on "Political Rhetoric and New Media." They also did textual analysis of the videos that their students produced and added to the discussion of what students were doing when they composed these multimodal texts. Initially, I set out to do rhetorical analysis of videos in my research, similar to Dubisar and Palmeri, but after completing this process, I determined that I would rather focus on student attitudes and perceptions and felt that the comparison of the rhetorical features of the participants' traditional and multimodal texts would best be saved for another project. Nonetheless, the mixed methods

approach employed in Dubisar and Palmeri's study did inform how I analyzed and presented the findings of my own research in the following chapter of this dissertation.

A mixing of both qualitative and quantitative methods can be seen as a positive trend across the disciplines. The interdisciplinary nature of composition studies provides a varied backdrop for methodological approaches to our research, and these varied techniques may be adequately incorporated into the scope of a case study such as the one I have conducted for my research. Though to some degree, the case study has been validated as a preferred method in the past twenty years or so, as evidenced by the number of case studies published in current journals and books, and the prevalence of their use in dissertations across the discipline of composition and rhetoric, there is still some doubt cast on the rigor and reliability of the case study method due to the fact that most of the data and reporting of data is entirely subjective, often left to the interpretation and speculation of the researcher as participant observer. I decided to take a mixed methods approach to my research as an attempt to distance myself in some ways from the subjective nature of case study research, particularly in my circumstances in which not only was I the participant observer, but also the teacher of the participants in my research study. I realize the inherent conflicts that can arise from this dual position as both teacher and researcher, so I decided to add quantitative elements to my research design as a way of using numbers to tell part of the story too. I have developed this mixed methods case study in order to utilize components of the best methods available to me in the conducting of teacher research.

Rationale for Mixed Methods Case Study

Because my research questions have to do with pedagogy and the practices of integrating multimedia assignments into freshman composition courses, there is a mixture of both theory and practice at the heart of my research questions. As noted by Gesa Kirsch in “Ethics and the Future of Composition Research,”

[B]oundaries begin to blur among what constitutes theory, what constitutes methodology, and what constitutes practice . . . this new, scholarly orientation of seeing theory, research, and practice as mutually informing entities accounts for much of the innovative scholarship emerging in composition studies today. (133)

Because my research involves not only the theoretical implications of integrating multimedia into composition programs but also the practical applications of incorporating these types of assignments into the curriculum, a mixed methods approach was a logical approach to my research. Kirsch further supports the integration of mixed methods, stating, “What we need . . . is room for multiple research methods, for flexible paradigms and theories that can help researchers adapt to changing circumstances, changing audiences, and changing needs of participants and the research community” (Kirsch 135). No single method is best when dealing with the issues of teaching composition in the twenty-first century, which is why the multimodal aspect of mixed method research seemed like an appropriate avenue for the subject of my research.

Todd Taylor goes as far as to suggest that a blending of methodological approaches is essential as we continue to develop the field of composition and rhetoric in the twenty-first century. He writes: “These new imperatives—to value teaching, to embrace diversity, and to connect teaching and research—*favor* composition studies” (Taylor 146). Indeed, MacNealy acknowledges that most research in the field already contains elements of both

qualitative and quantitative data: “Although research projects can be categorized as mainly quantitative or qualitative, many projects use some data of each kind” (44).

According to Anthony Onwuegbuzie and R. Burke Johnson, leading proponents for the use of mixed methods research in educational research designs, mixed methods research is “A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come.” In their article of the same title, Onwuegbuzie and Johnson argue that:

[t]he goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both in single research studies and across studies. (15)

The quantification of qualitative data and vice versa actually enhances the quality of research in a mixed methods design.

I chose to take a mixed methods approach in order to ensure that enough data was collected and to enhance the case study approach by introducing quantifiable data. In the text, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, John Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark outline the “key components that go into designing and conducting a mixed methods study:”

In a mixed methods study, the researcher:

- collects and analyzes persuasively and rigorously both qualitative and quantitative data (based on research questions);
- mixes (or integrates or links) the two forms of data concurrently by combining them (or merging them), sequentially by having one build on the other, or embedding one within the other;
- gives priority to one or to both forms of data (in terms of what the researcher emphasizes);
- uses these procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study;
- frames these procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study;
- frames these procedures within philosophical worldviews and theoretical lenses; and

- combines the procedures into specific research designs that direct the plan for conducting the study. (6)

By blending the quantifiable data with the narrative of my qualitative data, I have bolstered the validity of my findings and provided a backdrop for the triangulation of my findings. Each method used supports, validates and informs the data collected across each instrument. The quantitative approach is a useful way to add an objective lens to the subjective nature of teacher research.

Convergent Mixed Method Design

I implemented a convergent design in this mixed methods study. I collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, analyzing both sets of data and merging the results of my analysis in order to more fully interpret the answers to my research questions. Early in the research process, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through surveys that contained both closed and open-ended questions. I then conducted three interviews in order to get a more nuanced view of the attitudes and perceptions of three participants in the study. At the mid-point of the research process, I conducted another survey in order to again determine student attitudes and comfort levels regarding the multimedia assignment. At the conclusion of the research process, I again surveyed students to determine their overall attitudes and perceptions of the process of composing with multimedia. I also collected final reflection essays for analysis to further understand attitudes and perceptions of the participants and to gain insight into the value students place on both traditional essays and multimedia productions in their academic and professional lives. Table 1 shows the types of instruments used to collect data alongside, the types of data provided and the types of analysis used for each instrument.

Table 1: Instruments Used, Data Provided

Instrument Type	Type of Data Provided	Types of Analysis Used
Pre-Survey: Open-Ended Questions, Likert Scale, Multiple Choice	Qualitative and Quantitative	Statistical and Textual Analysis of Coded Answers
Midpoint Survey: Open-Ended Questions, Likert Scale, Multiple Choice	Qualitative and Quantitative	Statistical and Textual Analysis of Coded Answers
Post Survey: Open-Ended Questions, Likert Scale, Multiple Choice	Qualitative and Quantitative	Statistical and Textual Analysis of Coded Answers
Interviews: Pre and Post Interviews of Three Participants	Qualitative	Textual Analysis of Transcripts
Reflection Essays	Qualitative and Quantitative	Statistical and Textual Analysis of each Document

Through combining multiple methods in my research process, I have been able to assess how student participants viewed their computer literacy skills at the onset of the multimedia project through surveys and interviews, and through the textual analysis of final reflection essays, I have been able to determine some of the overall attitudes and perceptions students have about creating a multimodal text as part of their first-year composition course. I have also been able to assess the comfort levels of students using the software applications necessary for the completion of a multimedia project, determine their concerns about the project, and gain insight into some of the frustrations associated with creating a new kind of text as part of their academic experience.

Selection of Participants

I selected the participants of my research study based on the fact that participants would be students enrolled in sections of my composition courses. I chose to conduct research in two sections of the five sections of composition that I taught during spring semester 2011. I chose to conduct research in two classes in order to collect enough survey responses that would give an adequate assessment of the skill levels and attitudes of a group of first-year composition students, collecting a sufficient amount of survey data and reflections for textual analysis in order to gain an overall assessment of attitudes, skill levels and rhetorical strategies implemented in the creation of both traditional academic texts and in the creation of argument-driven video documentary essays. I chose the two course sections based on the fact that I had open office hours after each class time, freeing up time for me to conduct interviews with participants and to ensure that students had enough time to complete surveys without detracting from in-class instruction.

I began the research process by asking students in two sections of my first-year composition courses to participate in the study. Thirty-seven students agreed to participate in the study. After students began working on their proposal research papers and were introduced to the components of the multimedia project, I administered the first survey in order to determine whether the participants were traditional or non-traditional students, their level of computer skills and comfort levels working with technology, and to determine their attitudes and perceptions about completing a multimedia project in their first-year composition course. All 37 participants took the first survey. A few weeks later, I administered the Midpoint Survey and received 16 submissions, and for the Post-Survey I received 28 submissions.

I also interviewed four participants at the beginning of the project. Of these four, three were interviewed after the completion of the project. These participants volunteered based on their availability to meet with me in my office after our class time. At the end of the semester, I analyzed the reflection essays student wrote in response to their experiences with composing a multimedia project. I received 29 reflection essays.

In the Pre-Survey I wanted to determine the participants' computer skills, their experience working with multimedia software and their attitudes and perceptions about doing a multimedia project in their composition class. In the following segment, I present the background of the three participants interviewed for the study.

It is important to note that participants in my research study are students at a two-year community college. Students in this setting range from traditional to non-traditional age groups, come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, and have various levels of

computer skills ranging from those of digital natives to those of individuals who are new to the use of computers on a day-to-day basis for educational purposes.

Because of the open admissions policy, students at the community college where my research took place matriculate with a wide range of skills when they enter their programs. Many students require remedial courses in both writing and reading before entering the first-year composition courses. Likewise, their programs of study range from general education for transfer credit, to studies in nursing or technical programs that will be completed in two years. This diverse population creates a broad range in research participants; however, some generalizations can be made from this sample of community college students that can be applied to a wider range of students at several different levels within higher education institutions. My study can only provide a snapshot view of the experiences of a group of students in the setting of a mid-sized, urban community college located in the state of Tennessee; however, this inquiry into the attitudes and perceptions of students composing multimodal texts should be informative in the development of best practices across a variety of institutional settings.

Instrumentation: Surveys, Interviews and Textual Analysis

Surveys can be very useful when assessing the attitudes and beliefs of research participants. MacNealy concedes that surveys are:

[T]he only research tool available to obtain certain kinds of information, namely opinions, preferences, beliefs, feelings and other personal information. Surveys provide a way to describe a population in quantitative terms. (MacNealy 148)

I implemented the use of surveys in my study to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, which is essential to the mixed methods approach to research.

In the survey process, I used the web application Survey Monkey to collect responses anonymously from participants. I created the surveys in Survey Monkey and then uploaded survey links into eLearn, which is the online component required of all courses at the institution. I used closed-ended questions using Likert scales and multiple choice answers, as well as open-ended questions, in order to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Figure 1 shows an example Survey Monkey's print-version of the first survey, which looks very similar to the actual online survey that participants took.

1.

1. Please choose the answer that best describes you.

I have always had a computer in my home.

I started using computers regularly in elementary school.

I started using computers regularly in middle school.

I started using computers regularly in high school.

I started using computers regularly in college.

I do not use computers regularly.

2. What is your level of computer and technology skills? (Sending emails and attachments, uploading documents, navigating webpages, finding information, using word processing software, figuring out how to do things on the computer etc)

	I am not very skilled with computers	I know the basics	I am average	I have good computer skills	I am an expert with computers
1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***3. What is your age group?**

18-20

20-25

25-30

30-35

35-40

40-45

45-50

50-55

55-60

60+

***4. Do you have access to digital video cameras that can capture still photos and videos? Explain**

***5. Do you have any concerns about making a video for a grade? Please explain.**

Figure 1: Print Pre-Survey Questions from Survey Monkey

The questions for the first survey can be found in Appendix A. The ten-question pre-survey was used to determine the age of participants and when they began regularly using computers; to determine an assessment of their level of computer skills, and to determine

levels of access to multimedia equipment and familiarity with software programs; to determine participants' understanding of the term rhetoric at the onset of the multimedia project, and to gain insight into the attitudes and perceptions about doing a multimedia project as part of a composition course. All of these factors contribute to an understanding of the participants' level of skill and their attitudes about using multimedia at the project's earliest stages. Age was important to consider in determining whether or not there was considerable variation between the skills, experiences and attitudes of traditional students compared with those of non-traditional students. As can be seen by the format and questions on the first survey, this instrument was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data concurrently during the research process.

Towards the middle of the project, I used the midpoint survey to determine participants' degree of frustration with the multimedia project and to gain insight into the basis of some of these frustrations. The questions for the second survey can be found in Appendix B. At this time during the semester, I always detect that students are experiencing some levels of frustration, so I wanted to measure the extent of these frustrations and determine some of the reasons why students experience difficulties with the multimedia project. I also wanted to assess if participants were achieving levels of comfort using the programs and whether or not they reported that they had access to the necessary materials to complete the project, and also whether or not they reported a level of confidence that they would be able to complete the project on time. Again, as in the first survey, the second survey instrument was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data concurrently as a combination of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions were used.

The final survey given was comprised of only open-ended questions and was given to determine student attitudes about the outcome of their project, their level of satisfaction with the finished product, their understanding of the term rhetoric after the completion of the multimedia project, and to ascertain whether or not they reported the acquisition of skills in the process of completing the project. The questions for the third survey are listed in Appendix C. This third survey instrument was used to collect qualitative data; however, I was able to quantify some of the data by coding the responses and looking for similar themes and common answers.

In each survey, participants remained anonymous. Therefore, the surveys served as a means of providing data that could be objectively quantified. The surveys also provided some general demographic data that could be compared with the qualitative data that was provided through open-ended questions. Because I did not ask for any personal information that would identify the participants, the surveys allowed students to give candid responses that they may not have given in face-to-face interviews or in a setting in which they were asked to respond to questions on the terms of a student-teacher interaction.

Analysis of Survey Data

I began my analysis of survey data by putting the quantified data obtained from the Likert scale and multiple choice questions into tables that displayed the percentage of participants that answered a particular way. Since I obtained information as to whether the students were traditional (ages 18-20) or non-traditional (ages 20+) in the pre-survey, I was also able to compare the survey answers based on age group. Unfortunately, I was unable to continue with this comparison in the midpoint and final surveys as I failed to ask

students for their age group on each of the surveys. Table 2 provides an example of the tables I used in the analysis of survey data.

Table 2: Example of Survey Table

Computer Skill Yes – Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students						
	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Not Skilled	0	0	1	100	1	3
Know the basics	2	67	1	33	3	9
Average	7	64	4	37	11	31
Good	10	63	6	38	16	46
Expert	3	75	1	25	4	11

Creating tables helped me to distance myself as a teacher-researcher as I analyzed the survey responses, and assisted me with a non-biased approach to the data. The total percentages indicate the percentage of students who responded a certain way to the question. In the first survey, the responses of traditional and non-traditional were also compared. For example, a total of 16 students responded that they had “good” computer skills at the beginning of the project, and of those 16, 63% were traditional students and 38% were non-traditional. In the end, the comparison of traditional and non-traditional students had to be omitted due to the fact that the second and third surveys did not ask the students for information about their age. The data for many of these tables are discussed and analyzed in the following chapter. Appendix D shows the remainder of the statistical tables used for my analysis of the surveys. Appendix E shows the complete tables of coded responses for the open-ended questions.

I also quantified the open-ended survey results by creating tables, listing the responses, and coding the responses accordingly as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Example of Table Coding Open-Ended Survey Questions

Age	Response	Concerns
Trad	No	No
Non	Yes because I have no clue of what to do.	Yes
Trad	Yes, I had to make one for my class in high school.	Yes
Trad	yes, I dont have the necessary equipment needed to make a video	Yes
Non	No.	No
Non	it seems a little hard but I like a challenge	Some

In addition to coding surveys using tables such as the one presented here, I also created coding sheets for both multiple choice and open-ended questions, ranking answers based on themes and assigning each theme a number, generally 1-5. An example of the coding sheets follows in Table 4.

Table 4: Example of Code Sheet

Survey 1

Q1: Computer Use

1 = I started using computers in college

2 = in high school

3 = in middle school

4 = in elementary school

5 = always had a computer

Q2: Computer Skill Levels

1 = Not skilled

2 = Know the basics

3 = Average

4 = Good

5 = Expert

Q3: Age

1 = 18-20 Traditional

2 = 20-25 Traditional

3 = 25-45 Non-Traditional

4 = 45-55 Non-Traditional

5 = 55 + Non-Traditional

Q4: Access to Technology

1 = Yes

2 = Yes, with camera phone

3 = Yes but with some issues

4 = No access with exception

5 = No access

Q5: Concerns

1 = No concerns

2 = Some concerns

3 = Yes concerns

Q7: Understanding of Rhetoric

1 = Understands rhetoric is persuasion w/use of appeals

2 = Understands rhetoric involves writing/analysis

3 = Understands rhetorical questions

4 = Just guessed at the term

5 = No understanding of term

Q8: Experience with Multimedia

1 = None

2 = Little

3 = Some

4 = Much

5 = Expert

I also used Excel to color code the survey responses based on the numbers assigned to each survey question, first by color coding the written responses and then by condensing those responses to the number value assigned to each question. Figures 2 and 3 below show screen shots of the color-coding scheme used to analyze the text of the survey questions and an example of an Excel data sheet coded by number.

0-25	webcam
5-30	yes I own two and one can capture videos
3-20	Yes, I have access to a digital video camera. I have had it for two years. It is one of the new one it takes video and pictures.
0-55	no, I dont have one.
5-30	No. I have my phone that takes pictures but I can not upload the pics anywhere
5-30	yes video camera and digital camera
5-30	yes I own three camers
0-25	Yes, I have a camera for photos and I believe videos too.
3-20	Yes, I have the one that can take photos and also can be used to take videos. It is the new ones that they have came out with that allows you to take photos a
3-20	No I do not have access to any kind of video cameras
0-45	I do have a camera that can capture still photos and videos.
0-25	No, I do not have one.
3-20	Yes, I have a digital camera that records video and an actual video camera.
3-20	no, the only thing that I have that records things and take pictures is my cell phone
5-50	Yes, my daughter has one but I am not sure how to use it.
0-45	I have access to a digital video camera, but it is a very inexpensive camera and does minimal work.
0-25	No I do not. I have a camera and it has the capabilities to make videos but it does not have a memory card so I can not make a video. I would buy a memory card
0-35	Yes I do. I have a digital camera that does both. Its not the newest model but it gets the job done.
0-25	My camera that I use to take pictures can also be used for video.
0-25	Yes I have a video camera where I can take pictures and videos if needed.
0-25	no I do not have access to any videos at my home
0-25	Yes, I do.
0-35	yes I have a new sony handycam with photo option
5-30	I have an andriod cell phone that has the video camera and still photos.
3-20	I have a digital camera at home.
3-20	yes I do have a digital camera that does all that and my phone does it as well.
3-	I do have a Cannon digital video camers that can capture still potos and videos.
0-25	Yes, I own a nikon 550 digital camera that takes all kinds of multimedia. It also has a direct usb output port for easy transmission to a computer. I can also use my
3-20	I do have a digital camera. But it sucks battery power quick and I don't have the necessary equipment for it.
5-30	Yes, I have a digital camera that can also video. My cell phone also has a video camera, but my camera would have better quality.
3-20	Yes, My girlfriend has a digital camera that can take still photos and video.
3-20	I dont have access to a digital video camera but I can purchase one.
3-20	Yes, I own a Sony digital camera that takes pictures and can record videos. But the videos aren't as great as a professional camera.
3-20	Yes I have a digital camera that takes good pictures
0-25	yes.
0-25	yes.
5-30	Yes, I have a camera that takes video's!
3-20	I have a camera that can record video but the screen is cracked and some of the buttons no longer work

Figure 2: Example of Color-Coded Survey Responses

											Sheets			Charts		SmartArt Graphics			
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q10	Q10	Q10	Q10	Q10
2				2		2	2	1	1	4	3	1	1		2				
3	5					3	3	1	3	4	1	1	1	1	2			5	
4	5					3	1	1	3	2	5	3	5		2				
5					1	1	4	5	3	5	5	1	1					5	
6					1	3	3	2	1	1	3	1	1			3	4		6
7				2		4	3	1	2	1	1	2	5				4		
8				2		4	3	1	2	5	1	3	2		2				6
9			3			4	2	1	3	3	1	2	5	1			4		
10	5					3	1	1	1	2	5	3	5		2				
11			3			3	1	5	3	2	1	1	1		2		4		6
12					1	3	4	1	3	2	1	1	1		2		4		
13	5		3			4	2	5	3	2	3	1	1				4		6
14	5					4	1	1	2	1	1	1	1			3	4		6
15			3			3	1	2	3	4	1	1	1		2			5	
16					1	2	4	3	3	4	2	1	1	1	1			5	
17					1	4	4	3	1	1	4	2	2			3	4		6
18			3			4	2	4	3	3	3	1	1	1			4		6
19	5					3	1	3	3	3	1	1		1			4		6
20	5	4				4	2	1	1	1	3	5	5						6
21	5					3	2	1	2	4	5	1	1	1	1				
22					1	3	2	5	3	3	3	1	1				4		
23			3			4	2	1	2	3	1	3	3				4		
24	5	4				4	3	1	2	3	3	2	1		2		4		
25			3			4	3	2	1	3	3	1			2		4		
26	5					4	1	1	2	2	2	3	5			3	4		6
27		4				5	1	2	1	2	1	3	5			3	4		6
28					1	3	5	1	2	1	5	3	5		2		4		6
29	5					5	2	1	1	2	1	5	5	1			4		6
30	5					4	1	3	2	3	3	3	5			3	4		6
31			3			5	3	2	1	1	1	3	2				4		6
32					1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1		2		4		6
33	5					4	1	3	1	3	4	2	2		2		4		
34				4		4	1	1	2	2	1	1	1		2		4		
35				4	1	3	1	1	1	4	1	1	1		2		4		
36	5	4	3	4	1	5	2	1	1	2	1	5	5			3			
37	5					4	3	1	3	4	4	2	1		2		4		
38				4		2	1	3	1	2	1	2	1				4		

Figure 3: Example of Color-Coded Survey Responses Using Numbers

After coding the surveys in this way, I was better prepared to review the attitudes and perceptions of the participants and then analyze the findings accordingly based on the themes that emerged. A similar coding process was also used for the data collected through interviews and reflection essays.

I have used a variety of instruments in the design of this mixed methods research project in order to ensure the triangulation of the data presented in my findings. In order to enhance the reliability of my research methods, I have used several similar questions on surveys/interviews/final reflections that were collected from participants.

Surveys were used to determine overall skill levels and attitudes of the participants and the data presented through the surveys were corroborated with the information obtained through individual interviews of three case participants and the reflection essays of a majority of the research participants. Rather than relying on one type of research instrument to assess attitudes, skills and outcomes, I have employed multiple instruments to ensure the triangulation of data collected and bolster the results of my research initiatives and findings.

Interviews

I conducted four interviews for the pre-interview and then again interviewed three of the four original interviewees after they had submitted the project. The fourth interviewee was eliminated due to the fact that she was unable to participate in the follow-up interview. The interviews were conducted in my office and were recorded using the software program Audacity. I asked for volunteer participants in order to conduct these interviews and offered volunteers one excused absence for each interview conducted for a total of two excused absences per participant. The offer of excused absences resulted in two volunteers who needed the benefit of excused absences and two who volunteered independently of a need for excused absences. The interview questions were similar to the questions of the surveys; for instance, I asked students to describe their educational background and their comfort levels with multimedia software. This allowed me to collect

information that would provide a more in-depth assessment of the skill levels and attitudes of the case study participants. I established an interview protocol for both the pre and post interviews. Appendix F and G show the pre and post-interview questions.

For the first interview, I closely followed the protocol and each interview took no more than fifteen minutes to conduct. The open-ended questions of the first interview were very similar to both the open and close-ended questions of the first survey; however, I was able to obtain more detailed and personal responses through the interview process.

In the follow-up interview, I used the established protocol questions but also included more open-ended questions that were established based on my knowledge of the participants' and their process and/or difficulties they encountered in creating the multimedia assignment. The interviews served as a resource for a more richly detailed collection of qualitative data that compliments the quantitative data collected through the anonymous surveys. In addition to the questions listed on the final interview protocol, I also asked questions specific to the issues of each participant and opened the discussion to include more in-depth explanations based on the participants' experiences with the project. The scripts for the pre and post interviews can be seen in Appendices H-M.

Interview Analysis

The analysis of the participant interviews began with transcribing each interview. I then printed the transcripts and highlighted quotes that were of particular interest and made marginal notes about the themes that were emerging from the dialogue. I then highlighted specific quotes from each interviewee that would provide insight into the emerging themes found in each survey and in the reflection essays. After coding the transcripts for themes and carefully choosing quotes that allowed the participants to tell

their own story, I then wrote a narrative for each interviewee that served as an introduction for each participant and conveyed an appropriate assessment of their personal circumstances, attitudes and perceptions before and after they completed the project. The transcripts of each interview are included as Appendices H-M.

Final Reflection Essays

In addition to using surveys and interviews as methods of inquiry, I also did textual analysis of the reflection essays that students wrote in response to their experience with multimodal composition. I asked students to compare writing a traditional argumentative paper with the process of composing a video documentary essay. The traditional essay assignment was a proposal essay and the assignment was adapted from the text *Good Reasons* by Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer. The details of this assignment are included in Appendix N. As students were finishing up their traditional essay assignments, I reviewed their requirements for the video assignment. The details of the multimodal assignment are presented in Appendix O. After students had submitted their documentaries for review, I asked them to write a reflection essay detailing their experience composing a documentary in comparison to the process of composing a traditional essay. The reflection essay was composed in-class and was not used for a grade. The assignment given for the reflection essay is shown in Appendix P.

Textual Analysis of Reflection Essays

In order to code the reflection essays, I used a software program called Dedoose, a newly developed program that is specifically designed for mixed method studies. Dedoose allows texts to be uploaded and assigned codes and descriptors among other useful

features. After uploading all the texts to Dedoose, I created a list of codes or themes and then went through each of the reflection essays, coding each sentence within the program.

Figure 4 shows a screen shot of a coded reflection essay as it appears in the program.

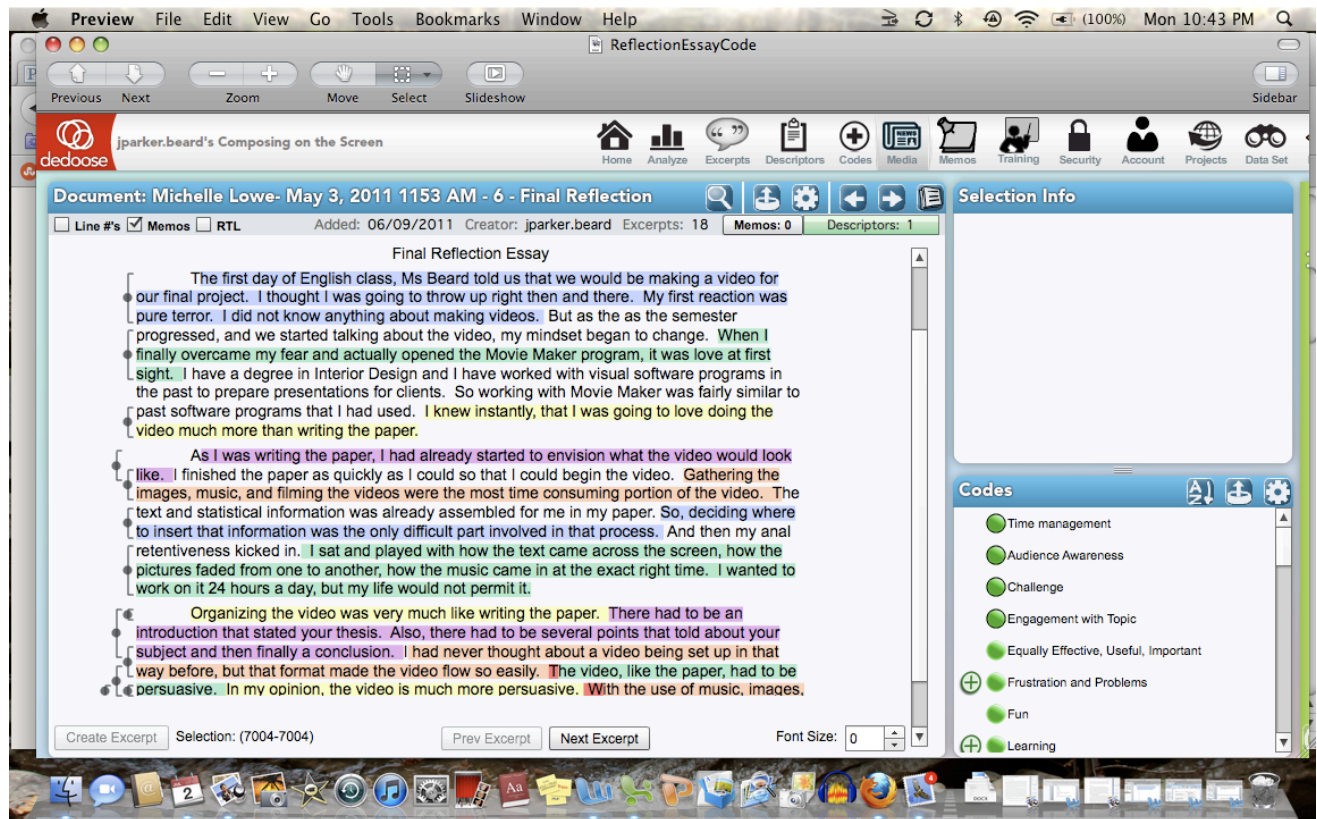


Figure 4: Coded Reflection Essay in Dedoose

As can be seen, the program Dedoose proved to be an extremely useful tool for coding the reflection essays and determining the themes that emerged out of the participants' comparisons of traditional and multimodal texts and both the positive and negative experiences they encountered. After all the reflection essays were coded by theme, I created a table listing each code alongside the frequency each code was used. A sample of the table listing the codes used in the process of coding reflection essays along with the number of times the code was used is depicted in Table 1.5.

Table 5: Sample of Code Table Used for Reflection Essays

Code	Times Assigned
Audience Awareness	44
Challenge	15
Engagement with Topic	9
Videos and Papers are Equally Effective	14

The table of codes with the numeric value of how many times it was assigned was very useful in my analysis of the most prominent themes that emerged from the reflection essays. Finally, after reviewing the coded themes, I created a table depicting the overall themes of the reflection essays alongside the codes that were used which conveyed each theme, as can be seen in the sample of Table 6.

Table 6: Sample Tables of Reflection Essays and Assigned Codes

Theme	Codes
Traditional and Multimodal Composition are Similar but Multimodal Composition is More Complex	Audience Awareness Organization Strategies Papers and Videos are Equally Effective Research and Use of Resources

By analyzing the themes that emerged from the coded reflection essays, I was able to pinpoint direct quotes from the texts that I used in my analysis and overview of each theme as I answered each research question. Some of the findings and implications of this process of textual analysis are presented in the following chapter.

Pilot Study

I attempted to conduct a pilot study in 2010, the year before I completed the actual research study. At that time I was working at Dalton State University. I was able to obtain approval from Dalton's Institutional Review Board; however, I was not able to obtain full IRB approval from Georgia State before the pilot study. The pilot did enable me to compose the survey questions used for the final project and allowed me to become familiar with the process of IRB approval, including the process of creating an informed consent document and administering surveys in class. Due to the fact that the pilot study did not receive IRB clearance at Georgia State, I was unable to use or analyze the data collected from the surveys.

IRB Approval

There were a couple of concessions that the administrators of the community college required of me in order for them to approve my project. First, I was not to use the name of the college in my dissertation, but was only allowed to describe the school as a "mid-sized urban university in Tennessee." Other requirements that were detailed in a letter approving the project were as follows:

- No student under than 18 years of age will be allowed to participate
- No monetary or grade-related compensation for participation will be offered or implied
- Although their involvement includes students posting their work on the internet via YouTube, no additional personally identifiable information will be disseminated during or following the project
- Copies of the project findings will be made to the Institutional Review Board upon request
- The college will incur no charges in regards to costs or resources that will be used for the study, nor will there be modifications to facilities

The full letter of approval from the college where the research was conducted is included as Appendix Q; please note that I have omitted the letterhead and any reference to the name of the college per their request. The informed consent request is presented in Appendix S.

I was also assigned an administrator to help distribute the consent and waiver forms so as to not put students in an uncomfortable scenario when they were asked to participate in the study. Students were also given the option of not participating in the study and were assured that there would be no penalties to their grade regardless of their participation status. The process of obtaining IRB approval at Georgia State also required similar protocols.

The complete application for Georgia State's IRB approval is included as Appendix R. To obtain IRB approval, I had to compose an informed consent request that detailed the particulars of the project and the requirements of the participants among other provisions typical for this kind of document. The informed consent document was distributed in class by the administrator that acted as my liaison at the community college throughout the duration of the project. This informed consent document can be found in Appendix S. Other documents required by IRB included Pre, Midpoint and Post Survey questions and Pre and Post Interview questions and the waiver form that students are required to have any person appearing in their videos to sign, shown in Appendix T; again, please note that the name of the college has been struck through per their request. I was able to obtain IRB approval before data was collected as is mandated by Georgia State's IRB.

In addition to the documents explained in the previous section, I was also required to resubmit an application for continued review after the research project was completed

stating the following: "Enrollment is closed and no interaction with subjects will occur, but data analysis is still ongoing." The approval for continued review is shown in Appendix U. During the process of obtaining continued review approval, I also had to submit an amendment requesting that the principle investigator of the study be changed to Dr. Mary Hocks as my previous director was no longer working for the University. This amendment can be seen as Appendix V.

Limitations of Study

There were significant limitations to my research study that were a result of the context of the research environment and the personal circumstances surrounding both the participants and myself as researcher. Because of my lack of experience with developing survey instruments, I failed to consistently track the demographics of the participants based on age and skill throughout the survey process. Failure to track the age range of the participants throughout the survey process resulted in the inability to compare the experiences of traditional and non-traditional students and this would have been a valuable addition to the study.

My study was also limited in scope in that I was only able to obtain data from a relatively small group of students from only one institution and also the context of doing the research at a community college versus a larger university or smaller state school may have had some impact on the results, though ultimately the experiences students have with multimodal composition are probably similar across a variety of institutional experiences. The attitudes and perceptions of the students presented here are sufficient to depict a generalized view of how students respond to composing new kinds of texts. The very nature of case study research presents only a snapshot view of the attitudes and

perceptions of a select number of participants. However, the data collected in the process of my research is sufficient enough to point to some answers to my research questions while leaving room for the development of enhanced research projects related to my points of inquiry in the future

Another limitation within the design of my research project lies in the fact that several participants dropped out of the study (and the class) before the completion of the project. As noted by MacNealy, the concept of mortality within a research study affects the internal validity of the research presented (59). There is no way to determine the reason that these participants did not finish the course. Based on my experience, it is common for students to stop attending classes towards the end of the semester for a variety of reasons ranging from changes in work schedules, personal or family illness, or an inability to meet the demands of a college-level course such as freshman composition. Because I did not receive the same number of surveys for each instrument, the results are less reliable than if the same number of participants were represented throughout the surveys and reflection essays. Nonetheless, I was still able to provide an overview of the participants' reaction to the project at various points in the composition process.

Also, at least three participants who answered the final survey and wrote final reflections did not complete the video assignment. Rather than eliminate their responses from the scope of my study, I have decided to include them understanding that they may offer insight into the difficulties some students encounter when they are asked to compose multimodal texts. It is worth noting that the students who did not complete the project also encountered difficulties submitting course assignments, including the research paper, and were often absent from class before, during and after the multimedia assignment. These

students were having difficulties with the course before they were assigned the multimedia project, yet their difficulties and frustrations associated with the project are worth noting in the context of my research project.

Time constraints were also an issue as I conducted my research project. The data was collected over the course of one semester and therefore is limited to the experiences of one group of students in the course of a sixteen-week duration of time. It was a difficult undertaking to assume the role of researcher while simultaneously teaching five sections of composition. At no time during the research process was I able to devote my full attention to the research process as the obligations of grading papers, responding to emails, attending meetings and the other business associated with teaching full-time often prevented me from devoting my energies to the research process within the limited time frame of one semester. Again, it is worth noting that though time constraints may have diminished the quality of the design of the research methods I have employed, I have obtained a sufficient amount of information that, upon further analysis, has helped me gain insight into the research questions I have posed.

By no means are the parameters of my study exhaustive, nor can all my questions be answered completely through this process of inquiry. Instead, my research project has initiated me into the research practices available within my discipline and has provided me with some insights into the practices of assigning multimodal texts within the context of first-year composition courses. I have implemented a mixed methods design in order to provide some quantitative data that will support the qualitative narrative that is provided through my lens as a teacher-researcher and participant observer and as a means of combining both objective and subjective accounts of the experiences and skill levels of my

research participants in regards to their attitudes, perceptions and experiences with multimodal composition.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of my worldview and theoretical approach to my research study and have presented my rationale for conducting a mixed methods case study in order to determine student attitudes and perceptions of multimodal composition and to ascertain how they compared the value and process of traditional composition with multimodal composition.

This mixed methods study provides a valuable look into the experience of multimodal composition within the context of first-year composition courses from the perspective of students. I have provided an explanation of why I was drawn to conduct teacher research; the details of the study's concurrent mixed methods design; the details of how participants were chosen for the study; and the benefits and limitations of the case study method. I have also provided insight into the methods used to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data, and discussed how these mixed methods allowed for the triangulation of data. In the following chapter, I will present the data and analysis of the findings obtained through the various methods presented in this chapter. In Chapter 5, I will conclude by briefly summarizing the results of my research and offer some final conclusions about the implications of my study within the field of computers and composition. I will also discuss suggestions for future research that can contribute to the pedagogy of multiliteracies within the field of computers and composition.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF KEY FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter 3 focused on presenting the methods and methodology that I chose for my research as a convergent mixed methods case study. In this chapter, I present analysis of the significant findings that help answer my research questions. I discuss how the participants compared traditional and multimodal composition, and the academic and professional value they place on both types of composition. I also discuss some of the positive and negative experiences students had with multimodal composition. To answer each research question, I provide an overview of what the findings suggest and how they might be used to further pedagogical strategies for the integration of multimodal composition in first-year composition. The tables presenting the data collected can be found in the Appendix D and may be referred to as necessary.

Concerns & Interest Levels

A total of 37 participants responded to the first survey, and this was the largest response rate for all three surveys. On the Pre-Survey, when asked if they had concerns about completing a multimedia project in their English class, 38% of the students reported that they had no concerns, 27% reported having some concerns, and 35% reported that they did have concerns about completing this type of assignment. A total of 62% of the respondents indicated that they did have concerns about multimodal composition. This indicates that a majority of students may be apprehensive about creating videos for a composition class.

As the open-ended responses to the Pre-Survey indicate, the students who had no concerns about the project most often had previous experience with multimedia software and an interest in technology. On the other hand, students who expressed concerns about the project were most often unfamiliar with multimedia software and felt intimidated by taking on such an unfamiliar task. Participants also expressed concerns about having the technology needed to complete the project and having enough time to complete a task that seemed so complex in the designated time frame.

Though only 16 participants responded to the Midpoint study, I was still able to gauge how students were feeling about the project after we had begun to work on it in class. The findings of the Midpoint Survey indicated that 25% of the respondents were uncomfortable with using the technology necessary to create a multimedia project and 44% of the respondents expressed concern about completing the project on time or expressed that they did not feel prepared for the project; however, at the project's midpoint, 44% of the respondents indicated that they were comfortable with the project.

In the Pre-Interview, Brenda expressed the most concerns about the prospect of creating a multimedia text. Because of her lack of computer skills, Brenda anticipated that she would have to spend a lot of time just learning the movie-making software program. Her concerns about the project stemmed from her anxiety about using technologies that were totally unfamiliar to her. In the Post-Interview, Brenda confirmed that learning the software was indeed the most time consuming aspect of the project. Jessica, on the other hand, expressed that she was excited about the project but that she felt that she needed to know more about what would be expected of her in order to feel more comfortable with doing it correctly. Jessica also expressed that she thought the project would be time

consuming but manageable. Christie, on the other hand, expressed very little concern about the project and had become so excited by the prospect of working with multimedia that she was already contemplating changing her major to media technology at the time that we spoke during the Pre-Interview.

In the Reflection Essays, several participants mentioned that they felt intimidated by the multimedia project in its earliest stages. Participants who mentioned that they were intimidated by the project often noted that they felt less intimidated as they began working on the project, but the Reflection Essays did show that there was some apprehension about creating multimedia texts, particularly in the project's earliest stages. These findings demonstrate that many students do have concerns about learning the new technology skills that are required in order for them to successfully compose multimodal texts. Students also have concerns about having enough time to complete their video assignments, as they seem to perceive early in the process that producing multimedia is a time consuming enterprise.

For students that have little or no experience using multimedia software, the prospect of composing a multimedia text is daunting, particularly if a significant grade is attached to the assignment, as was the case for my students whose video documentary assignment counted for 10% of their overall grade in the course. Since I did not spend a lot of class time teaching the students how to use movie-making software, students were largely on their own when it came to learning the software programs that they needed to use in order to create their videos. Participants were right to be concerned that the project would be time consuming, as it *is* time consuming to produce a five-minute video, particularly for someone who has never done it before.

True to a concurrent approach to mixed methods, I collected data using two methods right at the onset of the multimedia project and at the beginning of my study. When the first survey was administered, I was able to obtain data from 37 of the students who agreed to participate in the study, and this excellent return rate provided me with a comprehensive view of how students were initially reacting to the project. Because I had responses from nearly all of the study's participants for the first survey, I was able to obtain information that reflected the experiences the majority of my students within the two sections of composition.

As the data presented above shows, a majority of the students surveyed expressed some concerns about doing a multimedia project. According to the responses on the Pre-Survey, the main concern that most students had was due to a lack of experience with movie-making software. When I conducted Pre-Interviews on the same day that the first survey was given, I was able to get a more personalized sense of some of the concerns that were expressed on the survey. For example, Brenda, a non-traditional student, expressed the most concern about the project because of her lack of experience with computers in general. As the semester progressed, Brenda's concerns proved to be warranted in that most of her frustrations were related to learning the software required and general technical difficulties. In the first survey, the students who stated that they had little concerns about completing the project also indicated that they had previous experience with multimedia. In her interview, Jessica further confirmed that experienced students have fewer worries when asked to create videos. Jessica explained that she had made videos for fun in the past, so she was not very concerned that she would have many problems figuring out the programs. Early in the research process, I was able to get a

general sense of the anxiety students felt when they were asked to compose in ways that were unfamiliar to a majority of them. A total of 29 students responded to the final survey, and this was a good rate of return. I was able to analyze the responses from the open-ended questions on the Post-Survey in comparison with the more in-depth responses from the Reflection Essays and Post-Interviews and the use of these three instruments provided me an in-depth understanding of what a majority of the students experienced in the multimodal composition process. The used of mixed methods allowed me to capture both a general overview and a more in-depth understanding of the concerns students had at various points in the multimodal composition process.

In *Multimodal Composition*, Cynthia Selfe and her co-authors suggest that teachers should survey their students before assigning multimedia projects in order to determine skills levels and access among other things. Perhaps teachers can also investigate student interest levels in creating multimedia projects in order to provide support for those who have little or no interest in creating this type of project early in the process. Students who exhibit high interest levels may be paired with those who exhibit less interest to complete preliminary tasks related to the project as a means of building community and providing a support network for students with little or no interest in this type of project. For example, when I first introduce my students to the movie-making software, I might first survey students and then pair those with high interest levels with those of lower interest levels to complete some basic training tasks. Students who are more interested or comfortable with creating a multimedia project may help establish some interest in students who are not as enthusiastic about the project and this may help create a higher sense of motivation in students who may not be naturally inclined to experience the motivation Anderson

discusses in “The Low Bridge to High Benefits” due to their initial lack of interest in creating multimedia texts.

This raises the interesting point that multimodal composition could help develop and foster a sense of community among students of a composition course. Perhaps a multimedia task could be assigned early in the semester to build ties among students and this development of community could benefit them throughout the course of the semester. The potential for multimodal composition to foster community in a writing class should be explored in future research endeavors.

These findings also suggest that it is important that teachers not assume that a large majority of their students will automatically be interested in the prospect of creating multimodal texts. Although the results of my research indicate that students are interested in creating multimedia texts, the findings also demonstrate that many students are not initially interested in taking on a task that may be daunting or unfamiliar to them. Lower student interest levels may be related to participants’ concerns about creating a multimedia project.

It is important to consider what concerns students have about creating these kinds of texts so that we might better support them in what is often an unfamiliar and daunting process. The Pre-Survey, Midpoint Survey, Pre-Interview and Reflection Essays provided insight into the concerns the participants had about the multimedia assignment. The concerns the participants of my study had about learning new technologies and time management also leads me to suggest that composition teachers may need to consider the weight that is placed on multimedia assignments and perhaps create smaller assignments associated with these projects in order to alleviate some of the concerns about a

multimodal text counting for a large percentage of the student's overall grade. This is a complicated issue because on the one hand we want our students to put effort into their multimedia projects, but on the other hand we must take into consideration that many of them are entering uncharted territory.

It may be that supplementary support should be provided to concerned students in the form of additional out-of-class workshops, instructional videos, one-on-one tutoring sessions or by faculty consciously making connections with personnel and staff members on campus who can offer additional technical support to students who are struggling with the technical aspects of working with multimedia. Although in my research I have not focused on making connections with support staff as an aspect of multimodal composition, I partnered with the library staff at my college and they provided instruction sessions on several aspects of the multimedia project in my classes. For some of the sessions, the library staff members came to our class and for other sessions the class met in the library. As part of this collaboration, the library staff members created comprehensive library guides for the video documentary essay project. Many students made connections with the library staff members and went to them for additional help with the project. In fall of 2011, I gave a presentation at the Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy entitled, "From Document to Documentary: Integrating Research and Information Literacy Through Librarian-Instructor Collaboration and Digital Media Projects." In this presentation I discussed the collaborative relationship I developed with the library staff as a way of supporting my students in the process of multimodal composition. Forming these types of collaborations between faculty and staff members as a means of supporting

multimodal composition is an area of interest that should be explored further in future research projects.

Comparing Traditional & Multimodal Composition

In the surveys and reflection essays, many participants recognized that traditional writing and video production share many commonalities; the participants who were interviewed also expressed that they went through similar processes when composing their video as they did when they wrote their paper, particularly in the research aspects of both assignments.

When asked about how the video project worked in the context of a writing class, in her final interview Brenda acknowledged how both traditional writing and composing videos is a method of expression. However, she indicated that the video was a more effective method of communication.

Of course, when we write our papers, it's expression. It's proving our point. It's making an argument. The video . . . showed all of that and more to me . . . It showed my argument. It showed my information. It showed my pictures . . . I can describe them on a piece of paper, but I showed them up on that video . . . it's just to me . . . better.

Christie also mentioned that she had to go through some of the same processes when writing her paper that she did when making the video, but she described the process of making a video as being more involved.

I would say . . . the video is more time consuming just because there's a lot more involved . . . in a paper you can pretty much sit down at a computer and look for your sources . . . but when you're making the video, you've got to be a little bit more involved.

Unlike Christie, Jessica indicated that she spent more time on her paper because it was more difficult for her to express her ideas in words than it was for her to demonstrate her

points visually.

I had to think more of how to word things . . . it's easier to portray . . . what you're trying to say with pictures and music . . . than writing it out and just re-writing it and fixing it, all the typos and stuff, grammar and stuff like that.

These responses indicate that the participants recognized the innate similarities and differences between traditional and multimodal composition.

In their Reflection Essays, many participants acknowledged that composing a video is very similar to writing a traditional paper. Often they expressed that while the two activities share common attributes. They acknowledged how composing a video has similar rhetorical demands as writing a paper, such as audience awareness and persuasive techniques, and that multimodal composing also requires pre-planning, research and writing as well as the implementation of organization strategies such as well-crafted introductions, thesis statements and meaningful conclusions. However, they also indicated that they found their videos to be more rhetorically effective in many instances. Many students perceived traditional composition as more “boring” or “old fashioned” than multimodal composition.

Students noted that they employed many of the same organizational strategies when composing their video as they did when writing their papers. Within the 20 Reflection Essays, 25 excerpts were coded for mention of organization strategies. Some of these excerpts dealt specifically with organization within traditional essays while many denoted a relationship between the organizational strategies employed in writing a paper and those necessary when composing a video. The following excerpts shed insight into how the participants related the organizational strategies used in writing a traditional essay to those used when composing a video.

- *There are certain steps one has to take in planning a video such as making an outline or script . . . researching information or facts on their material, building a thesis, introduction, and conclusion for the film just like one has to do writing a paper.*
- *In both you have to brainstorm and think of what the main idea is. The next thing that you have to do is sit down and think of a layout of what the video or paper is about.*
- *There had to be an introduction that stated your thesis. Also, there had to be several points that told about your subject and then finally a conclusion. I had never thought about a video being set up in that way before, but that format made the video flow so easily.*

As these responses reveal, students recognized that similar organization patterns exist in traditional and multimodal composition. Students use similar organization strategies when they compose their traditional essays and multimedia texts; therefore, these findings indicate that multimedia texts could be used to discuss organizational structure of traditional texts.

Students also use similar research strategies when they compose multimedia texts. There were 11 excerpts from the reflections that made mention of the similarities between the use of research and resources in traditional essays and the use of research and resources in videos. The excerpts below demonstrate how the participants compared the need to do research and use resources in both their paper and their video.

- *Although there is more research for a research paper, a multimedia project requires research too.*
- *With both of these assignments it requires lots of research to be done.*
- *It added a new way to do research, but make it visual as well.*

These responses show how many of the participants recognized that research and use of resources is as important to crafting an argument through a multimedia platform as in the

writing of traditional academic texts. This focus on the need for adequate research in both types of composition reflects another way in which students find multimodal composition to be similar to traditional academic composition. This finding suggests again that multimodal composition may enhance the process of traditional composition by allowing students to become more engaged with the research aspects of creating a video before they write their formal research papers. Perhaps if students are asked to compose multimedia texts before they write traditional papers, they will become more immersed in the researching of their topics and this could enhance their traditional writing skills. This possibility should be further explored in future investigations into the use of multimodal composition to enhance the first-year composition curriculum.

There were several comments in the Reflection Essays related to traditional writing as boring or less interesting than multimodal composition. Nine excerpts were identified as mentioning traditional papers as less interesting or even “old fashioned,” as seen in the following comments.

- *Words on a paper can be drawn out and less interesting to an audience.*
- *Most people nowadays do not want to sit down and read a long boring paper.*
- *I think that videos should be part of the school curriculum because things are advancing and I think that papers are soon going to be old fashioned.*

These responses show how many of the participants feel that traditional academic essays are dated and have little rhetorical function beyond the scope of higher education. They are less interested in reading and writing these kinds of texts. However, they see multimodal composition as a relevant way to communicate in the 21st century.

There were a total of 44 excerpts coded in the Reflection Essays for mention of the

use of image or visuals in the composing of videos. The only other topic that was discussed as frequently as the use of image was the subject of audience awareness. The following excerpts demonstrate how students recognized the role of image in their videos..

- *Most people enjoy a visual example with pictures rather than reading the material because it gives the viewer a chance to actually see the student's point other than trying to figure it out for themselves.*
- *Reading words on a piece of paper can suggest images in the mind, but seeing the true images evokes emotion of all different kinds.*

These excerpts demonstrate how participants viewed the rhetorical aspects of adding visuals to their arguments. Students often commented on the visual experience of making their videos. There were 27 excerpts identified as addressing the topic of video as a visual experience. Several participants noted how the visual aspects of their videos helped them literally see their topic in a different light or gain a better understanding of their topic. The visual aspects of the video helped make their arguments come to “life,” as the following comments reveal.

- *It helps makes stuff come to life by making a video.*
- *Making a video is nothing more than making the words on the paper come to life.*
- *With the use of music, images, and font styles, the subject comes to life.*

The participants often expressed how the use of image effectively conveys meaning in multimodal composition. They also recognized the persuasive value of music and sound in their videos as seen in the responses below.

- *Music is a powerful tool and has an important place in setting the mood. Music can make a person sad or happy. Music can show suspense or excitement.*

- *In a video people can use music to open up a window of emotions that can persuade someone.*
- *It gives everyone a chance to not just read with their eyes but also read with their ears.*

As can be seen in these excerpts, participants demonstrated an understanding of the visual and aural rhetorical aspects of composing multimedia texts. More often than not, participants expressed that their video arguments were more effective, more persuasive and more engaging than their traditional papers. I believe these findings demonstrate how students may become more critical “prosumers” through the process of multimodal composition.

There were 23 excerpts identified as revealing student perceptions that their video was more effective than their paper. Often students reported that they felt the visual and aural aspects of their videos made their arguments more convincing to their audience. They also often expressed that they consider themselves more “visual” and found the video more appealing for that reason.

Participants also regularly mentioned that they thought their audience preferred a visual and aural experience rather than the experience of reading a traditional essay. For this reason, several participants mentioned that persuasion is easier in videos and more difficult in papers. In the Reflection Essays, there were 14 excerpts coded as mentioning that persuasion is either more difficult in papers or easier in videos.

Students also expressed that composing videos allowed them to adapt their writing skills to multimodal composition as well as learn new rhetorical and technical skills. Students use words to persuade in both traditional and multimedia texts, but multimedia texts present the opportunity to persuade with image and sound as well, which causes

students to *literally see* and their multimedia texts as more effective. When teachers assign multimedia texts, they can ask students to critically think about the persuasive powers of the various media they encounter on a daily basis. This idea is in line with Daniel Anderson's concept of "Prosumer Approaches to New Media Composition." When students are asked to persuade through multiple modes and become critical producers of the types of texts that they encounter on a daily basis, they are then able to become more critical consumers of such media. As a result, students become empowered through a more complex understanding of rhetoric and its applications in our daily lives. This concept of empowering and enriching students' lives through the study of rhetoric is one of my greatest motivations for teaching writing and immersing myself in the field of rhetoric and composition. It was important for me to determine how students understood and applied their concepts of rhetoric to both their traditional and multimodal texts. I wanted to understand how students saw the use of rhetoric in both their papers and videos in order to see if students do in fact integrate their understanding of rhetoric into their multimodal compositions. The findings here show how students compared the rhetorical strategies used in traditional and multimodal composition and help us to see Anderson's "prosumer" effect that initially inspired me to integrate new media into my own classes.

Several instruments were used in my study to determine some of the ways students compared traditional academic essays to video documentary essays. In the Post-Survey and Reflection Essays, participants made comparisons between the process of composing traditional and multimedia texts and also commented on how traditional and multimodal composition compare. The participants who were interviewed also made comparisons between traditional essays and videos in their Post-Interviews. Because I received such a

high response rate on both the Post-Survey and Reflection Essays, I was able to get a comprehensive view of how students viewed their experiences and the value they placed on both traditional and multimodal skills. The Post-Survey provided some general information and points of interest, whereas the Reflection Essays and Post-Interviews provided me with a more complex narrative of student outcomes.

Value of Traditional and Multimodal Composition

As noted in Chapter 2, according to The New London Group, the “mission of education” ideally is “to ensure that all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community and economic life” (9). One way of understanding how the skills learned through multimodal composition may play a role in the lives of our students is by asking them the academic and professional value they place on both traditional and multimodal composition. Understanding the academic and professional value students place on the types of texts we ask them to compose can guide us in how we think about the real-world applications of the skills we are asking students to develop as it is important that both teachers and students recognize the practicality of composition skills.

In the Reflection Essays, there were 14 excerpts that indicated that traditional and multimodal compositions are equally important and valid forms of communication. After completing the multimedia assignment, many students could identify the value in composing in both traditional and multimodal modes.

In the Post-Survey, an overwhelming total of 89% of the respondents indicated that they would likely make another video in the future. Some of the respondents were enthusiastic about the idea of making another multimedia text, while others expressed that

they would be more interested in completing a project like this under different circumstances; nonetheless, a majority of the participants did think that they would use multimodal skills in the future. Only 10% of the respondents showed no interest in making another video in the future. These findings indicate that a majority of the participants of my study found value in their new multimodal skills in that they could foresee using them in future academic, professional or personal endeavors. The participants further discussed the value they placed on both traditional and multimedia texts in their Reflection Essays.

In the Reflection Essays, many of the participants indicated that they could see the value in the skills they developed through the process of traditional and multimodal composition. Many respondents indicated that they found both composition exercises to be equally important as 14 excerpts were coded from the Reflection Essays for mention of the equal value of both traditional and multimedia texts. However, there were more excerpts coded (17) in which the participants mentioned that they perceived traditional composition as more of an academic skill than composing videos. Many of the participants felt that their future teachers would be more likely to ask them to compose traditional essays in their academic lives and thus they believed traditional essays were more useful academically. These findings further demonstrate the fact that the academic realm has not caught up with the demands of 21st century communication, as many of the scholars in Chapter 2 contend. These findings indicate that students still see the traditional academic essay as the preference of most teachers in the setting of post-secondary education, and they are likely right to make this assumption. Nonetheless, students did convey a sense of the possibility that multimodal skills may benefit them in both academic and professional endeavors.

Although new media scholars within the field of computers and composition have successfully established the place of multimedia texts in the composition classroom as I discuss in Chapter 2, the participants of my study perceived that the traditional academic essay is still the dominant form that will be expected of them as they progress through their undergraduate and graduate careers. On the other hand, many students revealed the importance of multimodal composition as an important professional skill in the 21st century workplace.

As Lester Faigley points out in the “The Challenge of the Multimedia Essay,” when we introduce new media texts into the composition curriculum, it does not mean that we are just throwing out the traditional essay in favor of something more flashy or up to date. The need to successfully integrate the new with the old puts advocates of new media texts in a balancing act position. As the findings of my research study indicate, multimedia texts are time consuming and often students must learn new technology skills when they are asked to compose them. To adequately prepare students for the challenges of new media, I propose that teachers of composition plan an adequate amount of class time for students to learn how to use the software programs and actually work on producing their multimedia texts in class so that they are able to get the extra technical support that they need.

But students also need an adequate amount of class time to work on their traditional essays as well, particularly when it is this type of text that they will be more likely asked to produce as they progress through their academic careers. If directors of first-year writing programs ask that teachers adhere to a master syllabus or a required number of essays that must be assigned, this leaves little room for the time needed to successfully integrate new media into a basic sixteen-week composition course. I argue that

multimodal compositions are worth the time it will take to integrate them into our already busy schedules, but not at the expense of our students learning to compose the traditional texts that will be asked of them in their other classes. A solution to the “balancing act” problem is beyond the scope of my research project; however, future inquiry should be made into how teachers of composition can successfully negotiate the teaching of traditional academic essays with the introduction of multimedia texts into the curriculum.

It is interesting that the participants viewed the creation of multimodal texts as more of a professional skill than the composing of traditional academic texts. They saw academic writing as an isolated and specific exercise that would be used only in their college experiences, but they saw multimodal composition as potentially useful in their careers. Where there were only seven experts coded from the Reflection Essays as mention of traditional writing as a professional skill, an astonishing 24 excerpts were coded for mention of multimodal composition as a professional skill.

The participants saw video production as a professional skill. They often noted that if they had to communicate a message to an audience in a work setting, they would prefer to make a video rather than write a paper for the audience to read. The participants often noted that they would rather watch a video to learn information; therefore, they felt they could use a video to communicate more effectively in a professional setting because they could generate more interest in their audience by presenting their message using multiple modes. As in the Reflection Essays, the participants in the Post-Interview also expressed that they would be more likely to use a video in a professional setting.

In her Post-Interview, Brenda specifically noted that in the “twenty-first century” video would be the preferred method for communicating ideas in the professional world.

She indicated that if she had to share information with colleagues in a work setting that a video would be a more effective mode of communication. Jessica made a similar connection to video as a more effective method of communication in the professional setting. In her Post-Interview, Jessica expressed that in her future career as a nurse she would be more likely to make a video to communicate important messages to an audience; she particularly noted that an audience of school-aged children would more likely be engaged with a video. Christie made the point that video has the potential of helping a person shape their professional personae and develop a more professional voice, thus placing greater professional value on multimodal composition. In each case, the women interviewed felt multimedia texts were more effective and useful in a professional setting.

The fact that participants viewed multimodal composition as a more useful professional skill has been one of the more interesting conclusions of my research study. Time and time again participants expressed that videos are a more effective mode of communication. Because most of the participants themselves felt that it would be more interesting to watch their classmates' video rather than read their papers, they saw multimodal composition as a more effective way of making and communicating meaning, and the participants viewed multimodal composition as more valuable professional skill.

These findings prompt one to ask what exactly it is we are preparing our students for in their first-year composition course. Are we preparing them to write essays for their other college courses or are we preparing them to be better communicators in their professional and personal lives? I suspect that many teachers of composition would answer yes to both of these questions. We must negotiate a balance between traditional composition, which the participants viewed as a skill that will be primarily useful in their

academic careers, and multimodal composition, a skill that my study's participants found to be potentially valuable in their professional lives. Perhaps balance can be achieved more easily if instructors rethink the role of multimodal composition in their writing courses. If multimodal composition is used to enhance the teaching of writing rather than displace it, students could benefit academically while advancing their multimodal skills, and subsequently, students could also benefit from enhancing their communication skills through multiple modes in the classroom, workplace and beyond.

Putting Multimodal First

Though I have always assigned the multimedia project at the end of the semester, the findings of my research indicates that multimodal composition could be a very useful tool early in the semester. Because multimodal composition tends to be more engaging, students may find a multimedia project early in the semester to be a good starting point for learning about methods of organization as well as other composition processes that are similar across traditional and multimodal compositions. An important conclusion I reached that holds a high potential for pedagogical improvement, is that multimodal composition functions as a way to innovate traditional composition. After conducting my study, I have determined that including multimedia projects early on in the semester may be a beneficial strategy to help students develop a more complex understanding of the composing process through the medium of digital technology. Similarly, multimedia texts can also be used to engage students in research about their chosen topics before they actually write their papers.

The data collected in my study illustrates how students compared the composition process in both traditional and multiple modes. This information allows us to see the

connections students make to the structural design and organization, research process, and methods of delivery between traditional and non-traditional texts. Based on these findings, I conclude that multimodal composition may be an incredibly useful tool in the teaching of traditional writing. This is a delightful and unexpected conclusion! I began my research with the intention of showing how multimodal composition is an extension of the writing process. Though multimodal composition can be seen this way, the findings of my research show it has the potential to be much more than that. Based on the responses of the participants of this case study, the process of multimodal composition could actually be used to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the writing process, and therefore I conclude that a pedagogical strategy that integrates the conscious use of multimodal composition as a teaching tool early in the semester may actually benefit students in the process of writing their traditional academic essays in their first-year composition courses. Future research should be conducted in order to determine if students do indeed enhance their writing process as a potential benefit from composing in multiple modes.

Overview: Attitudes & Perspectives on Traditional and Multimodal Composition

Students recognize that there are many similarities between traditional and multimodal composition as there are also many differences. In considering the attitudes and perspectives of students on multimodal composition and the way they compared traditional essays with multimodal essays, the findings of my research study demonstrate the following:

- Approximately half of the participants of my study expressed a moderate to high interest in the multimedia project, indicating that the other half of the participants did not express any interest in multimodal composition.

These findings suggest that pedagogical strategies should be implemented in order to facilitate the needs and interests of students who have little to no interest in multimodal composition. Some strategies may include surveying students before assigning multimedia projects and pairing more enthusiastic students with less interested students. It is also important to not assume that students will be as enthused by the prospect of multimodal composition as we are; therefore, a pedagogy of multiliteracies will provide support and encouragement to students who are less motivated to compose in multiple modes.

- Participants of my research study were most concerned about learning the new technology required in the production of a multimedia text. They were also concerned about completing the project in time.

It is important to recognize these concerns when weighting the grades for multimodal projects and also when determining the timing of these projects in order to alleviate some of these common concerns.

- Students perceive the organization strategies implemented in the creation of traditional and multimodal texts are very similar.

Multimodal composition could be used at the forefront of composition classes as a method of instruction for the methods used in the composition of traditional academic essays.

- Students use similar research methods when composing traditional and multimodal texts.

Similarly to the potential use of multimodal composition skills to instruct students in the organizational strategies used in traditional writing, multimodal composition may also be used to engage students in researching their topics before they compose their traditional research essays.

- Students find that their multimodal texts are more persuasive in that they can use words as well as visual and aural cues to persuade their intended audience.

This suggests that multimodal composition can be used as a powerful tool in the “prosumer” approach to teaching rhetoric in the composition classroom.

- The participants of my study view traditional composition as a useful academic skill that will be less valuable in their professional lives; however, they view multimodal composition as less valuable academically and more valuable as a professional skill.

Both traditional and multimodal composition has a perceived value for students in their academic and professional careers. A pedagogy of multiliteracies within the context of first-year composition will include strategies on how to connect traditional, academic writing skills with multimodal skills in order to prepare students for their academic and professional lives.

In response to the findings of my research study in the comparison of traditional essays to multimodal essays, I have come to the following conclusions:

- Composition teachers should not assume that they will be met with equal enthusiasm for the multimedia projects they assign.

When we assign multimedia texts in composition courses, teachers should consider ways in which we can engage the less interested students and provide the support they need early in the process.

- Multimodal texts can be used to enhance student awareness of organization strategies that are used in both traditional and multimodal composition.

- Multimodal composition can be used to enhance the research experience in traditional composition.
- Multimodal composition can be used to instruct students in the multifaceted aspects of persuasion in their own texts as well as the various texts, both traditional and multimodal, that they encounter in their daily lives.
- Multimodal composition can be used to enhance student understanding of the use of the rhetorical appeals and allow them to more fully comprehend how each appeal is used and to what end in the various texts that they both produce and consume.

Access

The issue of access has been of concern to scholars since the inception of computers and composition as a subfield within the field of composition and rhetoric. It is still important to consider whether or not students have access to the digital technology required in order to create multimedia texts. Instructors cannot simply assume that all students have a laptop and high-speed Internet, as that is not always the case. If we are to assign multimedia texts in our composition classes, it is important to consider if all of our students will be able to access the equipment needed to complete the project. The findings from the Pre-survey, Midpoint Survey, Pre-Interviews and Reflection Essays provide insight into the question of access for the participants of my study.

A total of 88% of the participants surveyed in the Pre-survey indicated that they did have access to the technology they needed to complete the project. In the Midpoint Survey, 79% of the respondents stated that they had access to the technology they needed in order to complete the project. These survey results indicate that a majority of the participants did

have access to the technology they needed to create a multimedia text. The participants in the Pre-Interview also indicated that they had access to the tools they needed to create the project.

Remarkably, not a single student wrote about access as an issue in their Reflection Essays. Students wrote that they had issues with technology or had trouble downloading media, but no one mentioned that access was of significant concern in the process of completing their projects. Several students used original content in the production of their videos and several only used content from the Internet to compose their videos; many students worked on their projects in the library, but no one seemed to have a serious issue accessing the equipment they needed to complete the project.

Because I cannot guarantee that students will have access to digital recording equipment, I cannot insist that they include exclusively original content in their multimedia texts. I discuss the issue of access in relation to assigning videos in my publication in *Computers and Composition Online* entitled, "Documenting Arguments, Proposing Change: Reflections on Student-Produced Proposal Documentaries," published in spring of 2010. Based on my experience assigning variations of this multimedia project for the past several years, students who use original content usually produce more interesting and engaging videos, even when the quality of the videos is not as good. However, because there is no guarantee that I can provide the equipment necessary to produce multimedia texts with original student content, access will probably continue to be an issue of concern. Nonetheless, a majority of the participants of my study did report having access to the technology needed and this leads me to conclude that access was not a significant issue for

students. Perhaps this suggests that access will become less of a problem as we advance through the 21st century.

Audience Awareness

The findings of the Reflection Essays and Post-Interviews indicate that the participants of my research study had an increased sense of audience awareness when they produced their multimedia texts. Audience awareness was one of the prevailing themes that emerged in the coding of the Reflection Essays as 44 excerpts were identified for the mention of audience. Though some students recognized that they had to consider audience when they wrote their paper and made their video, more students indicated that their video was a more effective means of conveying their message to an audience. Because students knew that their videos would be seen in class and published online via YouTube, they had a heightened sense that their messages would be read, seen and heard by a larger audience.

In the Reflection Essays, participants often wrote about how they felt their videos were more effective in communicating their message to more people. In addition, many students expressed that they felt their videos were capable of engaging their audience more than their traditional paper could. The following excerpts demonstrate this prevalent theme throughout the participants' responses:

- *With the video I feel I am able to reach a larger audience.*
- *With a video, one can get their point across in a short amount of time all the while entertaining one's audience.*
- *I also think that people are going to pay more attention to a video because it probably isn't going to be boring someone to death.*

As these responses indicate, participants did have a heightened sense of audience awareness in relation to their videos. As the Reflection Essays findings presented the theme of a heightened sense of audience awareness with multimodal composition, so did the responses collected in the Post Interviews. In the Post-Interview, all three women indicated that they thought their video could impact more people than their traditional papers could.

In the interviews, the participants often expressed that they felt they could reach a larger audience with their video and that their video was a more effective method of communication. Brenda mentioned that the visual aspect of her video was appealing. When asked to explain, she replied:

I think that . . . say somebody reads your paper, you know, after the first, second page, if it doesn't draw you in, it's boring to them. A video, you can keep people's attention, I think, better, and they want to see what's coming next . . . not like a paper . . . people just get, I don't know, it's just been done for so long, you know.

Like Brenda, Christie also expressed a preference for the visual aspects of her video.

Christie considers herself a “visual type person” and finds that when information is presented visually it is more engaging to the audience. She also notes that presenting a message visually is a way of opening it up to a wider audience.

I'm not one who likes to read a whole lot . . . I'm more of a visual type person . . . I'm sure there's a lot of other people like me . . . I would much rather go to YouTube and . . . watch these videos than pick up somebody's paper and sit and read over a paper. So, I think . . . it's a good thing because . . . it would probably open up the door for a bigger audience than most people that sit and read papers for fun, you know (laughing), which you're not going to have too many of, so I think the video concept is definitely a good thing.

Jessica also expressed similar thoughts about a preference for the visual mode of communication. Even though Jessica is a strong writer, she still felt that her video was a more effective way of communicating a message to more people.

Well, personally, I think people would enjoy the video more just because not everybody is going to sit down and read a paper, 'cause it's kind of boring. But like going back and looking at videos . . . I would much rather do that than go read through their papers (laughing). So, I think my video is more effective. I mean, for a teacher, maybe my paper is more effective because they will sit down and read it, but if it has to go out to like REACH other people, my video, definitely better.

All three participants that were interviewed expressed a preference for the visual aspects of their video and each one explained that they felt they could reach a wider audience and convey their message more effectively through the visual aspects of their multimedia project. Each interviewee also made specific mention of traditional academic writing as “boring” compared to the multimodal aspects of their video projects.

The participants felt that their videos were more effective rhetorically and therefore could make more of an impact on their audience. They often mentioned that they would prefer *watching* over *reading*, and that the visual aspect of their videos made them more appealing to an audience. These findings suggest that because of its visual, aural as well as textual features, multimodal composition could instill a more tangible sense of rhetorical purpose in the producers of multimedia texts.

It is possible for a group of twenty or more students to sit and watch one person's video as a collective group and have the experience of watching and responding to the text's meaning. A group could read a paper together, but it would require them to read the text individually or read the text aloud and this would not create the same effect as viewing a multimedia text together. A multimedia text can be broadcast for the world to interact with via video sharing and social network sites. Traditional essays do not have the same reach or appeal for the students who participated in my study. Multimodal composition presents an opportunity for students to present their work to a wider audience, in the classroom and in the digital world.

The participants recognized that their papers were similar to their videos in that it was important to consider audience, but they felt their videos were capable of conveying their messages more effectively to more people. These findings suggest that teachers could assign multimodal texts as a way of providing a more authentic rhetorical experience for students. Students learn more about audience awareness by using their multimedia texts to reach a wider audience. Multimodal composition could be used to facilitate discussion about topics and generate a sense of rhetorical purpose and intention in students because they will be aware that their messages will be seen, heard, viewed, and read by more people than a traditional essay would.

Deeply Exploring Topics

In the Post-Interview, Christie explained that her information technology and computer skills were not significantly improved as a result of completing the project, but she did talk about how creating the video gave her a more in-depth understanding of her topic. Interestingly, Christie explained that the visual aspect of creating a multimedia text enhanced what she learned about her subject matter. Christie explained that because working on her video was a more visual experience, it made her understand her topic better and helped her retain the information she learned in her “long-term” memory. This suggests that the process of multimodal composition may allow students to become more knowledgeable about their topics. Asking students to compose multimedia texts could create a more in-depth learning experience due to the fact that students become engaged with their topics through multiple modes of sensory perception.

In the Reflection Essays, participants also noted that they learned a lot about their topics and the topics of others in the process of creating their videos. One student wrote

that after viewing the videos of his classmates, he learned a lot about important problems that we are faced with in today's society and that he now "will have a different view on some things." Students participating in my study often expressed that they would rather watch and learn from the videos of their peers, creating a learning environment in which students can easily share information about the topics that they are most interested in and create a text that collectively teaches their classmates as a group when their videos are shown in class.

Based on the information shared by participants of my research study, students find multimodal composition to be more engaging than traditional academic essays. Students view traditional essays as boring and uninteresting. They would rather watch the work of their peers rather than read it. Multimodal assignments can foster a sense of engagement in students and may help students become more interested in writing about their topics after they have produced a multimedia text on their topic of choice.

Enjoyment & Expression

There were 13 excerpts that were coded for the mention of fun or enjoyment in relation to multimodal composition and the following excerpt illustrates the common theme that students perceive multimodal composition as a difficult but enjoyable undertaking.

- *So making a video just like any assignment it can be hard, but there is nothing wrong with mixing work with a little fun.*

This indicates that students may find the challenge of multimodal composition more rewarding than writing a traditional essay and demonstrates how multimodal composition can be an engaging and stimulating learning tool for the teaching of writing in first-year

composition courses.

Although the video was time consuming, Brenda enjoyed the opportunity to express herself creatively through a multimodal format.

I have to say I like this a lot better because it's different. I think it gets to show people's . . . individuality more and it's creative . . . I think it's a way to express yourself also, more so than writing a paper.

When asked to explain why she found the video to be a better way of expressing herself, Brenda again focused on the visual aspect of the video.

Because when you create the video, you can put in your personal touches, just like I did . . . show your personality through it. It's really just like a blank piece of paper and you can do whatever color any way you want to, that's the way I look at it. You can express yourself.

Towards the end of her interview, Brenda explained that early in the semester she did not understand why she was being asked to make a video in her composition class. She was anxious about the project and was disgruntled that she was being asked to create a video as part of a writing course, but after successfully completing the project, she began to understand the connection between traditional and multimodal composition.

I mean at first I was like, "Oh, I can't believe she's making us do this because this is COMP, this is WRITING" and I didn't get that part, but now I do get it because writing is a way of expression, video is a way of expression. So it does link and it does come together.

Jessica also saw the video project as a more expressive and creative mode of communication. She explained that she understands the value in both writing a research paper and creating a video, but again she had a preference for the capabilities for expression that the video offered.

For me, I could kind of express more in my video than I would on the paper.

When asked to explain why she felt that she could express more in her video, Jessica replied:

Like I was saying, like the pictures, it's just, it's more creative for me. A video is more creative, more artistic . . . the paper was really important and it's good because I . . . had to research . . . I learned more in that area, but the video offered more artistic ways to express myself. I like that. It was fun.

As the responses of the Post-Interview indicate, when the three participants compared traditional writing to the composing of their videos, they often expressed that their videos were more involved and more effective than their traditional papers. Both Brenda and Jessica noted that the video allowed them to express themselves better and more creatively than the traditional research paper did. These findings are encouraging in that they demonstrate how adding the “fun” dimension of multimodal composition can engage students in their writing classes. Though it is not our responsibility or intention to make every learning experience fun for our students, it is worth noting that adding fun to the learning process can be beneficial to both students and teachers alike. In the classroom we are often met with less resistance when our students are enjoying themselves, and this fact alone suggests that multimodal composition can be a valuable tool in the teaching of first-year composition.

Empowerment & Activism

Of particular interest is the theme of multimodal composition as a venue for social activism that emerged in the participants’ reflection essays. There were 20 excerpts identified as commentary on video production as a technique to communicate important social messages and evoke social change. In the excerpts below, participants reveal how multimodal composition is an effective communication tool to convey important messages

and enact social change.

- *I felt like this assignment was very beneficial to show the problems that we are dealing with today in America. I have not really ever thought about all these different things happening that is causing problems. After watching some of the students' videos, I will have a different view on some things . . . Now students need to try and follow their proposals to make the world a better place.*
- *I think if the audience can see what is really going on then they are more than likely willing to change.*
- *Even though making the video proved to be complicated and had me focusing on other things . . . I think it helped me to learn more about . . . how making documentaries can change people's minds with just a short amount of time.*

The findings presented above demonstrate the importance students place on multimodal composition as a valuable communication tool that is similar to traditional writing and also capable of affecting meaningful social change in the recipients of their multimodal messages. The possibility for encouraging social activism through the venue of multimodal composition is exciting and encouraging indeed. As a teacher of writing, I hope to prepare my students to be engaged citizens of their communities and of the world, an outcome that enables them to be better prepared to be designers of “social futures” as discussed by the members of The New London Group.

Skills Learned

Participants often noted that they adapted their writing skills and learned new skills in the creation of their videos. In the reflection essays, 22 excerpts were identified as relating to the participants' learning process in the production of their multimedia projects. The following excerpts reveal some of the skills students learned in the process of composing a multimodal text.

- *The video project was a great idea and has shown me a better understanding of how a small piece of media works.*

- *The skills I learned were problem solving, time management, coordinating. The problem solving skills is the most useful because it was not easy to find out a way to get the information I wanted to use and put it into my video.*

Other participants noted that they learned how to use movie-making software and to be more organized while working on the project. Some participants expressed that the project helped them learn more about their topics and the topics of other classmates, and one participant noted that the project helped them learn how to find information and resources more effectively.

Based on the findings of my research, students learn and develop many skills in the process of composing multimedia texts.

- Students learned how to use movie-making software.
- Students learned the value of time management and often improved their time management skills.
- Students learned how media works.
- Students learned how to collect and organize digital media.
- Students learned they could accomplish complex technical tasks and developed self-confidence.
- Students learned problem-solving skills.
- Students learned more about their own topics and the topics of others.

In response to the findings on the skills students learned as they created their multimedia projects, I make the following propositions.

- Learning multimedia software may allow students to gain a more in-depth understanding of the rhetorical function of text, image and sound in multiple

modes. A discussion of the function of media and rhetorical use of multimedia texts should be added to the discussion when we teach multimodal composition.

As students learn to use multimedia software, teachers could ask them to critically think about the textual, visual and sonic aspects of media. Movie-making software may allow students to gain a better understanding of how media works to persuade and influence the public and new media software can be used to teach rhetoric in first-year composition classes.

- Teachers should consider discussing problem-solving skills when they assign multimedia tasks.

Multimedia assignments may be used to educate students about the importance of information technology and teach students how to access the information they need and solve problems (see Gee in Chapter 2). Multimodal composition may also provide the opportunity for students to develop their time management and organizational strategies, skill which are likely to benefit them in their academic, professional and personal “lifeworlds” (The New London Group).

- Multimedia assignments can be used to engage students in their own topics and give them the opportunity to teach their classmates about their topics.

If multimodal assignments are given early in the semester, as a precursor to the traditional research-based academic essay, students may become more engaged in their topics and the research process itself. Students may also present their videos in class in order to generate discussion about their topics and make connections with others who have similar interests. Video could be used as a powerful tool for building community early in the semester.

By understanding some of the skills students learn when they compose multimedia texts, teachers are better able to anticipate how multimodal assignments can be used to teach the basic principles of rhetoric and composition. The skills students learn and advance when they produce multimedia texts can be easily associated with traditional composition skills as can be seen when comparisons between traditional and multimodal composition are made.

Problems and Frustrations

Just as the positive language used by participants in their reflection essays is very revealing, so is the negative language that was used. There were five excerpts coded for negative language and 12 excerpts that were marked specifically for the expression of frustrations or problems with the project in the Reflection Essays. Many of the problems and frustrations students encountered were related to technology issues. Participants also noted that negotiating copyright rules and permissions to use various media presented a source of their frustrations as well. These typical frustrations and problems with negotiating technology issues as well as concerns with copyright and Fair Use Law should be further explored in future research projects.

On the Midpoint Survey, when participants were asked to explain the problems that they were encountering, 13% of the respondents reported that they were not experiencing any problems; 7% reported that they were having issues with using the software; 47% reported having issues with music, editing or the inclusion of text in their project; 13% reported having difficulties finding information, resources, materials, content or downloading media, and 20% reported having complications related to copyright.

When asked about their levels of frustration at the project's midpoint, 13% of the respondents reported that they were "very frustrated with the project and have been working on it for days" and another 13% reported that they were "very frustrated and have been working on it for weeks." Out of the 16 respondents, 25% reported that they were "somewhat frustrated with the project but enjoying a chance to learn something new" and only 6% reported having no frustration with the project. A majority of the students expressed little frustration and that they were enjoying the project as 56% reported that "the project is challenging, but I am enjoying it" and 25% reported that "the project is easy and I am enjoying it."

On the Post-Survey, when asked about the problems they encountered while doing the video project, 36% of the participants reported having issues with technology or downloading media; 11% reported that they had difficulties finding information or resources for the project; 25% reported having trouble learning the software program; 18% of the participants noted that they had trouble with time management or organization, and 11% mentioned having difficulties with the music in their video.

Around the project's mid-point, after the initial interview, Brenda came to class a few minutes late and appeared noticeably agitated. When she plugged in her flash drives at her computer station, I heard an audible gasp. I quickly went over to her to see if I could offer some assistance.

When Brenda pulled up her project in the classroom, all she could see were red "Xs" where all her pictures had been. She stared in horror at the screen and explained that she had worked for hours on her mother's computer the previous night but now all her work

had “disappeared.” I was able to help her resolve her issues, but she was very clearly upset.

In our final interview, Brenda explained how frustrated she was with the learning curve that was required of her in the making of the video. When I asked her if there was any additional information that I could have provided the class in order to make the video project easier, she replied:

No, I wasn't in the dark about anything. The only thing that I think could help in the future is that if somebody is not familiar at all with the program, they probably need a little bit more extra time to get familiar with it, then start their project. Because . . . if you're spending time trying to learn it, it does take you away from doing the best you can on your project because then there's all the time gone and you're like, "Oh, I've got two days," doin' the best you could do because your time limit runs out.

As we finished up the interview, I could tell that Brenda was relieved to have the project completed and the semester behind her. Her frustration seemed to melt away as she talked about the outcomes of the project and her understanding of how the multimedia project contributed to her learning in the course. She left my office in a positive frame of mind and she seemed upbeat about the final outcomes of her project and the semester as a whole.

Christie also encountered some frustrations and problems and her difficulties were largely due to the fact that her computer crashed during the course of the project. In the final interview, Christie explained that her husband had downloaded a virus on their personal computer and when it crashed, all her media files were lost. When I asked her how much time it cost her when she lost all her media, she replied:

Well, since there was a time line and it had an actual time that it had to be in, I pushed myself, obviously, to get it in before the time was up, so I would have liked to have been able to have a lot more time to do it over, but since I didn't, I basically did it in one day. I worked an entire day literally trying to get everything together . . . I think if I hadn't lost everything and still had all that, then definitely my video would have been better. But because . . . I had to whip it together, basically I don't feel like it got the 100% that it would have gotten.

Christie was able to submit her project in time, but the fact that she had to start over significantly affected the quality of her work. Technical problems seem to be the basis of much of the frustration that the students experience when working with multimedia. Jessica also discussed some of her frustrations with creating the video in the Post-Interview.

Of the three participants interviewed, Jessica seemed to experience the least amount of difficulty; however, she did find some aspects of the project to be frustrating. The biggest problem she had was altering the length of time her pictures were displayed in the video. Jessica explained that she used the “Help” feature in iMovie to figure out how to make her pictures show up for a longer duration, but she also mentioned that she felt slightly disadvantaged because she was using iMovie instead of Windows Movie Maker. We had discussed several aspects of Movie Maker in class, but this information was not relevant to her.

In class you . . . were explaining how to use Movie Maker and I was like, well, that looks really easy and then I don't have Movie Maker on my computer so I kinda like had to tough it out on my own (laughing) and I was just like UGG and then nobody that I knew knew how to work iMovie . . . I was forced to go look it up, but good thing they had that information there.

Jessica was able to successfully work independently and complete her project well before the original due date. Though each of the participants interviewed experienced their own frustrations with the video project, they all indicated that they were happy with final outcome during their post-interviews.

Technical Difficulties

It is important to consider what problems and frustrations students encounter when they are producing multimedia texts. As compositionists continue to integrate new media into their classes, students will more often be asked to compose new types of digital texts in addition to the traditional essays typical of first-year composition courses. For many students, the process of creating multimedia is a new experience that requires them to learn about new software programs and enter the unfamiliar waters of copyright and Fair Use laws. Even for individuals with experience using multimedia technologies, the process of creating a multimedia text can sometimes be problematic. I wanted to know what difficulties my students faced in the process of creating their multimedia projects so that I could anticipate these issues in future semesters and provide additional support for my students as they take on the challenges of developing multiliteracies. Participants provided information about their levels of frustration and the problems they encountered in the Midpoint Survey, Post-Survey, Reflection Essays and Post-Interviews.

As the findings show, on the Midpoint survey, only 13% of the respondents reported that they were not experiencing any problems or frustrations. However, a total of 54% of responses indicated that participants were having some type of trouble with the movie-making software program whether it be just learning how to use the software or problems specifically related to the editing of music, font, text, transitions, video or still images into their multimedia texts. A total of 33% of the Midpoint Survey's respondents indicated that they were experiencing issues related to copyright in some way, whether it was finding materials that were appropriate to use, difficulties obtaining permissions to use copyrighted materials, or finding acceptable media listed under the Creative Commons

License. A majority of the respondents, 81%, did report they were having some difficulties with the project but that they were enjoying the opportunity to learn something new, but 26% of the respondents indicated that they were experiencing frustration after spending some time working on the project.

On the Post-Survey, a total of 82% of the respondents indicated that the problems they encountered had to do with learning the software program, downloading media and editing media within the movie-making software, or finding information and source materials for their project, whereas 18% reported that their issues dealt more with time management in the production of their video. In the Reflection Essays, participants identified many of the same problems that they encountered in the process of creating their multimedia texts.

In the Reflection Essays, participants wrote about some of the same problems and frustrations that they were experiencing at the project's midpoint. There were 15 excerpts coded as mentioning the challenging aspects of creating a video, a total of 12 excerpts coded for specific mention of problems or frustrations; 10 excerpts mentioning the participant's need to learn the software or problems with technology, five excerpts coded as generally negative language, and five coded excerpts indicating that the video required more work than the paper; 17 coded excerpts dealt with time management, seven excerpts related to copyright issues, and 11 excerpts that noted how making a multimedia text is very time consuming.

As the findings in the Midpoint Survey and Post-Survey as well as the Post Interviews demonstrate, participants seemed to have the most difficulty with working with unfamiliar technology, and many perceived that the process of creating a multimedia text

was very time consuming. Many also reported feeling frustrated or overwhelmed by issues related to copyright laws and Fair Use guidelines as most students have little knowledge or experience with these important aspects of composing multimedia texts. I spend a lot of time emphasizing that students need to follow Fair Use guidelines and use media under the Creative Commons License when possible, and this causes some frustration when students get the impression that they are limited in what media they can and cannot use from the Internet. In the Post-Interviews, Brenda, Christie and Jessica explained that their problems were more related to issues with technology.

Brenda probably experienced the most frustration with the multimedia project because she had to spend “so much time learning the equipment.” Her lack of computer skills going into the project were probably a major contributing factor to her overall levels of frustration with the project. She explained in the Post-Interview that she felt she had spent a majority of her time just learning to use the movie-making software and when her computer crashed midway through the project, she experienced a great deal of frustration trying to work on the project on several different computers.

Similarly, Christie experienced some of the same issues as Brenda because her computer also crashed after she had already spent a significant amount of time recording video and taking pictures for the project. This resulted in her having to completely start over with her video as the deadline was fast approaching. As she explained in the Post-Interview, she felt she had to “throw it all together” at the last minute in order to get the video submitted on time and this significantly detracted from the quality of her work. Jessica’s problems were also related to technology, but they were not as severe as Brenda and Christie’s issues.

As the findings from the Midpoint Survey, Post-Survey and Reflection Essays indicate, in answer to the question of what negatives aspects of multimodal composition were experienced by the participants of my research study, most were related to working with the unfamiliar software programs required to make a multimodal text. Copyright and Fair Use also presented some frustration for some of the participants.

These findings suggest that students need a strong technical support system when they are asked to compose multimedia texts. Likewise, when students are asked to compose multimedia texts on their own computers, they may be faced with the issue of a computer crashing, and they may experience difficulties when they have to work on their projects on several different computers. They also may find that composing a multimodal text is a time consuming process and this suggests that teachers should take time management into consideration when they plan their multimedia assignments.

A potential solution to alleviate some of the problems and frustrations that are inherent in the production of multimodal texts would be to provide additional training in the use of multimedia software before students actually begin working on their own projects. In previous semesters, I have spent a week of class time allowing students to create short videos in order to prepare them for the larger multimedia project. This could be a good strategy to help students overcome some of the difficulties they experience when working with new technologies.

It may be an even better situation to allow students to work on their projects in a designated computer classroom where they can save their projects to a particular computer and work on them during class. However, this solution may not always be a viable option. Nonetheless, the technical problems students may encounter in the making

of their multimedia projects should not deter teachers from assigning new media texts as part of their composition courses, but careful considerations should be made about how we can provide additional technical support to students in class and outside of class, and the time-consuming aspects of multimodal composition should be considered when we integrate new media assignments into our courses. Although problems and frustrations were a part of the multimedia assignment, participants often expressed that they were satisfied with the overall results of their video projects and this fact illustrates one of the many benefits of incorporating multimodal composition within the curriculum of first-year writing programs.

Overview: Positive & Negative Aspects of Multimodal Composition

In the previous sections, I have answered my second research question that asks what the participants of my research study convey as the negative and positive aspects of multimodal composition. Following I present an overview of the results of the findings of my research:

- A majority of the participants of my study did not have concerns about access to technology.
- Students expressed that they have a keener sense of audience awareness and purpose in the composition of multimodal texts.
- Students reported that they felt an enhanced sense of engagement with their topics while composing multimodal texts.
- Multimedia assignments could present an opportunity for teachers to discuss the importance of time management and organization strategies in both traditional and multimodal composition.

- Teachers should consider how multimedia assignments might boost their students' confidence levels in both traditional and multimodal composition.
- Students may feel that they have more freedom of expression when given the opportunity to create multimodal compositions.
- The problems participants encountered were mostly related to learning the movie-making software. Students also had problems with copyright and Fair Use guidelines.
- Computers crash and technology fails, even under the best circumstances, and it is important to recognize the innate frustrations and problems that will inevitably arise when asking students to compose multimodal texts in any circumstance.

In response to the answers to my second research question presented here, I propose the following:

- Access is less of a concern than it has been in previous years, but if teachers can provide students with a reliable computer classroom and the digital technology required to make multimedia texts, students may produce better texts, encounter fewer problems, and experience less frustration with multimodal composition.
- Multimodal texts can be used in composition courses to enhance a sense of audience awareness and purpose and could enhance the discussion of purpose-driven arguments in first-year composition courses.
- Multimodal composition gives students the opportunity for more personal expression.

A sense of fun and engagement can help build the “bridge” to the “high benefits” of student motivation (Anderson 2008).

- Multimodal composition allows students to be more engaged with the topics and subject matter of their traditional texts. In turn, students gain a sense of fulfillment and audience-driven purpose when they share their topics with their classmates and publish their arguments to the world via the World Wide Web.

Students see multimodal communication as a useful tool for social activism and sharing information that they care about. These findings suggest that multimodal composition does allow students to envision their role in the “design of social futures” (The New London Group).

- It is important to consider how much time can be and should be spent on the production of multimedia texts in first-year composition courses.

Connecting multimodal assignments to traditional writing assignments may help engage students when they produce their traditional academic essays.

- In-class and out-of-class technical support should be provided to students so they can successfully navigate the unfamiliar terrain of multimodal composition.

Teachers should consider how to make connections between their students and helpful support staff members at their institution. Multimodal communication is a community act and takes a support system of many people playing many different roles. By enhancing a support system for this type of composition to occur, writing teachers may foster the education of a more engaged and active citizenry.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed some of the findings from the Pre-survey, Midpoint Survey, Post-Survey, the Pre and Post Interviews, and the Final Reflection Essays. These findings include information about participants’ attitudes and perceptions about creating a

multimedia text in comparison to the writing of a traditional essay and the value they place on both traditional and multimodal composition as an academic and professional skill. I also presented the findings that show the positive and negative aspects of multimodal composition as conveyed by the participants of my study. As I presented findings, I analyzed how the comparison of traditional and multimodal composition may inform the teaching of writing in first-year composition programs. In my analysis, I presented ways in which multimodal composition can be used to supplement traditional instruction in first-year composition courses. I also analyzed how understanding some of the positive and negative aspects of multimodal composition may contribute to the learning outcomes of assigning multimodal texts as well as how this information can contribute to a “pedagogy of multiliteracies” and facilitation of the “design of social futures” within the context of general education composition courses.

In the following chapter I will conclude with suggestions as to how my research fits into the larger discussion of multimodal composition and the use of new media texts within the field of computers and composition. I will also provide an overview of the findings of my research project and I will present my suggestions to enhance best practices in the teaching of multimodal and traditional composition. I will also forecast how future research projects may be designed in order to further our understanding of how multimodal composition can best be integrated into writing programs.

CHAPTER 5: TRADITIONAL AND MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION AT WORK FOR TEACHERS,
STUDENTS AND FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS

Introduction

In the previous four chapters, I introduce the basis for my study's inquiry into student attitudes and perceptions about multimodal composition; offer a thorough literature review examining the scholarship of new media, situating my study within the conversation of computers and composition; establish my methods and methodology as a

teacher-researcher using a contextualist paradigm and pragmatic worldview; and present the findings and analysis of the data that emerged from this mixed methods case study.

In this final chapter, I will provide a summary of my research project and highlight some of the key realizations that I have come to in the work of this dissertation. I will then offer some conclusions about these key points and offer some final suggestions as to how my research can inform the practice of teaching multimodal composition in first-year writing courses. Finally, I will use this closing chapter to recall some of my personal experiences with teaching multimodal composition—the experiences that led me to the subject of this dissertation and both inspired and frustrated me in my first years of teaching. These personal reflections illustrate why I was drawn to my research but also demonstrate the struggle that teachers of composition face as we try to reconfigure what it means to teach writing in the 21st century. I will conclude with some suggestions for future research projects that can contribute to our understanding and implementation of multimodal composition in the teaching of writing as we prepare students for their roles as students, professionals and engaged citizens of the world.

Summary and Conclusions

Through this mixed methods case study, I was able to learn more about how students respond to the tasks of multimodal composition before, during and after the process of creating video documentaries for their first-year composition course. Through surveys, interviews and the analysis of reflection essays, I was able to put together a picture of how students compare multimodal and traditional composition, the frustrations they encounter when composing in various modes, and ascertain the value the participants place on both traditional and multimodal composition. I was also able to depict some of the positive and

negative aspects of multimodal composition that the students themselves revealed through the various research instruments used.

I have used my study to capture a snapshot view of student experiences with multimodal composition as a means of furthering my own pedagogical strategies and contributing to the discussion of best practices in the use of student-produced videos in first-year composition. In this process, I have come to several realizations, the most significant of which can be summarized as follows:

- Multimodal composition is difficult and many students are unfamiliar with the process. This lack of experience can often cause students to have anxiety or feel intimidated when they are asked to create videos in their composition classes.
- Technical problems are probably the most frustrating aspects of multimodal composition for students, but access to technology is not as big of an issue as in times past.
- Students view the skills acquired through multimodal composition as professionally valuable; however, they view the skills inherent to traditional composition as valuable in their academic lives.
- Students are more engaged with their topics and have an enhanced sense of audience awareness, rhetorical purpose, and social agency with video production.

Of course there are other themes that emerged from the research of this dissertation, but these key points stand out as the most significant and lasting impressions that I have taken from the project. Based on these findings, I present the following conclusions.

It is important to recognize the anxiety that composing new media texts can cause our students, and we must also acknowledge that our students will not always be as enthusiastic about creating new kinds of texts as we are about asking them to do so.

Because multimodal composition is difficult and intimidating to many students, strong support systems should be in place when we create multimodal assignments. Support systems can be created both inside and out of the classroom. We can consciously pair students based on their abilities and comfort levels with multimodal composition, perhaps giving students the opportunity to support and teach one another as they work on their projects. We can also provide additional support outside of the classroom by offering workshops and office hours dedicated to helping students as they work through the challenges of multimodal composition. Another valuable support system could be established through connections with library staff as I have discovered first-hand in recent semesters. Establishing community in the classroom and networking with other faculty and staff members outside of the classroom can provide both teachers and students with the support systems they need to successfully produce new media texts.

Most students now have easy access to the technology needed to compose multimodal texts; however, working with unfamiliar technology can be extremely frustrating and time consuming. It must also be acknowledged that often technology fails.

When we design multimedia assignments, we must take into consideration the time it takes not only to learn how to use new programs and equipment, but also the time that can be lost when technologies fail. We must think about how we can provide the technical expertise, training and even basic computer support for our students when we think of how to create an environment conducive to learning new skills. If students are perpetually

frustrated by the technology used for multimodal composition, they may have difficulty gaining the full benefits of acquiring new skills and composing in new ways. If we cannot provide students with the space to compose videos, specifically a computer classroom with all the necessary software and hardware, then we will need to come up with some solutions to address the technical difficulties that inevitably arise.

In addition to planning ways to support our students, it is also important to ask them to think about how they might use their composition skills, regardless of whether we are asking them to write traditional academic essays or asking them to compose in new ways.

Composing multimedia just for the sake of doing something different is not enough. We must ask our students to think critically about the skills they develop in first-year writing and ask them to consider how these skills will benefit them academically, professionally and even personally. Adding this critical approach to teaching composition will allow students to see the value of composition and rhetoric, and will help the field maintain relevancy in a rapidly changing world.

If composing new kinds of texts challenges our students to see their topics and research in new and engaging ways, then we should be able to use new media assignments to inform the writing process and get our students excited about writing in a variety of ways.

Multimodal composition should no longer be an “after the fact” enterprise, something we do at the end of the semester after the more serious business of paper writing is over. We can use multimodal composition early in the semester to motivate and engage students and get them writing and thinking about their topics and the various modes of communication that are available to them.

Multimodal composition can also be used to get students thinking about rhetorical choices and the multiple modes accessible to make meaning in our digital world.

There does not have to be such a clear distinction between traditional and multimodal composition. Indeed, as many of the scholars presented in Chapter 2 argue, the successful writing programs of the future will integrate multimodal composition as a tool to enhance the literate practices of our students. We can no longer afford to have a narrow view of what writing is and what writing can do. As such, we can begin to see how multimodal composition merges with traditional composition and learn how to use a variety of assignments to get students thinking critically about the ways they can compose effectively and convey messages in many different modes for many different purposes. In this sense, multimodal composition can strengthen our pedagogy and enhance our students' understanding of rhetoric. And this all can be done in conjunction with teaching traditional writing rather than keeping multimodal composition separate from the business of teaching writing.

When students work with multimedia, they learn time management and organizational skills and they also gain confidence when they successfully create new kinds of texts.

We should ask students to write about their experiences with multimodal composition, and this will allow them to think critically about their roles as both consumers and producers of multimodal texts.

Opening the composition classroom to multimodal composition, specifically in the form of video documentaries, gives students the opportunity to develop skills that let them participate in convergence culture and address issues that are important to them.

Simply put, multimodal composition gives our students a chance to be heard and seen in both a literal and figurative sense. If we wish to empower our students to take action and put their compositions out in the world, we need to ask them to think about their roles as both producers and consumers of media. .

Suggestions for Future Research

Since completing the research for this dissertation, I have had several discussions with colleagues within my department where I currently teach, at workshops, and at conferences where I have presented my work. Many of these conversations led me to consider future research projects that could further the work presented here.

Having shown how students compare and contrast traditional and multimodal composition in my research, I would like to further this exploration by comparing traditional essays to video documentary essays through rhetorical analysis of student texts. Research should be done comparing the use of the rhetorical appeals in traditional and multimodal texts in order to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each type of composition. If student videos are more effective in some ways but less effective in others, it will be interesting to explore how so and why, and perhaps use this understanding to enrich the teaching of both.

Likewise, I have argued in this chapter that multimodal composition should not be considered an afterthought in our composition classes, but should be integrated into our courses throughout the duration of the semester as a means of both engaging our students with their topics and enhancing their sense of rhetoric and purpose. A future research project could allow one to investigate student writing before and after the completion of multimodal projects and determine if video documentary essays can help students see

their writing in new ways and even improve their traditional essays as a result. Research should be conducted to determine exactly what skills students acquire through multimodal composition and if/how those skills translate over to traditional writing skills. Research is needed to explore how video documentary essays might remediate the traditional academic essay in first-year writing programs and beyond.

It would also be interesting to explore how multimodal composition can be used to teach reading and writing to students in developmental English courses. Finally, more research is needed to explore how students continue to use multimodal composition in their academic, professional and personal lives after completing a multimedia project in their first-year writing courses, and also to explore how teachers of composition are being supported in their efforts to teach multimodal composition in first-year writing programs.

I began this project with the intention of showing how multimodal composition is an extension of the writing process, but as the scope of the study developed, my focus shifted and I came to realize that multimodal composition has the capacity to be so much more than just an addition to teaching the traditional academic essay. Ultimately, I wanted to provide a view of how students respond to traditional and multimodal composition and give voice to the concerns, frustrations, challenges and triumphs that the participants of my study encountered as they created a new kind of text for their basic writing course. I have concluded that multimodal composition is a tool that can be used to teach our students about communication, audience, purpose and rhetoric, and also as a vehicle of empowerment that will allow them to more fully and critically participate in the media rich culture of their daily lives. While there is yet much to be determined about how we will teach writing and what we will teach as writing, this project has further convinced me of

the value of new media scholarship and has empowered me to continue on as an advocate and innovator within my chosen field and profession. Multimodal composition is here to stay, and I look forward to participating in the evolution of the field of composition and rhetoric through the lens of computers and composition. I also look hopefully toward the world that is possible through our conscious and critical “design of social futures.”

Namaste.

WORKS CITED

- Aitken, N. L. *Creating a Connected Classroom: Engaging Students with Multimodal Texts in the Community College Composition*. Diss. Illinois State University, 2009.
- Anderson, Daniel. “Prosumer Approaches to New Media Composition: Consumption and Production in Continuum.” *KAIROS* 8.1 (2003): multimedia. 12 October 2003. <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/8.1/binder2.html?http://www.hu.mtu.edu/oldsites/kairos/CoverWeb/anderson/index.html>
- Anderson, Daniel. “The Low Bridge to High Benefits: Entry-Level Multimedia, Literacies, and Motivation.” 25.1 (2008): 40-60.
- Anderson, Daniel. et. al. “Integrating Multimodality Into Composition Curricula: Survey Methodology and Results from a CCCC Research Grant.” *Composition Studies*. 34.2 (2006). 59-84.
- Baile, Brian. • *Reel Literacies: Digital Video Production as a Literacy Practice*. Diss.

- University of Rochester, 2009.
- Ball, Cheryl. "Show, Not Tell: The Value of New Media Scholarship." *Computers and Composition*. 21 (2004): 403-425.
- Ball, Cheryl E., & Moeller, Ryan. "Re-Inventing The Possibilities: Academic Literacy and New Media." *Fibreculture*, 10.
http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue10/ball_moeller/index.html
- Ball, Cheryl E. et. al. "Talking Back to Teachers: Undergraduate Research in Multimodal Composition." (in progress) Debra Journet, Cheryl E. Ball, and Ryan Trauman (Eds.) *The New Work of Composing*. Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press. <http://tinyurl.com/TalkingBack-Ball>
- Barthes, Roland. "The Rhetoric of the Image." *Image, Music, Text*, New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- Bernhardt, Stephen. "Seeing the Text." *College Composition and Communication* 37.1 (Feb. 1986): 66-78.
- Bizzaro, Daniel Lee. *Examining the Influence of Multimodal New Media Texts and Technologies On First-Year Writing Pedagogies: A Cross Sectional Case Stud.* Diss. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2010.
- Blair, J. Anthony. "The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments." *Defining Visual Rhetorics*. Eds. Charles Hill and Marguerite Helmers. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.
- Bolter, Jay David and Grusin, Richard. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.
- Bolter, Jay David. *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.
- Bloom, Lynn Z., Donald A. Daiker, and Edward M. White. *Composition Studies in the New Millennium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2003. Print.
- Borowicz, Suzanne. • *Embracing Lives through the Video Lens: An Exploration of Literacy Teaching and Learning with Digital Video Technology in an Urban Secondary English Classroom*. Diss. State University of New York at Buffalo, 2005.
- Borton, Sonya C. *Multimodal and Print Composition: An Examination of Instructors and Students Transferring Rhetorical Knowledge in First-Year Composition*. Diss. University of Louisville, 2008.

- Clark, Elizabeth. "The Digital Imperative: Making the Case for a 21st Century Pedagogy." *Computers and Composition* 27.1 (2010): 27-35.
- Connolly, Evelyn M. *From Page to Screen: Multimodal Learning in a High School English Class*. Diss. Hofstra University, 2008. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.
- Cope, Bill and Mary Kalantzis, Eds. *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Creswell, John. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009. Print.
- Creswell, John., and Clark Vicki L. Plano. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007. Print.
- Cushman, Ellen. "The Rhetorician as an Agent for Social Change." Ed. Lisa Ede. Urbana, Illinois: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999. 372-389.
- Cushman, Ellen. "New Media Scholarship and Teaching: Challenging the Hierarchy of Signs" *Pedagogy*, 11.1, (Winter 2011): 63-79.
- DeVoss, Dànuelle N., Heidi A. McKee, and Richard (Dickie) Selfe, eds. *Technological Ecologies and Sustainability*. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital P/Utah State UP, 2009. *Computers and Composition Digital Press*. Web. [May 20, 2012]. <<http://ccdigitalpress.org/ebooks-and-projects/tes>>.
- DigiRhet.org. "Teaching Digital Rhetoric: Community, Critical Engagement, and Application." *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 6.2 (2006): 231-259. Retrieved from Project Muse.
- Dubisar, Abby M., and Jason Palmeri. "Palin/Pathos/Peter Griffin: Political Video Remix and Composition Pedagogy." *Computers and Composition* 27.2 (2010): 77-93.
- Evans, Ellen and Po, Jeanne. "A Break in the Transaction: Examining Students' Responses to Digital Texts." *Computers and Composition*. 24.1 (2005): 56-73.
- Fadde, Peter, J., Patricia Sullivan. "Toward Sustainable Processes for Incorporating Video into Multimedia Composition." *Technological Ecologies and Sustainability*. Eds. Danielle N. DeVoss, Heidi A. McKee and Richard Selfe. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital P/Utah State UP, 2009. *Computers and Composition Digital Press*. Web. [May 20, 2012]. <<http://ccdigitalpress.org/ebooks-and-projects/tes>>.
- Faigley, Lester and Selzer, Jack. *Good Reasons: Designing and Writing Effective*

- Arguments*. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2006.
- George, Diana. "From Analysis to Design: Visual Communication in the Teaching of Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 54.1 (2002): 11-39.
- Haendiges, James A. *Mobility and the Digital Page*. Diss. Washington State University 2010.
- Halbritter, Bump. "Big Questions, Small Works, Lots of Layers: Documenting Video Production and the Teaching of Academic Research and Writing" *Kairos* 16.1 Fall 2011 <http://www.technorhetoric.net/16.1/praxis/halbritter/index.php>
- Hawisher, Gail E. and Selfe, Cynthia L. Eds. *Passions, Pedagogies and 21st Century Technologies*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1999.
- Hawisher, Gail E. and Selfe, Cynthia. "Becoming Literate in the Information Age: Cultural Ecologies and the Literacies of Technology." *College Composition and Communication*. 55.4 (2004): 642-692.
- Hill, Charles A. "The Psychology of Rhetorical Images." *Defining Visual Rhetorics*. Eds. Charles Hill and Marguerite Helmers. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003.
- Hill, Charles A. "Reading the Visual in College Writing Courses." *Visual Rhetoric in a Visual World: A Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Carolyn Handa. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004. (107-129)
- Hocks, Mary E. "Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments." *College Composition and Communication*. 54:4, 2003.
- Hocks, Mary E. and Comstock, Michelle. "Voice in the Cultural Soundscape: Sonic Literacy in Composition Studies." *Computers and Composition Online*.
- Hocks, Mary E. and Kendrick, Michelle R. eds. *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in The Age of New Media*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003.
- Hodgson, Justin. "'Reculturalizations: 'Small Screen' Culture, Pedagogy and YouTube.'" *Enculturation*. 8, 2010. <http://enculturation.gmu.edu/reculturalizations>
- Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York UP, 2008. Print.
- Johanek, Cindy. *Composing Research: A Contextualist Paradigm for Composition and Rhetoric*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2000. Print.
- Kirsch, Gesa and Patricia A. Sullivan. *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1992. Print.

- Kniewel, Michael. "What is Humanistic About Computers and Writing? Historical Patterns and Contemporary Possibilities for the Field." *Computers and Composition*. 26.2 (2009): 92-106.
- Kofi-Charu, Nat. *Multimodal Media Production in the Development of Multiliteracies*. Diss. University of California, Berkley, 2008. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.
- Kopp, Drew and Stevens, Sharon McKenzie. "Re-Articulating the Mission and Work of the Writing Program with Digital Video." *Kairos* 15.1 (2010)
- Kozdras, Deborah. *From Real to Reel: Performances of Influential Literacies in the Creative Collaborative Processes and Products of Digital Video Composition*. Diss. University of South Florida, 2010.
- Kress, Gunther. *Literacy in New Media Age*. London: Routledge/Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2003.
- Kuhn, Virginia. "Picturing Work: Visual Projects in the Writing Classroom." *Kairos* 9.2 (2005).
- Lauer, Claire. "Contending with Terms: 'Multimodal and Multimedia' in the Academic and Public Sphere." *Computers and Composition*. 26.1 (2009): 225-239.
- Lemke, J. L. "Metamedia Literacy: Transforming Meanings and Media." *Visual Rhetoric in a Visual World: A Critical Sourcebook* Ed. Carolyn Handa. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, (2004): 71-93.
- Lunsford, Andrea A. "Writing, Technologies, and the Fifth Canon." *Computers and Composition*. 23.2 (2006): 169-177.
- Lutkewitte, Claire. *Multimodality Is...: A Survey Investigating How Graduate Teaching Assistants and Instructors Teach Multimodal Assignments in First-Year Composition Courses*. Diss. Ball State University, 2010.
- MacNealy, Mary Sue. *Empirical Research in Writing*. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon, 1999.
- Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001.
- Martin, Londie T. *Bringing Ecomposition to a Multimodal Composition Course: Critical Literacy and Place at Work in English 250*. Diss. Iowa State University, 2008.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Fiore, Quintin. *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1967.

- Meeks, Melissa and Ilyasova, Alex. "A Review of Digital Video Production in Post-Secondary English Classrooms at Three Universities." *Kairos* 8.2 (2003): 20 pages. 08 September 2007
<http://english.ttu.edu/KAIROS/8.2/reviews/meeksilyasova/index.htm>
- Meeks, Melissa G. *Between Abolition and Reform: First-Year Writing Programs, E-Literacies, and Institutional Change*. Diss. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006.
- NCTE Executive Committee. "The NCTE Definition of Twenty-First-Century Literacies." NCTE Position Statement. (2008): Web. 27 July 2011.
www.ncte.org/positions/statements/21stcentdefinition.
- The New London Group. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures." *Harvard Educational Review*. 66.1 (1996): 30 pages. 09 September 2007
<http://l-by-d.com/Multiliteracies%20HER%20Vol%2066%201996.pdf>
- Ninacs, Michele. *Crossing Over to the Multimodal Side: A Study of the Consensus Building Strategies Employed by Miami University in Support of a Multimodal First-Year Writing Curriculum*. Diss. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2009.
- Onwuegbuzie, Anthony, and R. Burke Johnson. "Is 'A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come'." *Educational Researcher* 33.7 (2004): 14-26. Web.
- Palmeri, Jason. *Multimodality and Composition Studies, 1960--Present*. Diss. The Ohio State University, 2007.
- Pennell, Michael. "The H1N1 Virus and Video Production: New Media Composing in First-Year Composition." *Pedagogy* 10.3 (2010): 568-573. *Project MUSE*. Web. 21 May. 2012. <<http://muse.jhu.edu/>>.
- Powell, Beth. Kara Poe Alexander, Sonya Borton. "Interaction of Author, Audience, and Purpose in Multimodal Texts: Students' Discovery of Their Role as Composer." *Kairos* 15.2 Spring (2010)
- Ruefman, Daniel. *Examining the Influence of Multimodal New Media Texts and Technologies on First-year Writing Pedagogies: A Cross Sectional Case Study*. Diss. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2010.
- Selber, Stuart A. *Multiliteracies For A Digital Age / Stuart A. Selber*. Carbondale : Southern Illinois University Press, c2004., 2004. *GEORGIA STATE UNIV's Catalog*. Web. 21 May 2012.
- Selfe, Cynthia L , ed. *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2007. Print

- Sheppard, Jennifer. "The Rhetorical Work of Multimedia Production Practices: It's More than Just a Technical Skill." *Computers and Composition*. 26.2 (2009): 122-131.
- Shin, Dong-shin, and Tony Cimasko. Multimodal Composition In A College ESL Class: New Tools, Traditional Norms." *Computers and Composition* 25.4 (2008): 376-395.
- Shipka, Jody. "A Multimodal Task-based Framework for Composing." *College Composition and Communication*. 57.2 (Dec 2005): 277-306.
- Shipka, Jody. *Toward A Composition Made Whole* Pittsburgh, Pa. : University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011. *GEORGIA STATE UNIV's Catalog*. Web. 22 May 2012
- Smith, Mandy B. • *How Students Use Multimodal Composition to Write about Communities*. Diss. The Ohio State University, 2008.
- Takayoshi, ul & Selfe, Cynthia L. "Thinking About Multimodality." In Cynthia Selfe (Ed.) *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*; Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc. (2007): 1-12.
- Welch, Kathleen E. *Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism, and a New Literacy* Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999.
- WIDE Research Center Collective. "Why Teach Digital Writing?" *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* 10.1. (2005)
english.ttu.edu/Kairos/10.1/binder2.html?coverweb/wide/index.html.
- Wysocki, Anne Frances, et al. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2004.
- Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Using Multiple Technologies To Teach Writing." *Educational Leadership* 62.2 (2004): 38-40. *Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*. Web. 21 May 2012.
- Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Made Not Only In Words: Composition In A New Key." *College Composition And Communication* 56.2 (2004): 297-328. *Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*. Web. 21 May 2012.
- Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Writing By Any Other Name." *Principal Leadership* 10.1 (2009): 26-29. *ERIC*. Web. 21 May 2012.
- Yancey, Kathleen Blake. (2009, February). *Writing in the 21st Century*. Web. 21 May 2012. <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Press/Yancey/final.pdf>

Young, Jeffrey. ““Across More Classes, Videos Make the Grade.”
The Chronicle of Higher Education. Web. (May 2011).

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Pre-Survey Questions

1. Please choose the answer that best describes you:
 - I have always had a computer in my home.
 - I started using computers regularly in elementary school.
 - I started using computers regularly in middle school.
 - I started using computers regularly in high school.
 - I started using computers regularly in college.
 - I do not use computers regularly.
2. What is your level of computer and technology skills? (Sending email attachments, uploading documents, navigating webpages, finding information, using word processing software, figuring out how to do things on the computer etc.)

- I am not very skilled with computers
 - I know the basics
 - I am average
 - I have good computer skills
 - I am an expert with computers
3. What is your age group?
- 18-20
 - 20-25
 - 25-30
 - 30-35
 - 35-40
 - 40-45
 - 45-50
 - 50-55
 - 55-60
 - 60+
4. Do you have access to digital video cameras that can capture still photos and videos? Explain
5. Do you have any concerns about making a video for a grade? Please explain.
6. On a scale of 1-5, 5 being extremely interested, 1 being not at all interested, how would you rank your interest in using multimedia software to produce a digital video for this class?
- I have no interest in making a video
 - I am slightly interested in making a video
 - I am interested in making a video
 - I am very interested in making a video
 - This is great! I'm really excited about making a video!
7. Think about the discussions we have had in class and describe what the term rhetoric means to you. If you don't remember the meaning of this term, explain what you do know about what the term means and how you have heard it before.
8. On a scale of 1-5, 5 being very skilled, 1 being totally unfamiliar, how would you rank your familiarity with using multimedia software?
- I have no experience making videos
 - I have very little experience making videos
 - I have some experience making videos
 - I have made several videos before
 - I am an expert at making videos!
9. Previous to this class, have you ever used multimedia software before (Windows Movie Maker, iMovie, Photo Story, Audacity or similar programs)? If yes, please explain what kinds of software you used and how it was used.
10. Check the answers that best describe your feelings. You may check more than one answer.

Appendix B

Midpoint Survey

1. Check all that apply:
 - I would much rather write a paper than do this project.
 - I am glad to have the opportunity to do something other than a paper.
 - I have not learned anything new yet.
 - I have learned a lot of new things.
 - The paper I wrote required more work.
 - The video is requiring more work than the paper.
2. Are you comfortable that you will have access to the necessary digital technology needed to complete the video assignment? Why or why not?
3. Now that you have begun working on the project, are you comfortable producing a digital video as your final assignment? Why or why not?

4. So far, what problems have you encountered when working on this project? Have you had problems with multimedia software or cameras? Have you had trouble finding materials for your video? Explain
5. Now that I have worked some with multimedia software in this course:
 - I am very uncomfortable with the software
 - I am uncomfortable with the software because I have not yet tried to use it.
 - I am still not sure about using the software, but I think I will figure it out.
 - I am comfortable with the software.
 - I am extremely comfortable with the software.
 - I was extremely comfortable with the software before taking this class.
6. Check all that apply:
 - I am worried about completing this project on time.
 - I have not spent enough time preparing for this project.
 - I have not started working on the project, but I will complete it on time.
 - I have done some work on the project and I will complete it on time.
 - I am almost finished with the project and will have no problem submitting it on time.
7. Check all that apply:
 - I am very frustrated with this project, but I have not started working on it yet.
 - I am very frustrated with this project, but I have only spent a short amount of time working on it.
 - I am very frustrated with this project, and I have been working on it for days.
 - I am very frustrated with this project, and I have been working on it for weeks.
 - I am somewhat frustrated with this project, but I'm enjoying the chance to learn something new.
 - I'm not very frustrated with the project.
 - The project is challenging, but I am enjoying it.
 - The project is easy, and I am enjoying it.

Appendix C

Final Survey

1. After completing the video project, what is your understanding of the word rhetoric?
2. Would you consider making another video in the future? Explain
3. What advice would you give students who are beginning to work on making a video?
4. What do you consider to be the weaknesses of your video? Explain
5. What do you consider to be the strengths of your video? Explain
6. Do you consider making videos to be more or less difficult than writing a paper? Explain

7. Did you have a positive or negative experience doing this project?
Explain
8. What problems did you encounter while making the video? Explain
9. Are you satisfied with the results of your video? Explain
10. What did you learn while making your video? Explain

Appendix D

Tables Depicting Survey Data

Computer Use Yes – Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Started in college	11	73.3	4	26.7	15	40.5

Started in high school	3	75.	1	25.0	4	10.8
Started in middle school	7	77.8	2	22.2	8	24.3
Started in elementary school	5	71.4	2	28.6	7	18.9
Always had a computer	4	40.0	6	60.0	10	27.0

Computer Skill Yes – Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Not Skilled	0	0.00	1	100	1	2.9
Know the basics	2	66.7	1	33.3	3	8.9
Average	7	63.6	4	36.6	11	31.4
Good	10	62.5	6	37.5	16	45.7
Expert	3	75.0	1	25.0	4	11.4

Access to Technology

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Yes	14	64	8	36	22	60
Yes, with camera phone	2	40	3	60	5	14
Yes, but with some issues	3	60	2	40	5	14
No access with exception	1	100	0	0	1	3

No access	3	75	1	25	4	11
-----------	---	----	---	----	---	----

Concerns Yes – Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
No concerns	10	71	4	29	14	38
Some concerns	6	60	4	40	10	27
Yes concerns	7	54	6	46	13	35

Interest Level Yes – Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
None	2	29	5	71	7	19
Slightly	10	91	1	91	11	30
Interested	7	64	4	36	11	30
Very interested	4	67	2	33	6	16
Excited	0	0	2	100	2	5

Experience with Multimedia: Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
None	10	59	7	41	17	46
Little	3	43	4	57	7	19
Some	7	70	3	30	10	27
Expert	3	100	0	0	3	8

Preference for Paper or Video Yes – Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Prefer paper	4	57	3	43	7	19
Not sure	9	56	7	44	16	43
Rather make a video	5	71	2	29	7	19
Glad to have option of making video	16	62	10	39	26	70
Not sure why making a video	1	25	3	75	4	11
Understand value of making video	10	44	6	38	16	43

Use of Multimedia Software Yes – Total and by Traditional and Non-Traditional Students

	Traditional		Non-Traditional		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
None	12	62.2	7	36.8	19	54.3
Friend/family help/experience	1	25.0	3	75.0	4	11.4
Played around with it before	1	100	0	0.00	1	2.9
Yes, have used software before	9	81.8	2	18.2	11	31.4

Survey 2 Question 1 – N and Percentage Yes

	<i>N</i>	Percentage
I would much rather write a paper than do this project	3	18.8
I am glad to have the opportunity to do something other than a paper	12	75.0
I have not learned anything new yet	0	0.00
I have learned a lot of new things	8	50.0

The paper I wrote required more work	0	0.00
The video is requiring more work than the paper	8	50.0

Survey 2 Question 2 Comfort Level – N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Yes, comfortable because of personal access and access through school	12	75.0
Yes, comfortable because of library's resources	2	12.5
Have become more comfortable since working on project but not at first	2	12.5

Survey 2 Question 3 Comfort with Video – N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Yes	4	25.0
Yes comfortable because of resources provided	3	18.8
Yes, comfortable and have learned since starting the project	0	0.00
Yes, prefer making video over writing paper	5	31.3
No, uncomfortable with the technology and software	4	25.0

Survey 2 Question 4 Software Problems – N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
No problems	2	13.3
Software issues	1	6.7

Music, editing, text	7	46.7
Finding information, resources, materials, content, downloading	2	13.3
Copyright issues	3	20.0

Survey 2 Question 5 Comfort with Software – N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Uncomfortable	3	18.8
Uncomfortable because have not started	0	0.00
Unsure but confident will figure it out	6	37.5
Comfortable	3	18.8
Extremely comfortable	4	25.0
I was already comfortable	0.	0.00

Survey 2 Question 6 Time – N and Percentage

	N	Percentage
I am worried about completing on time	8	37.5
I have not prepared enough	1	6.3
I have not started but will complete on time	2	12.5

I have done some work and will complete it on time	8	50.0
I have almost finished and will not have a problem completing on time	5	31.3

Survey 2 Question 7 Frustration – N and Percentage

	N	Percentage
Very frustrated, but not started	0	0.00
Very frustrated, spent little time	16	100
Frustrated, been working for days	2	12.5
Frustrated, been working for weeks	2	12.5
Some what frustrated but enjoying	4	25.0
Not frustrated	1	6.3
Challenged but enjoying it	9	56.3

Survey 3 – Question 1 Understanding of Rhetoric - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
None	3	10.7
Rhetorical question	3	10.7
Analysis	5	17.9

Persuasion w/ appeals	15	51.6
Extremely comfortable now	2	7.1
Use of visual images, words, music to persuade	0	0.00

Survey 3 – Question 2 Would You Make Another Video – N Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Yes	21	72.4
Maybe under different circumstances	5	17.2
No	3	10.3

Survey 3 – Question 3 Advice to Others Making a Video- N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Time management	18	66.7
Do research	3	11.1
Use rhetoric	1	3.7
Enjoy, have fun, don't stress	4	14.8
Plan, organize	1	3.7

Survey 3 – Question 4 Weakness of Video - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Fonts, colors, music organization, transitions	7	26.9
Technology problems, quality, getting resources, interview problems	6	23.1
Did not turn out as planned	2	7.7

Length timing	3	11.5
Spelling errors, proofreading	2	7.7
None	1	3.8
Lack of information, research, weak content	5	19.2

Survey 3 – Question 5 Strength of Video - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions	15	53.8
Research , information, facts, statistics	5	17.9
Topic choice	3	10.7
Persuasive	4	14.3
Planning and organization	1	3.6

Survey 3 – Question 6 Paper or Video is More Difficult - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Paper is more difficult	10	34.5
Equal or both are difficult	10	34.5
Video is more difficult	9	31.0

Survey 3 – Question 7 Positive or Negative Experience - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Positive	17	58.6
Both	8	27.6

Negative	3	10.3
Neither	1	3.4

Survey 3 – Question 8 Problems - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Technology, downloading	10	35.7
Finding information and resources	3	10.7
Learning the program	7	25.0
Time or organization	5	17.9
Music	3	10.7

Survey 3 – Question 9 Problems - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Yes, satisfied	21	77.8
Both	3	11.1
No, not satisfied	3	11.1

Survey 3 – Question 10 What Was Learned - N and Percentage Yes

	N	Percentage
Technology, software	13	46.4
About topic	7	25.0
Time management, staying on task, not giving up	4	14.3
About resources available	1	3.6

About rhetoric	3	10.7
----------------	---	------

Appendix E

Coded Tables for Survey Questions

Response

only trouble i had was finding ways to mend my pics together with the music

It seems that I have encountered many problems during this project. I had problems finding material on my subject, the multimedia software seemed not to like me at all and I am afraid to even start putting music with my video.

Problems with

Music, editing, text

Software

I haven't had any problems.	No problems
I have had a problem with the words over-lay when I moved clips around. I am sure I will figure our how to resolve the problem, if not I will get help from the staff at Chattanooga State.	Music, editing, text
I've done projects before. I always have a little bit of trouble trying to edit a video though. I' have been having a little bit of trouble with materials cause their are so many discussions and articles and videos based on the topic that I'm working on.	Information, resources, materials, content
No so far so good. I think its more about planning. If you plan it out and allow time for it, it goes much smoother.	No problems
I haven't had any problems. I did have a few frustrations when I didn't know how to do certain things with the movie software on my computer. But, once I figured it out it all became easier.	No problems
ive had a little trouble figuring out how to get the music and video in	Music, editing, text
No, I have not starting in making the video yet, I plan on working on it today and throughout the weekend. I am having a little bit of problems finding photos and actual places where abusing animals are at in my neighborhood.	Music, editing, text
The only problems Ive had is putting a video clip inside of the video and using the different transitions	Music, editing, text
Having trouble working with this softwear	Software
Just having trouble finding images for my video that I dont have to ask permission for. Other than being told no its going ok.	Copyright
The only problem is finding music that I download from the sites given working in my video.	Music, editing, text
The only problem I have had so far is dealing with the copyright of pictures I need for the video. I have not found any pictures that are in the creative commons or that are not copyrighted.	Copyright
Not ing able make the video look the way it is in my d.	Music, editing, text
Pulling back and doing what is realitic is hard.I have not had trouble with the program,or finding material.	
I have had issues with downloading media ,but now I have conquered it ,and could not be happier.	Information, resources, materials, content
Response	Problems with
only trouble i had was finding ways to mend my pics together with the music	Music, editing, text
It seems that I have encountered many problems during this project. I had problems finding material on	Software

<p>I have had a problem with the words over-lay when I moved clips around. I am sure I will figure out how to resolve the problem, if not I will get help from the staff at Chattanooga State.</p>	<p>Music, editing, text</p>
<p>I've done projects before. I always have a little bit of trouble trying to edit a video though. I've been having a little bit of trouble with materials cause there are so many discussions and articles and videos based on the topic that I'm working on.</p>	<p>Information, resources, materials, content</p>
<p>No so far so good. I think it's more about planning. If Response</p>	<p>No problems Problems with Music, editing, text</p>
<p>only trouble I had was finding ways to mend my pics together with the music</p>	
<p>It seems that I have encountered many problems during this project. I had problems finding material on my subject, the multimedia software seemed not to like me at all and I am afraid to even start putting music with my video.</p>	<p>Software</p>
<p>I haven't had any problems.</p>	<p>No problems Music, editing, text</p>
<p>I have had a problem with the words over-lay when I moved clips around. I am sure I will figure out how to resolve the problem, if not I will get help from the staff at Chattanooga State.</p>	
<p>I've done projects before. I always have a little bit of trouble trying to edit a video though. I've been having a little bit of trouble with materials cause there are so many discussions and articles and videos based on the topic that I'm working on.</p>	<p>Information, resources, materials, content</p>
<p>No so far so good. I think it's more about planning. If you plan it out and allow time for it, it goes much smoother.</p>	<p>No problems</p>
<p>Responses</p>	<p>Video Strengths</p>
<p>The music, it tells the story and almost touches your heart. It put the video on another level that helps the viewer relate to the problem more.</p>	<p>Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions</p>
<p>I did my research and the same thoughts I came up with to get the problem solved others had the same idea.</p>	<p>Research, information, facts, statistics</p>
<p>The strengths of my video would be the pictures that I chose for my subject.</p>	<p>Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions</p>
<p>The strength of my video would be the pictures and video of my friend, Lauren. The realness of the pictures and video make a big impact.</p>	<p>Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions</p>
<p>The texts and pictures just having a visual so that the audience could have an idea</p>	<p>Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions</p>
<p>I think the statistics and pictures were pretty good in our video.</p>	<p>Research, information, facts, statistics</p>

I think I played well with emotions by using sad music and the way I filmed all the animals.	Music, images, visual, appeal to emotions
The strengths are the facts that I put in and the different transitions.	Research, information, facts, statistics
My strengths would have to be my fact, information and my pictures.	Research, information, facts, statistics
I think the information I put in it was awesome and eyeopening for me and hopefully for others	Research, information, facts, statistics
I think ,y video has wonderful facts , and videos that defenitely pull at the ethos side of rhetoric.	Research, information, facts, statistics
the strengths of my video are the videos i put in there and the pics of my children	Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions
our topic was strong.	Topic choice
The pictures, the imformation i gave and the music put it all together.	Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions
I tried to push my point across by making the video seem dramatic and very persuasive.	Persuasive
I would have to say that the strengths of my video were the pictures. I say this because I feel that the pictures that I chose for my video REALLY make an impact.	Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions
My passion for the subject gave me strength in doing this video. I love photography and I love my community.	Topic choice
The way I set my video up and my effects. I like the writing and the music I put in there.	Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions
The strengths I found in my video is that the video, is trying to convience people such as kids,parents and teachers about violent games and how it can affect them, and what can be done about it.	Persuasive
I would consider my strengths the pictures, music, and words because they were the easiest things to do.	Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions
Pictures and videos including facts based on my topic, and an interview. All of the multimedia I put in my documentary came from my camera that I gathered by myself	Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions
My video presents a very clear picture as to why smoking on campus is bad, how it is hard to avoid, and how the effects of second hand smoke can affect a person.	Persuasive
Planning and organizing it well.	Planning and Organization
that at the end it was no beating the bush got straight to the point with the conclusion on how we could make a difference	Persuasive
The live footage of football games.	Music, images, visuals, appeal to emotions
The personality that I put into my idea. I tried to make it	Topic choice

fun to watch.

the transitions and ending

Examples of shootings

Response

More difficult, it requires you to think and also relate to how some one else views your work, not just the teacher. You have to look at your work from different angles research different things then pull all of it together and make it understand able at the same time.

I was about even bothe would have been hard.

I believe that making a video is harder than writing a paper, however, making a video is more of a challenge.

Making a video is much easier to me than writing a paper.

I come from a visual background and the video was much more exciting than writing a paper.

I think that making a video is way harder than writing a paper, for me. Other people probably think that making the video was easier, not in my case.

Less, I can't way more stressed out writing papers than I did making this video.

I think it is more difficult because of the rules with the sources.

Making a video was less difficult than writing a paper, becasue they had pic and fact down in front of you to help you out.

More difficult because I had no idea what I was doing

While I beleive it is more difficult tomake a video , i enjoyed making a video much more than i did writing a paper.

less difficult i axctuell foun it to be relaxing and fun

it is more difficult but it is also more fun han writing a paper

I think they are both difficult. You have to gather as much information as you would a paper, but the video is more fun.

There are different things that make each difficult.

Writing a paper can seem boring, while making a video takes a little more effort.

I think that it is about the same for me. This is because I have a writing-processing problem, this means that I know what I want to say, but I just don't know how to put it down on paper. But, I think that making videos is difficult because of how much more time, effort, and information you have to put into it.

Music, images, visuals,
appeal to emotions

Music, images, visuals,
appeal to emotions

Video or Paper

Video

Equal

Video

Paper

Video

Paper

Video

Paper

Video

Video

Paper

Video

Equal

Video

Equal

I think the two go hand in hand. I found doing the video was challenging, but not that difficult. Doing the video, I think actually helped me in writing because I was seeing the picture that I was writing about and it made me think of more ideas as I went around my community photographing.	Equal
Less difficult. Writing a paper is not my strongest attribute	Paper
It was fun and it was difficult. The project was much easier than writing a paper.	Paper
No I think writing a paper is less difficult because everyone's computer does not have certain things that needed to complete the video.	Video
I think making a video is fun and it seems less difficult than writing a paper	Paper
I think that making a video is more creative and more fun than writing a paper. Yet, writing a paper is probably much faster. Making a video takes a lot more time.	Video
It is easier because even though it is time consuming, I had fun while working on it.	Paper
they are almost equal but the video wins because instead of finding 1500 words we could just pick a picture that would do the speaking	Paper
I think it's easier to write a paper.	Video
Maybe not less difficult but much more involved and fun to me.	Paper
I feel that there are difficult parts to both and can't really say which is more difficult even though writing a paper takes less time	Equal
less, I thought it was more fun than a paper	Paper

Response

	Positive or Negative
It was up and down for me. When I first found out about the video I was because I thought I was going to be different and easy. When I actually started on the video I found that it was even harder than the previous one's I have done in the past.	Both
At first it was negative because nothing worked for me, but in the end it became positive when I thought of other things to do.	Both
My experience with this video was a negative one, because, many things went wrong and unexpected circumstances happened.	Negative
I had a very positive experience making the video. All aspects came together nicely, making it very enjoyable.	Positive
I had a very negative experience making this video. It	Negative

stressed me out to the max, I popped a blood vessel in my eye even!	
Positive, I learned a lot just from this one project.	Positive
I had a little bit of both because I was afraid that youtube would pull my video so i tried to use creative commons a lot. But the positive thing is that I didnt give up.	Both
I have a positive experience. At first i was so worried but after I got it done i was not worried or stressed out. It came real easy and not hard to do.	Positive
Positive!!! I like what I have learned and more confidence in teaching myself how to figure things out by myself	Positive
I had a very positive experience. The optic i chose was very close to my heart,and I enjoyed making it.	Positive
positive- because i enjoyed it and learned at the same time from it	Positive
i have both	Both
Positive. It thought me alot about movie maker, so in the furture ill know what i am doing. Also it thought me alot about what advertiment goes through to sell a product.	Positive
I feel like I gained a better understanding of making videos and am proud of my work.	Positive
Well, for me, it was both a positve AND negative experience. It was positive because I had fun working on it. But, it was negative because I didn't realize how much time it would take and when I was finally done with it, I had trouble uploading it to YouTube.	Both
definantly a positve experience. I am excided about doing a video for my family and friends, using photos I have. My granddaughter had ask me a number of years ago to write in a book about my life. I could not think of things of interest. After doing this project, I see how I can make the video and write a paper to go along with it. She will love it. Thanks for the oppertunity to learn something new and so exciting.	Positive
Positive. I just did not have enough time to work out my technical diffuculties	Positive
It was a little bit of both. Getting the clips,slides and pictures together was the easy part.	Both
Both positive and negative. My positive experience is that it is a fun project you just have to be organized and in order or it will not turn out right. My negative experience is that i was not able to put my interview with my project or download any videos from the internet, which caused me to miss two requirements.	Both
I had a positive experience with doing this project	Positive
I had a very positive experience in doing this project. I was	Positive

very grateful to the many sources that were available to me for completing the project. All of that help made it possible for me to finish my project to my satisfaction.

I had a positive experience

Positive

very positive

Positive

A little of both but more positive in the end.

Both

A positive, this was my favorite project out of all of my classes.

Positive

a positive, i got stressed in the end but its because i procrastinate

Positive

Positive, I found it fun

Positive

Appendix F

Pre-Interview Questions

1. Are you comfortable using computers?
2. How much time, on average, do you spend using computers every week?
3. How do you feel about making a video for a class project?
4. Do you have any concerns about making a video?
5. What information do you need to know before you begin the project?
6. How do you feel about working in groups?
7. Do you have a YouTube account? Have you ever posted a video on YouTube before?
8. Will you be comfortable posting your own video on YouTube?

9. What do you expect will be involved in making a video? How much time do you think you will need to make the video?
10. Do you anticipate having any problems with accessing equipment or meeting deadlines?

Appendix G

Post-Interview Questions

1. Are you more comfortable using computers now than you were when you started the video project?
2. How much time did you spend working on this project?
3. Do you think this was a worthwhile learning experience? What did you learn?
4. What kind of problems did you encounter?
5. Was there any information that you did not have that you needed while making the project?

6. How did your group work together?
7. Did you experience any difficulties when posting your video to the internet?
8. Did you share your video with people outside of our class?
9. What do you think of the final product?
10. Did you have problems with equipment or meeting deadlines?
11. How does the video compare to the paper? Which skill do you think will be most valuable for you academically and professionally?

Appendix H

Transcript of Brenda's Pre Interview

My name is Brenda P.

J: Tell me a little bit about your educational background.

B: Um, I just graduated from high school, twelfth grade, and come straight to college after being out of school twenty something years.

J: So you didn't go to college after high school? You waited 20 years?

B: Yeah

J: Why'd you decide to come back?

B: It was always a dream of mine to always better myself but I've had a lot of (sigh) bad things happen in my life that's you know put me behind where I couldn't but now at this point and time in my life, my son's almost grown, so it's my time.

J: Are you glad to be here?

B: Oh yes, yes, and I think if I had went any other time in my life, I really don't think I would have been as prepared as I am now, you know?

J: So you're here at the right time for you?

B: Yeah

J: Are you comfortable using computers?

B: Sigh, I'm gettin' there, I'm not as comfortable with them as I would like to be, but I'm learning. Everybody's helpin' me, my professors and other classmates and stuff. But when I first started school, I didn't even own a computer.

J: So just in the past

B: This is my second semester

J: Just in the past six months or so,

B: Yes

J: You bought your first computer.

B: (laughs) Yes, my first computer.

J: Wow, so how do you feel like you've changed as far as from that time before you had the computer til now?

B: Well, I've learned a *lot* considering I didn't know one single thing. I mean just how to turn it on and that was it, so I'm learnin' (laughing), I'm learnin' different things.

J: Everything is turned in online in my class, so has that been challenging?

B: Sometimes, it is, you know, but basically, the way that it's done, just put it in the dropbox, that's pretty simple as long as your computer is working right, ya know.

J: How much time on average do you spend using computers every day or every week?

B: Probably about six hours a day I'm on my computer for my classes.

J: So it's all related to school?

B: Right, yeah.

J: Do you do anything for fun on the computer?

B: Yeah, you know I'll play games sometimes to relax, or I'll look up things, you know, like medicine or recipes, stuff like that you know.

J: So you didn't have a computer before, you didn't have the internet,

B: No, didn't have *anything*.

J: So is it kinda a world of difference?

B: Yeah, yeah it is. Yes, and I love having it.

J: Now you can't imagine life without it?

B: No, I don't know how I done it before. (laughing) I really don't. I just never, I don't know, I just never, everybody had one and I was like "I don't need a computer," but yeah, yeah you do. You do.

J: So you've come to appreciate having a computer?

B: Yes, yes I do.

J: So you are spending a lot of time for school on the computer?

B: Yes

J: Do you ever use it to watch TV or do anything with entertainment?

B: To look up songs and stuff, and I have watched videos on it a couple, but not as much. It's mostly for school.

J: So, how do you feel about making a video for a class project? What was your first impression?

B: (laughs) My first impression was, "Oh no." I'm not one of these people that can get up in front of a class, I get real nervous, you know, and uh that's what I thought, I thought I'm going to have to be on this video talking, which now I know I don't have to, I can go about it a different way if I need to, you know, but uh, I'm nervous at first, but uh after today I've learned more of what's expected of me, so I'm gettin' a little bit at ease with it.

J: So it didn't make you want to run away from the class?

B: No, not run away at all, I mean, actually, even though I was nervous, it makes me, it's something different, and it's a different aspect on everything and it could be fun, it could turn out to be really fun.

J: Do you have any concerns about making a video or the project?

B: Well, for me the only concern is learnin' how to use all of the things to make it, you know, not getting all the information, I can do all that, it's just usin' the software.

J: Yeah, that's probably the hardest part.

B: I'll definitely be at the library asking for help.

J: Good, so you plan on getting some extra help?

B: Oh yes, I need that.

J: What do you need to know, what information do you need to know before you start this project?

B: That I need to know before I start? I need to know you know, where I can go get help, um, to where I can get my resources from, uh what is expected of me, and what is expected of the outcome, what is the final project, what it should be.

J: How do you feel about working in groups?

B: Uh, I like working in groups. I think it can, you know, it depends on if everybody pulls their share and does everything, and if, you know, I'm sortof a loner. I was thinking about doing a group but every time I ask somebody, they're like "I think I'm gonna do it by myself," so, you know, I don't know, a group could be good, I guess.

J: So you think you'll end up doing this individually?

B: Probably, probably.

J: Do you have a YouTube account?

B: No

J: Have you ever watched stuff on YouTube?

B: Yes, yes on my phone and my computer.

J: So you've not ever posted a video on YouTube? And you're not familiar with that aspect of YouTube.

B: Never. Just watching it.

J: Do you think you're comfortable with the idea of putting your video up on YouTube?

B: Oh yeah, oh yeah. No, it's not a big deal at all. If I can help anybody in any way with my project, you know, to inform them of any information, or anything that may help them, I'm willing.

J: And what's your topic?

B: Suicide

J: So you're excited about the idea of getting it out there?

B: Yes, letting people see and to help, maybe we can stop a lot of it.

J: What do you expect here at the very beginning of the project, what do you think will be involved with making this video?

B: A lot of time. A lot of, you know, learning how to use the equipment. You know, that's going to be my main thing, you know, learning, cause my paper, I'm just almost finished with it, so I've really, I took your advice, get that paper out of the way so I can put all my energy and time into the video.

J: So you know it's going to be time consuming? And you're going to have to learn a lot.

B: Oh yeah, yeah. Right. And I want it to be time consuming so it will be the best it can be. Because if you don't, then it's not going to turn out well, you know. And I'm the type of person, I've got to be happy with it.

J: How much time do you think you'll need to do this?

B: Probably about two weeks, I guess, you know, I mean you could probably do it within a week I'd say, if you put lots of time, but someone like me that has to work and has a family, about two weeks is probably a good thing I think.

J: Do you anticipate having any trouble with getting equipment, having access to a camera, or whatever you need.

B: No, no because I've got some, I've got friends, then of course the library, so there's a lot of resources to get the things you need.

J: Do you think you'll have any trouble meeting deadlines?

B: No, not at all, not if you take your time and use everything that's offered to us, no. I should not have a problem at all. We have a lot of resources offered.

Appendix I

Brenda's Post-Interview

Q: So you had some trouble, huh?

B: Yes I did. (laughs)

J: Well tell me what your trouble was.

B: The trouble I guess, cause I wasn't familiar with the program and also being that I hadn't had a computer until I started school, it was very time consuming trying to learn the

program which took me away from trying to do my project, do you understand, ya know? I couldn't do my project 'til I learnt how to do the program. So.

J: Right. So, did you learn how to do it?

B: Yes, I did (with confidence).

J: You were showing me some stuff.

B: Yes, I was.

J: So you felt like you were frustrated because you didn't know how to use the software already.

B: Exactly. That was my problem. It wasn't the project itself, you know, it was just trying to learn how you put this here and do that, and you know, the equipment you use, use of the equipment.

J: Are you more comfortable now using computers?

B: Very much. A lot more comfortable.

J: Just related to the class or the project specifically? Tell me a little bit more about where you've come from being a new user to now.

B: Okay, well, being comfortable with the computer, you know, of course because I have to use it every day for my studies and everything, but I really believe the project made me a lot more comfortable because I had to use things on the computer that I would never have to if I hadn't done this project, which therefore taught me different things on the computer.

J: Well, like you said, you figured out, you got a new video, suicide video, you downloaded one in class but you didn't use that one. So tell me how you found that ,

B: I just uh went back to YouTube and went back over the videos and I realized that when I picked the first video I didn't look at the time, so I started looking at the time and then also I just went through the videos, found the one I liked, downloaded YouTube downloader, like you shown me, and put it on there, and then everything else fell in place.

J: So, you figured it out pretty much on your own. You had some help from the library but they didn't tell you how to do that. You knew how to do it.

B: No, I had to figure most of it out cause a lot of them don't know the answers neither.

J: I noticed when I was looking at your video, um you have a lot of different colors of font, a lot of different sizes, so tell me a little bit about your decision making process when you were deciding how things should look. Why did you do it the way you did it?

B: I'm the type of person, I like things to be different, , I don't like the same ole same ole and I just thought, to me it, to me I think it would bring the viewer in more if things were different not just the same, you know, like everybody would use.

J: Good. So you actually changed font every time.

B: Yes, just about every time. Yep.

J: Was that difficult for you to figure out or once you figured it out it wasn't difficult?

B: Once I figured it out, it wasn't difficult. I just looked up and said, "Oh, what does this do" and then started using it. (upbeat).

J: I even noticed you put some effects on pictures and stuff.

B: Yes.

J: Um, so you were pretty comfortable once you got into the program and you experimented.

B: Playing around with it, yes, you've got to learn, and then I, cause it does a lot of things you never thought it would do, and you don't know what they are until you try to use them, so that's what I was doing.

J: The big question. How much time do you think all of this took?

B: (Laughing, big sigh). Being that I had a lot of other issues, besides school, you know, unexplained issues that happened, (sigh) I probably spent a good 20-25 hours on this project, yeah.

J: And what about in comparison with your paper?

B: Oh my paper, four hours, five hours (laughing). BUT I have to say I like this a lot better because it's different. I think it gets to show people's more individuality more, and uh, it's creative, and I think it's a way to express yourself also, more so than writing a paper.

J: It's a better way to express yourself? Why is that you think?

Q: Because when you create the video, you can put in your personal touches, just like I did, show what kind of, show your personality through it. It's really just like a blank piece of paper, and you can do whatever color any way you want to, that's the way I look at it. You can express yourself, so.

J: Good, so you didn't feel like you were boxed in (B: No, No) by format or things like that. So, color, pictures, things like that, make you feel more expressive?

B: Yes, the words you wanted to write up on the captions, you know, that's you, anything, the information you wanted to put on, and what you wanted to choose. It was just a way to express yourself. I mean, you can do it in a paper, but it's only by writing. It's not visual.

J: So what about the visual. A lot of people keep bringing that up. What about the visual is appealing?

B: I think that, okay say somebody reads your paper, you know, after first, second page, if it doesn't draw you in, it's boring to them. A video, you can keep people's attention, I think, better, and they want to see what's coming next. Do you know? Not like a paper, to me. You know, like a book, you turn the next page or something. A good book. But not like a paper, people just get, I don't know, it's just been done for so long, you know.

J: Yeah, a lot of people tell me that they are more visual. That *they* enjoy seeing something more than reading something.

B: Right. And it is, for a lot of people. Ya know.

J: So, I know you were frustrated. Taking that into account, and you didn't know how to use the software, was it a worthwhile experience for you?

B: Yes it was. Even though I was stressed out there for a while and everything, um, I'm proud of myself number one, cause I done something I didn't think I could ever do, number two I can and will use this in the future for other projects that, at my choice, yes, I just, I don't, I really liked it.

J: Even through all your frustration?

B: Yeah.

J: And you thought you weren't going to make it.

B: (laughs) Right

J: You now finished the project, it's turned in, everything is done, what did you learn from this?

B: Personally, I learnt that as long as I don't give up I can complete anything (laughs). Um, second I've learnt more on the computer and now the program. If I wanted to make a video tomorrow, I could go right into and start doing it, you know.

J: So you've come that far.

B: Yes I have. I mean, I probably might run into another problem, cause we always do, but not nowhere like I done before.

J: So you feel like you could do another project and it be a lot easier.

B: Yes, yes.

J: What about, did you have to look anything up, like did you Google how to do something, or did you kind of just use trial and error? How did you figure out how to do stuff?

B: No, I didn't Google, I just pressed buttons and see what, this one didn't work, and do the other one, and just try to do it that way. Cause to me, I learned better doing it myself. Somebody can tell me a million times how to do it, but if I don't do it myself, I can't really comprehend it sometimes.

J: So, did you start off on your computer and then move around a lot?

B: Yes, cause my computer finally bit the dust. So I had to move around a lot. I went from my mothers, to the library, back to mom's.

J: Where did you end up spending most of the time working on it?

B: The library.

J: And were able to get help that you needed there?

B: Yes.

J: The problems you encountered. What were some of the things you had trouble with?

B: Uh, the program, you know, if I hit a picture and it disappeared, I had trouble trying to bring it back, or I'd have to start all over, um, (pause) trying to put it in order, I sorta had a problem, you know, because I knew the order I wanted to do , but I couldn't really get it to go there for a while, just basically the equipment, that's really all. You know, cause the research is just like when you research a paper, you know, and then you go on the computer, we're all on the computer every day anyways, pulling up pictures, so that wasn't really the hard part, basically just the equipment, learning to use it, the program.

J: Yes, and the Live MovieMaker is more difficult. I have to take that into account. So was there anything you needed, or any information that you needed that you did not have that I could have given you, that you didn't have or that you were in the dark about?

B: No, I wasn't in the dark about anything. The only thing that I think that could help in the future is that if somebody is not familiar at all with the program, they probably need a little bit more extra time to get familiar with it, then start their project. Because it does, if your spending time trying to learn it, It does take you away from doing the best you can on your project because then there's all the time gone and your like, oh I've got two days, ba ba ba ba. You know? Doin' the best you could do because your time limit runs out.

J: So maybe spending more time actually working with and playing around with the software?

B: Yes

J: Okay. So, now if you had the project to do, if I gave you another video project, how would you feel as far as comfort level.

B: Oh, good, I would be very comfortable with it. You know, I would still have to ask some things, cause I'm not perfect, but as far as being able to get in there, I could so much more done in two hours than I did before. Believe me. (Laughs).

J: So, you've come a long way?

B: Yes.

J: Do you plan on sharing your video with other people? And having other people watch it?

B: Oh yes. I'm very proud of it. I wanna show everybody. And I also hope that it helps someone.

J: Because the topic is important to you.

B: Suicide. Yes. It is.

J: And so you want to show it because you're proud, but also because of the message?

B: Right. Very much the message.

J: So what do you think about how it turned out?

B: I'm very happy. I didn't think I was going to be, but after I got the music with it, and you know, it's completed, finished, I'm happy with it. I really am. I see a couple things I would have probably done different, but all in all, I'm happy with it.

J: Tell me more about what you think (you wrote about this in class today but I want to hear more about what you think) paper versus video? Which is going to be more useful? One more useful than the other or are they the same?

B: Um, (pause), I do, I really like the video aspect of it. I mean at first I was like, oh, I can't believe she's making us do this, because this is *comp*, this is *writing* and I didn't get that part, but now I do get it because writing is a way of expression, video is a way of expression. So, it does link and it does come together. So, I mean, there both, you can both academically learn from them, but I just I like the video. I think people would learn more from it, and it can impact people emotional, I think more so than a paper, ya know.

J: Do you think you'll reach a bigger audience with a video?

B: Yeah, cause say on a piece of paper, I wrote, "The girl" because let's face it, with suicide they shoot theirself, hang themselves, cut themselves, but say "The girl shot herself in the head." Okay, you read that, but then up on the video there's the picture *of* the girl. Done that, or after, or doing it. That has such a greater impact to me than the paper.

J: So, which skill do you think you'll end up using I guess academically more? Think of all the skills you learn in the class. Obviously they're all important. Is there any skill you learned that is more important than the others as far as being in school?

B: You talking about the way we learned to write?

J: The writing of the paper versus the making of the video and the computer stuff. I mean, which is going to be more useful to you in this school setting?

B: The video cause it made me get closer to the computer and learn more that I need to know for future classes and everything.

J: What about professionally? What is your major, remind me? (B: X-ray Tech). Okay, so you may not specifically make another video, but what do you think as far as professionally writing versus multimedia? What do you think about the difference there?

B: Um, (pause, sigh) are you talking about like . . .

J: In the professional world, what do you think is going to be more useful? To be able to do a video or a paper?

B: In the professional world?, in the twenty-first century, I think a video. I think, I just ya know, we've done papers for SO long, and you know, let's face it, they get old, and tired, and boring. And this video is something new, and like I said, it is more, you can be very informative in it, and to me it just touches people more so and draws the viewer in more than a paper. And I just think, you know, like if I was to get up, say in my profession, and I had to teach somebody something, I could make a video showing them so much easier than writing a paper and letting them sit there and read it. You know?

J: So you would prefer a video to show something to a crowd rather than a paper?

B: Oh yes, most definitely. Most definitely. Cause I think people would learn more from it. It would make whatever, say a job or a subject, it would make it more interesting, I believe to people, instead of just reading it cause you can read it all day long but something about the visual of it, it makes people more interested in it.

J: Okay, so even through all the bumps and problems, you did come through and it is a finished product, and I do think it looks good, (Thank you, thank you), after all that you've been through, was it worth all of that trouble?

B: Yes, it was. Because if you're proud of yourself, anything that you went through is *worth* it, you know.

J: So, looking back from the first day of class when I said we're going to do this, how did you feel that day compared to today?

B: Oh, I was like "Why do we gotta do a video?!!!" I mean, I didn't like it honestly, I'll be honest, I was like, "What does this have to do with writing?" I took a writing class. Now I understand what it has to do with writing. I'm glad I done it. I think the idea of it is great. And I think more people should try it. And use it in their classes and students should use it for their projects.

J: So you said you didn't get it at first, but now you get it, so why do you think video goes with comp?

B: Because comp, you know, is writing class, that's what when you say comp everybody thinks oh writing class, okay, and of course when we write our papers it's expression. It's proving our point. It's making an argument. The video, at first I was like, what, it don't have, it's not going to show anything, but YES, it showed all of that and more to me. You know. It showed my argument. It showed my information. It showed my pictures. You know, I can

describe them on a piece of paper, but I showed them up on that vide. And I just, it's just to me, it's just better. I don't know, I really enjoyed it.

J: Do you think it is writing? Is making a video writing?

B: Yes it is. 100% Yes it is. It is. That is my story up there. You know, just cause it isn't on my paper, that is my story, I had to write that, whether it be with pictures, you know, that's a story, you know, you don't have to just write on a piece of paper to *write*. You know putting items together, grouping it, making it the finished product, that can be writing. You have to do it all the same. Composing. Maybe that's what I'm trying to say. Getting it all together to a finished project.

J: It is composition? You are composing?

B: Yes, you are composing.

J: And even though you used stuff that wasn't all yours, you took your stuff from other places and made the video, you feel like you have a sense of ownership of that?

B: Oh yes, *I* made that, you know, even though everything, like you said, wasn't mine personally, but *I* made that. Nobody else would have put it together nothing like I did. That's me. My individuality.

J: You should be proud of yourself.

B: Thank you. I am.

Appendix J

Transcript of Christie's Pre-Interview

Q: Tell me about your educational background.

A: Basically, I dropped out of school in the eleventh grade and then I actually just before the starting of this semester went and took the GED classes, got my GED and this is my first semester at any college.

Q: So how long did it take for you to come back to school?

A: Let's see, that was right around ten years.

Q: Now you're back in school, are you comfortable using computers?

A: Yes, very much.

Q: And you feel like you've always had a computer around or was there a time when you started using them more?

A: I guess it was probably more around middle school that I really started using them. I remember them having computers available in like the library during like elementary school but we didn't, we only had like limited time that we were able to use them in there, so (Q: so in middle school you started using them a lot) Yeah.

Q: How much time, on average, do you think you spend using a computer every day or every week?

A: Every day, just because of homework and things like that, I probably use it more now than ever but anywhere from two to four hours a day, usually something like that.

Q: Is it mostly for school?

A: Yeah, a majority of the time it's all for school work.

Q: So, when you're not using the computer for school, are you using it to watch TV or to do other kinds of research, Facebook, that kind of stuff?

A: Yeah, usually if I am on the internet, and it's not pertaining to school, then I'm either on Facebook or possibly watching videos on YouTube or you know, if there's something I need to check on or paying bills or something like that.

Q: So it's part of your everyday life?

A: Yeah

Q: How do you feel about making a video for a class project?

A: I think it's really exciting. I haven't did anything like this before. I've made videos, just pushing a record button and then pushing stop, but I've never actually put a video together and had to make the video, and make it my own, so I'm actually really excited and it's actually brought the question up of if I'm in like the right area for what I want to do because I've gotten so excited my husband was like, "Well, maybe you should reconsider what you're doing just because of, you know, how much you're enjoying this, so yeah, I'm definitely excited about it.

Q: How do you feel about working in groups?

A: I don't really have a problem with working in groups. I work well with people so it doesn't really affect me. On this particular video that we're doing, this project, I guess because I'm so into it, and I've already developed a lot that I'm going to implement in my video as well as my paper, I don't necessarily want to group with anybody else just because I really just want to put everything in and it be all mine.

Q: Do you have a YouTube account?

A: Yeah, I've never actually uploaded one of my videos to YouTube but yeah, I have a log in where I'm able to view videos.

Q: Are you going to be comfortable putting your video up on YouTube?

A: Oh yeah, I don't have a problem with that. I think it will actually be kind of neat just to be able to watch even after this is all over, to be able to go back and look at it and you know, just examine my work, but then too to see if other people have viewed it or commented on it. You know, just to see what they say.

Q: Do you plan on sending it out and showing it to other people?

A: Um, Yeah, I'll probably, if nothing else, I'll probably just, you know, send the word around, go to YouTube and check out this video I made. Just to see what people have to say. But yeah, I'll definitely have some people take a look at it for me.

Q: What do you think will be involved in making this video?

A: Well, it's definitely going to take some time, and patience, but research is one of the main things but too, just really the main thing is just time cause you're going to have to use time to get pictures, take pictures, video, if you interview, so I mean there's a lot, you know, to include, but time is the main thing that I'm really going to have to put in.

Q: How much time do you think you'll need?

A: Well, I'm not exactly sure how much time that it's going to actually take to do the video but I would imagine I mean, I'm going to at least as far as recording wise, I'll probably I would estimate at least a couple of hours or more just because I'm not going to be happy with my very first recording, you know, so and then, I'm also going to be doing an interview and one of the clips or part of my video, so which I'm obviously not going to use the entire video, but depending on how talkative the person is they may be really long-winded and I could be sitting there for a while, so but yeah, at least four or five hours. I would guess.

Q: Do you think you're going to have any trouble accessing equipment to do the project?

A: Hopefully not, I have a video camera on my camera, which I could use. But I would prefer, just because it is a camera and it's actually an older camera, it's not that old, but it's been dropped and stuff, so I'd actually like to use one of the Flip videos from the library and actually checked earlier today with them to see if I could go ahead and like pre sign it out for Monday cause I'm going to need it on Tuesday for one of my interviews, and but you just basically first-come first serve, so I'll have to go on that Monday and hopefully they'll have one available cause they only have three. So, but if all else fails, I can use my phone or I could use my camera. So, I'm not limited to what I could use. I would just prefer to use their camera. It's a little bit better.

Q: So you're going to try to get the Flip camera.

A: Yeah

Q: Do you think you'll have any trouble meeting deadlines?

A: No, I don't think so. I've got a lot of my information already pulled together and I guess because I'm so intrigued by the whole thing, I've just had ideas and all kinds of stuff coming along and I've made sure that I'm basically one step ahead as far as you know, because I haven't even gotten the paper completed but I've already set up interview times and stuff with people for the actual video. So, hopefully it will all fall into place, but I think it will be good as far as completing it in time.

She set up an interview, plan it as a newscast, put a humorous spin on it, it should turn out well, she was very enthusiastic

Appendix K

Transcript of Christie's Post-Interview

Q: Are you more comfortable using computers now that you've completed the project than what you were before starting the project?

A: As far as just basic computer stuff, it didn't really make me feel more comfortable, but with like the whole movie maker program, all that, definitely, because I had never used the program before, so yes.

Q: Do you think those skills you used will be useful in any way?

A: Yes, I do because I did change my major to media technologies, and after reviewing the classes I have to take, I'm pretty sure I'll run into projects like this

Q: So, tell me more about why you changed your major.

A: Well, after this project, it actually made me question my major that I was in and I decided that I would actually like to work more in this field and it just built a really big interest so I've decided to change my major to media technologies and try to pursue that whole career.

Q: Wow, so this really made an impact on your life since you decided to change your major.

A: Yeah, it did.

Q: Did you do any research into the major?

A: Yeah, I did do some research to see what the program has to offer. You know, see what the classes were like. And pretty much everything, all the classes that I'll have to take all seem really interesting to me and I really think I'm going to enjoy it, you know, and I didn't really feel that way about what I was majoring in before, which was radiologist tech, so completely different field, you know, it has nothing to do with the body at all, so but yeah, it intrigues me, so I think I've made a good decision with the change.

Q: Well, I know you had some problems where you had to start over.

A: Yes, well, I had basically before I had to start over with everything, I had my pictures and like my interview and all that put up, but I still had some more recording to do as well as pictures to add. And then music and things like that. So, but I had the largest portion, I guess you could say, was already put together.

Q: And you just had a virus on your computer.

A: Yeah, my husband downloaded a virus like three days before it was due.

Q: And was it unrelated to the project?

A: Yeah, no it had nothing to do with the project.

Q: So how much time did that cost you, you think?

A: Well, since there was a time line and it had an actual time that it had to be in, I pushed myself, obviously, to get it in before the time was up, so I would have liked to have been able to have a lot more time to do it over, but since I didn't, I basically did it in one day. I worked an entire day literally trying to get everything together and do all my research and everything and pull pictures and take pictures and record and everything all brand new, so, but prior to losing everything I had been working on the project even before we submitted our papers, so I had already had my interview and had started collecting pictures and my sources and everything and had pretty much all my information together, I just had, you know, small things to do.

Q: So, how much time do you think it took?

A: Um, total I mean it was probably right at a month I would say that I had prepared, I mean, because it was just a little bit here, a little bit there, I was constantly trying to set

things up, and get it ready, just so it would be an easier process, but too because it was interesting to me, so I mean, it wasn't like I really minded having to work on it, so yeah, three or four weeks I would say.

Q: So, compared to the paper, which is more work do you think? Or more time consuming?

A: I would say probably the video is more time consuming just because there's a lot more involved and as where in a paper you can pretty much sit down at a computer and look for your sources maybe grab a book or two or whatever to look for a couple of sources out of that, but when you're making the video, you've got to be a little bit more involved than just sitting down at a computer. You've got to actually get out and do things. Well, I guess it depends on how you're creating your video. With me, I had more than just pulling stuff from the internet. I had to actually go outside and record, or go outside and take pictures or go interview, so there was more to it. I it was more involved with the video than a paper would require.

Q: So, in your opinion, which turned out better, the paper or the video? I know you haven't gotten a grade on either, which is good, I just want your opinion.

A: Um,(long pause) I would . . . it's hard to say. I would say probably since I did have to start brand new and create my video in one day, I would say that my paper probably turned out better. Which I was happy with my finished result with my video. I mean there are some things that I would edit and change and make better and add to, but I think, or I may even put them somewhere at the same, yeah, the same. I think if I hadn't of lost everything and still had all that, then definitely my video would have been better. But, because I, you know, I had to whip it together, basically I don't feel like it got the 100% that it would have gotten.

Q: Well, comparing paper to video, what do you see in the value of writing a paper versus making a video.

A: I would say, well, for one because my paper, people like me, I don't necessarily, I'm not one who likes to read a whole lot unless I'm just really into a book or something. I don't read a whole lot. I'm more of a visual type person, and so to me, with this it's kinda like, you know, I'm sure there's a lot of other people like me and I would much rather go to YouTube and, you know, watch these videos than pick up somebody's paper and sit and read over a paper. So, I think it's, you know, it's a good thing because I mean it would probably open up the door for a bigger audience than just people that sit and read papers for fun. You know (laughing), which you're not going to have too many of, so, I think the video concept is definitely a good thing.

Q: You make some really good points about being visual. I think you're right, a lot of people are more visual now and are more likely to learn more about something when it's presented that way. Do you think academically, in your studies, writing a paper obviously has value because you're going to be asked to do that, but do you think doing a video would have value academically?

A: Uuum, most definitely. Because another thing with that is it's like I know that in the past when I've written papers you know, I know what I'm writing about and I understand what I'm writing and I have some knowledge and I learn as I'm writing it, but it's like with the whole video thing I guess it helps store in your memory better just because it is visual as well as you're having to write and you know, it's like basically storing it in your long term memory versus just you know, like a lot of times, that just leaves your short term and doesn't get passed on, so it probably I would say would help because I think if in all my classes if I had to do the same thing, I'd probably retain information a lot better than just writing a paper.

Q: Wow, that's interesting. I didn't even think of that. You're actually learning it better about your subject because you're doing more with it.

A: Right, it's more involved. Yeah.

Q: So do you think it was a worthwhile learning experience?

A: Oh yeah, yeah, I'm very excited. Like I said, I changed my major and if we hadn't had this project, I mean it's very possible that I wouldn't have, and who knows, in a couple of years I'd be miserable in the workforce or whatever I ended up doing where I was at. So, yeah, I'm glad.

Q: So, obviously learned a lot about movie making software in this process.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you ever find that you had to go look stuff up or go online to find out how to do something in the process of figuring this stuff out?

A: Yeah, well uh, as far as like with the program itself, we used the Windows Movie Maker, I had to look up some help sources on that just to you know because it didn't really, just going into the program it didn't, some of the icons you can look at them and know what to click but some of them were a little confusing, so I did have to you know, do a little more research to get help on exactly how to use everything, but for the most part with everything else except for because I've personally experience a lot of pot hole problems, so I knew a lot about them, but um, I did learn more about them like as far as how they're created and things like that so I did gain some more knowledge on you know, on the actual topic that I did my video on.

Q: So you didn't find yourself looking technical stuff as much, you felt like it was intuitive what you were doing on the computer?

A: Yeah. For the most part. Right, yeah, if I had no computer skills I would have been completely lost but . . .

Q: So you don't feel like your computer skills really improved, but your specific doing multimedia skills did improve.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have any questions or was there any information missing that I didn't give you that you needed.

A: Um, no, I feel like really I mean you went over it several times, so we pretty much had an open window to ask any questions or any information what we didn't understand, but for the most part I felt like everything was explained rather well so I didn't really have too many questions.

Q: Posting it to the internet, was that a problem for you?

A: No, uh it was pretty simple, just had to create the log in and I have experience with uploading videos just with other sites and stuff, so that was pretty simple or even just uploading pictures, it's basically the same thing as uploading a video, so it was a pretty simple process to do, yeah.

Q: Did you share your video with people outside of class?

A: Yeah, I did actually tell mainly family members so far, but um, I actually haven't been able to talk to too many people just because of not having power (tornadoes) I haven't had a chance to really tell anybody, hey, go check out my video, so it will definitely happen though, because it was fun, it was fun to make it and it's fun to watch. You know, so I definitely want to share it with some people to see what they think and see what they have to say about it.

Q: So you are tell other people about it?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: You said the final product that you imagined, but what do you think about it overall?

A: Umm, for the most part I think it's pretty good, um, with my video I know that lot of people, um, didn't really go in the direction that I went, as far as making my video because we kind of set it up like as a whole news scene, you know, and so, um, I wanted it to be kind of fun, and fun to watch, entertaining, you know, so that people would actually enjoy it while they were watching it and not be like, ugh, it's another video, you know, so um, I was pretty pleased with the outcome of it, again if I had more time to have, if I hadn't have lost everything, I think it would have came out a little bit better, and I probably would have added more to it, I definitely would have added more to it, you know, just little things that probably would have added more character to it, but for the most part I was pleased. I basically took what I had in mind and created that, so I reached my goal!

Q: So, we talked about the value of video academically, what about professionally. I know you changed your major, but setting that aside, do you think that other people or you might use this professionally as a skill, or that other people might use it professionally.

A: Yeah. And um I definitely told my, well, I think that it's a great thing, and I actually plan on using it even more, I was telling my husband that I could see where I would even maybe do more videos like this and almost use them as a portfolio when I do finish school and start looking for a career doing this that I could be like, well, I've got my YouTube videos if

you want to check them out and see what, basically, what I have to offer, you know, so I think it will help and I know to with me I mean, I'm obviously from the South, and you can hear it in my voice, but um, it's kind of even helped in that perspective too because when I watch myself on the video, you know, because I recorded it several times, so that even helps me to recognize like things I need to correct if I'm going to be on the news, or wherever I end up being, you know, like I want to be able to come off professionally, and clear, and not have the drawl (laughs) you know that I have, so it's going to help me for sure, I don't know about other people, but I feel like it will be something that will help me in the long run.

Appendix L

Transcript of Jessica's Pre-Interview

Graduated HS 2010

Traditional Student

Public to 2nd and 3rd- 9th Private Christian

Homeschooled in High School

DR for 9 months 16-17

1. Are you comfortable using computers? Yes, I was exposed right before high school. Not "into" computers/internet until then.
2. How much time, on average, do you spend using computers every week?

Whew! A lot. A lot of other stuff besides school. Pastime, TV, Facebook plus school/research
 3. How do you feel about making a video for a class project? It's interesting. I would have to learn how to make a movie because I've never done one before. I'm glad and excited that I get to learn to do that.

4. Do you have any concerns about making a video?

Just that I'll be able to understand everything because I don't like being lost when doing a project. So I hope everything gets cleared up for us.

5. What information do you need to know before you begin the project?

Topic I'm going to be working on. How to work the program for making the movie. Being open to ideas on how to make the project work.

6. How do you feel about working in groups? I like that. Yeah. I like insight from other places. Other people will help me see things in a different way. Working with Amber

7. Do you have a YouTube account? Have you ever posted a video on YouTube before?

Yes, No

I don't think my home videos would be interesting to others.

8. Will you be comfortable posting your own video on YouTube? Yes

9. What do you expect will be involved in making a video? How much time do you think you will need to make the video? Obviously, everything involves a lot of work. I don't think over my head, but yeah. It depends on how well I get along. Enough time to prepare

10. Do you anticipate having any problems with accessing equipment or meeting deadlines? Yeah, if we're going to record, I don't have anything fancy. No, not if I do my work on time and don't procrastinate.

Appendix M

Transcript of Jessica's Post-Interview

Q: Okay, tell me if you are more comfortable using computers now than you were before starting the project.

A: Yes, at the beginning of making the video I was kinda scared because I had never made a video before, but in class you guys pretty much covered a lot of stuff like, you know, where to get our information, and if we needed help and also I went to online and Googled, I went on the Apple page cause I have iMovie and just read up on how to use that program. And in the beginning it was like trial and error, you know, like just figuring out how to adjust the sound and like different things and I was frustrated but it was good and now I feel really confident making another video.

Q: So you actually did some research on your own, went to the Apple page, to help use the software?

A: Yeah, cause I had no idea, how to do it.

Q: So you figured it out? A: Yeah, I did.

A: Like everything I had a problem with, like I couldn't adjust something, I would just go to "Help" you know the thing, and it sent me to the page and then I would learn from it and then when I would do it, it would work, and I was like "yay!" (Laughing) It was exciting.

Q: That is exciting. So did you figure out new ways of finding information or finding what you needed to know or were you use to using Help tools in that way?

A: Every time I use a program, I usually know how to use it beforehand, and I never have to go to like the help, so this was like the first that I actually really used the help that they offer, yeah. And it was like, for example, like uploading pictures, I was frustrated because it wouldn't let me put words on it because the picture would only last like a few seconds, really short, and I didn't know what was going on, I was like some pictures can last a long time on the video and then I noticed you have to upload it a certain way on to the program and I just drag and that makes, you can choose how long you can put the picture for and I didn't know that, and that made it so much easier because I was really frustrated with that.

Q: And you looked that up?

A: Yeah, I looked that up. Yeah, it really helped me. That was just one of the things (she used Help for).

Q: So you were able to find out what you needed by going and Googling or using the Help.

A: Yes.

Q: So, how much time do you think you spend overall on this?

A: Um, Well, what took me the longest was getting my information together. Like getting my interviews done and finding my pictures, my music, I spent like a day looking for pictures, and like I worked on it one day looking for pictures and music, and then I had to wait on some of my interviews, and stuff, but getting it together maybe like a week or two. Like, it wasn't extremely hard. It was just gathering the information was more time consuming than actually putting it together.

Q: Do you think you spent more time on the paper or the video?

A: Um, (long pause) I would say it was . . . if it hadn't taken me so long to gather my interview, I would say the paper was probably longer. I mean, maybe, cause like I had to think more of how to word things, like I told you in class, it's easier to portray like what you're trying to say with pictures and music, you know, and then writing it out and just re-writing it and fixing it, all the typos and stuff, grammar and stuff like that.

Q: So it seemed easier to put your ideas into . . .

A: Into a video. Yeah, definitely.

Q: So when you think about comparing a paper to the video, and I know you haven't gotten a grade on either, which is good so we can talk about it without a grade affecting your idea of it. Which one do you think was more effective? Which one do you think was better?

A: Well, personally, I think people would enjoy the video more just because not everybody is going to sit down and read a paper, cause it's kind of boring. But like going back and looking at videos, even like how you asked us to go view other people's videos and comment on them, like I would much rather do that than go read through their papers. (Laughs) So, I think my video is more effective. I mean, for a teacher, maybe my paper is more effective because they will sit down and read it, but if it has to go out to like *reach* other people, my video, definitely better.

Q: So, talk a little bit about how you see the exercise of writing a paper compares with doing a video. Which one do you think is more valuable, are they equal, and which one do you think is more valuable academically, I know you're committed to your studies, so which one is more valuable academically and professionally?

A: Okay, they both have their goods, like in my opinion. Writing a paper, it requires you to know stuff about English, your grammar, and stuff, like you have to put that into your paper in order to write a good paper. And I know like in college they will require more papers, so that was really good. But um, the video offered *other*, you know, areas, and I needed my paper in order to do my video because like I used stuff from my paper in my video, so um, but the video like covered other areas of learning. It's just different. Like I felt you can express, like for me I could kind of express more in my video than I would on the paper, if that makes any sense.

Q: Yeah, why can you express more, explain what you mean.

A: Like I was saying, like the pictures, it's just, it's more creative, for me. A video is more creative, more artistic, I see them both, they're both good. I mean the paper was really important and it's good because like I had to research and in the paper I put a lot of research and stuff that I looked up, but the video didn't necessarily need so much research, even though you have to know what you're talking about, but in that area the paper was good because I had to you know research stuff and that area got, I learned more in that area but the video offered more artistic ways to express myself. I like that. It was fun.

Q: So what about professionally? Do you feel this is something you can use? What is your major? A: Nursing Q: So do you see it as something you can use, obviously you think the paper is going to help you professionally,

A: Well, in my career, it depends. I mean my career is more hands on, but if I were to be like trying to promote something, health wise, writing papers, like writing articles and stuff maybe to promote something in a magazine, that would come in really handy, but also I was thinking for the video it would like, if I was working like as a school nurse and I wanted to promote something in my schools, then a video would probably reach the students

better, I would think, you know, in my career, they both have benefits, career wise, yeah, I think I would benefit from both.

Q: Did you have any big problems that you were really frustrated by, did you have to start over or anything

A: With the video? Um, my biggest problem was that picture thing about the picture not lasting as long, like that one slide not lasting as long as because like in class you guys were explaining how to use the Movie Maker and I was like, well, that looks really easy and then I don't have Movie Maker on my computer so I kinda like had to tough it out on my own (laughing) and I was just like UGG and then nobody that I knew knew how to work iMovie, I was just like, I was forced to go look it up, but good thing they had that information there, that was like my only problem with the picture cause I was like, it wouldn't, it wasn't going to last, it was going to be hard to make the video five minutes long if my pictures were only lasting two seconds. I figured it out.

Q: Did I not give you enough information to the project? Or did you have enough to do it?

A: I think you gave enough information on like on the websites you guys provided with the library's help also on finding stuff that I could use that wasn't copyrighted, that helped a lot because I know that's a really big issue and um the places where we could find articles also the Nexus Lexus, and stuff like that, that was really really helpful finding articles and stuff because otherwise I don't know where I would find, like that was one of the things I was stressed about on the paper, I was like oh no, where am I going to find all these sources, Ah! I'm not really, I don't know how to go look through a library like paper wise, you know, like which shelf, which book, you know, that kind of thing confuses me, so being able, you guys offering that resources and showing us how to use it, that was very, very helpful.

Q: And when you didn't have the info, you went and found it? Finding the info you needed, that might be a skill that will be useful you think?

A: Yeah, yeah. Definitely, finding, In life you always just practical things sometimes I need help on doing something just practical and I have to go online and find it. Yeah.

Q: So did it give you more confidence in finding what you need to know?

A: Yeah, it did, definitely.

Q: Will you share your video or have you shared your video with other people outside of class?

A: Um, I showed it to my best friend who was in it, so of course she saw it, and then a few other of my friends. I plan on posting it on my Facebook so that people can see it. That's like the one way I think I'll get it out there. I was actually going to post it like today or tomorrow so people could see it. Yeah, I really like it. And I think it's a really important message, especially here at Chatt State, and I know a lot of people have that problem, everywhere. And so I think it's a good thing.

Q: So what do you think about the overall product. How do you feel about it?

A: I feel good about it. It came out like I wanted it to. It's definitely something, I had that picture in my mind when I started it and I was able to accomplish it. Without pulling all my hair out. (laughing)

Q: I know you didn't have a problem turning in your paper or your project because you turned in both way in advance. Do you think that's just a personality thing?

A: Yeah, I don't like things hanging over my head. I get stressed. I was like I know the school year was ending and I had a bunch of other classes also and I was like I can't have major projects and also studying for tests like, it's too stressful for me. I'd rather get it all done first and then have a bunch of free time to do other things.

Q: So do you think overall this was a worthwhile learning experience for you?

A: Yes

Appendix N

Proposal Argument Essay

Write a 3-5 page (minimum of 1200 words) proposal argument essay at least 5 additional outside sources.

Your secondary sources should include the following:

1 book

3 scholarly sources found through the library databases

1 reliable internet source

You may include more sources if needed.

Papers should be written in MLA format. Papers under 1200 words will receive a 20 point reduction. You may include pictures and graphics in your essay, but make sure to include citations and proper documentation for these just as you would document a traditional source.

Proposal arguments call for some action to be taken (or not taken). The challenge for writers is to convince readers that they should take action, which usually involves their commitment of effort or money. It's always easier to do nothing and wait for someone else to act. Thus, the key is using good reasons to convince readers that good things will result if some action is taken and bad things can be avoided. If readers are convinced that the proposal serves their interests, they will take action.

Example: We should vote to convert existing train tracks in the downtown area to a light-rail system and build new freight track around the city because we need to relieve traffic and parking congestion downtown.

Successful proposals have four major components:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Stating a proposed solution
3. Using good reasons to convince readers that the proposed solution is fair and will work
4. Demonstrating that the solution **is feasible**. Your solution not only has to work; it must be feasible to implement. You must offer suggestions to solve the problem that average citizens, members of the community, students, faculty and staff can implement.

This assignment taken from the text *Good Reasons*, by Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer

Appendix O

Multimedia Assignment: Proposal Argument Documentary

Guidelines

You will be creating a multimedia production as the final project in this course. These projects will be due the last week of class and should be appropriate for viewing in class.

You will be taking the proposal essay written for this class and converting it into a video using Windows Moviemaker or iMovie. You may also choose to use a different software program if you prefer.

You may work alone, or you may also choose to work in groups up to 4 members. If you choose to work in groups, you must coordinate within the group and delegate

responsibilities accordingly. **Every group member is required to participate and contribute equally to the project.** You should decide as a group whose paper to convert into a video, or perhaps you will decide to collaborate and combine your paper topics to create a cohesive topic for your video.

I am available to make suggestions and help you with your topics, and I will also provide some basic instruction in class on how to use the multimedia software.

Video Requirements:

- Videos must be 5-7 minutes in length (no more than 10 minutes)
- Video must contain all of the following: still pictures, video clips, student-produced writing in the form of text within the video, music from the site FreePlay Music (or music that does not infringe on copyright). **You will be writing a script from your proposal essay.** You may not just read information from an outside source, but must write your own script for the video.
- Video must present a clear thesis statement and show the development of a rhetorical argument, just as a traditional academic essay would
- All source material must be cited in the credits or as the information is shown or given.
- All pictures used must fall under creative commons license and be given appropriate attribution. Any copyrighted materials appearing in the video (including the songs) must fall under fair use guidelines.
- Video must be uploaded to YouTube and a **link must be submitted to the instructor via eLearn's dropbox no later than the due date**
- Videos should have a proper title in YouTube, just as an essay would. Also, a short description must be included for the video which includes the class and section in the description box.
- Students must submit all signed release forms to the instructor by the last day of class.
- A hard copy of the video on CD or on a flashdrive should be brought to class on the due date as backup
- All videos must be contain content that is appropriate for class
- All videos must be shown during the last week of class
- If working in a group, all group members must turn in a group evaluation form that gives the following information:
 1. State what each member contributed to the group
 2. State the overall effectiveness of the group
 3. State your overall opinion of the final product
 4. State if you feel that everyone participated equally and explain why or why not
 5. State your overall experience with producing a multimedia text

The evaluation will be submitted from each individual member in the appropriate eLearn dropbox. Students working alone should provide a self-evaluation and state how much time was spent on the project, explaining any difficulties that were overcome and also

explaining if anyone outside of class helped with the project and what these individuals contributed to the project, as well the student's overall opinion of the final product.

Grade: Worth 100 points (10% of total grade in the course) + 50 points for assignments related to the project (5% of total grade)

Does the video meet the requirements?

Does the video show accurate writing skills?

How effective is the editing, sound quality and overall appearance of the final product?

Do the group members report equal sharing of responsibility?

Examples of student work can be seen on my YouTube channel at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/jcparker4u#grid/user/8282FDAFAF9527DD>

Extra Credit

Up to 10-15 points of extra credit will be given for students who leave thoughtful and constructive comments on the class videos. In order to receive 10 points of extra credit, students must log into YouTube and comment on all of the videos from their class. To receive 15 points of extra credit, students must comment on all the videos from their class as well as five other videos from other classes.

Appendix P

Final Reflection Essay

Write an essay describing the process that you went through in the production of the multimedia project, the obstacles you encountered in its production, and the skills you learned or improved upon in the creation of the video.

Explain the strengths and weaknesses of your video, how you envisioned your video would look compared to the actual outcome of the project, and areas where your project could use improvement. Also explain if there were any issues you had in the production of the video and give your instructor feedback on how you think the project could be improved upon in future semesters.

Explain how you might be able to use the skills you learned in the making of the video in other areas of your life (academically, professionally or personally).

This essay is a reflection on your overall experience with making a video in your English class, what you learned from the experience, and if you feel that you did or did not benefit from the experience.

Appendix Q

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research from Community College

February 22, 2011

Jeannie P. Beard
English Department
██████████ Community College

Dear Ms. Beard;

Your request to conduct a research study on the effectiveness of a multi-media approach to teaching composition has received preliminary review in this office. As you have described it, a full review by the Institutional Review Board has been waived according to 45 CFR 46.101(b) (see attachment).

██████████ understands that your subjects will be current students in certain Composition I classes who have volunteered and signed their informed consent to participate. In addition, we have agreed that:

- No student younger than 18 years of age will be allowed to participate
- No monetary or grade-related compensation for participation will be offered or implied
- Although their involvement includes students posting their work on the internet via YouTube, no additional personally identifiable information will be disseminated during or following the project
- Copies of project findings will be made available to the Institutional Review Board upon request
- The College will incur no charges in regard to costs or resources that will be used for the study, nor will there be modifications to facilities

If there are further questions, please contact my office at 423.697.3267.

Sincerely,

Eva Lewis

Eva Lewis
Associate Vice-President
Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning

Application	As Of: July 2, 2012 11:15 PM
Title: Composing on the Screen: Student-Produced Multimedia Texts As an Extension of the Writing Process in the Composition Classroom	
Principal Investigator: Jennifer Lynn Bowie	Current Status: Waiting for PI to Send
Admin Assigned:	Last Activity: 04/12/2010 - Forwarded to PI
Committee Assigned:	Original Approval Start:
Review Type:	Current Approval Period:

Application Summary

Application Description:	The primary purpose of this study is to examine the production of digital video as text in the composition classroom, and determine the validity of multimedia productions as a form of scholarship in addition to traditional academic essays. By incorporating current theory and practice in the field of composition and rhetoric in regards to digital literacy and new media studies, and implementing a case study method, this research aims to support the use of new media in writing studies, and establish the academic foundations for using digital video as academic text in the context of general education coursework.
Application Department:	English - 111100000
Research Personnel:	2 personnel
Researcher Certifications:	1 researcher has active "CITI Refresher: On-line Training for the Protection of Human Research Subjects" certification 2 researchers have active "CITI Training: On-line Training for the Protection of Human Research Subjects" certifications
	certification details
Research Funding:	none
Research Locations:	2 locations
Research Subjects:	56 subjects, Both genders

Event's:

Protocol Deviations: 0 Protocol Deviations created
»[Report Protocol Deviation](#)

Study Closures: 0 Study Closures created
»[Report Study Closure](#)

Research Funding: none

Research Locations: 3 [locations](#)

Research Subjects: 46 subjects, Both genders

Vulnerable Populations: Students or Trainees

Drugs: none

Investigational Devices: none

Radiation: none

Key Words: Composition, Multimedia, Rhetoric

Documents: 11 [documents](#)

This is the PRODUCTION system.

Page generated on July 2, 2012 11:22 PM

IRB Wise v.2.3.8 (0003495) www.irbwise.com

© 2004-2006 IRB Solutions, Inc., Portions Copyright 2000-2004 Georgia Tech Research Corporation

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Appendix S

Informed Consent Document

Georgia State University

Department of English

Informed Consent

Title: Composing on the Screen: Student-Produced Multimedia Texts
As an Extension of the Writing Process

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jennifer Bowie

Ms. Jeannie Parker Beard

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to learn how making videos is like writing. You are invited to participate because you are a student enrolled in a section of English 1010. A total of up to 46 people will be in this study. Participation will take one to four hours of your time over the course of the semester.

- You will take part in interviews, complete surveys, or be observed only if you agree to take part in the study. You do not have to take part in the study; however, all students must submit a multimedia project for a grade in the course.
- Participation in the research will not affect your grade on the project or grade in the course.
- You are being asked to volunteer to participate in this research study because you are a student enrolled in English 1010.
- The purpose of this research is to look at the videos produced by students and understand how
 - making a video is similar to or better than writing an essay.
- If you agree to participate in the study, your video will be analyzed and possibly used as an
 - example in published articles and conferences. If you agree to participate in the study and your
 - image or voice appears in your final video project, then by signing this consent form, you also
 - agree to your image or voice being shown in a professional setting such as a conference or
 - workshop.
- If your video project is used as an example in published articles or conferences, credit will be
 - given to you as the producer of the work. No profits will be made off of your video.
- You will be asked to participate in short surveys. You may be selected to be

interviewed. Participation in the research will take one to four hours of your time. Surveys and observation

of group work will be done during class time. Interviews will be done during the instructor's office hours.

- Two sections of English 1010 will participate in this study for a total of up to 46 participants.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will complete three short surveys. You may be chosen to be interviewed. You will be watched as you work in groups. You may be videotaped during class. If you are videotaped during these observations, these videos will be kept private. Your identity will not be used in the research. You will be working with movie-making software in the classroom when the observations will take place. Surveys will take place at the beginning of three classes. Interviews will be given in the instructor's office at Chattanooga State and may be audio or videotaped. Audio or video recordings for interviews will be kept private. Two interviews will be conducted with each person interviewed. You will be privately interviewed. All information given in interviews will be kept confidential. Surveys will take no more than ten minutes and each interview will take approximately thirty minutes. Group observation will take place during class time. You may spend up to four hours (including group observations in class) participating in this research study.

III. Risks:

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

IV. Benefits:

By participating in the study, you may realize what you have learned about technology and rhetoric because you will be asked to reflect on these topics at the beginning and at the end of the study. Society may benefit from teachers learning about how to use multimedia texts in the college classroom.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in this research study is voluntary. If you decide **not to participate, your grade will not be affected.** Likewise, **if you decide to participate** in the study, **your**

grade will not be affected. No grade in this course will in any way be affected by this research study.

You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and then change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any grade points to which you are otherwise entitled, and participation or lack of participation will not affect your grade in the course.

VI. Confidentiality:

The researchers will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Dr. Jennifer Bowie, Dr. Beth Burmester, Dr. Mary Hocks and Ms. Jeannie Parker Beard will have access to the information you provide. The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) will also have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board and the CSCC Institutional Review Board).

We will use your student I.D. number rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored on password and firewall-protected computers. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when I present this study or publish its results. However, if your image or voice appears in your final video, your agreement to participate in the study is your consent to allow your image and voice to be used as an example during conferences or presentations. If your final video is used as an example in a publication or presentation, you will be given credit as the producer of the work.

The general findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally in publications related to the research. Videos recorded during observations will be stored on a password and firewall-protected computer for up to five years, after which time, the videos will be destroyed.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. Jennifer Bowie at 404-413-5864, jbowie@gsu.edu, or Ms. Jeannie Parker Beard at 423-697-3148, Jeannie.beard@chattanoogaastate.edu, if you have questions about this study. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, be audio or video recorded, and have your video project presented at professional conferences or presentations, please sign below.

Print Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

Date

Principal Investigator

or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix T

[REDACTED] Community College

Consent and Waiver Form

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I hereby grant full permission **[REDACTED]** Community College to prepare, use, reproduce, publish, distribute and exhibit my name, picture, portrait, likeness or voice, or any or all of them in or in connection with the production of a motion picture film, television tap or film recording, sound track recording, computer or network distributed computer file, or still photography in any manner for educational, treatment, scientific, publication, informational and any other professional purpose deemed necessary, and

I hereby waive all right of privacy or compensation which I may have in connection with the use of my name, picture, portrait, likeness or voice, or any or all of them, in or in connection with said motion picture film, television tape or film recording, sound track recording, computer or network distributed computer file, or still photography and any use to which the same or any material therein may be put, applied or adapted by **[REDACTED]** Community College, and any of its agencies, i.e. schools, departments, or divisions.

This consent and waiver will not be made the basis of a future claim of any kind against **[REDACTED]** Community College and any of its agencies.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
(signature)

(Print Name)

ADDRESS: _____

Appendix U

Continued Review Approval Form for GSU's IRB

IRBwise

<https://irbwise.gsu.edu/sub/submissionview.form?submissionId...>

Continuing Review #1 for H11346	As Of: July 2, 2012 11:57 PM
--	------------------------------

Admin Assigned: [White, Shelia](#)

Current Status: Approved

Committees Assigned: COMMITTEE 1

Last Activity: 03/16/2012 - Letter Recorded

Review Type: Expedited Review

Date Approved: 03/16/2012

Application H11346	As Of: July 2, 2012 11:57 PM
---------------------------	------------------------------

Title: Composing on the Screen: Student-Produced Multimedia Texts As an Extension of the Writing Process in the Composition Classroom

Principal Investigator: [Mary E Hocks](#)

Current Status: Approved

Admin Assigned: [Susan Vogtner](#)

Last Activity: 03/16/2012 - Amendment #1 for H11346 Letter Recorded

Committee Assigned: COMMITTEE 1

Original Approval Start: 03/18/2011

Review Type: Expedited Review

Current Approval Period: 03/16/2012 - 03/15/2013

[view approved Application details >>](#)

Renewal Details

Subject Information

A Does this Protocol involve direct interaction with human subjects?

Yes

B What is the current status of the study? If all research activities, including data analysis is complete or will not continue beyond the current expiration date of the IRB approval, please follow the instructions to close the study.

Enrollment is closed. No interaction with subjects will occur; but data analysis is ongoing. (Inactive)

Jennifer Bowie is no longer at Georgia State. My new committee chair is Mary Hocks.

C If the study is ongoing, and enrollment is closed, please select one:

Data Analysis Only

Appendix V

Amendment Changing Principle Investigator for GSU's IRB

IRBwise

https://irbwise.gsu.edu/sub/submissionview.form?submissionId...

Amendment #1 for H11346	As Of: July 3, 2012 12:07 AM
--------------------------------	------------------------------

Admin Assigned: [White, Shelia](#)

Current Status: Approved

Committees Assigned: COMMITTEE 1

Last Activity: 03/16/2012 - Letter Recorded

Review Type: Expedited Review

Date Approved: 03/16/2012

Application H11346	As Of: July 3, 2012 12:07 AM
---------------------------	------------------------------

Title: Composing on the Screen: Student-Produced Multimedia Texts As an Extension of the Writing Process in the Composition Classroom

Principal Investigator: [Mary E Hocks](#)

Current Status: Approved

Admin Assigned: [Susan Vogtner](#)

Last Activity: 03/16/2012 - Amendment #1 for H11346 Letter Recorded

Committee Assigned: COMMITTEE 1

Original Approval Start: 03/18/2011

Review Type: Expedited Review

Current Approval Period: 03/16/2012 - 03/15/2013

[view approved Application details >>](#)

Amendment Request Details

Change in Procedures:

Jennifer Bowie is no longer at GSU. My new PI is Dr. Mary E. Hocks.

Change in Research Team:

Approved Application

(at time of Amendment request)

Name	Role	Certification
Bowie, Jennifer	PI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CITI Training: On-line Training for the Protection of Human Research Subjects (Approved): April 21, 2006 - April

Requested Change

Change	Name	Role	Certification
No Change to Approved Value	Parker-Beard, Jeannie	Student PI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CITI Training: On-line Training for the Protection of Human Research Subjects (Approved): July 10, 2009 - July 9,