

Course Design

Engaging Writing about Writing Theory and Multimodal Praxis: Remediating WaW for English 106: First Year Composition

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“Literacy alone is no longer our business. Literacy and technology are. Or so they must become.”

—*Cynthia Selfe, Technology and Literacy in the 21st Century*

Course Description

English 106: Introductory Composition is a mandatory four credit hour course offered at Purdue University, a large, public land-grant institution located in northwestern Indiana. English 106 is offered by the English department through the Introductory Composition at Purdue program (ICaP), supervised by the Writing Program Administrator (WPA) of first-year composition (FYC). According to the university catalog, students enrolled in English 106 gain “extensive practice in writing clear and effective prose and instruction in organization, audience, style, and research-based writing” (“Introductory Composition”). All English 106 students are required to purchase a copy of ICaP’s *Composing Yourself* handbook, a university-specific guide to institutional resources, ICaP policies, the eight topic-specific sections of English 106 (detailed in the Institutional Context section), and library research tips. The majority of students enrolled in English 106 are first-year students from a variety of majors, though a small number of students come to the ICaP program in their sophomore, junior, or senior year.

Institutional Context

Of the approximately 39,000 students who attend Purdue University, 30,000 are undergraduates. Currently, all freshmen enrolled at Purdue are required to take English 106. Because there is no placement examination at Purdue, incoming students are allowed to satisfy their introductory composition requirement by self-enrolling in English 106, 106i (a course that is focused on teaching English as a second language),¹ or English 108 (an accelerated composition course with an emphasis on service learning). All of these courses make up ICaP.

Sections of 106 (by far the most numerous of the composition courses, with roughly 150 sections per semester) are divided into eight different “syllabus approaches,” as they are called within ICaP, which have been approved by the WPA at Purdue. These approaches are:

- Academic Writing and Research
- Composing Through Literature
- Composing with Pop Culture
- Digital Rhetorics
- Documenting Realities
- UR@
- Writing Your Way Into Purdue
- Writing about Writing.²

ICAP incorporated Writing about Writing (WaW) as its latest syllabus approach in 2011. Although students have some say in which type of composition course they would like to enroll (whether 106, 106i, or 108), if they take the standard English 106 course, they have no control over the syllabus approach that their instructor selects. They may, for instance, be asked to analyze popular media and their place within it, or to compose in academic genres throughout the semester. Despite this variety in 106, all syllabus approaches emphasize rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, writing processes, knowledge of conventions, and literacy for composing in electronic environments (see the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ “WPA Outcomes Statement” for more detail on each outcome). No matter which approach they choose, instructors are encouraged to develop assignments that will help students reach these outcomes.

All English 106 courses meet five days a week: twice a week in a traditional classroom, once a week in a computer lab, and twice a week in the 106 conferencing room (half of the students meet with the instructor on one day, the other half on the other day). That said, there is no standard schedule across 106 sections for these types of meetings—one section of 106 may have classroom days, a computer lab day, and conference days that fall on similar or different days of the week as another section depending on a number of factors.

In this course design, we discuss the ways in which we incorporate social media and multimodal assignments in order to help students better understand the concepts in a FYC course centered on the WaW pedagogical approach. Although WaW helps to build a meta-awareness of the writing process and the rhetorical constituents of a situation, as some in the field of writing and composition have noted, using scholarly composition articles to teach first-year students how to write can be somewhat problematic. Hence, we articulate the theoretical rationale behind our WaW approach to readings, activities, and

assignments; we also provide the same level of theoretical justification for the incorporation of digital rhetorics in our class, detailing how the latter helped us achieve the aims of the former.

Theoretical Background

In “Teaching about Writing: Righting Misconceptions,” Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle argue that teaching students to write by introducing them to a “set of basic, fundamental skills” they can use across all academic contexts creates the false impression that all academic writing looks the same, when in fact similar features in writing “are realized differently within different academic disciplines, courses, and even assignments” (556). A non-differentiated approach to teaching writing, as the authors note, assumes that, for example, lessons in writing reports will not only correlate from one discipline to another, but will also be generic enough to apply across contexts (557). Downs and Wardle propose that writing instructors prepare students to write across disciplines not by teaching various genres, but by teaching what we, as composition scholars and researchers, understand and accept about writing itself. The goal is to have students develop a meta-awareness of the contextual elements that shape writing so that they can become familiar with how they write on a regular basis and what type of writing specific communities value (559).³

Although we could see WaW’s capacity to teach for transfer, as instructors of writing, we were also cognizant of the fact that students might feel daunted by the material and by the lack of a user-friendly textbook to access this information pertaining to the knowledge and practice of writing.⁴ However, by incorporating hands-on invention exercises involving technology and social media platforms with which many students are already familiar, we hoped to cushion the learning curve for students. Additionally, we hoped that by bringing in these technologies students would be better able to make the necessary connections between the texts we read and their own daily writing practices. In effect, we saw our activities—drawing from Jason Palmeri—as powerful tools that aided in forming connections across assignments, applying course theory, and streamlining invention processes. He argues that “if we limit students to only alphabetic means of invention and revision, we may unnecessarily constrain their ability to think intensively and complexly about their work” (44). Given the scholarly nature of WaW texts, we designed assignments that bridged course readings with composing elements that emphasized multimodality and rhetorical skills in an effort to encourage students to work with different composing spaces and creative processes.

In our syllabi, we aimed to maintain technological inclusion in the composition classroom by offering a stream of assignments and activities that complement our students’ growing literacies in technology and composition

theory. We worked to reinvigorate the broad FYC goals of inventing, composing, and arranging with timely foci such as web design and social media audiences. Our initial goal was to encourage a focus that experimented with the changing *locations* of writing, geared toward a general audience that students were more familiar writing to in their day-to-day literacy practices such as peers and blog readers. “Compositionists,” Stephanie Vie asserts, “should focus on incorporating into their pedagogy technologies that students are familiar with but do not think critically about: online social networking sites, podcasts, audio mash-ups, blogs, and wikis” (10). It is this inclusion of technologies that many students use every day and that can be used to deploy metacognitive rhetorical skills relevant to FYC.

Palmeri advocates for technological literacy when he asserts that “even when we are composing a solely alphabetic product, we often are thinking with multiple symbol systems (visual, auditory, gestural). As a result, multimodal composing activities can be a powerful way to help students invent ideas for and consider revisions of their alphabetic texts” (44). We see our task as FYC instructors as offering students new perspectives on what counts as “writing” and how WaW, and other syllabus approaches for that matter, might benefit from assignments created with new technologies and literacies in mind.

In the following sections we provide a rationale for the major projects that we assigned in our English 106 sections, focusing on the units that asked students to apply the theoretical concepts of WaW in digital spaces. We used the selections in Wardle and Downs’ textbook, *Writing about Writing*, for many of these assignments but also included various readings that lent themselves to each of the particular assignments. We should note that these sections are written in the past tense as they discuss our pedagogical and theoretical work during the two semesters that we taught this syllabus approach (though we occasionally deviate into the present when appropriate).⁵

Assignment 1: Literacy Self-Study

We began by having students interrogate their writing practices through a self-study for two reasons: first, the self-study allowed students to immediately begin developing metaknowledge regarding their own writing practices, and second, it challenged and expanded traditional notions of literacy. To accomplish these goals, students kept a running log of everything they read and wrote over the course of two to four days. Our intention was to break students from their mindset that reading and writing are acts merely confined to academic practices or the English classroom. During this self-study, students noted how often they were texting, checking their cell phones or browsing the internet during the day, reading billboards or fliers, or engaging in other nontraditional habits of reading and writing.⁶ Although many of

our students initially claimed not to be readers or writers, those who engaged with the assignment were typically surprised by how long their lists became after one day.

Simultaneously, we asked students to read articles from newspaper sources about contemporary literacy trends and technology so that they could gain a better understanding of what some writers think of their literacy practices. For instance, David Mehegan's 2007 *Boston Globe* article, "Young People Reading a Lot Less," portrays young people as worse readers and writers than students from previous generations, placing the blame squarely on technology. And a quick Google search uncovers numerous other articles and blog posts about the "dangers" of new media and their ill effects on reading and writing. We paired these readings with Dennis Baron's "From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technologies" in *Writing about Writing* to help present students with a more balanced historical overview of the fears typically associated with new technologies in writing. Taking all of these readings together gave students plenty of resources for framing their own self-studies within the present day context.

For their first assignment, students had the option of agreeing with, disagreeing with, or expanding on either the academic or newspaper articles. Typically students took an argumentative approach against the popular (mis) conceptions of how technology affects literacy, using the data they collected from their self-studies. Thus at the completion of this project, when transitioning to the literacy narratives project, students thoroughly expanded their definitions of literacy to include not just traditional alphabetic reading and writing, but digital and other literacies as well. This framing of literacy as a fluid concept prepared students to think broadly in terms of types of literacy, literacy sponsors, and literacy stories.

Assignment 2: Literacy Narrative with Tumblr Blogs

Once students had a broader understanding of literacy, we introduced them to the literacy narrative assignment with the hope that they would be better able to expand their understanding of the different agents that have played a role in their literacy—whether they be people, corporations, software programs, or a combination thereof. We relied heavily on Deborah Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy" for this unit, as her essay centers on how sponsors help individuals acquire literacy.

We augmented the literacy narrative assignment by asking students to assemble a visual collection of digital artifacts on the blogging site Tumblr. We chose this blogging platform for several reasons: it is popular among students for personal blogging, the interface is simple, and creating an account and building a blog are fairly straightforward.⁷ Additionally, we approached the

literacy narrative assignment as a chance for students to experiment with a variety of media—personal photographs, favorite books, audio recordings of foreign language lessons, and videos of pivotal movies that sparked interests, to name a few examples. Tumblr allowed for easy integration of such media and a moderate level of visual customization.

As they completed this assignment, we encouraged students to see themselves as curators of their own history, building online collections of literacy moments and blog entries that would form an aesthetically cohesive composition that resembled a digital scrapbook or living digital timeline. We approached curation as both the selecting and building of a collection of media artifacts—processes which require students to develop their critical thinking skills for both creating literacy stories and comprehending how arrangement affects audience perceptions of these stories (Castro-Lewandowski 1). Additionally, because an increasing amount of personal and professional research is conducted online, it behooves students to get a sense of how organization becomes even more vital to the digital composing process. As the Pew Research Center's 2013 report on internet users as creators shows, 47% of adult internet users engage in some form of “curation” while viewing, sharing, or reposting online media (Duggan).

Given its multidisciplinary reach, curation borrows skills from new media composing, filmmaking, journalism, art creation, and a number of other fields. Palmeri, for example, attests that “both filmmakers and writers often rely on crafting narratives, setting up contrasting oppositions, or grouping material by topical categories” (134). The work of composing online then relies not only on collecting pieces but also on knowing how to connect them. In our case, we required students to curate on several levels: collecting important literacy artifacts and events in a variety of media, organizing these items and moments to reflect on or respond to a chosen literacy theme, and tagging Tumblr posts with categorical identifiers that placed each student's post in Tumblr's larger tag database. Further, this overarching emphasis on curation urges students to “come to a dynamic rhetorical understanding of how patterns of arrangement can be adapted to audience and purpose” (Palmeri 134). Students were able to consider how each arrangement of their literacy moments told particular stories and presented information to readers in different manners.

As students collected and connected their literacy moments and sponsors, we discussed other literacy narratives like Sherman Alexie's “Superman and Me” and Malcolm X's “Learning to Read,” as well as the less traditional stories, videos, and podcasts that can be found in Ohio State's excellent and easily accessible Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (DALN). Typically, we assigned students the task of identifying two or three literacy narratives on the DALN and asked them to analyze what was most effective or memorable

about the presentation of the narrative. This mixture of theoretical articles, personal (alphabetic) literacy narratives, and multimodal narratives created a wide repository for class discussion about media, memory, and arrangement.

Because students were asked to compose a narrative based on the themes that began to slowly emerge from their posts, we also discussed approaches to constructing narratives and supporting themes. To help introduce notions of narrative arrangement and invention, Liz distributed a “Timeline of Literacy Moments,” an activity that asked students to storyboard important experiences of literacy in their lives centered on a theme or a series of connected themes. Liz presented students with a digital Microsoft Word flowchart template with fillable text boxes and image placeholders, enabling students to map a literacy trajectory through personal artifacts and memories of sponsors (see Figure 1).⁸ The students’ timelines ultimately enabled them to populate their Tumblrs with posts centered on this outlining activity.

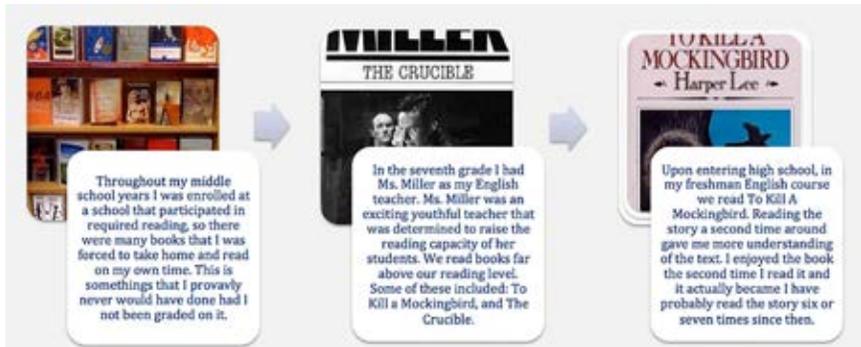


Figure 1. Timeline of Literacy Moments. 2013. Liz Lane.

Tyler, on the other hand, covered traditional narrative structure in class (exposition, conflict, rising action, transformation, etc.) in addition to presenting Karen Schriver’s ideas of how text and images interact (taken from her book *Dynamics of Document Design: Creating Texts for Readers*). Together, the use of visuals along with traditional narrative elements worked to develop multiliteracies by encouraging students to augment description in their stories with images as they often do in their social media-infused lives. Both Tyler and Liz incorporated these smaller activities and discussions to explore the questions our respective students presented; we also incorporated these elements to further explore and bridge the digital literacies that students draw on regularly.

By the unit’s end, we saw students making connections between writing theory and multimodal practice while using technology to create digital literacy narratives. The narratives that our students consume today are not strictly textual—they are movies, songs, brochures, social media messages, and more. As multimodal learners and writers, our students live in a complex environment

of social media, tangible texts, and traditional composition. Wardle and Downs write that our classrooms are populated with “experienced student writers, and they’re engaged in many other discourses as well—blogging, texting, instant messaging, posting to social networking sites . . . and otherwise using language and writing on a daily basis” (*Writing About Writing* v). Our multimodal assignment made this particularly salient to us.⁹

Assignments 3 and 4: Discourse Community and Writing for the Public

For the third assignment, students engaged in primary and secondary research in order to write an ethnographic essay in which they analyzed the practices of a discourse community of their choosing. We tied this directly to the fourth project as well, wherein students remediated their essay into a blog form, focusing on audience considerations.

At the center of the concept of discourse communities is the idea of a “common means of communication.” By expanding the idea of literacy during the first two projects, students were prepared to see literacy, writing, and discourse as fluid and socially constructed categories. James Gee’s “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction” reframes the terms “literacy” and “discourse,” and, along with Tony Mirabelli’s “Learning to Serve: The Language of Literacy of Food Service Workers,” expands the definition of literacy to include implicit, socially constructed power dynamics. Interestingly, we found that students were quick to embrace the idea of groups of people coming together for common goals and/or engaging in shared literacies; their difficulty, rather, lied in differentiating communities with common goals and practices from any assembled group of people. Although it is difficult to give students a specific heuristic for identifying each type of group clearly, we had—and continue to have—very good discussions with our students about what separates one from the other and how thin the line between the two actually is.

In their ethnographic study, students conducted observations and interviews to uncover how their chosen discourse communities function. Because of the accessibility of on-campus clubs and organizations, the majority of our students tended to research the practices of local communities like the management major learning communities and residence life floor communities. Part of the assignment also required students to conduct secondary research on their discourse community, meaning that students came to familiarize themselves with the library and its services.

Once students had created a final draft of their essays, we segued into the final project of the course, in which students created a custom WordPress site and presence for the community they had researched in depth. Students remediated their written research projects into a readable, concise blogging platform with the goal of informing and engaging an outside audience—those

students in our other WaW sections who were also working on their own WordPress sites. These online spaces were inherently public in that students often approached the assignment as if they were creating informative spaces for other students seeking information about communities at Purdue and in the West Lafayette, Indiana area. We had students compose a website in hopes of introducing an alternative place for typical FYC writing assignments grounded in theory. This unit would equip students with general knowledge of web design and blogging practices. As the academy increasingly focuses on multimodality, we felt that a toolkit of digital skills would be important and transferable to most any pursuit a student chooses after their introductory composition course (Figure 2 displays a final student website for the Purdue Cooperative Housing discourse community).

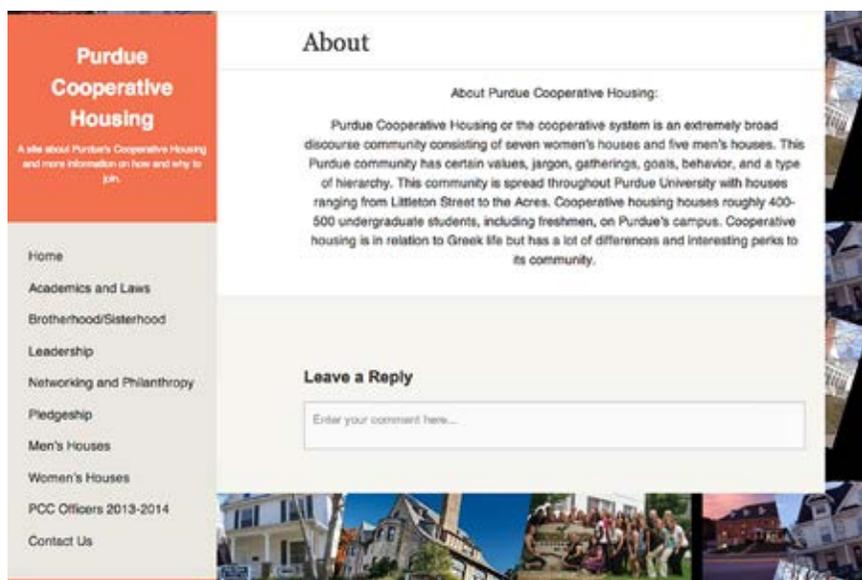


Figure 2. Purdue Cooperative Housing Student Website. 2013. Heather Mink and Liz Lane. WordPress, 26 Apr. 2013. Web. 19 June 2014. <<http://hmink12.wordpress.com/>>.

Students created ten posts that could be spread across multiple pages and menus on their sites. They determined the layout of their pages, using the variety of customizable options offered by WordPress; they could add menu links, pages, widgets, and a great deal of multimedia to help promote their discourse community. We then evaluated these products in terms of audience expectations, logical arrangement of information, and links and other typical web site structures.

From the beginning of the project, students set their blogs with the public comment features enabled so as to conduct asynchronous peer review and feedback sessions between our three class sections. Doing so opened up an atypical dialogue about readership and audience as students could get a sense of the variety of organizational tactics and remediation choices their larger peer group (among all three sections) was making. Peer reviews were scheduled near the latter three weeks of the assignment and required each student to post at least five separate feedback comments on various peer WordPress sites outside of their own class section.

Although we had used peer review in our other assignments, we were especially pleased with students' ability to provide specific feedback to one another on web design, usability, readability, and other higher-order concerns that related to the assignment criteria. For example, one of Fernando's students had focused her blog on the local choir group at Purdue to which she belonged; in a post describing the community's expectations for dress, she wrote that members of the choir "are required to color coordinate and wear similar clothing so that they look together and like a group." In her response, one of Liz's students not only offers suggestions on the content of the post and how it needs more description, but also notes that Fernando's student is not following the guidelines of the assignment, as she could use more multimodal aspects "to draw in the reader" (see Figure 3).

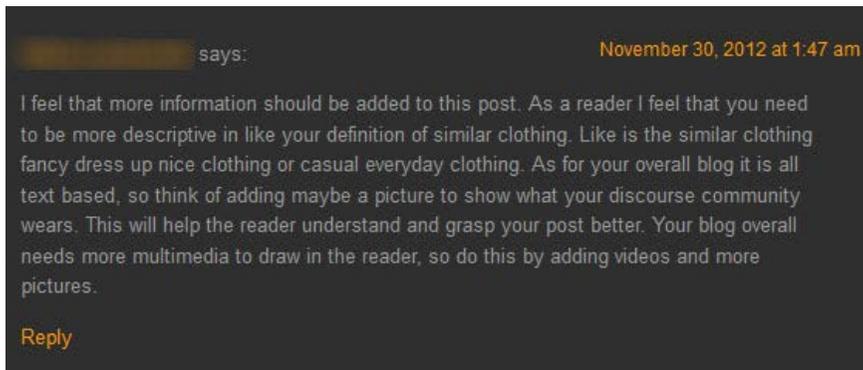


Figure 3. WordPress Comment on Student Blog. 2013. Liz Lane.

Critical Reflection

We recognize that this is not a syllabus that can be incorporated into any course at any institution. However, given the emphasis on technology at Purdue and the requirement for composition classes to meet in a computer lab at least once per week, we developed these assignments for our particular student audience. As we reflected upon the semesters in which we implemented

this assignment sequence, we noticed several pros and cons to our approaches. In particular, Liz noticed that she started developing carefully scaffolded materials that led up to major assignments such as handouts, checklists, and in-class activities in an effort to help students organize and manage the required number of blog posts, meet the larger assignment requirements, and submit the materials required for successful assignment completion.

For example, Liz created the “Timeline of Literacy Moments” for the literacy narrative assignment in the hopes that it would turn student focus to the collection, arrangement, and presentation of literacy artifacts on a blog. Students were asked to fill in a timeline template with influential literary moments and memories alongside images or links to potential media they could then post to Tumblr (see Figure 1). Our initial concern with using Tumblr as both the invention mechanism and final product for assignment two was a concern about *how* the students’ individual sites would look. Once we scaffolded the assignment and discussed how we would present narrative structure and visual rhetoric, Liz saw student enthusiasm increase with the direction this assignment was taking.

Not surprisingly, students struggled with the academic language and unfamiliar conventions of the scholarly articles we assigned. However, we saw these struggles as an opportunity to discuss audience and genre, in turn helping students to develop a language for the difficulties they were experiencing. And while our students did not express any more enthusiasm for reading the actual composition articles than did Todd Ruecker’s students, our students did remember the important aspects of each unit and connect them to what we had covered in the readings. We believe that using Tumblr helped students to see that their literacies came from many sources, and provided fertile ground for meta knowledge. For example, in one of Fernando’s classes, when anonymously surveyed at mid-semester, students stated that the Tumblr assignment was helpful in writing their papers (see Table 1). Students responded that such an activity allowed them to have a more visual understanding of what was meant by sponsorship. In the sample of responses included in Table 1, students’ answers vary from one who stated that s/he thought the assignment “helped spark ideas” for his/her paper to another who saw the point of the Tumblr exercise as helpful in articulating “who/what influenced us—beyond the obvious choices” in terms of literacy.

What do you think the goal of Assignment 2 was?	What did you think of posting images and captions on Tumblr for this project?
To make us think about our history of reading and writing.	[It was helpful because it] helped us see who/what influenced us—beyond the obvious choices.”
[To discuss] different forms of our literacies and who had an impact in helping us learn them.	[Without the Tumblr activity] I wouldn’t have known how far I would go in finding sponsors.
[To see] how literacy is a group effort between the number of people and objects in your [sic] life.	[It] helped spark ideas [for the main assignment].
[To understand] who our most important sponsors are and how they helped shape the way we read, write, talk etc.	[It was] interesting to see what others posted because it gave me some ideas and different perspectives about my sponsors.

Table 1. Student reactions to Assignment 2.

To make sure that students were not simply stating that they enjoyed blogging on Tumblr, they were also asked to describe what they had perceived the point of assignment two to have been. In other words, Fernando wanted to ensure that the students who thought that the Tumblr activity had been helpful could actually articulate why. Many students were able to fully convey the connections that we had hoped they would make. What is immediately evident in these responses is not only how students are comfortable using the metacognitive language of writing (as evidenced by how frequently terms such as “sponsor,” “literacy,” etc. appear) but their grasp on what these terms mean. For example, one student wrote that the purpose of assignment two was to help students identify their sponsors and “how they helped shape the way we read, write, talk” (the broad definition we give students).

Admittedly, these are only a few responses, and they are, of course, not representative of every class that we have taught, but they do highlight some general student reactions to our curricular design. We do not mean to imply that all students automatically develop a meta-awareness of their writing practices by incorporating technological aspects into a WaW curriculum. Students certainly express having difficulty in keeping up with posting, and if they neglect reading the assigned articles for class, the point of the Tumblr assignment does become

altogether unclear for them, often resulting in captions that do not address the importance of literacy. As some students communicated in the survey, the captions and postings are particularly important to the final product.

Similarly, most students were able to understand the difficulties that can arise when trying to communicate to public audiences as they remediated their discourse community assignments into blog form for assignment four. Some students enjoyed the blogs because they “let us be original while still including our thoughts in writing. It was the best of both worlds between English and technology.” However, we were excited by the number of students who mentioned the constraint of audience for the project. For instance, one wrote “[I feel that I gained] an understanding for different audiences. I used to only have to write primarily for my teachers, so this class has opened my writing to many different audiences.” This is particularly important as WaW sees the point of FYC as extending beyond the classroom and teaching students skills that they can carry into other coursework and workplace settings. In effect, this approach teaches students to anticipate the responses of varied yet specific audiences. As one student noted, “My biggest challenge was to make people from Indiana, where [the discourse community of] lacrosse basically doesn’t exist, want to engage in my posts and understand the topic. I had to try to relate the posts to them and I tried to do so by relating things in lacrosse to similar things in other sports.”

In future iterations of this course, we would like to create an even more integrated relationship between our readings and networked spaces. For example, instead of blogging with each other, we could have students attempt to blog or tweet through a nationally recognized organization’s social media channel (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) in order to discuss expertise. This would merge the writing for the public section of the course with our discussions of rhetorical situations. As students are already considering the constraints, this seems particularly relevant.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Kendall Leon for encouraging the three of us to work together on this syllabus approach, and for pointing out that this work might be of interest and benefit to other instructors. We are also grateful for Laura Micciche’s feedback throughout the course of the last year, which helped refine our discussion in this piece.

Notes

1. Just over 8,500 (21%) of our students are from other countries, making it necessary to provide sections of the introduction to composition course that are aimed specifically at nonnative learners (Institute of International Education).

2. Incoming TAs are assigned to a specific syllabus approach for their courses (chosen by their teaching mentor) so as to encourage collaboration on assignment creation and course troubleshooting. Beginning with their second year of teaching, TAs have the option of selecting whichever syllabus approach they would prefer.

3. We are aware that there remain several challenges to teaching composition from a WaW approach. Libby Miles et al. worry that teaching through WaW removes students' exposure to various rhetorical situations and contexts (504), and Joshua Kutney also critiques WaW for lack of evidence of effectiveness. See Wardle's "Continuing the Dialogue," Downs' "Response to Miles et al.," and Barbara Bird for responses to these particular critiques.

4. For example, in his course design, Todd Ruecker reports that one of the main student complaints regarding his WaW curriculum deal with the difficulty of getting through dense composition articles. Although their main frustration centered on length, the fact that most of the articles that Ruecker assigned were ten pages or shorter suggests that students might object more to the style and content of academic articles than necessarily to their individual length (95).

5. Fernando and Tyler continue to teach using this approach and make iterative changes with each semester. As her interests lie primarily with digital rhetorics, Liz finds her pedagogy aligning more with the digital rhetorics syllabus approach.

6. We found that assigning articles like Sondra's Perl's "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers," Christina Haas and Linda Flower's "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning," or Dale Cohen, Sheida White, and Staffaney B. Cohen's "A Time Use Diary Study of Adult Everyday Writing Behavior" helped us discuss the benefits of documenting and interrogating our daily writing practices with our students.

7. Recently, we have experienced difficulty having students set up accounts when they attempt to do so in class through the same IP address. Having students do this for homework or using other platforms would be more efficient.

8. Instructions for this activity directed students to "[s]tart considering how your collection of literacy moments becomes a narrative on your Tumblr blog. There are a variety of ways to structure a narrative or story: chronologically, from beginning to end; non-traditional, beginning in the middle; or reverse chronological, beginning at the end; and many more. Use the boxes of the flow chart to determine a starting point for your narrative. Choose a structure and begin working with placement, arrangement, and storytelling through your various literacy artifacts (you can attach images, links, videos, and captions to explain or think through each artifact). You'll revisit this timeline as you continue to draft your literacy narrative." For readers interested in having students create their own "Timeline of Literacy Moments" for invention purposes, these graphical charts can be inserted into a Microsoft Word document using the "Smart Art" feature (there are a variety of shapes available). Liz chose "Picture Accent Process" under the "Process" menu. Once students select a type of chart, they can edit or add to the number of textboxes and image placeholders.

9. A video showcasing our collective student literacy narrative projects can be viewed on Vimeo at <http://vimeo.com/user9295980/remediatingwaw>.

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English 106: First-Year Composition

Writing about Writing

Instructor: Fernando Sánchez

Schedule:

Monday: Classroom

Tuesday: Conference

Wednesday: Computer Lab

Thursday: Classroom

Friday: Conference

Course Description

Welcome to English 106: First Year Composition. In this class you will learn about practices in the research and analysis of writing. We will begin by investigating our own reading and writing habits and work our way to examining what it means to be a reader and writer in a community. In our course, we will emphasize the use and production of multimodal composition as a means and outcome of inquiry.

This course explores the social practice of writing; we are going to do a lot of writing and work collaboratively to understand what exactly constitutes “writing.” Ultimately, this class is designed to serve you, to help you become more effective and appealing writers for your current and future academic, civic and personal endeavors.

Goals

By the end of the course, you will have a broader understanding of what it means to write; you will learn how to collaborate with others in order to strengthen your writing; you will be able to revise and edit your writing efficiently; and you will gain experience using multiple composing technologies to produce a variety of genres of texts. Introductory Composition at Purdue sees English 106 as helping you obtain greater awareness of the context in which writing happens, as well as the form that it takes.

Course Texts

Wardle, Elizabeth, and Doug Downs. *Writing About Writing: A College Reader*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2011. Print.

Other readings, as necessary, on Blackboard.

Grading

Assignment—Value

Project 1: Literacy Self Study—20%

Project 2: Literacy History—20%

Project 3: Discourse Community—20%

Project 4: Writing in the Public—20%

Daily Writing—20%

Major Projects: See Assignment Descriptions, Goals, and Evaluation Criteria Below

Course Calendar:

Week One—Introductions | Policies | Diagnostic Essay

Week Two—David Mehegan, “College Students Reading Less” and Ben Yagoda, “Seven Deadly Sins | Literacy logs introduction

Week Three—Grant-Davie, “Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents” | MLA style

Week Four—Presentations of rhetorical situations | Peer review of Project 1

Week Five—Deborah Brandt, “Sponsors of Literacy” | Set up Tumblr accounts

Week Six—Literacy narrative structure and examples | Visual rhetoric

Week Seven—Transitioning from Tumblr to narrative | Drafting

Week Eight—John Swales, “Concept of a Discourse Community” | Brainstorm for Project 3

Week Nine—Peer Review of Project 2 | Analyses of fictional discourse communities

Week Ten—Ann Johns, “Discourse Communities and Communities of Practice” | Research Methods

Week Eleven—James Porter, “Intertextuality and Discourse Community” | Intertextuality of memes

Week Twelve—Library and secondary source scavenger hunt | Peer Review of Project 3

Week Thirteen—Set up WordPress | Kimball and Hawkins, “Principles of Design”

Week Fourteen—Ethos online | Workshop blog design choices

Week Fifteen—Booth, “Rhetorical Stance” | Reflect on all the writing we have done

Week Sixteen—Discuss the feedback on your blogs | Applying feedback

English 106: First-Year Composition

Writing About Writing

Instructor: Liz Lane

Schedule:

Monday: Classroom

Tuesday: Conference

Wednesday: Classroom

Thursday: Classroom

Friday: Computer Lab

Course Description

The goal of English 106, First Year Composition, is to help you learn strategies and practices of research, analysis, and rhetorical composition. Over the course of the fall semester, our class will focus on investigating writing and research broadly as a topic of study. To do this, we will begin by investigating our own reading and writing practices. Then we'll embark on an investigation of what it means to be a reader and writer in communities and public issues surrounding literacy. In our course, we'll explore various tools for creating unique composition arguments, such as images, videos and digital stories, web-based platforms, and more.

Goals, Means, and Outcomes

As the semester unfolds, we'll consider the various definitions of writing, composing, and reading and will discuss how those definitions change over time. This class is designed to serve you, to help you become more effective and appealing writers for your current and future academic, civic, and personal endeavors. At the end of this semester, you will have learned to:

- Recognize and evaluate the rhetorical situation of writing.
- Effectively employ primary and secondary research to develop, articulate, and support a purpose or topic.
- Understand what it means to write in different contexts and for different audiences—and know why this matters.
- Utilize writing as an integral part of inquiry about the material, social, and cultural contexts you share with others.

- Develop effective and efficient processes for writing through practice planning, drafting, revising, and editing in multiple genres using a variety of media.
- Understand, evaluate, and organize your ideas.
- Evaluate others' commentary on early drafts and incorporate these suggestions into subsequent drafts.
- Edit and proofread writing to maximize credibility and authority.

Required Texts

- Wardle, Elizabeth, and Doug Downs. *Writing About Writing: A College Reader*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. Print.
- *Composing Yourself* (ICaP guide for students)

Grading

Assignment	Value
Assignment 1: Literacy Self Study	20%
Assignment 2: Collecting Literacy Stories	20%
Assignment 3: Community Discourse	20%
Assignment 4: Writing in the Public	20%
Reading Journals and In-class Writings (graded credit/half credit/no credit)	10%
Participation and Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Assignment Sequence: See Assignment Descriptions, Goals, and Evaluation Criteria Below

Course Calendar

Week 1	Course introduction/ <i>Composing Yourself</i> policies/ professional email diagnostic
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Week 2	Assignment 1 introduction/ Yagoda, “Seven Deadly Sins”/ Perl, “The Composing Process of Unskilled College Writers”/ Collect literacy logs
Week 3	Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation”/ Grant-Davie, “Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents”/ Baron, “From Pencils to Pixels”
Week 4	MLA presentations/ Review literacy logs/ Attribution and Citations/ Reflection memos
Week 5	Revision tactics/ Peer Review/ “Who is a Writer?” video
Week 6	Assignment 1 submission/ Assignment 2 introduction/ Brandt, “Sponsors of Literacy”
Week 7	“In Defense of Rhetoric”/ DALN introduction and assignment/ Malcolm X, “Learning to Read”/ Tumblr account sign-up and initial posts
Week 8	Narrative structure/ Alexie, “Joy of Reading and Writing”/ Timeline of Literacy moments/ Tumblr posts/ DeVoss et al., “The Future of Literacy”/ Kimball and Hawkins, “Principles of Design”/ Outline of literacy narrative/
Week 9	Visual rhetoric/ Tumblr posts/ Peer Review/ St. Martin’s Handbook, “Narrative Structure”/ Reflection memos/ Editing and Polishing (extra lab days)/ Assignment 2 submission/ Assignment 3 introduction
Week 10	Branick, “Coaches Can Read Too”/ Fictional Discourse Communities presentations/ Swales, “Concept of a Discourse Community”/ Johns, “Discourse Communities”/ Discourse Community proposal
Week 11	Gee, “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics”/ Research writing and interview questions/ <i>Fieldworking</i> readings and ethnography (external)
Week 12	Wardle, “Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces”/ Peer Review of Rough Draft/ Cultural artifacts and image integration
Week 13	Assignment 3 submission/ Assignment 4 introduction/ Remediation plan/ Extending research and new research considerations
Week 14	Usability and writing for the web/ Booth, “Rhetorical Stance”/ Remediation/ WordPress account sign-ups/ Initial WordPress discourse community posts

Week 15	WordPress posts/ Multimedia and remediation/ Peer response comments/ Attribution, fair use, and citations online/ Awareness of online public
Week 16	WordPress posts/ Peer response comments/ Visual rhetoric and design critique/ Using peer feedback effectively/ Assignment 4 submission

Assignment Descriptions, Goals, and Evaluation Criteria

Fernando

Project One: Literacy Self-Study

For Project One, you will collect data regarding your reading and writing practices. You will keep a record of everything you read and write (Facebook posts, books, text messages, etc.) on a weekday and on a Sat or Sun. You will then interpret this data through the lens of what we learn about rhetorical situations. Essentially, you will figure out the meaning behind your acts of reading and writing. You will then draft a 750-word essay in which you respond to the readings we have done in the class. You can agree with writers we have read regarding what they think of your generation's literacy practices, or you can disagree with them.

Liz

Assignment 1: Literacy Self-Study

For Assignment 1, you will keep a record of everything that you read and write for two days (i.e. class assignments, your daily online reading habits, social media posts, text messages, food labels, etc.). You'll reflect and comment on each of your experiences while answering these questions: What thoughts occurred to you? How do you choose your words in this rhetorical situation? What were the overall aims of this practice? Then, using the data you collected on your reading and writing practices, you will create a profile of yourself as a reader and writer that responds to one of the author's we've read (Perl, Baron, Bitzer, and/or Yagoda). You might choose to agree with the author's findings, disagree with his/her claims, or update the research about literacy. The point is for you to use your data as research and support for your profile and stance. Write 750-1,000 words that create a portrait of yourself as a reader and writer. Consider how your findings can contrib-

ute to a larger conversation about contemporary literacy and rhetorical situations.

Goals:

- To record and reflect on your own reading and writing practices.
- To learn to collect, use and integrate primary research to support your purpose.
- To develop your understanding of the rhetorical situation of writing.
- To improve your use of MLA citation style.

Evaluation Criteria:

This project will be evaluated based on how successfully you:

- Look back on your recorded data and make a consistent argument about your particular reading and writing practices.
- Use your literacy log as detailed evidence in your paper. You should quote it when necessary.
- Address issues of speaker, audience, message, and constraints in your paper AND connect your reading and writing practices to the readings we have done in class.
- Format your paper and cite your sources in MLA style.

Assignment Goals:

- Reflect upon your reading and writing practices.
- Learn about collecting primary research and crafting a well-supported argument using this evidence.
- Encourage an understanding of the rhetorical situation of writing.

Evaluation Criteria:

- This project will be evaluated based on the following elements:
- Thorough and well-supported discussion of your literacy self-study and evidence (this means full citations from your literacy log).
- Clear and carefully structured literacy narrative (drawn from self-study) that considers the argument(s) of at least one scholarly article we've read (Perl, Baron, Bitzer, and Yagoda).
- Discussion of the rhetorical situation(s) of various literacy practices, including audience, mode, and constraints.
- Inclusion of a minimum of three images that reflect your literacy habits and self-study findings.
- Correct MLA citation of self-study findings, images, and scholarly articles.

Project Two: Literacy History

For Project Two, you will look back and reconstruct your literacy history through a literacy narrative. The purpose of this assignment is to uncover those agents who have helped shape you as a reader and writer. Some of these agents may come to mind quickly, others will only be made clear to you after weeks of introspection. As part of this Project, you will create a Tumblr account. You will be responsible for posting three images every weekday on Tumblr that represent your literacy sponsorship—remember to keep Deborah Brandt’s definition of sponsorship in mind as you post. Each entry should also include a forty word caption. After you have accumulated around fifteen images, we will begin finding patterns and themes in order to create a 750-word rough draft of your literacy history. This rough draft should begin to identify a consistent pattern or theme in the images and use rich description throughout the narrative to **SHOW** not just tell your audience about your reading and writing history.

Goals:

- To reflect on your own reading and writing practices.
- To connect our reading and writing practices to a social context.
- To learn to use visual media in support of an argument.
- To become familiar with interviewing as a form of primary research.

Assignment 2: Collecting Literacy Stories

For Assignment 2, we will draw upon our readings of literacy sponsorship and literacy history to plot key moments in your literacy history. Your resulting narrative of connected moments, memories, and artifacts will take shape on the blogging platform of Tumblr. This space is ideal for this assignment as it allows you to incorporate a variety of media: text, images, audio, video, hypertext, etc. We’ll spend ample class time exploring and using the site. Aim to think of your narrative as a collage of your personal literacy made visible through a digital space. This goal will urge us to consider arrangement, visual rhetoric, audience, access, and much more. You’ll complete outlines and a storyboard-style timeline to help plan posts. Each post will have a 200-300 word caption and you will also create one larger post that culminates in a 750-word literacy narrative. Thus, the length of this assignment is equal to that of a five-page paper in content.

Assignment Goals:

- Connect personal literacy with larger theories of literacy acquisition.
- Help validate and further explore individual literacy practices.
- Practice writing in a familiar genre.
- Gain experience in using multiple composing technologies to produce various genres of texts.

- To begin incorporating MLA citation and research into your work.
- Explore proper web/blogging citation and attribution conventions.

Evaluation Criteria:

This project will be evaluated based on how successfully you:

- Identify a consistent pattern or theme in the images from Phase One in your literacy narrative AND use rich description throughout the narrative to SHOW not just tell your audience about your reading and writing history.
- Discuss your literacy history in conversation with the readings we covered in class, including Brandt, Devoss et al., Alexie and others (use your journals and annotations to help you here).
- Incorporate images from Phase One in the literacy narrative document as evidence.
- Conduct a brief interview with someone familiar with your literacy history and use it as evidence to support your pattern.
- Cite everything (interviews, images, articles from WaW) in MLA style.

Project Three: Discourse Community Analysis

Project Three will ask us to collect data on the practices of discourse communities that we would like to join in the future. The final deliverable for this project will take the form of a 1,000 word rough draft. We will employ primary and second-

Evaluation Criteria:

This project will be evaluated based on the following elements:

- A final blog that includes a minimum of eleven literacy artifact posts using a variety of multimedia the Tumblr platform supports (image, video, audio, link, text, or quote).
- Proper tagging and attribution conventions included in each post (including links, captions, and any re-blogging information).
- A clear and well-constructed literacy narrative theme that connects each of your posts to your final narrative blog entry (minimum of 750 words). Turn back to our Timeline of Literacy Moments activity to consider how arrangement of moments and artifacts might change on your blog.
- Evidence and employment of visual design conventions including Kimball and Hawkins' principles of design, usability, and audience awareness (i.e. "web audience expectations").

Assignment 3: Community Discourse

Assignment 3 asks you to explore the discursive practices of a certain community. You will choose a community, either local or global, and examine the goals and characteristics of the discourse community. Our readings by Swales, Johns, Gee, and

ary research methods to investigate the discourse practices of a discourse community that you are hoping to join or that you are curious about. You will report your findings in an ethnographic essay that incorporates text and images. We will also be drawing from readings and excerpts by Tony Mirabelli, John Swales, and Anne Johns to deepen our understanding of how discourse communities function. After we read James Porter's "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community" we will revise the rough draft to include information about intertextual practices and elements within our communities.

Goals:

- To use primary research methods that we learned in Projects One and Two.
- To properly identify the characteristics of a discourse community.
- To prompt our thinking about the practices of discourse communities.
- To continue to integrate visual media to support our writing.
- To continue to master the citation of sources.
- To inquire about the material, social and cultural contexts you share with others.
- To integrate secondary research methods into our writing.

Evaluation Criteria

This project will be evaluated based on how successfully you:

Wardle will deepen our understanding of how discourse communities function. You will also be conducting research and interviews, and visiting your community, if possible. You will use Swales' "6 Characteristics of a Discourse Community" to guide your research. The final project will be in the form of a 1,000 word research essay with at least two images that supplement your text.

Assignment Goals:

- Prompt our thinking about the discourse practices that exist in our communities.
- Provide opportunities for interviewing, sharing, and observing communal agents and their practices.
- Continue to integrate media into our writing.
- Give us practice at conducting and integrating ethnographic research in our writing.
- Inquire about the material, social, and cultural contexts you share with others

Evaluation Criteria

This project will be evaluated based on the following elements:

- A comprehensive record of interviews, meetings, and observational

- Conduct interviews and take notes on your observations of a scene or a “text” related to the community.
 - Discuss the community’s discourse and how it relates (or does not relate) to its goals.
 - Tie the discourse community’s practices and its goals to the ideas of Swales, Johns, etc. How do you see what our writers talk about in the practices of actual communities—what doesn’t fit?
 - Include three relevant pictures with captions in your paper that help elaborate on your discussion.
 - Cite your primary and secondary sources in MLA style.
 - Investigate some practice or aspect of your discourse community that is intertextual. Integrate James Porter’s discussion of intertextuality to determine how texts and practices are “borrowed” from previously accepted sources.
 - Use the library database to find relevant secondary sources (we will discuss this in class) that will help you support your discussion.
- notes you conducted/attended/gathered during research of your community.
 - Clear thesis and argument of how the discourse community accomplishes and relates to its overall goals (turn back to Swales for examples).
 - Inclusion of at least one scholarly article’s theoretical definition of “discourse community” to help support or refute your findings (Swales, Johns, Wardle, Gee, etc.).
 - Inclusion of a minimum of three images that illustrate artifacts, documents, communication mechanisms, or membership in this community (include captions and MLA citations).
 - Employment of this unit’s discourse community jargon: intertextuality, hierarchy, mushfaking, discourse, ecology, and more.
 - Proper MLA citation of your primary and secondary sources, images, and scholarly articles.

Project Four: Writing in the Public

For Project Three, we selected and studied discourse communities specific to our interests, and saw how the goals and values of these communities are reinforced and realized through their means and ways of communication. For the last project, we will extend our work on discourse communities into the public, while both exploring current issues and remediating our work into the form

Assignment 4: Writing for the Public

Assignment 4 asks you to consider writing outside of the classroom. Specifically, you will remediate your essay and research from Assignment 3 into a public blog. Essentially, you will be writing for the public and informing them about your discourse community. We will use WordPress as a platform for this assignment and will share our blogs-in-progress

of a blog. We will therefore become familiar with the conventions of blogging. To become more familiar with the consequences of writing for a public, we will also share our blogs with students in two other sections of ENGL 106 who are also blogging about their discourse communities. We will post responses to their blogs (they will respond to our blogs too). Our aim is to discuss not only how we write for an audience “out there,” but also how we respond to the public’s messages. We will read work by Wayne C. Booth and by Kimball and Hawkins to aid us in this project.

Goals:

- Prompt our thinking about how remediation affects and is affected by the rhetorical situation.
- Provide opportunities to write for an audience outside of our classroom.
- Further our work on multimedia composition.

with students in two other sections of ENG 106. Opening our writing process to other peer groups will generate unique feedback and encourage you to consider how to approach online readers and larger audiences. Our aim is to discuss not only how we write for an audience, but also how we respond to the public’s messages. We will read supplementary texts focused on blogging conventions, visual rhetoric, and usability to help inform our experience writing for the public. To jump start this remediation of a pre-existing assignment, consider the following questions:

- What are people saying about your discourse community?
- How and where are these conversations taking place?
- How can you remediate what you’ve already written to fit the rhetorical situation of blogging?
- What kinds of subjects generate responses within this community? Why?
- What are the current issues or problems this community faces?

Assignment Goals:

- Prompt our thinking about remediation and the rhetorical situation.
- Provide opportunities to write for an active audience outside of the classroom.
- Further our work in multimedia composition and multiliteracy studies.

- Use the conventions of discourse communities and blogging.
- Demonstrate coherent structure, effective style, and grammatical and mechanical correctness.
- Use secondary and primary research to explore current issues in a given discourse.
- Use secondary and primary research to explore current issues in a given discourse.

Evaluation Criteria:

This project will be evaluated based on how successfully you:

- Demonstrate a rigorous effort in remediating your third written project into an online space.
- Address issues of audience explicitly in your reflections and implicitly in your actual product.
- Include multimodal aspects in your final product, such as videos, images, and sounds.
- Integrate what you have learned about how to effectively communicate in your discourse community (content) and how to effectively present that information in blog form (design).
- Apply grammatical and mechanical rules properly in your product.
- Provide citations to all of your multimodal sources so that your readers can locate them.

Evaluation Criteria:

This project will be evaluated based on the following elements:

- Evidence and employment of visual design conventions including Kimball and Hawkins' principles of design, usability, and audience awareness.
- Completion of five (5) full-length (150-200 word) comments on peer blogs that speak to the assignment goals and questions.
- Proper citation and attribution of secondary and primary sources (including links, images, and other multimedia).
- Grammatically correct blog entries and successfully remediated research content made to fit the constraints of the blogging platform (i.e., page breaks, length, and editing considerations).