WRITING CENTERS AS LITERACY SPONSORS IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
INVESTIGATING MULTILITERACY CENTER THEORY AND PRACTICE

Jeffrey S.J. Kirchoff

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2013

Committee:

Dr. Kris Blair, Advisor

Dr. Charles Coletta
Graduate Faculty Representative

Dr. Gary Heba

Dr. Lee Nickoson
ABSTRACT

Dr. Kristine Blair, Advisor

This dissertation examines how the proliferation of multimodal composition in college curricula across the nation affects Writing Center theory and practice. The project acknowledges that universities are beginning to recognize and adapt definitions of literacy that argue for 21st century individuals to be able to adapt, critique, and ultimately create a variety of media (see New London Group, 1996; NCTE, 2008; and Kress, 2003 among others). I connect this research to Writing Center theory and practice by demonstrating that historically, Writing Centers have served as literacy sponsors in the university. As such, I advocate what is commonly referred to as a Multiliteracy Center model (see Trimbur, 2000 and Sheridan and Inman 2010). However, while there is research supporting the Multiliteracy model, there are a dearth of narratives that examine Multiliteracy Center theory and practice; while Writing Centers typically chronicle shifts in Writing Center theory practice in great detail, there is currently not much written on the intersections between writing center theory and practice and multimodal composition. This project works towards filling this gap. As such, I provide a case study of Eastern Kentucky University and their Noel Studio for Academic Creativity. Using Kathy Charmaz's grounded theory, I weave together interviews, consultation observations, survey responses, and existing theory and practice to better understand how working with multimodal composers can alternately enrich and complicate writing center theory and practice.
Dedicated to my wife, Stephanie A. Kirchoff
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to my committee members for their support, encouragement, feedback, and of course, their time. I would like to particularly thank Dr. Blair for her willingness to meet with me, her guidance throughout this entire project, and her invaluable, thoughtful ideas. I appreciate it all.

A special thanks to Eastern Kentucky University and the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity for their willingness to work with me. They reached out to me, welcomed me with open arms, and made me a part of their community for a week. I am grateful for their collegiality and hospitality. In particular, I would like to thank Leslie Valley, who first offered the use of the Noel Studio for this study, and Dr. Shawn Apostel, who graciously responded to my numerous emails throughout the year.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Stephanie. Her unwavering support, tolerance, and friendship was—and is—absolutely invaluable. My gratitude for her countless sacrifices cannot be put into words.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>A CASE FOR MULTILITERACY CENTERS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Centers as Literacy Sponsors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changing Conceptions of Literacy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing Centers' Response to Changing Conceptions of Literacy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods and Methodology</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Artifact/Textual Analysis</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminist Influence on Research Methodology</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissertation Summary</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>TECHNOLOGY'S AFFECT ON WRITING CENTER THEORY AND PRACTICE: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computers as Manager</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computers as Consultant</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computers as Means of Delivering Consultations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiliteracy Centers</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arriving at and Focusing Research Questions</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure/Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1: Research Questions and Methods</td>
<td>16-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2: Objectivist Grounded Theory vs Constructivist Grounded Theory</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1: Glass Sculpture, Noel Studio</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2: Breakout Room, Noel Studio</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3: Work Station, Noel Studio</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4: Invention Space, Noel Studio</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3: Stuart Selber's Functional Literacy</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5: PowerPoint Slide (a) Emily, Emily, and Eric</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6: PowerPoint Slide (b) Emily, Emily, and Eric</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I. A CASE FOR MULTILITERACY CENTERS¹

In 2001, John Trimbur made the bold assertion that in the near future, Writing Centers would begin to identify themselves more as "Multiliteracy Centers"—places where not only consultations are offered for traditional, print-based alphabetic essays, but also PowerPoint presentations, web pages, and document designs (30). While Trimbur's notion of a Multiliteracy Center has not sparked the revolution or paradigm shift he predicted, there is certainly a small pocket of Writing Center theorists who are touting the work Multiliteracy Centers are doing. Articles in the *Writing Center Journal*, chapters in edited collections, and even texts completely devoted to Multiliteracy Centers (such as the recent edited collection from David Sheridan and James Inman, *Multiliteracy Centers*) are adding to the already rich Writing Center Scholarship. Indeed, at the 2011 Computers and Writing conference, a roundtable featuring Writing Center Directors Nancy Grimm (Michigan Technological University), Jackie Grutsch McKinney (Ball State University) and Valerie Balester (Texas A&M)—among others—discussed the shift from "Writing Center" to "Multiliteracy Center." The participants strongly urged attendees to consider how the humanities' recent engagement with technology, new media, and digital writing affects Writing Center theory and practice. Though the tone of this roundtable was overall one of hope and excitement, they did conclude by noting that convincing the university (including administrators, faculty, and students) to fund Multiliteracy Centers may prove to be a challenge; moreover, they recognized that a move to Multiliteracy Centers will radically alter how Writing Centers conduct their work.

¹ This text will use the language of "consultation," "consultant," and "consulting," as this is the language used by the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity—the site of my case study. I recognize that there are other terms that could be used, such as "tutorial" or "Writing Coach," and that each term used is, indeed, loaded.
At the end of the Computers and Writing Roundtable, the Writing Center directors called for attendees to consider the role Multiliteracy Centers can play in the university. This project heeds their plea. In this dissertation, I examine the intersections between Writing Center Theory (and Practice) and the recent integration of multimodal composition in college curricula by focusing specifically on Writing Centers identifying as "Multiliteracy Centers"; to that end, this project narrates the case study of one such Multiliteracy Center: the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity at Eastern Kentucky University². Through this case-study research, I provide the account of how one Multiliteracy Center operates and represents themselves within the larger context of the university, while also paying attention to how this particular Multiliteracy Center trains their consultants and to that end, designs their consultations.

This chapter, then, consists of several sections meant to foreground my research and this project. I open with a brief review of literature that focuses on three areas. First, I investigate how Writing Centers have historically served as a literacy sponsor; secondly, I examine, broadly, the changing landscape of composition studies, with a specific focus on digital literacy acquisition in the 21st century; and finally third, I present research on how some Writing Center Administrators are adapting (or not adapting) their centers to accommodate the changing composition landscape. This literature review does not claim to be exhaustive, but rather seeks to survey these three areas to show how this emerging field of scholarship can benefit from further discussion and dialogue. Using the literature review as a springboard, I then present the research questions that this project investigates and tentatively answers. Finally, this chapter concludes with a short summary of my project.

² No pseudonyms are used in this study at the request of the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity.
Writing Centers as Literacy Sponsors

Nancy Grimm asserts that there is no one theory that "provides answers to the daily concerns that arise out of writing center practice" (Good Intentions xvii) and hence there is little agreement among Writing Center directors when it comes to Writing Center practices; this is not surprising, given that each institution is governed by local contexts. While there is little agreement regarding how one should run a Writing Center, there does seem to be consensus regarding why Writing Centers exist in the university. Most Writing Center theorists and practitioners agree that Writing Centers came into existence primarily to serve as a literacy sponsor for students. Deborah Brandt defines a literacy sponsor as "agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress or withhold literacy [...]" (166). Writing Center scholars posit that the work Writing Centers do is an example of Brandt's vision of literacy sponsorship. For example, Grimm notes that universities "establish[ed] writing centers to demonstrate their commitment to literacy" (Good Intentions xiii). Joan Mullin continues this line of thought by noting Writing Center consultants are often a source of literacy education for students who visit Writing Centers (167); as such, she suggests that training consultants to reflect, challenge and critically think about dominant literacy practices—and how they as consultants might subvert or add to those literacy practices—is a must, so that consultants can be responsible literacy sponsors (167). Elizabeth Boquet not only asserts that Writing Centers were more than likely created as a response to a perceived decline in students' literacy skills, but also suggests that university officials hoped that Writing Centers could also increase enrollment and retention by servicing "remedial" and "basic" writers (50). Naturally, though, this is where the agreement ends; to return to Grimm's assertion, there is little agreement about how a Writing Center should actually serve as a literacy sponsor.
This can be seen in many ways. For starters, one need only read Stephen North's seminal article "The Idea of a Writing Center." Here he posits that there are two kinds of Writing Centers: one that simply acts as a "first aid" kit to papers and one that strives to create "better writers, not better writing" (68-69). He asserts that the "first aid" Writing Center does not have any lasting effects on the writer, while the "better writers" approach succeeds in "mak[ing] sure that writers, and not necessarily their texts, are what get changed by instruction" (69). The insinuation is almost impossible to miss: "first-aid" Writing Centers—where the focus is primarily on a student's "sickly" or "broken" text as opposed to the student's process—are inferior to Writing Centers that preach "better writers, not better writing." North goes as far as to say that this should be the "slogan" or "axiom" of all Writing Centers. Mark Waldo has a similar opinion, as he believes that consultants should work with students on their writing processes as opposed to their writing. However, his view regarding the nature of Writing Centers is a bit more complex than North's. He believes that Writing Programs and Writing Centers should "be linked philosophically, each grounded in a similar theoretical perspective from which their pedagogy stems" (168). This "symbiotic" relationship, Waldo posits, will benefit all involved. As he says, "this type of relationship makes the program and center essential to the academic mission of the university, not peripheral to it" (170).

However, as Waldo's argument progresses, he points out a Writing Center that takes the identity of a "grammar garage" is ultimately problematic (even if, he says, the Writing Program values such "grammar grunts"). He says this approach to directing a Writing Center will "limit potential" while "increasing expendability. It is far easier, certainly, for budget cutters to target centers that deal with freshman writing at the sentence level than it is to target those that deal with writing at all levels throughout the academy" (171). Ultimately, Waldo undermines his
original argument by closing his piece arguing for Writing Centers to focus on creating better writers—in fact, he quotes North. Moreover, he privileges Writing Centers who sport a WAC initiative, finding them less expendable than those that operate "only" out of a Writing Program.

Tilly and John Warnock, like Waldo, privilege the Writing Centers who, as they say, focus on "process, not product; on authorial intention and expectation, not teacher authority or punitive measures; on holistic and human concerns, not errors and isolated skills" (16). By extending North's argument, they claim that the Writing Center is to make students able to not only "float" but "swim" by themselves (19). Thus, they feel the sole purpose of the Writing Center is to, paradoxically, make sure the Writing Center is not needed by student writers again (20). They feel that in order for students to do this, consultants must empower writers to take control of their writing and to evaluate their own learning processes (20).

Where Waldo and Warnock & Warnock base their ideas on North's famous axiom of "better writing, not better writers," Andrea Lunsford complicates North's ideas just a bit by suggesting Writing Centers can take one of three forms: a storehouse, a Garret Center, or a Burkean Parlor. According to Lunsford, a storehouse Writing Center is one that serves as an information station to students, providing various handouts and "skill and drill" worksheets (93). A Garret Center, Lunsford posits, looks to help students find their unique voices by listening, encouraging, and validating (94). While Lunsford, unlike North, is careful to not disparage these Writing Centers, it is clear that she advocates her third model, the Burkean Parlor. This model focuses on true collaboration between student and peer consultant. She writes that this model is useful because it is built "on the notion of knowledge as always contextually bound, as always socially constructed" (97). This concept is similar to Christina Murphy's conception of social constructionist consulting. Murphy suggests that since the very notion of a Writing Center defies
the concept that writing is a solitary act, then the Center should strive to be a place for collaboration. As such, she advocates for Writing Centers to adapt a "social constructionist" attitude towards consulting. Murphy believes that since social constructionism moves "power away from the control of any one individual—teacher/student/tutor" (119) collaboration—and "social consensus" (120)—will take place as a result. Similarly, Grimm advocates a dialectical approach to consulting—one where the consultant talks "with" the student as opposed to talking "to" the student (46). As such, she promotes a Freirean approach to literacy sponsorship, as it "emphasizes intersubjective knowledge built up in the relationship between people and because it questions what before was taken as natural and imagines the possibilities of transformed spaces" (Good Intentions 47). This is similar to the ideological model of literacy education that Brian Street advocates. He asserts literacy is a social practice that is embedded in socially constructed principles; thus, literacy according to Street is always a social act that mandates interaction (77-78).

It is quite possible that Murphy draws her ideas regarding collaboration in the Writing Center from Kenneth Bruffee. Bruffee, author of the influential work "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" argues that peer consulting needs to be at the heart of Writing Center work because important thought "originates in conversation" (5), thus making conversation and collaboration between consultant and student vital. Bruffee continues by iterating that writing consultants and administrators should engage "students in conversation at as many points in the writing process as possible" (7). But perhaps his most important contribution to the lexicon of peer consulting and writing center practice is his thought that

Peer tutoring, again like collaborative learning in general, plays an important role in education because it provides a particular kind of social context for
conversation, a particular kind of community: that of status equals, or peers[...] As a form of collaborative learning, peer tutoring is important because it provides the kind of social context in which normal discourse occurs: a community of knowledgeable peers. This is the main goal of peer tutoring. (8-9)

It is this line of thinking that continues to dominate Writing Center theory today.

While there are many ideas about how to serve as a literacy sponsor to students (e.g. grammar garage, better writers not better writing, collaboration, socially constructed knowledge, etc.), it is apparent that this "how" is central to Writing Center work. Throughout this scholarship, Writing Center stakeholders—consultants, administrators, etc.—very seriously discuss the best way to foster literacy education in students. Additionally, it is clear from the above ideas that many Writing Center theorists are basing their ideas on how to improve the literacy skills of students on traditional, widely accepted notions of what "literacy" is. As Grimm writes, many individuals associate literacy with reading and (especially) writing well (Good Intentions 44). But recently, there are those in the discipline that are challenging these traditional notions of literacy, paying particular attention to what it means to "write" or "compose" in the 21st century.

Changing Conceptions of Literacy

Ilana Snyder and Scott Bulfin believe that literate individuals now must recognize "how different modalities are combined in complex ways to create meaning. These other modes incorporate diagrams, pictures, video, gesture, speech, and sound. In an increasingly multimodal communication landscape, understandings of language are no longer limited to grammar, lexicon, and semantics [...]" (809). Maria Lovett et al. continues this line of thought by asserting that "we live in a world that has moved well beyond the technology of ink and paper; a world in
which, increasingly, words come off the page" (288). As such, these authors suggest that literate individuals must now become increasingly familiar with "nonprint-centric, multimodal texts" (288) as opposed to only alphabetic-based (printed with ink on paper) texts. Furthermore, Gunther Kress asserts that theories of literacy must now account for "gesture, speech, image, writing, 3D objects, colour, music and no doubt others" (36). In many ways, it seems as though these authors are responding to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) argument that proficient 21st century readers and writers should be able to "create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts" ("NCTE Definition" par. 1).

Recognizing that computers are now a "fact of life in educational settings" (1) Stuart Selber adds to the conversation of changing literacy practices by discussing what it means to be literate in the computer age—that is, he asks the question "what is computer literacy"? In Multiliteracies for a Digital Age, Selber argues that there are "three subject positions connected to the literacy landscape: students as users of technology, students as questioners of technology, and students as producers of technology" (25). As such, he offers three metaphors or filters for which to view these subject positions: functional, critical, and rhetorical literacy. The crux of his argument is that "Students who are not adequately exposed to all three literacy categories will find it difficult to participate fully and meaningfully in technological activities" (24). Functional literacy is focused with effective employment, critical literacy with informed critique, and rhetorical literacy with reflective praxis (25). These different stages of literacy are needed in the digital age, as Danielle DeVoss, Elyse Eidman-Aadahl, and Troy Hicks note that computers have "dramatically expanded options for writers and have probably made writing, and learning to write, more complex" (21). They point out that composing with computers does not simply mean
writing an alphabetic essay with Microsoft Word, but rather can include (as the aforementioned authors have noted) audio, image, video, and more (21).

These changing perspectives on what is expected of literate individuals in the 21st century is reflected in college curricula. For example, Peter Kittle has students create digital documents of a literacy narrative. He tries to incorporate web 2.0 technologies because he sees how wide-spread they have become in other college curricula and in the nebulous workplace ("Student Engagement and Multimodality: Collaboration, Schema, Identity"). Similarly, Alanna Frost, Julie A. Myatt, and Stephen Smith were inspired enough by Kathleen Yancey's 2004 CCCC's address on rethinking composition in the digital era—along with the "realization" that students are, on a daily basis, using a vast amount of "semiotic resources"—to integrate multimodal assignments, such as the hybrid essay (images used in alphabetic essays), into their courses. Like Kittle, they chose to use this in a literacy narrative assignment. Using multimodal assignments, they argue, help stop individuals from privileging the printed word while also helping students learn a variety of communicative methods ("Multiple Modes of Production in a College Writing Class"). Diana George also has her students work with images and other visuals by assigning a visual argument composition (28). She purposefully keeps this assignment open-ended, as she is hoping students will take advantage of the freedom to explore different design ideas. This also allows the students to make some very important and real rhetorical decisions about which modes/media to use.

Writing Centers' Response to Changing Conceptions of Literacy

As the above examples—and the myriad of other examples I did not cite—demonstrate, there does seem to be a shift in college compositions and what it means to be literate. As literacy sponsors, how will Writing Centers respond to this shift? And should they respond to the shift?
Joan Mullin would seemingly argue that Writing Centers are indeed responsible for adjusting to shifts in literacy, as she notes that as "economies" of literacy change and require new skill sets, then so should Writing Center's literacy instruction (162). John Trimbur, in "Multiliteracies, Social Futures, and Writing Centers" takes Mullin's feelings even further, suggesting a complete re-conceptualization of the Writing Center:

Writing centers will more and more define themselves as multiliteracy centers [...] 
To my mind, the new digital literacies will increasingly be incorporated into writing centers not just as sources of information or delivery systems for tutoring, but as productive arts in their own right, and writing center work will, if anything, become more rhetorical in paying attention to the practices and effects of design in written and visual communication [...]. (30)

Trimbur here is borrowing the term "Multiliteracy" from The New London Group, and their influential "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies." In this piece, the New London Group coin the term multiliteracies to describe "the multiplicity of communications channels and media, and the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity" (63). Multiliteracies, then, focus "on modes of representation much broader than language alone" (64). Given this, it is not surprising that Writing Centers working with multiple kinds of composition—ranging from video to podcast to alphabetic—have taken the name "Multiliteracy Center" or MLCs.

Though the literature on MLCs is sparse, there are some leading voices in the field, including David Sheridan. He believes that "Multiliteracy Centers should be spaces equal to the diversity of semiotic options composers have in the 21st century" ("Introduction" 6). While he admits that this is a bit of a utopian ideal, he strongly feels that students working on projects such as web pages, digital slide show presentations (like PowerPoint or Prezi), flyers, brochures,
digital videos, and more should have a proper place to go seek help. Sheridan continues by suggesting that Multiliteracy Centers "should be staffed by consultants who have the rhetorical, pedagogical, and technical capacities to support this diversity of semiotic options" ("Introduction" 7). As such, consultants would need to represent an array of disciplines and presumably directors would want to seek out students with a variety of experiences and backgrounds. In some ways, then, Multiliteracy Centers furthers a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) initiative. Lastly, Sheridan believes that "Multiliteracy centers should facilitate the competent and critically reflective use of technologies and other material, institutional, and cultural resources" ("Introduction" 7). The consultation is a natural place for this facilitation to take place. Teddi Fishman describes what may be conceived of as a "typical" (or perhaps ideal) MLC consultation:

[T]ypical visitors to a multiliteracy center come in and ask for help fixing problems that they identify as technological or even mechanical. The associates attempt to ask them questions like "Why do you choose this application?" (Are you sure PowerPoint is the most appropriate choice to make a poster?) and "How does the multimedia aspect of your project enhance your message?" (Do those blinking images and sound effects help your presentation?) [...] (63)

Fishman later suggests that the focus of any session should not differ from North's mantra of "Process not Product" by arguing that the focus of a MLC consultation should still be on developing a skill-set—not just developing one given text (68). However, just as the structure of a Writing Center consultation are up for debate, so too is the structure of a MLC consultation.

Christina Murphy and Lory Hawkes believe this is the time for Writing Centers to move to Multiliteracy Centers. However, they believe such a move should be made to gain professional
ethos. They assert that for too long, Writing Centers have been trying to gain "understanding" from those within the academy since the first inception of Writing Centers (174). With the humanities move toward embracing digital technologies, they believe that Writing Centers have an opportunity to show "their rightful and credible role as a knowledge-making academic resource that fosters the major educational and societal goals of multi-modal literacy" (175). Such a move, they argue, will render Writing Centers relevant again. For one, they believe it will show that Writing Centers are staying current and are taking part of conversations within the larger field of Rhetoric and Composition. They also fear if Writing Centers do not move forward with the rest of the humanities, then Writing Centers will be further thrust into the margins and perhaps face irrelevancy. Peter Carino echoes this thought by arguing "writing centers will need to be versed in technology" in order to stay relevant ("Computers" 192). Thus, these authors suggest embracing changes in the Writing Center primarily because they seek to stay relevant. This is not a surprising attitude given the perceived marginalization of Writing Centers.

As David Sheridan points out, though, the shift to multimodality and "new" literacies has "not instilled in writing centers the kind of we-have-to-quickly change urgency expressed by Cynthia Selfe on behalf of composition studies" ("Introduction" 5). Michael Pemberton, for example, believes Writing Centers should tread cautiously when it comes to dealing with non-traditional compositions. He openly wonders if "it is really the writing center's responsibility to be all things to all people [...] If we diversify too widely and spread ourselves too thinly in an attempt to encompass too many different literacies, we may not be able to address any set of literate practices particularly well" ("Planning" 21). It is not surprising to see this kind of caution; similar caution was seen—and still is seen—with Online Writing Centers (or Online Writing Labs, commonly referred to as OWLs). Eric Hobson, speaking about OWLs, fears that the
Writing Center may "unwittingly develop and enact a hierarchy—a class structure—based solely on the extent to which centers do/do not embrace or foreground technology in their day-to-day operations" (480). In the same vein, it is possible that Writing Center stakeholders could create a hierarchy favoring centers that cater to multimodal composers. While unlikely, there is the possibility that some in the field would privilege those more affluent with technology. Moreover, the amount of technology in the center can often be linked with the amount of money a writing center has, creating the kind of "class" structure that Hobson speaks of. This would truly be unfortunate because all Writing Centers should be governed by local context. Quite simply, not every campus will need a Writing Center equipped to handle multimodal compositions, and certainly not every campus will be able to afford the technology that these sorts of Writing Centers demand.

There are certainly some in the field who have tried to address these kinds of concerns; specifically, Jackie Grutsch McKinney ("New Media Matters: Tutoring in the Late Age of Print") and Jo Ann Griffin ("Making Connections with Writing Centers," a chapter from the edited collection *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*) discuss how consultants—already pressured with working with "traditional" modes of writing (i.e. alphabetic representations)—can adequately and effectively respond to digital and multimodal texts. Griffin suggests that consultants work from what they know. To that end, she encourages Writing Center staff to "think of video or audio essays as rhetorical documents" (154), which would allow writing center folk to discuss rhetorical dimensions of a text. She also suggests that writing center staff can draw from the American Psychological Association (APA) and their *Publication Manual of the APA* which "recommends a number of techniques to help writers present arguments in graphic or photographic formats" (158). Finally, she reiterates that Writing Center
staff can always rely on critical listening and responding to provide useful feedback to students working on multimodal composition (159).

Grutsch McKinney takes a different tack, as she advises consultants become familiar with texts such as Karen Schriver's *Dynamics in Document Design*, Cynthia Selfe's chapter from *Writing New Media* (a chapter on visual assessment criteria) and Robin Williams' *The Non-Designer's Design Book* which offers four basic design principles ("New Media Matters" 43-45). This, she suggests, will give consultants a common language and vocabulary which they can draw on in their consultations with multimodal composition.

While these authors pose interesting ideas, what the research on MLCs reveals is a lot of nebulous territory. While Sheridan eloquently articulates a vision of a Multiliteracy Center, he qualifies it by noting it is utopic in nature. Murphy, Hawkes, and Carino all consider MLCs to be of value—but it is thought of as a political maneuver to gain respectability in the larger field of rhetoric and composition. And while Griffin and Grutsch McKinney gallantly attempt to show how consultant training may be accomplished, they don't really address Pemberton's concerns that Writing Centers simply can't be all things for all people. It would seem, then, that this field—Multiliteracy Center theory and practice—would benefit from research that further examines theoretical issues such as consultation dynamics and pragmatic issues, such as the role MLCs might play in the institution, consultant training, and MLC representation.

Research Questions

My research questions are influenced not only by the aforementioned literature, but also a survey distributed to Writing Center Directors in the late summer of 2011 (for more on this survey, see chapter three "Methods and Methodologies"). This survey was designed to focus my
research and to get a general feel for the attitudes surrounding MLCs. See Appendix A for the survey questions distributed.

1. What is the role of "functional literacy" (as conceived by Stuart Selber) in the Multiliteracy Center?

   As the review of literature demonstrates, Writing Center practitioners have an antagonistic relationship with the stigma of being nothing but a "grammar garage"; put another way, Writing Centers chafe at working with students on "editing" kinds of things. Rather than work with students on pointing out comma errors, Writing Center consultants would much prefer work with students on higher order issues such as organization and content, playing particular attention to rhetorical and critical features of the text. Part of this reason is because Writing Centers have long worked toward eliminating the university only thinking of the Center as being a one-stop fix-it shop.

   However, a shift to Multiliteracy Centers brings up this issue yet again—though with slightly different parameters. According to Selber, a functionally (computer) literate student must be able to use computers in achieving educational goals; understand the social conventions that help determine computer use; be able to use (and understand) the specialized discourse of computers; effectively manage his/her online world; and finally, be able to solve "technological impasses" (Multiliteracies 45). Selber succinctly describes the functionally literate student as "[understanding] what computers are generally good at, using advanced software features that are often ignored, and customizing interfaces" (Multiliteracies 46). Functional literacy, then, encompasses anything from working within Microsoft Word to customizing a desktop/laptop layout to something as "simple" as naming files. While Selber argues that functional literacy is necessary for the rhetorical or critical literacy work to take place, there are few places in the
university structure for this functional literacy to take place. Is the Multiliteracy Center a place for this functional literacy to take place? How Multiliteracy Centers respond to this notion of functional literacy is critical, especially since they have long fought the reductive stigma—a stigma that might be attached to functional literacy. Thus, part of my project investigates the relationship of functional literacy and the Multiliteracy Center.

2. *How do Multiliteracy Centers address one of the fundamental and persistent concerns of Writing Center administrators: consultant/administrator training?*

One of the biggest concerns raised in Multiliteracy Center Scholarship—and the survey distributed to Writing Center Directors—is consultant training. Many existing consultants are not equipped or capable of working with multimodal composers. This question gets to the heart of this important issue by seeking a better understanding of how one Multiliteracy Center prepped their staff to successfully undertake this endeavor.

3. *What should we call these centers that work with multimodal composers/compositions?*

This question recognizes that though "Multiliteracy Center" is the term widely used in Writing Center scholarship to describe centers working with multimodal compositions, it may not be the best, or most accurate, description. As the politics of naming a center has been a major concern for Writing Center stakeholders since the inception of the center, this question aims to re-open the debate by discussing how to best characterize "next-generation" Writing Centers.

Methods and Methodology

The table below summarizes how these methods are employed in this project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of “functional literacy” in the Multiliteracy Center?</td>
<td>• Interview of MLC Director(s) and Consultants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Observation of consultations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reading/Theory on the intersections of functional literacy and Writing Center Theory and Practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do Multiliteracy Centers address two fundamental and persistent concerns of Writing Center administrators: funding and consultant training?  
- Interviews of MLC Director(s) and consultants to determine training procedures for MLC directors and consultants.
- Published scholarship analysis.
- Analysis of training materials/texts.
- Observation of consultations.

What should we call these centers that work with multimodal composers/compositions?  
- Interview of MLC Director.
- Published scholarship analysis.
- Short analysis of other Multiliteracy Center websites.

Table 1. A summary of research questions and methods

I use empirical qualitative research methods in this project, in the form of a case study. For more on the university and the university demographics, please see chapter three. My observations are primarily of multimodal composition consultations. Supplementing these observations are interviews with the MLC director and consultants in the MLC. Additionally, my empirical research is aided by an analysis of relevant published scholarship, training materials from the Noel Studio, and websites of a variety of Writing/Multiliteracy Centers. I synthesize these interviews, consultation observations, and analysis of texts to arrive at my exploratory answers to my research questions.

Interviewing

Kathy Charmaz notes that interviewing is useful to a qualitative researcher because it allows "in-depth exploration of a particular topic or experience and thus, is a useful method for interpretive inquiry" (*Constructing* 25). In order to facilitate this in-depth exploration, I constructed open-ended questions that were designed to invite detailed discussion on a particular topic. Indeed, I take the advice of Charmaz, who reminds researchers that "Interviewers use in-depth interviewing to explore, not to interrogate" (*Constructing* 29, emphasis mine). Moreover, while I went into my interviews with a set of questions that I created (see Appendix B), I encouraged open dialogue.
Observation

Ann Blakeslee and Cathy Fleischer assert that observation occurs in almost all qualitative research, whether it is conducted formally or not. However, they go on to note that it is important to decide what your role as an observer means to the data you collect (109). For instance, how does your positioning as either an impartial observer (someone observing from afar) or engaged observer (someone participating in the actual activity being observed) influence the results of your observation? For this study, I was an impartial observer—someone observing consultations from afar. These observations were vital to my research, as it allowed me to see the social dynamic of consultations, how people approach their consultations, how individuals respond in these contexts, and also, how the physical space of the MLC influences actions and reactions.

Artifact/Textual Analysis

Blakeslee and Fleischer find artifacts to be the "physical evidence that researchers examine to better understand the issues and people they are studying" (117). In this case, the artifacts I examined were websites for Multiliteracy Centers, materials related to the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, and in some cases, Writing Center websites.

Feminist Influence on Research Methodology

Though I do not engage wholly in feminist research principles, I draw on some ideas of feminist researchers. In Patricia Sullivan's "Feminism and Methodology in Composition Studies," she identifies three characteristics of feminist research (these characteristics are borrowed from Sandra Harding). The first tenet is that the research must generate its "problematics from the perspective of women's experiences" (133); secondly, the research should be designed for women; lastly, it "insists" that the researcher be on an equal plane as its subject matter (133). It is this last tenet that I draw on for my project. This belief recognizes that our
research participants are humans, not subjects. As such, feminist research principles encourage researchers to share interview transcripts, observations, and representations of data collected with the participants for dialogue and feedback. At the very least, participants are offered to be included every step of the way and to help shape the finished product. Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1993) call for researching "with" participants, rather than researching "on" participants (43). Gesa Kirsch takes this a step further, contending that "researchers must begin to collaborate with participants in the development of research questions, the design of research studies, and the interpretation of data [...]" (x). Additionally, Kirsch, drawing on other feminist scholars, calls for a component of reflexivity that is important because

[I]t allows researchers to engage in the kind of critical reflection and analysis that motivated Oakley [another researcher] to change her research procedures. It enables researchers to be introspective, to analyze the research process in response to participants, and to adjust and refine their research goals as they learn more about those they study. (3)

It is in this vein, along with privileging participants, that feminist principles affect my research strategies.

Methodology

In "Capturing Complexity: Using Grounded Theory to Study Writing Centers," Joyce Magnotto Neff makes a compelling argument to use Grounded Theory in Writing Center qualitative research studies. Neff finds value in grounded theory because it facilitates a conversation between description and theory, while not privileging one over the other; secondly, she appreciates how grounded theory can show the complexity of social practices, while supporting situated research (136). Though Neff values those two aspects of grounded theory,
she most appreciates how grounded theory—through constant analysis and reflection—allows experience to play a role in research; that is, grounded theory does not necessarily rely on only outside sources—personal experience, coupled with rigorous data collection, is what grounded theory values most says Neff (136). Thus, she thinks grounded theory is particularly useful in Writing Center research because "it allows researchers and practitioners who wish to address particular questions about how, why, and when writing centers work to do so by combining their years of experience with a rigorous research tradition" (148). As an aside, she also finds that grounded theory is an effective methodology to satisfy other administrators in the university (148).

While Neff’s glowing account of grounded theory is a useful starting point, there are, of course, more detailed works that explain Grounded Theory. Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss’s *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) is considered the first—and in many cases seminal—work of Grounded Theory. Here, they articulate and ultimately advocate strategies to develop theories from research grounded in data as opposed to using the deductive method (starting with a testable hypothesis that is informed by existing theory). For Glaser and Strauss, some of the key components of grounded theory include

- Concurrent data collection and analysis
- Constructing theory from codes/categories from collected data
- Compare each stage of analysis; this should, they argue, create multiple categories, properties, and hypotheses regarding a given problem.
- Similarly, researchers should advance theory development during each step of data collection/analysis instead of waiting until the end of the study
- To help elaborate and analyze categories, write memos/logs
Charmaz notes that since the original advocacy of Grounded Theory, there have been many permutations of it. As she notes, grounded theory is a "set of principles and practices, not [...] prescriptions or packages. [It] emphasizes flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes and requirements" (Constructing 9). Charmaz herself advocates a variation of Grounded Theory, which she terms "Constructed Grounded Theory." She writes,

I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices. My approach explicitly assumes that any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it. (Constructing 10, emphasis original)

It is this framework of Grounded Theory that I use in this study. I follow the kind of Grounded Theory Charmaz proposes; this includes gathering rich and full data and placing them in their situational contexts (using the methods outlines above), coding my data, writing extended notes (including analysis) about my data (memo-writing), and finally, constructing a kind of working theory that reflects my data analysis.

Dissertation Summary

This project is divided into five chapters. The first chapter has attempted to build a case for Multiliteracy Center research, as I situate this larger project through a brief literature review, an overview of the research questions, and a summary of methods and methodologies employed.

The next chapter is the formal literature review. This literature review has a dual focus. First, I provide some historical context on Writing Centers and their relationship with technology. In this chapter, I address how Writing Centers have alternately embraced or resisted
technology, paying particular attention to computer use (or misuse and disuse) in the Writing Center, implementing (or resisting) Online-Writing Labs, and of course, current discussion centered on Multiliteracy Center theory and practice (while also paying attention to skepticism of Multiliteracy Centers). As Peter Carino does in his histories of Writing Center scholarship, much of my research is drawn from the oldest journal in our field, *The Writing Lab Newsletter*. Adding another layer to this literature review is "local context." I stress that how Writing Center stakeholders interact with technology and other units in the university is inherently influenced by the local context of their particular institution/university. To that end, I acknowledge that Writing Center Theory and Practice is, ultimately, shaped by local context.

Chapter three focuses on my methods and methodology. This section includes a detailed explanation of my methods (interviews, observations, artifact analysis, and reading) along with my chosen methodology, Grounded Theory. Moreover, I further explain Kathy Charmaz’s notions of Grounded Theory. In addition to foregrounding my research methods and methodologies—and explaining why I chose them—I discuss how I chose a MLC to observe, which consultants to interview, and how I chose certain artifacts to analyze.

Chapter four narrates and analyzes my findings. All the information I garnered from reading, interviews, observations, and artifact analysis is presented and recounted in this chapter; much of this section is based on my coding and memos written throughout my empirical research. This is woven together with current (and seminal) theory on new media, literacy, and Writing Center theory.

Chapter five reiterates the tentative answers to my research questions before discussing the implications my research has. I conclude by proposing future studies that I see as a result of
this research. This research is meant to fuel further discussion and thought about the direction of MLCs and the role they may play in the university.

Given my past experience as a Writing Center director, along with my academic research interests of Writing Center theory, literacy theory, and multimodal composition, this project has some very obvious benefit to me. It allows me to explore how Writing Centers are adapting to changes in composition and since Writing Centers exist to help composers of texts, this strikes me as important work. Additionally, this work hopefully adds to the existing body of Multiliteracy Center Scholarship. As the Multiliteracy Directors astutely pointed out at the Computers and Writing conference, this is simply an area that has not been explored in great depth. Additionally, it is a field that has, unfortunately, been met with some derision. The Multiliteracy Directors recounted stories of how their colleagues received their work with skepticism; I too have faced some of this skepticism. Presenting at the Writing Program Administration conference in the summer of 2011, I discussed the notion of Multiliteracy Centers. The primary response I received was that multimodal composition was not as important as "real writing." Additionally, there was general concern that work in MLCs might somehow diminish the work of Writing Centers. Moreover, there seems to be some general disagreement over what, exactly, the work of a Multiliteracy Center should be (and thus how it should be represented) and how consultants should work with burgeoning multimodal composers. This research project looks to confront these concerns.
CHAPTER II.

TECHNOLOGY'S AFFECT ON WRITING CENTER THEORY AND PRACTICE:
A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While chapter one provides a broad context for this project, this chapter focuses specifically on Writing Center theory and practice; in particular, this chapter seeks to better understand the role technology has played in the Writing Center. Similar historical surveys have been done by Peter Carino (1998) and Mike Palmquist (2003). Carino focuses his history on the "tension[s] between technological endorsement and technological resistance" (172) in the Writing Center, while Palmquist delineates his history by discussing how technology aids the instructional goals of Writing Centers (396). Though this literature review draws extensively on the works of Carino and Palmquist, it looks to diverge from these two impressive histories in two ways. First, since both Carino and Palmquist only provide histories up to 1998 and 2003 respectively, this chapter naturally seeks to examine the influence of technology in Writing Centers from 2003 and beyond (though I still examine technology in the center before 2003 as well). Secondly, I use articles from The Writing Lab Newsletter, The Writing Center Journal, Computers and Composition, and other seminal works on Writing Center History and Theory to categorize how Writing Centers have historically used technology—specifically computers. This review of the literature suggests that computers have played a role in the Writing Center in three distinct ways: as "manager," "consultant," and "means of delivering consultations." These three categories will, I hope, adequately summarize the ways that Writing Centers typically use technology. I conclude this chapter by examining Multiliteracy Center literature, specifically arguing that the work of Multiliteracy Centers marks a genuine paradigm shift in Writing Center Theory and Practice.
Computers as Manager

Peter Carino's history of computers in the Writing Center picks up in 1982—with the advent of computer-assisted consultations—as he asserts that prior to 1982 "centers had not received the technology [computers] in significant proportion" ("Computers" 176). However, there is literature seen in seminal journals such as the *Writing Lab Newsletter* and *The Writing Center Journal* that suggest otherwise—that Writing Centers *were* engaging with computers in the Center. Indeed, in Mike Palmquist's short history, he pinpoints 1977 as the earliest mention of computers being used in the Writing Center. However, as Pamquist notes, it was more an exploration of "how the computer might help manage writing centers" (398). As the literature reveals, this notion of computer as manager is the first kind of engagement Writing Centers had with technology, though such engagement still exists today. Indeed, this is an important aspect of how computers have influenced the work of Writing Centers.

As Palmquist notes, the first mention of computers in a Writing Center publication seems to be Richard Mason's 1977 *Writing Lab Newsletter* article "A Response to Our Questionnaire." Though the article is predominantly an overview of what his "Writing Lab" at Michigan Technological University is doing, he does spend a little bit of time discussing technology and computers in relation to Writing Centers. Specifically, he writes that the MTU Writing Lab was hoping to integrate a "computer terminal" in the near future. In what amounts to only a few lines in his article, he briefly details how this terminal will be used: "We intend to use it primarily for administrative control and academic accounting purposes (pen and paper are just not fast enough), but will also be available to develop writing programs" ("Response" 2). He continues by noting the aforementioned computerized writing program will be "something of a luxury" as
one writing program could be used for up to "fifteen or more carrel stations" and would be available at all times ("Response" 2). 

This is a significant article for many reasons, but two are of particular interest to this project. First, this is only the fourth issue—and the first of the second volume—of The Writing Lab Newsletter. Long considered one of the two most important journals in Writing Center scholarship—The Writing Center Journal being the other—this suggests that even in its infancy, Writing Centers were at the very least thinking about how technology (specifically computers) could further the work of Writing Centers. Yet it is also important to note that Mason is speaking purely in terms of management, as he specifically references administrative control and accounting. Conversely, those working within the field of rhetoric and composition at this time were seeking ways to reconcile computers and word processing programs with process theories and, more importantly, how computers could be used as a writing instrument (Carino 173). Thus, where Mason is seeing the computer as a management tool, others in the discipline were seeing computers as a writing tool.

Though Mason is the first to investigate how computers can help with managing affairs in the Writing Center, he is certainly not the only one. For instance, Myra Linden, in a 1979 issue of The Writing Lab Newsletter, writes a short column explaining how the Academic Skills Center at Joliet Junior College uses a computer management system to track student visits to the Academic Skills Center. She boasts that the system is "simple and relatively inexpensive" (4). Though this is a straightforward claim, it nonetheless addresses one of the prevalent concerns that Writing Center administrators constantly deal with: funding. Finding technology to document and manage student visits to a Writing Center is also the subject of a 1981 Writing Lab Newsletter article; here, Ronald Giles notes that Auburn's writing lab is in need of computer
terminals to index and manage the "reports" created for students visiting the center (8)—in fact, he explicitly expresses a desire to use a program similar to the kind of computer management system Linden describes in 1979. One year later, the *Writing Lab Newsletter* published an article by Maurice Scharton and Janice Neuleib that continues the discussion started by Linden and Giles: finding a computer program to help organize and manage student visits. However, how they approach this subject is interesting. While they, like Linden and Giles, advocate using a computer program to help organize information—specifically, referral forms, appointment sheets, student evaluations of the consultation and consultant evaluations of the consultation—the authors maintain that they are only using this program because it makes coding data for future research easier (7). In the article, though, they draw a line between "humanistically inclined" people (of which they consider themselves to be) and "computer" people. Though they see the benefit of using a computer program to manage information—and ultimately advocate the use of such a program—they actively seek to distance themselves from the "computer people." Moreover, they close their article by emphatically noting "we remain convinced that human teacher is the most effective channel through which education can flow" (9, emphasis mine). They justify their use of the computer program by saying "a computerized record-keeping system can help us to devote a larger proportion of our time to tutoring and can help us to improve our ability to tutor" (9). Like the other authors mentioned here, Scharton and Neuleib see the computer program as a tool; unlike the other authors, though, they seek to distance themselves from the computer while concurrently aligning themselves and the work they do with humanists.

It is of note that during the first five years of *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, several articles were published on how computers and computer programs could be employed to manage the
work of Writing Center administrators. For example, Daniel Reimer notes that his Writing Center uses the computer not only for word processing but also as a handout index, a document repository, and a record keeping program (2). Richard Mason, in a later, 1982 article in *The Writing Lab Newsletter* again notes that "A more mundane use of the computer should not be overlooked—record keeping. It is a relatively simple matter to write a program that will keep track of all student traffic" ("Computer" 2). This suggests that the Writing Center community valued such discussions and were actively seeking a way to use computers as tools to further the work they do in some capacity. Following 1982, more articles began being published on how computers could be used to aid consultations, but these discussions came after the initial discussions of how computers can be management tools.

And, though not as prevalent as they once were, these kinds of discussions still exist in Writing Center scholarship today. In September 2009, *The Writing Lab Newsletter* began publishing a semi-regular column called "Geek in the Center"; written by former Ball State University Writing Center director Jackie Grutsch McKinney, this column addresses issues of using technology in the Writing Center. She writes in her first issue that her general goal is to "introduce a technology (a program, web application, equipment, gadget, a practice) and point to research and current uses in writing center work in order to stir up conversations about possibilities" ("Geek" 7). To date most of her columns focus on pragmatic sorts of issues such as storing electronic documents, converting files to PDF, and other tasks that could be perceived as "management" related. Additionally, conversations centered on the same management issues brought up by Linden and others persist today on the Writing Center listserv, WCenter. WCenter, started from Texas Tech University in 1991 by Fred Kemp (Crump 4), often tackles topics similar to the ones presented in the early *Writing Lab Newsletter* articles detailed here.
Though a wide array of discussions take place here, there are still conversations regarding how computers can help manage a Writing Center; most prominently, directors discuss the merits of different online schedulers—and whether to even use an online scheduler.

What this section demonstrates, then, is that initial conversations about Writing Centers using technology were focused on how computers could be a tool to facilitate management tasks—scheduling, keeping track of referrals, and acting as a database for all things consultations. These conversations persist today, certainly, though they have taken a back-seat to other issues regarding Writing Centers and technology, which will be detailed further later in this chapter.

Computers as Consultant (or Computer Assisted Instruction)

In *Computers and the Teaching of Writing in American Higher Education, 1979-1994: A History*, Gail Hawisher et al. note that Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) dominated the work being done in the field of education and computers during the 1960s and 70s. They describe CAI as "drill and practice, or tutorials, or both—in a given content area" (34). Additionally, they observe that these programs could "record performance, chart student progress, and be used for record keeping" (34). Whereas programs such as PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations) and TICCIT (Time-Shared Interactive Computer Controlled Information Television) enjoyed a run of success and use during this time, the authors assert that there was no definitive proof that these programs actually facilitated and improved learning skills (35). By the late 1970s, funding for CAI programs had diminished, proving too expensive, complex, and ultimately ineffective (Hawisher et al. 36). Hawisher et al. argue that "The most powerful indictment of CAI came from students, who found the programs boring and even preferred lecture classes to the use of some systems" (36).
Interestingly, though, while the late 1970s found those in composition moving away from CAI programs, the use of CAI programs in the Writing Center were just getting started during this time. Not surprisingly, though, given the unfavorable reviews found in the Hawisher et al. text, the use of CAI software and programs in the Writing Center has been a highly controversial issue throughout the years. These varying attitudes towards CAI can be seen not only in Palmquist and Carino's respective Writing Center histories, but also through articles being published in Writing Center journals when CAI programs were first being integrated into the center. Though Peter Carino asserts that during the first four years of the Writing Lab Newsletter there are no articles discussing computer consultations ("Computers" 176) there are certainly articles published that discuss CAI. The earliest mention of CAI in any writing center publication seems to be from Gaylene Rosaschi. In a 1978 article in the Writing Lab Newsletter, Rosaschi discusses the use of the program TICCIT. Rosaschi describes TICCIT as "two Nova minicomputers, six disc drives, and anywhere from 32-128 computer terminals" (4). The program lets students choose their own learning styles to go through examples and practice problems related to writing; Rosaschi asserts that TICCIT is an "exciting" idea that helps make learning "appealing" to students (4). This one page article—which really comes across as an advertisement for TICCIT—concludes by saying TICCIT is being used in the writing lab to help with spelling, grammar, and other composition problems. This nod to "skill and drill" is a common feature of many of the CAI programs used by Writing Centers during the late 1970s and all of the 1980s, and thus was the source of much debate in Writing Center scholarship.

Palmquist suggests that "style- and grammar- analysis programs were being used routinely in writing centers" (399) during the 1980s, and Carino asserts that these style and grammar analysis programs tended to reinforce current traditional rhetoric "skill and drill" tactics
"Computers" 176). Despite a general aversion to current-traditional rhetoric skill-and-drill activities at this time in the wider field of composition, some Writing Center directors found these programs to be not only efficient, but also effective. Richard Mason is effusive in his praise when he writes that CAI can replace human interaction. He claims "Properly equipped self-instruction stations can provide an effective form of one-on-one, so that while a tutor is working with one student, s/he can keep many other working productively in the lab" ("Computer" 4).

Carino writes of two others who have similar notions as Mason. He first cites Francis Key who argues that the "precision" CAI programs have for finding surface errors is astounding, while Don Payne boasts of his writing center using CAI programs in a "'comprehensive sequence of lessons dealing with spelling, proofreading, vocabulary, and error'" (qtd. in Carino "Computers" 177).

Deborah Holdstein also advocates skill and drill CAI programs, but for different reasons. She believes that CAI can boost a writer's confidence, since the writer can work on "errors" in private; because of this "non-threatening" atmosphere, she believes the student will be more likely to persevere (7). Where Holdstein justifies the use of CAI programs through claims of helping students persevere, Alan Brown is much less altruistic. He bluntly notes that "The drill-and-practice computer programs, consisting of units of twenty questions and answers but no explanations, relieved me of the burdensome task of teaching grammar" (13).

However, Carino notes that there are others who oppose CAI programs because they do encourage current-traditional rhetoric. He cites Janice Neuleib, who argues that skill and drill exercises don't work in textbooks, so there is no reason to believe it would work on computers ("Computers" 177); similarly, Mary Croft fears that these programs will diminish the actual act of writing while favoring neatness and correctness ("Computers" 177). Judith Summerfield is a
bit more scathing. She suggests that the computer will "threaten the community of the writing center [...] I know that the temptation must be great to call up a software program and call that tutoring" (8). She concludes her article with this warning: "Watch out for computer terminals. Watch out for all evidence of attempts to break down the gathering of minds" (9).

The aforementioned literature does not offer much middle-ground in how CAI is viewed. Clearly, both pro- and anti- CAI voices are strong and at times, persuasive. This dichotomous attitude, though, should not be too much of a surprise considering the work being done in the field of composition—and writing center theory—during the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, consider the works being published regarding composition theory—specifically process theory. The 1970s saw pedagogues advocating teaching writing as a process not a product. Janet Emig suggests in her "Writing as a Mode of Learning" that writing as a process is central to learning; James Britton argues that there is a conflict between textbook notions of composing processes and the actual composing process used by writers (20); and Donald Murray famously argues that "we [composition instructors] should teach unfinished writing and glory in its unfinishedness [...] It is an exciting, eventful, evolving process" (4). Given this scholarship being published on teaching writing, it is understandable that some Writing Center specialists might be distressed by a move back to current traditional rhetoric. Moreover, Writing Center theory in the 1980s included popular works by Stephen North and Kenneth Bruffee—both of whom, as mentioned in chapter one, actively argue for conversation taking place in consultations and, perhaps just as importantly, creating better writers, not better writing. It would seem, at face value, that these CAI programs being used in the Writing Centers during the 1970s and 1980s do not support such goals. That said, it is just as understandable to see advocates of CAI programs.

Several Writing Center stakeholders, such as Mason, Pamela B. Farrell and Leigh Howard
Holmes, write about the inclusion of computer terminals and CAI programs in writing centers increasing the amount of people visiting the center—which often leads to more funding.

Some scholars make a distinction between CAI Programs (such as TICCIT) and Computer Assisted Composition (CAC) programs such as a word processing or text edit software (e.g. Microsoft Word). Wendy Tibbets Greene and Lynn Veach Sadler make this distinction quite clear when they note that CAC programs do not make use of grammar programs or style checkers—traits commonly associated with CAI software (10). Palmquist notes that "Early discussions of word-processing software among writing center scholars focused largely on its differences from the more familiar CAI programs and typically called attention to its potential role in supporting process instruction" (400). Indeed, Tibbetts Greene and Veach Sadler demonstrate this when they emphasize "We believe, fervently, in the concept of computer-assisted composition" (10); that said, they are certainly not the only scholars in the 1980s impressed with the work of CAC software.

For example, Farrell argues that word processing programs actually increases collaboration between the consultant and the student because "[Tutors and tutees] see the computer acting as a third party or neutral ground, encouraging collaboration, giving immediate feedback and ease of revision, inviting more writing, opening dialogue between writer and tutor, acting as a learning device, and giving writers pride in their work" (29). Moreover, she believes that "with the encouragement of the tutor, writers tend to do more writing" due to the ease of word processing programs (31). Beatrice Jacobson notes a similar phenomena with her writers; she says because students can write faster and see changes immediately, students feel more "freedom" (10). She also claims that more students use the computer not only for writing a draft, but also for brainstorming and prewriting (9). Daniel Reimer joins in the praising of text editing
programs, saying that they make writing easier while still making the writer think—the computer does not do the writing for him/her (2). Offering a more pragmatic benefit of using word processing programs is Leigh Howard Holmes, who claims that students will need knowledge of how to use word processing once they are on the job market—and that the writing center can (and should) be the place for students to learn how to use such programs (13-14). Palmquist asserts in his history that "More than any of the previous technologies—CAI, record-keeping tools, and style-and grammar-analysis tools—word processing software enabled students to engage in writing as they learned to write" (401). Fred Kemp, though a proponent of using the computer as a heuristic device, does admit that word processing "no doubt" assists students to write better (7).

Discussions of word processing software and CAI programs were a popular topic for discussion in the Writing Lab Newsletter. Peter Carino refers to Jim Bell's study that shows between 1984 and 1988, The Writing Lab Newsletter published thirteen articles and nine software reviews regarding CAI and CAC, "making computers the second most popular topic" ("Computers" 179). Additionally, Carino notes that several conference sessions were devoted to this very topic and often sparked lively debate ("Computers" 179).

Though The Writing Lab Newsletter actively discussed computers in the center, other publications were not quite so enthusiastic. For instance, only one issue of The Writing Center Journal during the 1980s addressed computer related topics—a special, 1987 issue. Additionally, in the first book on writing centers—Muriel Harris's 1982 edited collection Tutoring Writing—there is only one article devoted to computers (Don Norton and Kristine Hansen's "The Potential for Computer Assisted Instruction in Writing Labs"). Just two years later, Gary Olson released his Writing Centers: Theory and Administration—an edited collection of essays which is still
one of the more cited texts in the field; however, not one selection is devoted to computers in the writing center. Thus, during the 1980s, only one publication was actively working towards discussing and theorizing about using computers in the writing center. So while it was clearly an important issue for some, it largely remained on the margins in the field.

Computers as Means of Delivering Consultations: Online Writing Labs (OWLs)

Online Writing Labs (OWLs), according to Lynne Anderson Inman, are designed to support student writing efforts by "providing easy access to electronic resources and online tutoring" (650). Joyce Kinkead asserts that this Writing Center model should be considered imperative to writing center theory and practice because "an integral part of writing center philosophy [...] is that education should be accessible to all who can benefit from it" (4). This section looks to further explore the different kinds of OWLs that extends the services of a Writing Center. There are three primary kinds of online writing labs (OWLs). First, there is the "storehouse" OWL, where handouts on various composition concepts (e.g. thesis statements, semi-colon use) are made available to students of that particular university, and oftentimes, anyone perusing the web. Second, there is the OWL where students are able to submit essays to writing consultants to get feedback. This can be done either synchronously or asynchronously. Lastly, there are some OWLs who provide both services. Here, I hope to provide a bit of historical background and context for these types of OWLs, while also paying attention to ongoing discussions of how OWLs affect Writing Center theory and practice.

Muriel Harris and Michael Pemberton briefly acknowledge the OWL storehouse, noting "some centers might choose only to provide access to standardized handouts—on comma usage, resume formats, and subject-verb agreement, for example [...]" (146). Likewise, Stephen Neaderhiser and Joanna Wolfe briefly mention the storehouse OWL, simply describing them as
"websites offering published, public content" (53). An example of this kind of OWL is the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay (http://www.uwgb.edu/writingcenter/index.htm). Here, they offer a variety of handouts, including citation styles (APA and MLA), plagiarism, and sentence fragments.

Both Harris and Pemberton and Neaderhiser and Wolfe choose to only acknowledge the storehouse OWL, focusing instead on OWLs that actively consult student work. In Carino's history of computers in the Writing Center, he only cites the Harris and Pemberton piece as discussing the storehouse OWL; in Palmquist's later history, he brings up two Kairos articles published in 1996 that discuss how OWLs can fulfill "a wide range of purposes" including those serving "as online advertisements for campus writing centers, to those that offered online aids such as handouts and links to other online resources" (404). Jane Lasarenko's "Pr(owl)ing Around: An OWL by any other Name" goes so far as to say that this kind of OWL is "at the bottom rung of the OWL evolutionary ladder" (par. 2). Eric Hobson is even more disdainful, writing "many OWLs consist primarily of the contents of old filing cabinets and handbooks—worksheets, drill activities, guides to form—pulled out of the mothballs, dusted off, and digitized" (483). This disdainful stance can be seen in a number of articles published on the storehouse OWL. Randall L. Beebe and Mary J. Bonevelle believe that "The OWL is more than a tool for making handouts and other materials readily available" (46), suggesting that OWLs who only provide handouts are somehow not as effective or useful. Carino notes that the use of this kind of OWL "evokes the storehouse metaphor of the writing center constructed by Andrea Lunsford in 1989 to denounce current-traditional center practice based on correctness and grammar drill" (187). Thus, the only scholarship published on storehouse OWLs seem to either briefly acknowledge their existence or berate the work they do. I would contend that this
surprising lack of scholarship on storehouse OWLs is simply because Writing Center stakeholders tend to be more interested in the consultant/student dynamic, and since OWLs providing handouts are static, not too many scholars concern themselves with this kind of work—and when they do, it is only to condemn it.

Although storehouse OWLs don't receive too much scholarly attention, online consulting does. One of the most popular topics in Writing Center journals or Writing Center conferences during the past two decades has been consulting in online environments. A topic of immense debate, the field has not come to any sort of consensus as to whether a) asynchronous or synchronous consultations are more effective or b) whether any sort of online consultation is effective. To clarify, synchronous consultations take place in real time—both the consultant and student are present and able to contribute to the conversation (e.g. instant messaging). Asynchronous consultations are a bit less dynamic, as a student submits a document to a consultant who responds in a separate document—there is no real-time conversation.

Asynchronous OWLs are quite common according to Neaderhiser and Wolfe's 2009 study on the uses of OWLs. In this study, they found that 91% of their survey respondents employ asynchronous consultation methods in their OWL, noting that the majority of those 91% use email for online writing consultations (61). This may be because asynchronous OWLs require less technological know-how and software than synchronous OWLs. Usually, a good email account suffices, and most universities now offer free email services to students, faculty, and staff. That said, though email is a common enough tool, there still can be some technological glitches, of course; still, these tend to pale in comparison to synchronous chat systems. As Eric Hobson writes, "one common issue that limits the use of online writing center services is that most of the people currently directing writing centers and training the tutors who work in these
centers usually have neither the time nor the expertise to explore all the available options and to create online tutorial services" (477). Thus, the familiarity of email may be comforting and quite simply convenient for many writing center directors. Kinkead also invokes pragmatism when she advocates for the "electronic tutor" and "electronic writing center," noting "Writing centers are a high-cost item on university budgets because of tutor salaries [...] from an administrator's standpoint, a center that offers only electronic tutor services would be cost effective as the tutor logs on daily, responds to questions, and logs off with no wasted time" (4). What may be even more attractive to administrators, though, is the notion of not having to buy additional software to engineer this.

Technological ease and administrative panacea, though, is not the only benefit discussed regarding asynchronous consultations. David Coogan, author of *Electronic Writing Centers* and "Towards a Rhetoric of Online Learning" is a staunch advocate of email consulting. He believes that it is foolhardy to consider email consulting a replacement for face-to-face consulting. Thus, he gets frustrated when individuals believe that "email tutoring is really just a bad version or a non-version of real tutoring" (*Electronic* 24). This should not be the case—there really should be no comparison between the two, he argues. Rather, Coogan believes email consulting should be seen as an entirely different genre (*Electronic* 24). He makes a compelling argument, to some extent. He points out that in face-to-face consultations

the student and tutor talk 'over' a paper. The paper connects them. They see the same text. And the paper creates tension: who touches it? reads from it? marks it? The underlying question soon becomes, what will be DONE to the paper? As a methodology, then, the f2f tutorial is grounded by paper, and The Paper can limit student-tutor interaction. ("Towards a Rhetoric" 556)
In comparison, he argues that in email the consultation is constructed by text and that more work can be accomplished because there is no need to worry about "phatic cues" ("Towards a Rhetoric" 556).

Mark Mabrito takes a similar approach to Coogan by noting that email naturally demands students to write more than a face-to-face consultation; he asserts that since the conversation must be written instead of spoken, students will gain the benefit of practicing writing more (145). But he also believes that email consulting can help apprehensive writers in other ways. First, he suggests it can provide a less threatening environment "because it is an environment characterized by a psychological distance and also because the written conversation of email provides a less threatening method of evaluation" (146). Second, he suggests that the written transcript of emails can be helpful for students in the revision process. He points out that studies have shown "students tend to remember less of what was said in a face-to-face conference than they remember after reading written comments" (146). These seem like compelling reasons to at least explore email consulting.

That said, there are also several critics of asynchronous OWLs. In fact, there are more detractors to asynchronous OWLs than supporters in the published scholarship; additionally, it is of note that most of the "pro-asynchronous" OWL scholarship was published in the 1990s. The last decade or so seems much more focused on synchronous OWLs. Lee-ann Kastman Breuch has harsh words for OWLs, noting that they are "less than impressive attempts to mirror a face-to-face tutoring environment online" (29) and "some may argue that online tutoring goes much against the idea of a writing center—the idea of Burkean Parlors, of ongoing conversation" (31). Neaderhiser and Wolfe feel that "email—asynchronous (i.e. time-delayed) written communication—seems to go against the dialogic nature of writing center interactions" (50).
Even Muriel Harris, considered by many to be the foremost Writing Center scholar, finds that email can be too limiting for students seeking the kind of informal conversation and brainstorming that often takes place in face-to-face consultations ("Using Computers" 7). Joanna Castner is a bit more diplomatic in her criticism of asynchronous online consultations. Though she lauds that the "asynchronous nature of email" presents students working full time or not living near/on campus an opportunity to receive feedback in a convenient manner, she ultimately concludes that "email does not seem to encourage sustained dialogue" (119). This is problematic, Castner argues, because like Harris she finds that dialogue is central to any successful consultation (120); moreover, she fears that a lack of dialogue may give a writer the wrong idea regarding a Writing Center and may perceive it as a one-stop fix-it shop (120).

The alternative to asynchronous consulting is synchronous consulting—or consulting that takes place in real time. Though email is often the only consultation method associated with asynchronous consultations, there are several consultation methods associated with synchronous consultations. Neaderhiser and Wolfe discuss several in their article, including text-based instant messaging, real-time screen sharing, real-time audio, real-time video, and phone (55-57). Often, these synchronous methods are offered as a viable—and preferred—alternative to asynchronous consultations while also serving to convince skeptics who doubt the merits of online consulting in the first place. Hobson sees synchronous consultations—such as video conferencing—as working towards "creating OWLs that are consistent with the best of the writing center community's social constructivist-influenced theory and practice [...]" (484-485). Theorists such as Nancy Grimm (in Good Intentions: Writing Center Work for Postmodern Times) and Laurel Johnson Black (Between Talk and Teaching: Reconsidering the Writing Conference) advocate the importance of understanding student writing in context, while also privileging ongoing
dialogue/conversation—two strengths of synchronous writing consultations. Castner notes this, by saying that if Writing Centers seek to achieve dialogue in online consultations, then they should only seek out synchronous software (127).

Interestingly, though, despite the strong push in recent Writing Center scholarship to move towards synchronous models of OWLs, the Neaderhiser and Wolfe piece—published in 2009—indicates that current theory is not translating into practice. Again, 91% of the Writing Centers responding to their survey use asynchronous methods of consulting online. Compare this to 28% who use some form of synchronous consulting (the totals exceed 100% because some institutions offer more than one method for online consultation)—a number that staggers Neaderhiser and Wolfe because of the sophistication of many synchronous tools and, more importantly, how many free options are available to writing center directors (such as AIM Pro) (51). Moreover, they note that some responses to the survey included this remark: "An online writing center isn't really a writing center, is it?" (66). This, perhaps, suggests that despite the debates among some Writing Center scholars regarding kinds of online writing labs, some individuals are still not even convinced that OWLs are viable.

What the literature also reveals, though, is that even though there is no consensus as to the "best" way to conduct OWL consultations, there is a consensus that Writing Center stakeholders should be the ones making decisions about the kinds of OWLs implemented on their particular campus, using local context as a guide. To that end, several writing stakeholders are alarmed that some OWLs are being outsourced to companies such as Smarthinking, which means that Writing Center stakeholders have no say in how online consulting is conducted. 

Holly Moe reviewed Smarthinking in a 2000 issue of The Writing Lab Newsletter and determined Smarthinking to be a "jiffy editing service" and declares it ultimately inadequate for
what students "really" need which is "real assistance that will teach them skills to improve their writing" (16). Muriel Harris also discusses commercially available online consulting services that many universities are gravitating towards; she argues that

We need to clarify for ourselves and our administrators why our academically situated writing centers need to keep our doors open, no matter how tempting it might be for the bean counters who influence budgets to recommend switching to commercial tutoring services such as SMARTHINKING. ("Preparing" 17)

Harris suggests we do this by showing administrators articles similar to Neal Lerner's "Counting Beans and Making Beans Count," an article that demonstrates how students who visit Writing Centers earn higher grades in the respective course they were visiting the writing center for. She also suggests that we show how consultants deal with affective concerns, while providing the necessary personal interactiveness that working with writers demands (19). Thus, while there are debates taking place within the Writing Center community regarding OWLs, most of the community agree that outsourcing online writing consultations can make for bad pedagogy.

Multiliteracy Centers

As indicated in chapter one, the first piece of scholarship that explicitly calls for Writing Centers to work with new media is John Trimbur's 2000 Writing Center Journal article "Multiliteracies, Social Futures and Writing Centers." As mentioned in chapter one, this piece invites Writing Centers to become advocates of multimodal and multilingual literacies; to that end, he hopes that Writing Centers will challenge traditional genres and offer consultations to composers of texts that extend beyond alphabetic essays. For all intents and purposes, this article not only serves as the initial piece on Multiliteracy Centers, but it now serves as sort of a credo for any Multiliteracy Center proponent. Quite simply, Writing Center scholars have used this
piece as a springboard to make convincing arguments for writing consultants to assist new media composers.

Both Jackie Grutsch McKinney ("New Media Matters: Tutoring in the Late Age of Print") and David Sheridan ("Words, Images, Sounds: Writing Centers as Multiliteracy Centers") use Gunther Kress, the New London Group, Cynthia Selfe, Anne Wyscoki and Cheryl Ball (in addition to Trimbur) to persuade their readers that working with new media is not only a viable enterprise, but a needed activity in the university. Grutsch McKinney uses the works of these scholars to conclude that

we have witnessed a fundamental change in the textual climate. Before, putting a text on paper—and writing for that linear, left-to-right, top-to-bottom, page to page form—was the way to write. That has changed. Now, there are many ways to communicate through writing; consequently, putting a text to paper is now a rhetorical choice that one should not make hastily. ("New Media" 33)

Using the changing nature of text/writing as one reason to validate a move to working with new media composers, Grutsch McKinney provides two other reasons Writing Centers should invest in this movement. First, she indicates that "the alphabetic text in a new media text is subsumed into the whole and must be read in context of the whole composition" ("New Media" 35); that is, she claims that there are still alphabetic traits to these new media compositions that Writing Centers are "obligated" to help with. Secondly, she notes that Writing Centers need to "speak up about how creating digital texts involves more than mastering a software program" ("New Media" 35). She fears that if Writing Centers are not "loud" enough, rhetorical elements of these new media compositions will be forgotten, and the focus will be on only technical aspects.
Likewise, Sheridan uses the instructors at his institution (Michigan State) to demonstrate that students are being asked to create PowerPoint presentations, web pages, posters, and brochures and that these students are seeking help that extends beyond the kind of technical services computer labs and computer science programs offer ("Words, Images, Sounds" 342-343). Moreover, he acknowledges that while centers can respond to this need, they can also "be agents of institutional change, advocating for the kinds of composing and teaching they feel are important" ("Words, Images, Sounds" 343); he implies, then, that Writing Center stakeholders should find new media compositions important, as individuals are being asked to compose in such spaces not only in the academy, but in the professional work place as well ("Words, Images, Sounds" 343).

However, while these are inspiring arguments, these kinds of pieces are few and far between—a lament that regularly surfaces in the few published pieces of Multiliteracy Center Scholarship. Harry Denny notes that references to Multiliteracy Centers in Writing Center scholarship are few and far between, and as such, Writing Centers are not really taking up the "programming and staff development" that Multiliteracy Centers call for (85). Grutsch McKinney, writing in 2009, notes that there are only a few published pieces on Multiliteracy Centers ("New Media" 29) and in an interview with Krista Homicz Millar, Sheridan admits that there are not a lot of publications that explore how Writing Centers can support multimodal composition. Interestingly, *The Writing Lab Newsletter*—on the forefront for all things technology, as this literature review demonstrates—has not published a piece on Multiliteracy Centers as of Spring 2012. Not surprisingly, then, there are only a handful of institutions that have centers open to working with multimodal compositions, let alone identifying as a Multiliteracy Center. Currently, there is only one center identifying as a Multiliteracy Center:
Michigan Technological University's "Multiliteracies Center." Several Writing Centers, including Ball State, the University of Michigan, and Michigan State, have recently undergone name changes (from identifying as a Multiliteracy Center to identifying as a Writing Center) but still work with multimodal composers. Additionally, Texas A&M, Stanford, Salt Lake City Community College, St. Cloud State University, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and others acknowledge on their web-pages that they work with a variety of compositions beyond the traditional alphabetic essay.

Perhaps, given the lack of scholarship and actual Multiliteracy Centers, it will come as no surprise that there are concerns regarding Multiliteracy Centers. As mentioned in chapter one, the most prominent concern comes from the oft-cited Michael Pemberton article, "Planning for Hypertexts in the Writing Center...Or Not." While the crux of his criticisms of MLCs is mentioned in the first chapter, he makes some ancillary claims that deserve attention. First, he is not only skeptical of MLCs, but of computers in the Writing Center. He notes that the lack of personal contact in online tutorials may seem dehumanizing (13) and that CAI programs are "incipient threats" to "the writing center's very existence" (11). To be fair, attacks on CAI programs are nothing new, as this chapter demonstrates. Additionally, he does offer four recommendations on how to deal with multimodal compositions: treat them like any other text, ignore the complications of multimodal compositions entirely, use specialist consultants, and provide specialized training for consultants (16-21). Naturally, he comes up with reasons why each option is not a viable option, as he ultimately concludes that we should tread cautiously with these kinds of compositions (21). Pemberton does honestly offer valuable advice, here. He does not wholly reject multimodal consulting, but instead wishes to be the voice of caution while encouraging Writing Centers to be "attuned to changes in their students' and institutions' needs"
(22). This is fair advice, but it is easy to see how his claims could be construed as MLC-bashing. Rather, Pemberton vocalizes some very real concerns.

Nancy Grimm also offers a valid concern that comes with naming a writing center "Multiliteracy Center." She notes that "Many people take the term 'multiliteracies' to mean a major shift to multimodality, one that leaves print-based text in the dust. That's not my understanding of the term, however. While we work with some multimodal texts here at Tech [Michigan Technological University] it is not our exclusive concern" (Personal Communication, 8 Dec. 2011). This can be seen on the homepage of MTU's Multiliteracies Center homepage. Their mission statement reads as follows: "At the Michigan Tech Multiliteracies Center (MTMC), we work with students, faculty, and staff to address the challenges of learning & communicating in complex and culturally diverse environments." Indeed, while multiliteracies often does mean working with multimodal composition, it is certainly not an exclusive relationship. For instance, Stephen Fraiberg calls for "code mashing," which is the "complex blending of multimodal and multilingual texts and literacy practices in our teaching and research" (102). The New London Group, in "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies," indicate that the term multiliteracies encapsulates two important arguments; not only does it refer to "the multiplicity of communications channels and media" (63) but it also refers to "the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity" (63). For whatever reason, most of the scholarship on multiliteracy centers gravitate towards the multiplicity of media argument, while the focus on multilingualism tends to be overlooked. Grimm asserts that this is a problem—that there is a danger not only in seeing multiliteracy too narrowly, but that the name "Multiliteracy Center" can be misinterpreted.
Conclusions

This review of literature suggests several things. First, Writing Centers engage with technology in a variety of ways. Technology has been embraced by some and resisted by others; this battle is accounted for quite aptly in Carino's article. This resistance/embracing is often the result of local context. For example, when I directed the Writing Center at a community college in the late 2000s, I was initially afforded one computer with an ill-functioning mouse and sketchy internet connection. To discuss the role electronic consulting might play in our center would have been ill-advised—at least until we could afford a functioning desktop. Additionally, how technology has been often used to support the instructional goals of writing centers is capably documented by Palmquist. However, a close look at the scholarship published in the last 35 years on Writing Centers and technology suggests that there are three primary ways tech in the Writing Center is discussed: as manager (i.e. how it can help alleviate administrative concerns), as consultant (i.e. how CAI and CAC can further the goals of the center), and as a deliverer of consultations (i.e. how electronic consulting—whether static, dynamic, synchronous or asynchronous—can be used to further the reach of the center).

Though these are all important discussions—which is hopefully evident through this literature review—they do not challenge the compositions being consulted. That is, while the scholarship challenges the kind of work being done—and how it is conducted—the goals of these discussions are the same: how to best help students with their traditional, alphabetic essays composed on 8.5" x 11" paper. The literature on MLCs, which admittedly only spans eleven years or so, asks Writing Centers to challenge the very meaning of what it means to "write" and "compose." As these very discussions are taking place in the field of composition now, this shift presents writing centers the opportunity to not only broaden the scope of their work, but also be a
leader in the new media movement. Centers have usually been a step behind the field of composition in matters of technology. An example of this is how, and more importantly when, centers engaged with CAI software: the late 1970s, which is exactly when those in composition were starting to abandon it. That said, taking the leap to work with multimodal composers represents a paradigm shift in writing center theory and practice. At the very least, stakeholders will be forced to question all the issues mentioned in not only this chapter, but chapter one as well.

Given the breadth of such a shift, it is unfortunate that the literature on Multiliteracy Center has a dearth of narratives. This literature review demonstrates that there are several published narratives on how the use of computers—whether as manager, consultant, or deliverer of consultations—affect writing center theory and practice. However, such narratives cannot be readily found regarding centers working with multimodal and new media composers. Due to this lack of narratives, the opportunity for critics to step forward are plenty; moreover, it is easy for respected scholars such as Pemberton and Grimm to have concerns about how Multiliteracy Centers are not only represented, but how they can feasibly conduct this kind of consultation without shortchanging the quality of work in other areas of the center. Thus, this dissertation looks to fill this gap by providing a narrative of how one (or two) centers approached working with multimodal and new media composers. The next chapter outlines how I chose these two centers, while also detailing the methodological framework this narrative works in.
CHAPTER III: METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

While the last chapter focused on past studies involving Writing Centers and technology, this chapter seeks to articulate this project's research design. Specifically, this chapter aims to achieve the following: indicate how I arrived at my research questions, focusing particularly on a pilot survey conducted in the late summer of 2011; provide a thick description of the Multiliteracy Center I worked with and explain how the participating Writing Center was chosen; relate how the data was acquired and how this data is analyzed in chapter four; and finally, close the chapter by noting the limitations of this research design, while also reiterating the biases that I bring into this study.

Arriving at and Focusing Research Questions

My initial curiosity in this project stems from my own Writing Center experience. I've worked in two writing centers in a couple of different capacities—as graduate consultant (2006-2007), and a couple years later at the second institution, as Writing Center director (2008-2009). Much of my (broad) interest regarding the intersections of technology and Writing Center work stems from my time as a graduate consultant where I worked at a Writing Center that actively consulted with distance learners through both asynchronous and synchronous consulting. Though this Writing Center had offered students asynchronous consultations for several years before I worked there, the synchronous consulting was a brand new project that started my first year in the center. The account of our first year can be seen in *The Writing Lab Newsletter* issue thirty-one volume eight, as the director (Dr. Carol Mohrbacher) of this Writing Center wrote about our rather tumultuous foray into synchronous consulting. In this article Mohrbacher draws from several consultant remarks, including my own, to conclude that overwhelmingly the consultant (and Mohrbacher's) response to synchronous consulting was (initially) negative. At the heart of
our concern(s) was whether or not the students were getting the same quality consultation that they would have received if they had visited the Writing Center in person. The general response was that students using the synchronous OWL were decidedly "missing out" on many aspects of the writing consultant experience; these concerns mirror many of the fears outlined in chapter two. Mohrbacher ultimately concludes that centers using online synchronous consulting methods should tread cautiously and create strict ground rules for the student and consultant to follow.

My experience directing a Writing Center also factors into my interest in this project. As I have mentioned in both chapter one and chapter two, the Writing Center I directed lacked technology that is afforded most (but certainly not all) Writing Centers; this meant that we were only able to work with students face-to-face in the physical space of the center. The irony, though, is that the university where I directed the Writing Center not only had a high number of distance learners, but the instructors on campus—across all the disciplines—regularly assigned digital and multimodal projects that often required technology. When these students would traipse to the Writing Center with their technology-infused project in tow, they were often disappointed that we could not help them out due to our lack of internet, ill-functioning mouse, and antiquated desktop. Due to a shoestring budget—$100 per year when I first arrived—we barely had enough money to hire consultants. It was difficult, though, being put in a position where students actively sought our help on two fronts: distance learners seeking help from afar and local students seeking rhetorical, functional, and critical help on their multimodal projects.

These two experiences have certainly helped shape the scope of my research, as well as hearing, learning, reading, and seeing firsthand how "composition" and "literacy" are changing to accommodate and embrace multiple media. While the changes in literacy and composition discussed in chapters one and two are exciting, I wondered whether Writing Centers were
adapting to these changes, and if so, how Writing Centers were changing so that they could provide students with the best possible educational experience, as guided by local context. This line of thought lead me to Multiliteracy Center research, as seen in the last two chapters. However, after learning about Multiliteracy Centers, I was still left with more questions than answers. Among my initial research questions were

1. What obligations do Writing Centers have, if any, to accommodate courses that are integrating multimodal compositions?
2. If Writing Centers are accommodating multimodal compositions, how are they justifying such a massive shift in practice?
3. What are the material concerns that such changes bring?
4. How does this affect consultant training?
5. If Writing Centers are not accommodating multimodal composition, does that go contrary to a Writing Center's purpose?
6. Moreover, if looked at conversely, is it responsible of instructors to assign multimodal compositions without the support of a Writing Center?
7. What other support exists besides technical support?
8. Who would provide the rhetorical and compositional feedback?
9. Does assigning multimodal compositions without these support mechanisms violate an ethic of care?
10. Is it even ethical? Obviously, these questions were beyond the scope of this project and additionally, they did not reflect a cohesive project.

To help focus my research questions, I conducted a pilot survey (during the late summer of 2011) to help focus my broad questions into a workable project; specifically, I decided to
survey Writing Center directors about the possibility of Writing Centers shifting to a Multiliteracy Center model (for survey questions used, see Appendix A). The participants recruited for my survey were WCenter listserv members. Though not officially affiliated with the largest Writing Center organization in the nation—International Writing Centers Association (IWCA)—the IWCA website advertises the listserv; in fact, the only way to enroll in the WCenter listserv is through the IWCA website. Advertised as a place for Writing Center professionals to ask for advice, announce events, and post research questions/projects, this seemed like an ideal location to distribute my electronic survey. While it is suspected that there are fewer members on the WCenter listserv than the Writing Program Administrator Listserv (which boasts around 3000 subscribers), there is no way to concretely determine how many people participate in the WCenter listserv. Further confounding this is that as with many listservs, there may be several individuals who subscribe but either a) don't check regularly b) don't direct a Writing Center or c) some combination of the two. Thus, though the WCenter is an excellent place to attempt to focus a research project or receive feedback, it is difficult to ascertain who is actually a part of the WCenter community. For example, I am a member of the WCenter community, but I rarely, if ever, post. However, I am active in that I read posts daily. The more frequent posters are directors of Writing Centers or graduate students interested in Writing Center theory and practice.

I chose survey research to help focus my questions in part because Janice Lauer and J. William Asher note that this kind of research can be valuable by allowing the researcher to describe a large(r) group of people (such as Writing Center directors) in terms of a sample (54). Because I was looking to get a feel for attitudes among a larger population, I needed a quick way to access and ask questions—and survey research allows for this. As such, I designed a survey
using Google Forms and sent this survey, electronically, to all the participants of WCen-ter. After one week, I sent a (friendly) reminder email. I left the survey open for the month of August 2011. In the span of this time, I received nineteen responses.

To help focus my research, I needed to better understand Writing Center Directors' attitudes towards working with multimodal compositions and, more broadly, Multiliteracy Centers; this would help me learn what issues need to be further explored in Multiliteracy Center research. As such, one of the questions asked point-blank "Do you believe Writing Centers should help individuals with multimodal compositions?" The response to this question was overwhelming: 100% (n=19) answered "Yes." The nineteen individuals who responded in such a positive way represent a variety of different writing centers. Most respondents (n=13) work in a Writing Center that offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, but I also had respondents who work in universities offering only undergraduate degrees (n=5) and associate degrees (n=1). Moreover, respondents had directed Writing Centers for various amounts of time. The majority of respondents (n=7) had been directing a Writing Center for 1-5 years; 15.7% (n=3) have directed a Writing Center 6-10 years; 21% (n=4) 11-15 years; 10% (n=2) 16-20 years; and 15.7% (n=3) have directed their Writing Center for over 20 years. Thus, the approval of Multiliteracy Centers is not coming from only one kind of university or new directors (a common misconception): the approval is more widespread, encompassing directors of only a few years to many years and is found at a variety of institutions.

When given a short answer space to elaborate on what kind of help Writing Centers should be giving students with multimodal compositions, a range of answers were given. 26.3% (n=5) stressed that design should be the primary focus for consultants helping students with multimodal composition. Of particular note is one respondent, who emphasizes that "we" should
focus "ONLY on basic design" (emphasis original). 15.7% (n=3) suggested that consultants and directors respond to texts only as audience members, while 15.7% (n=3) suggested that we should not consult texts any differently at all. One respondent clarifies by noting "All is text" suggesting that all text should be treated equally. Interestingly, one respondent indicated that Writing Centers should not work with multimodal composition, but instead offer handouts and documentation on visual rhetoric and literacy. Other responses included providing rhetorical help (n=3), general feedback (n=1), technical work (n=2), presentation/style (n=1), and ongoing encouragement (n=1). Thus, there does not seem to be any consensus, per se, as to what the work of a Multiliteracy Center should be. The answers provided give choices—ranging from design to technical work—to the aspiring Multiliteracy Center director. It also seems that some of these areas could be scaffolded; for example, a consultant could couch basic design discussion in terms of rhetorical effectiveness. It seems the answers are closely related, but the fact that no consensus exists demonstrates the nebulous nature of Multiliteracy Center work—and for that matter, Writing Center work.

While the above questions yielded the most insight as to how Writing Center directors view Multiliteracy Centers—and what their attitudes are—other insights were found through other questions. When asked to identify a challenge in creating a Multiliteracy Center—which I defined in this survey as a Writing Center willing to help students with multimodal composition—several respondents (n=7) noted that consultant training would be the biggest challenge. Even more respondents (n=9) identified funding and finding equipment to be the biggest concern. Singular responses that were particularly illuminating included one who did not think there would be any problems, to one who was afraid students would use the center only as a tech lab. Another individual was concerned that a Multiliteracy Center would compete with the
IT structure on campus. It is interesting to note that respondents were given a short answer box, yet 84% (n=16) latched onto either consultant training or funding as the most prominent issues. This gives a clear picture as to what is on the minds of these directors.

Due to the minimal response, the survey results would hardly be considered valid in most circles; that said, it certainly helped me shape my research questions and better understand the attitudes of Writing Center Directors a bit better, my response rate is simply too low to consider this a study that actually tells a story. Nineteen responses is a rather low number. While there is no way to really know how many contributors pay attention to the WCenter listserv, I'd imagine that number is well over 250—and I think that is a conservative estimate. If there were 250 participants on WCenter, it would give me a response rate of 7.6%. A more likely number of participants on WCenter is probably in the 500-700 range, giving me a response rate of 3.8% to 2.7%. Unlike case-study research, where working closely with one subject is reasonable, survey research demands a high response rate, given that surveys don't allow for an in-depth look; therefore, having 19 individuals speak for a population upwards of 500 individuals is not fair, valid, or accurate. While the 19 responses may work towards focusing a person's research interests/questions—which it did for me—it does not merit any sort of scholarly attention. The underwhelming response was disappointing.

Perhaps, though, this lack of response is just as telling as any responses might be; that is, perhaps people did not respond because they were so unfamiliar with the term "Multiliteracy Center" they did not feel comfortable completing the survey. While my recruiting letter asks individuals to complete a survey "that asks questions related to administrative and tutoring practices as they pertain to Multimodal Compositions" it is entirely possible that those who work
in Writing Centers that don't deal with Multimodal Compositions did not respond. That said, this is simply an assumption and I have no way to back up this claim.

Also disconcerting is that the findings are not in line with the research or my own personal experiences. While 100% of survey respondents indicate that we should be working towards a Multiliteracy model, Multiliteracy Center scholarship suggests that several Writing Center directors are concerned that a MLC moves too far away from "real" Writing Center work; additionally, as I reference in previous chapters, there are those who fear MLCs will edge aside traditional compositions. In short, the scholarship suggests that many Writing Center directors create a hierarchy of compositions worthy to work on in Writing Centers and traditional compositions typically are at the top of this hierarchy. The survey does not reflect this scholarship. It is not surprising to see a disconnect, though, since my response rate of 19 is not nearly enough to draw any concrete conclusions regarding Writing Center stakeholder's attitudes toward MLCs.

That said, the survey did help me narrow my research questions—which was, of course, my ultimate goal. The survey results further emphasized that consultant training in Multiliteracy Centers needs to be addressed; not only was this explicitly referenced as a concern in the survey, the varying attitudes regarding how a Multiliteracy Center consultation should be designed suggest that there is no consensus in this matter. In this way, then, the survey results and scholarship line up: there is a general concern regarding the preparation of administrators and consultants in Multiliteracy Centers. However, while my research questions respond to the survey, I also believe it is important to address the concerns detailed in Writing Center and Multiliteracy Center scholarship, as brought up in the previous two chapters. Therefore, my
research questions are in part responding to my pilot survey and in part responding to scholarship. To reiterate, then, my research questions are:

- What is the role of "functional literacy" in the Multiliteracy Center?
- How do Multiliteracy Centers address consultant training?
- What should we call these centers that work with multimodal composers/compositions?

A Closer Look at EKU and the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) is a mid-sized post-secondary institution that offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Though the majority of the programs are offered on the home campus, located in Richmond, KY, EKU also offers an assortment of distance education courses in a variety of modalities; these modalities include interactive TV courses (ITV) and internet courses. Given their catering to distance students, it is not surprising that EKU has a range of online programs for both undergraduate and graduate students (eight undergraduate online degrees and two graduate online degrees). According to the EKU website, their mission is "to provide and support university-wide interdisciplinary academic programs that promote student success through a broad-based and liberal educational experience." Throughout their campus, EKU has displayed posters featuring the catchy phrase "EKU: Preparing the students of today for the jobs of tomorrow." This sentiment can be seen, in part, through their four-pronged strategic plan which is summarized on the EKU website.

1. They seek to promote collaboration within the university and the community
2. Create a campus culture that informs critical and creative thinkers who can communicate effectively.
3. Provide students with a "liberating" education that allows students lead enriching lives.
4. Create a campus culture that values diversity, engagement, and a global perspective.
The Writing Center at EKU, named the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, is an active, vibrant force that reaches out to the EKU community in direct correlation with their four-pronged strategic plan. Specifically, their center was developed as part of EKU’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP re-states EKU’s commitment to produce informed, critical, and creative thinkers who communicate effectively. Known on campus as E⁴ (Evaluate, Explore, Expand, and Express) the QEP works to helping students Explore relevant information to gain knowledge and solve problems, Evaluate information and ideas, Expand and generate ideas to Express a point of view that is adequately developed. Not surprisingly, then, the mission statement of the EKU Writing Center mirrors the QEP. According to the EKU Writing Center website, they hope to inspire "21st century critical and creative thinking in the design of highly effective communication and research through multiple modes and media by employing an innovative integrated pedagogy within the EKU community and nationwide" ("Vision and Mission”).

The Noel Studio, located within the heart of the EKU library, provides services that are both typical and unique of a Writing Center. For example, like many Writing Centers, the Noel Studio offers help with brainstorming, organization, researching, grammar, mechanics, source citations, and critical thinking. However, unlike many Writing Centers, they also offer the following services:

- assistance with speeches, focusing on developing effective communication practices and negotiating group dynamics.
- assistance with creating thoughtful questions
- assistance with creating multi-media texts, while also helping students understand a variety of media options and uses
It is the last bullet point that I am particularly interested in, given the nature of this research project.

The EKU Writing Center was not always a space that welcomed multimodal composers. Prior to 2010, the Writing Center was housed in the basement of a dorm and worked only with composers of traditional, alphabetic essays. However, the concept of the Noel Studio began in 2003, as it was at this time that the university voiced a desire to relocate the Writing Center to the library. Though the relocation was originally intended to make the center more visible to students, the process soon evolved into something much bigger. The Dean of Libraries was very interested in merging the Writing Center with the department of communication to create what would be termed a "Communication Center." A task force was developed to research other centers of this nature and in 2004, the task force proposed a space entitled "Writing Studio." The proposal generated enough excitement around campus and, in 2004, the idea was presented to the President of the university. The studio was not built immediately, though, due to key leadership changes between 2004 and 2007. In a way, though, this leadership change benefitted the development of the center, as it was during this time the QEP was developed and key administrators saw the studio as supporting the goals of the QEP; it was during this time that the name "Writing Studio" changed to "the Studio for Academic Creativity." In 2008 things came together thanks to a one million dollar donation from two EKU alumni (Ron and Sherrie Lou Noel, for whom the center is named). Construction commenced immediately, and in the fall of 2010, the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity started scheduling consultations.

The Noel Studio is directed by Dr. Russell Carpenter, who has been overseeing the studio since construction commenced in 2009. His PhD is from the University of Central Florida and while earning this degree, he studied "writing center spaces through the lens of cultural and
political geographies in an attempt to understand how technology might enhance the way we teach and learn in these spaces." (Carpenter bio). While Carpenter oversees the studio operations, his role is more global in that he spends much of his time working with EKU faculty and also the surrounding Richmond, KY community to work on how the Studio can best help those communities' needs. Currently, the Studio is working with the Superintendent Teen Task Force and both the Madison County Schools and Williamsburg Independent Schools to make "mini-Studios." These collaborations are detailed on the Noel Studio website. Overseeing the more day-to-day work are three coordinators: a writing coordinator (Leslie Valley), a communications coordinator (Dr. Shawn Apostel), and a research coordinator (Trenia Napier). These three are in charge of training and implementing specific workshops based on the area they coordinate; they also work with EKU students and faculty on specific projects that fit under their expertise.

Carpenter, Valley, Apostel, and Napier work closely together to ensure they are on the same page. According to Carpenter, they meet on a weekly basis to discuss training and consultant performance. Moreover, he notes that as a group, they're involved in research and assessment (of the Noel Studio) that helps guide them in the teaching and the professional development of consultants. Together, the four work to refine what they have come to term as "Studio Pedagogy." Moreover, Carpenter is quick to point out that all three coordinators have advanced degrees in related areas. For instance, Apostel has a PhD from Michigan Technological University where he spent several years working in the Writing Center; additionally, his field of study is specifically visual media. Valley, who I spent much of my time with, has an MA from East Tennessee State University where she spent time in a variety of roles at their Writing Center, including volunteer consultant, administrative assistant, graduate assistant, and assistant director. In addition to Carpenter and the three coordinators, the center has over 30 graduate and
undergraduate consultants and also employs two technology associates to help ensure the technology in the space is working properly. During my time at the Noel Studio, I talked with the director, all three coordinators, one of the technology associates, and several consultants. More detail about the work they do can be seen in chapter four.

Appointments are available to any current undergraduate or graduate student at EKU. According to their website, consultations usually last 25 minutes to 60 minutes; they specify that the preference is for individuals to schedule appointments in advance, but they will take a limited amount of walk-ins. However, walk-ins are restricted to 25-minute consultations, meaning that the longer consultations are only available to those who made appointments. Their website also offers the hours and location of the Noel Studio. Interestingly, given the amount of distance education happening at EKU, the center does not offer online consultations; what they offer instead is an asynchronous OWL. Any visitor to their website can examine an array of helpful web pages on concepts ranging from visual communication to multimodal communication to revising.

In addition to appointments, the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity offers a variety of workshops geared towards both undergraduate and graduate students. According to their website, recent workshops include a workshop on creating a Prezi Presentation, writing a literature review, how to use Zotero (a reference manager program that collects, manages, and cites sources) and how to develop a research plan. Aside from their workshops, consultants also regularly visit EKU classrooms to help facilitate peer review and/or give a presentation on what kind of work goes in the Noel Studio. As is the case with many Writing Centers, the Noel Studio also regularly offers tours of the space.
I came to work with EKU’s Writing Center through an email exchange with the writing coordinator, Leslie Valley. Earlier in the year, I was accepted as a presenter at a conference to be held at the EKU Noel Studio for Academic Creativity. My presentation was based on my dissertation research and as such, my proposal abstract emphasized my work with multimodal composition and writing center theory and practice. Valley emailed me to say she was interested in my research; as an aside, she mentioned that their Writing Center regularly worked with multimodal composers and I would be welcome to visit at any time. Given their gracious hospitality and generous offer, I chose to use EKU as my case study. They fit the most basic criteria I had for this project: the center worked with multimodal composers, they were willing to work with me, and it was in reasonable driving distance.

Data and Artifact Acquisition

I visited the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity for one week in the middle of February 2012. I was given full access to the studio and permission to contact any stakeholders after my visit for follow-up questions via email. As a result, I was able to collect data in multiple forms. I collected data for this project by 1) interviewing a variety of stakeholders at the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity both in person and through email 2) observing face-to-face multimodal and traditional consultations at the Noel Studio 3) analyzing training materials for consultants at the Noel Studio 4) taking field-notes 5) examining a variety of handouts and advertisements distributed by the Noel Studio 6) comparing a variety of Multiliteracy Center websites, and finally 7) discussing the aforementioned data in relation to published scholarship on Multiliteracy Center theory and practice. The rest of this section provides details on each of these data collection methods. For information on how I analyzed this data, please see the next section ("Data Analysis").
Interviews

I was afforded the opportunity to interview several people connected with the Noel Studio. Each interview began with a set of questions I created prior to my visit; however, towards the end of each interview I asked questions based on different aspects of our conversation. The pre-designed questions were open-ended so that the interviewee did not feel inhibited but instead were encouraged to speak freely and openly about their experience(s) in the studio. Similarly, the "off-the-cuff" questions were usually based on aspects of the conversation that the interviewee seemed particularly passionate about and were asked in a way to get further clarification and details; they also were sometimes crafted from curiosities I found from earlier interviews I conducted. The individuals I interviewed included Dr. Russell Carpenter (director), Leslie Valley (writing coordinator), Dr. Shawn Apostel (communications coordinator), Trenia Napier (research coordinator), Emily Bayma (technological support associate), Pam Golden (graduate student consultant), Landon Berry (graduate student consultant), Joseph Pruett (graduate student consultant), and Kate Williams (the director of the QEP initiative). Each loosely-scripted interview was audio recorded with participant consent; additionally, I did jot down some notes while I listened to each participant, but I attempted to keep these notes to a minimum so as not to distract the interviewee. All interviewees declined the option to have a pseudonym. Follow-up email interviews were conducted with Carpenter, Valley, Apostel, and Williams. All interviews were transcribed in Bowling Green upon my return from EKU.

Observations

During my visit at the Noel Studio, there were four multimodal composition consultations. All four were observed by me. Only three were video recorded, as one student requested the consultation not be recorded in any fashion. This student did consent, however, to
my taking field notes of the consultation but asked his name not be used; the consultant requested the same privacy. Of the four observations, two focused on a PowerPoint presentation and two focused on research posters for upcoming conferences. It is interesting to note that one of the PowerPoint presentation consultations was a group consultation; three students participated in the consultation as all three were part of the upcoming presentation. Additionally, these three students offered to send me their PowerPoint presentation and gave me consent to use images from their PowerPoint in my dissertation. I graciously accepted their offer. There were several more traditional consultations taking place during my visit, and I recorded two of these for comparative data. More traditional consultations would have been recorded, but during "peak" hours I often was interviewing someone. All of these observations were transcribed when I returned to Bowling Green.

Artifact Analysis

The Noel Studio afforded the opportunity to analyze artifacts pertinent to my study; for example, they made available to me all of their training materials, including their primary training text: *The Aspiring Thinker's Guide to Critical Thinking* by Dr. Linda Elder and Dr. Richard Paul. Also useful was securing a copy of every single physical handout made available to individuals visiting the studio. Additionally, the director of their QEP, Kate Williams, gave me access to all the QEP drafts, including the version of the QEP that is used at EKU currently. All artifacts were analyzed using Grounded Theory (see below). Apart from working with documents made available to me at the Noel Studio, I also briefly analyzed the websites of other Writing Centers purporting to work with multimodal composers. These included Michigan Technological University, Ball State, Clemson University, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Stanford, and Texas A&M.
Published Scholarship

Naturally, the aforementioned data was juxtaposed with published scholarship on Multiliteracy Center and Writing Center theory and practice to determine how the theory and practice at the Noel Studio either parallels or departs from the traditions seen in the field today. Specifically, I address the concerns raised by Pemberton and Grimm (as outlined in chapter two), while also considering other Multiliteracy Center models as described by Sheridan, Grutsch McKinney, and others (again, as outlined in chapter two). Other key scholarship that addresses my research questions—including writing center scholarship on functional literacy, training, funding, and representation—are also included.

Data Analysis: Grounded Theory and Artifact Analysis

Grounded Theory

As mentioned in chapter one, grounded theory is used to analyze the data gathered during this research project. Grounded theory, according to Charmaz,

is characterized by the careful use of data to justify sampling decisions and analytic moves throughout the process of theory building. By developing representative codes, combining codes into categories, forming concepts, comparing like and unlike cases, and linking increasingly abstract concepts, researchers develop midrange theories that are supported by instances in empirical data (Constructing 4).

However, given the many strands of grounded theory, it was important to use the grounded theory framework that best fit my epistemological values; as Jane Mills, Ann Bonner, and Karen Francis assert, it is important for researchers to "choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality" (26). Given this research truism, I chose to use
Charmaz's ideas of constructivist grounded theory as opposed to variations presented by (among others) Glaser and Strauss (1967), Glaser (2002), Strauss and Corbin (1998), and Clarke (2005). While all variants of grounded theory include similarities—namely simultaneous data collection, identifying emergent themes/codes in early data, and inductive construction of abstract categories followed by an integration of said categories into a theoretical framework—there are several differences that are of note. This section will briefly detail these differences, focusing specifically on objectivist and constructivist grounded theory, before outlining the specific steps of constructivist grounded theory used for this project.

Objectivist grounded theory emphasizes that "data represent[s] objective facts about a knowable world. The data already exists in the world, and the researcher finds them[data sets]" (Charmaz "Qualitative" 677). The foundational work of Glaser and Strauss, seen in Discovery of a Grounded Theory, and later work published by Glaser ultimately assumes that there is a pre-existing truth—or one, objectivist reality—that the researcher/theorist "just" needs to find or discover. Jayson Seaman writes that the prevailing ideology behind objectivist grounded theory is that "things exist as meaningful entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects" (2). These positivistic notions are often (mistakenly) synonymous with all forms of grounded theory instead of correctly linking this ideology to objectivist grounded theory.

Additionally, some objective grounded theorists cast research participants in a less than favorable role. Take, for instance, Glaser's belief that inviting participants to review the theory created by the researcher is a foolhardy endeavor; he asserts that participants "may not understand the theory, or even like the theory if they do understand it" (25). He goes on to disparage "novice" grounded theorists for forgetting "that the participants are the data, NOT the
theorists" (29, emphasis original). Moreover, objectivist theorists are known to be rigid in how grounded theory should be performed. Seaman points out that objectivist grounded theorists have a "long-standing hesitancy to rely on existing concepts to do their work" (4) and Glaser and Strauss explicitly advocate for grounded theorists to not conduct any research prior to their own qualitative inquiry. Certainly, though, I do not mean to disparage objectivist grounded theory. The foundational work by Glaser and Strauss is ostensibly objectivist, but it does provide the framework for a theory that gives a recognized and respected rigor to qualitative research. Certainly, qualitative researchers owe objective grounded theorists at least a modicum of debt.

Strauss and Corbin move away from the rigid positivistic nature of objectivist grounded theory, stating forcefully that they do not believe in the existence of a "pre-existing reality out there. To think otherwise is to take a positivistic position that...we reject. Our position is that truth is enacted" (279). Seaman asserts, then, that the primary difference between Glaser and Strauss and Corbin is that the latter refers to a construction as opposed to a discovery of grounded theory (3). However, Seaman maintains that it is Kathy Charmaz who moves grounded theory from the rigid, positivistic methodology to the more flexible, constructed approach that I use in this project (3).

Charmaz notes that her constructivist approach to grounded theory departs from objectivist grounded theory in three key ways. First, she assumes that multiple realities exist—not just one reality needing to be discovered; second, she believes that the data is mutually constructed by the researcher and the participant; and thirdly, that the researcher is in some way affected by the participants' world—thus departing from Glaser's notion of a neutral, impartial researcher/observer ("Qualitative" 314). She extrapolates on this idea by observing that "our constructivist version [...] seeks interpretive understanding rather than a variable analysis that
produces abstract generalizations separate from the specific conditions of their production, as Glaser advocates" ("Constructivist" 168). Thus, where Glaser and objectivist grounded theorists seek a neutral portrayal of the data, Charmaz and constructivist grounded theorists very actively seek an interpretive portrayal of the data. Charmaz writes "As a constructivist grounded theorist [...] I am keenly aware that my standpoints and starting points influence how I see the project data and what I see in them" ("Constructivist" 170, emphases original). As such, constructivist grounded theorists advocate a reflective component in data analysis; Charmaz writes "Engaging in reflexivity and assuming relativity aids us in recognizing multiple realities, positions, and standpoints—and how they shift during the research process for both the researcher and the research participants" ("Constructivist" 169). Moreover, constructivist grounded theory rejects the rigid steps that objectivist grounded theory adheres to; as mentioned in chapter one, Charmaz and constructivist grounded theorists see grounded theory as a flexible approach to data analysis—not a rigid one bound by strict rules, guidelines, and timelines. Table two attempts to differentiate objectivist grounded theory from objectivist grounded theory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectivist Grounded Theory</th>
<th>Constructivist Grounded Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumes one, external reality waiting to be discovered</td>
<td>Assumes multiple realities that are socially constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocates one, objective, authoritative observer/researcher</td>
<td>Advocates and recognizes multiple voices; encourages reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treats data without acknowledging standpoint of the observer/researcher</td>
<td>Recognizes the standpoints of the researcher and participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Objectivist Grounded Theory vs Constructivist Grounded Theory**

Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory heavily influenced the way I collected and analyzed data. However, I am also inspired by Charmaz's assertion that her constructivist grounded theory are "flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes, and requirements" (*Constructing* 9). Thus, while I use her linear model of grounded theory (see figure 1) as a
starting point, I let my situation and circumstances dictate how I employed the principles of
grounded theory.

My first two steps mirror Charmaz's model. I first developed my research problem and
crafted some initial research questions; the steps I took to create those are described in the first
section of this chapter. After determining my research site, I visited Eastern Kentucky University
to collect data. However, due to my inability to transcribe and code immediately after each
interview or observation, I instead wrote detailed reflective memos to help aid my coding
process when I returned to Bowling Green. In these memos, I jotted down what I thought were
key ideas that transpired in either the interview or observation. See Appendix C for one of the
memos crafted during my time at EKU.

After the transcriptions were complete, I began with my initial coding. For initial coding,
I followed Charmaz's "code for coding." Here, she outlines seven steps for initial coding
including remaining open, staying close to the data, keeping codes simple and concise,
constructing short codes, preserving actions, comparing data with data, and finally, moving
quickly through the data (Constructing 49). I also took the advice of Charmaz and by hand,
coded the data line-by-line. Line-by-line coding means "naming each line of your written data"
(Constructing 50); this exercise helped keep my initial codes short and simple. It also helped me
realize what data I still needed to collect, and lead me to pursue additional data by way of
emailed interviews.

Following initial coding, I embarked on focused coding. This, according to Charmaz,
means "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of
data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense
to categorize your data incisively and completely" (Constructing 57). Moreover, this focused
coding helped me to easily compare my assorted data, paying particular attention to emerging themes in each interview and observation.

The final step I took before drafting an analysis was more reflective memo writing based on my initial and focused coding to help create and refine concepts. Further aiding in this process were my initial memos that I crafted while collecting data. Through these documents, I tentatively created categories to discuss and analyze my data. The categories created in all my analyses were then compared with one another to locate similarities and differences. These comparisons helped concretize the categories used to write chapter four and also helped focus the implications section in chapter five. Thus, the findings that I report in chapter four and the implications I write about in chapter five emerge from the recursive process of coding and reflecting on my collected data. Naturally, I then synthesize this data analysis with my artifact analysis and existing theory to help answer my research questions.

Artifact Analysis

Grounded theory is used to analyze the websites of various Multiliteracy Centers and all other texts gathered from Eastern Kentucky University (such as training materials and the QEP). Texts such as these are useful in a study using grounded theory because "researchers can compare the style, contents, direction, and presentation of material to a larger discourse of which the text is a part" (Charmaz Constructing 35). While I am referring to these texts as artifacts, Charmaz labels these kinds of texts as "extant." She argues that extant texts can "complement ethnographic and interview methods" and proceeds to offer a kind of heuristic to analyze said texts. I used these questions to analyze each and every artifact I collected and jotted down answers to each question to be coded later (following the same coding procedure outlined in the previous section). The questions Charmaz proposes researchers ask are:
1. What are the parameters of the information?

2. On what and whose facts does this information rest?

3. What does the information mean to various participants or actors in the scene?

4. What does the information leave out?

5. Who has access to the facts, records, or sources of the information?

6. Who is the intended audience for the information?

7. Who benefits from shaping and/or interpreting this information in a particular way?

8. How, if at all, does the information affect actions? (Constructing 38)

See Appendix D for an example of this kind of analysis.

Reciprocity

As I indicate in chapter one, an important part of my project involved allowing participants to see not only what was written about them, but also other parts of my dissertation at their request. I also wished to make this research partnership reciprocal, so that I was not the only beneficiary of their generosity. Interestingly, the director of the Noel Studio, simply asked that I do not use a pseudonym for their center. Additionally, all but one consultant and one student being interviewed and observed waived their right to have a pseudonym. Those two individuals are simply referred to as "Student" and "Consultant."

Biases and Limitations

As Pamela Maykut and Richard Morehouse write, "The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others [...] and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand" (123). My project is no different, as I bring a handful of biases to this project. Certainly, one of the biases I bring is my
past experience as both a Writing Center consultant and Writing Center director. I was careful to not compare the experiences of stakeholders at the Noel Studio to the experiences I had as a consultant and director. I respected and valued the local context of Noel Studio and conducted my analysis in a manner that took their specific context in to account. Another bias that I have is that I am a strong proponent of multimodal composition and Multiliteracy Centers. Thus, I fought the temptation to observe everything with the proverbial rose-tinted glasses and allowed the data to tell the story—not my preconceived notions.

As with any study using qualitative research methods, this project has a variety of limitations. One of these limitations was my "outsider" status. Neal Lerner discusses the insider/outsider relationship as it pertains to writing center research in "Insider as Outsider: Participant Observation as Writing Center Research." Here, he specifically points out the troubles of being an insider conducting writing center research; he suggests that having insider status, "often challenges the relationship between researcher and participants as our roles shift from colleague and friend to observer and evaluator [...] Furthermore, we bring a set of assumptions or an ideological framework that can overwhelm our attempts to understand what we observe" (55). While this may be true, there are also limitations to being an outsider. For one, I was acutely aware that I was disrupting the regular flow of work at the Noel Studio. While everyone was extremely courteous and went out of their way to make me feel welcome, I often felt like a burden—another worry for an already busy studio. Additionally, as an outsider—specifically one who lives five hours away—I could not make regular trips to the Noel Studio. Thus, I was only able to stay for one week, as I had my own obligations to attend to as a busy graduate student in Bowling Green. It is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions based on one
week of observations and because I was there for only one week, I know the Noel Studio was worried about getting me enough data.

This, of course, leads me to another limitation—a limitation with any Writing Center qualitative research. Due to the nature of Writing Centers—where walk-ins are the heart of the business—it is difficult to predict what kind of students will be visiting. While this spontaneity is exciting, it is also challenging for a researcher. It was entirely possible that the week I selected to collect data was a week where no multimodal composers visited—a reality that thankfully did not come to pass. Unlike research in a classroom—where you know there will be a class taught at a given time and place—Writing Center research is entirely contingent on how many students decide to visit the center on a given day.

The last limitation I will discuss is another common limitation to qualitative research and is related to my status as an outsider. Having someone observe a consultation naturally disrupts the normal one-on-one conversation that takes place in a Writing Center consultation. It can be challenging for both a student and a consultant to act naturally while there is someone sitting nearby recording and taking notes. I tried to be as inconspicuous as possible, usually sitting behind the consultant and the student out of their eyesight, but there were times I noticed both the consultant and the student glancing at me. Additionally, I did have my video recorder set up in front of the consultant and the student, so the camera was very present. While everyone discussed in this dissertation consented, it is still important to keep in mind that all consultations had unusual variables: me and my video camera. Thus, it is entirely possible that I was not able to observe these consultations in as natural a setting as possible. That said, I did do everything in my power to remain unobtrusive.

Conclusion
The goal of this chapter has been to clarify how I developed my research questions, provide background information on my research site and participants, relate how I collected data, explicate my methodological framework of grounded theory, and finally, recognize what biases and limitations I brought to this study. This research design is pragmatic in that it allows me to provide exploratory answers to my research questions, and through these answers, offer Writing Centers seeking to work with multimodal composers ideas regarding their future work. Moreover, and equally important, it allows me to locate areas for further research in this burgeoning area of scholarship (Multiliteracy Center theory and practice). The next chapter will explore and analyze the data I collected from the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity.
CHAPTER IV: THE CASE STUDY

This chapter focuses on the time I spent at the Noel Studio. However, I not only discuss—and analyze—my time spent at the Noel Studio, but also use the moments I observed at the Noel Studio to provide some tentative answers to my research questions. By triangulating interviews with Noel Studio stakeholders, observations of consultations at the Noel Studio, and scholarship on Writing/Multiliteracy Center theory, new media theory, and multimodal composition, I address some of the major issues facing Writing Centers considering a shift to the Multiliteracy Center model. I begin by offering a short "tour" of the Studio, so readers can get a feel for the space being used by Noel Studio consultants and EKU students. Next, I discuss how functional literacy can play a pivotal role in the work of Multiliteracy Centers. From there, I begin thinking about how Multiliteracy Center consultants can be trained to work with multimodal composers and be, according to Pemberton, "all things to all people." Finally, I tackle the issue of representing the Multiliteracy Center by questioning whether the moniker "Multiliteracy Center" is the best term for centers working with multimodal composers.

A Tour of the Noel Studio

Arriving at Eastern Kentucky University in February of 2012 to conduct my data collection, I was not entirely sure what to expect of the Noel Studio. Certainly, I had visited their website regularly to get some key background information on the space; my reconnaissance included studying their mission statement, devouring every picture to get a feel for the space, and also clicking on each consultant and administrator profile to better familiarize myself with the people I'd be working with for the better part of a week. Leading up to my visit, I had perused every link the Noel Studio had on their website, but I knew that no matter how much studying and analyzing I did on the website, nothing would compare to my in-person visit.
The Noel Studio is located in the heart of the library which is centrally placed in the middle of the EKU campus. When I first entered the Noel Studio, using the front library entrance, I was taken aback at the size of the place. While I knew from looking at the website that it was two floors, I was not able to appreciate how large the entire space was. The Noel Studio spans roughly 10,000 square feet, which allows the consultants and students plenty of room to work. The openness also creates a very inviting atmosphere which is further enhanced by the decor. Immediately above the front entrance is a rather ornate sculpture (see figure 1), which I later learned from Valley was made with a variety of glass the construction crew found when building the Noel Studio. After taking note of the impressive, colorful sculpture, I was greeted by a friendly person at the front desk and after giving my name, was quickly introduced to my primary contact, Leslie Valley. After some short introductions and the requisite "It's great putting a face to the name" chit-chat, she offered to give me a tour of the space, which I eagerly accepted.

We began the tour on the first floor\(^1\), which is where most of the "action" in the center takes place. Some of the more popular spaces in the center are the six break-out rooms on the first floor. These breakout rooms are of differing sizes, but all have several comfortable chairs, a computer (PCs in some, Macs in others), a projector system, a wide-screen, whiteboard, and the ability to video-tape goings-on (see figure 2). These password-protected computers are equipped with some impressive software, including VideoPad video editor, Prism Video Converter, Debut Video Capture, Zoom Text 9.1, the MS Word suite, and the Adobe Suite, including Design

---

\(^1\)For a sketch of the first floor that I made after the tour, see Appendix E.
During my time at the Noel Studio, I noticed that the breakout rooms were always in use.

In addition to the breakout rooms, the first floor is home to an open computer lab that has six computers. I use the term lab loosely, though, as the computers are positioned in the heart of the center and there are no physical walls separating the computers from the rest of the space. While all EKU students are allowed to use these six computers, consultations requiring the use of a computer get preference. Certainly, the open computer lab was a draw for many EKU students, as the computers were almost always in use; perhaps this is also a direct result of the central location of the Noel Studio (in the middle of the library). Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, much of the white-noise in the center stemmed from the computer lab in the studio.

Other first floor activity took place at the nine work-stations scattered across the space (see figure 3). These workspaces were varied, and allowed students to choose the space best suited for their needs. Most of the work stations consisted of tables and chairs, but the most popular space was tables and chairs positioned around a large plasma, flat/wide-screen that allowed individuals to plug their laptop in to. This impressive technology was used regularly throughout the day, as students working in groups really seemed to appreciate the capability of looking at their project on the big screen.

Another space the Noel Studio has for consultations is their "invention space" (see figure 4). This unique space boasts six whiteboards, a copy cam (a video camera set up to take pictures
of whiteboard notes), and two tables with a variety of chairs scattered throughout (ranging from comfortable couches to kid-like rocking chairs). However, what made the space most unique was their variety of toys placed at each table, including LEGO, tinker-toys, crayons, colored paper, and markers. While this was a very unique space, it did not get used much during the time I was there.

Rounding out the first floor are offices for the four coordinators: Dr. Shawn Apostel, Emily Bayman, Trenia Napier, and Leslie Valley. The first floor, which is designed to be the most active space in the Studio, is substantially larger and more open than the second floor. The second floor consists mainly of presentation rooms—which includes the same equipment as the breakout rooms, but are roughly three times larger—and the office of Dr. Carpenter, which overlooks the entire Noel Studio. There is also a small, but very clean, break-room for consultants, which includes a refrigerator, microwave, and tables. This innovative Studio is the home to a multitude of creative and productive conversations/consultations on a range of compositions; the rest of this chapter details just a handful of the consultations that I observed during my time at the Noel Studio and just as importantly, what these consultations mean for Multiliteracy Center theory and practice.

Functional Literacy

*When I was a reporter I took a photograph of the governor signing an education bill. I was one of several reporters—the others represented my competition. While the governor was on stage, I took a few pictures. At one point, I knew I had the perfect picture. The [governor] was smiling and the children around him were looking at him and smiling. [...] I ended up winning an award for that picture. I remember thinking, as I got the award, that my picture followed the same rules of composition as the other photographers. I knew how to take a good photo, and I knew the picture was good, but I couldn’t, at that time, explain WHY. I knew then I needed to go to graduate school so I could answer that question. That, to me, is the difference between functional and rhetorical literacy.*

—Dr. Shawn Apostel, Noel Studio
My interest in the relationship between Writing Centers and functional computer literacy stems, in large part, from a presentation given by Marcia Buell and Andrew McGuire at the 2011 Writing Program Administrators' Conference. In this talk, they discussed how technology—specifically computers—can hinder as much as help the writing process. Focusing particularly on their basic writing students, they told a series of narratives about students who become so frustrated with trying to figure out how to navigate programs such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Internet Explorer that they chose to not complete the assignment. They gave examples of students who didn't know how to double space, change fonts, alter the page orientation and, sometimes, even save an essay. Buell and McGuire relayed the conversations they had with these students and discovered that the students felt stupid for not knowing how to do these "basic" tasks; moreover, they discovered that there was no place to go on campus to learn said tasks. Teachers, administrators, and counselors all assumed that these students had learned how to use such programs at an earlier date. As Buell and McGuire point out through their stories, this assumption was wrong. Buell and McGuire closed their presentation by asking the audience to consider who on campus might be able to help students with functional computer literacy. Taking their query seriously, I began to wonder if the Writing Center—and more pertinent to this study, the Multiliteracy Center—would be a place for such functional computer literacy education. This section explores this notion; first, I discuss prevailing ideas regarding traditional and computer functional literacy, paying particular attention to how these ideas are received by the Writing Center community. From there, I explicate Stuart Selber's notion of functional computer literacy, which takes a slightly different approach from earlier theories and ideas of functional literacy. Finally, I examine the role functional computer literacy plays in the
Kirchoff 80

Noel Studio and discuss the implications for the larger field of Writing Center and Multiliteracy Center theory and practice.

Functional literacy is defined by Sylvia Scribner as "the level of proficiency necessary for effective performance in a range of settings and customary activities" (9). Functional literacy is popularly associated with the ability to read and write, but has gained more currency with the advent of computers and technology and is now often used to describe an individual's ability to successfully operate computers, computer programs, and computer software. Though functional literacy is a term that has been bandied about since World War I—Scribner notes that the term originally specified literacy skills required to meet the minimum tasks of soldiering (9)—it is not routinely embraced by academics. Glynda Hull writes that functional approaches to literacy "suggest literate abilities that are basic in the sense of being simple and fundamental, involving the decoding or encoding of brief texts within a structured task [...]" (qtd. in Selber "Reimagining" 472). Similarly, Stuart Selber points out that functional literacy has been equated with a multitude of flawed practices and perspectives that undermine responsible educational objectives: critics have argued that limited approaches to teaching functional skills overlook cultural contexts (Street), focus on vocational requirements (Knoblauch), and reinforce social norms and values (Giroux). ("Reimagining" 472)

The scholars Selber refers to—Hull, Street, Knoblauch, and Giroux—are, of course, not the only scholars concerned about the nature of functional literacy. Sofia Valdivielso notes that functional literacy is susceptible to criticism because it is "linear, simple, and reductionist [in] nature" (124). This criticism can be seen when Michael W. Apple bluntly asserts that an educational institution's aim "should be to create not 'functional' but critical literacy, powerful literacy,
political literacy which enables the growth of genuine understanding and control of all the spheres of social life in which we participate" (193, emphases original); the underlying belief here, then, is that functional literacy does not have anything to offer students, scholars, or educators and that the focus should be on rhetorical and critical literacies. At best, then, these scholars have a healthy skepticism for functional literacy—and that is an optimistic way of slanting their views.

Additionally, Writing Centers—like other scholars—have traditionally borne resistance to helping students with traditional functional literacy (e.g. grammar, sentence construction, punctuation, etc), as well as computer functional literacy. Chapter one discusses several concerns Writing Center stakeholders have at being labeled a "grammar garage," and Writing Centers have long tried to shake the stigma of being a remedial center that only does reductive work, which functional literacy is often thought as. While Stephen North is perhaps the most widely recognized critic of the "writing center as fix-it-shop" image, he is not alone. Lucy Wilson and Olivia Labouff find that the Writing Center is often regarded as a "fix-it shop for students who are unskilled or unsuccessful in the area of composition" (21) and as such "the writing center inevitably suffers the stigma that has been documented in countless journal and newsletter articles" (21). In a similar vein, Ann Moseley fears that

many centers have—perhaps out of necessity, perhaps out of inertia—been transformed from workshops where an apprentice writer learns his craft from a patient and skilled master teacher to factories where harassed and overworked tutors, like job foremen, distribute assignments—tapes or handouts of combination modules—for assembly line departmental programs or class assignments. (33)
She concludes that "I believe, personally, that the best philosophy that a writing center can have is the workshop method that focuses on the student and her writing process" (35). Given this resistance, it would appear to be a hard sell to convince Writing Center stakeholders that they should work with students on functional computer literacy concerns.

There are other Writing Center administrators, though, who feel the Writing Center/Multiliteracy Center is a natural fit for students seeking functional computer literacy help. Writing in 2000, Muriel Harris asserts that "Students may come through our doors not yet adept at word processing or uncomfortable with composing online or discussing writing online, but as writing classrooms move into computer lab classrooms, they will come with questions about writing in that environment" ("Preparing" 16); she goes on to suggest that Writing Centers be not only open but prepared to helping students with these functional computer literacy issues. Daneille DeVoss supports Harris's argument, writing that there is a danger in assuming that students just "know" how to use computers, noting that some students have not had access to technology in their home or high school (168). Because functional computer literacy help is not regularly available through student technology services, DeVoss argues that the Writing Center is the "ideal place" to teach functional literacy, as Writing Center consultants are trained in non-directive methods; assumedly, then, students needing to learn functional literacy would learn better from this non-directive approach (181). Thus, Harris and DeVoss might propose that Multiliteracy Centers—with their emphasis on new media and multimodal composing—are an even more natural fit for students to take their functional literacy issues.

David Sheridan also believes Writing Centers, and more specifically Multiliteracy Centers, are the best place for students to seek and find functional computer literacy help. He begins "All Things to All People" by acknowledging the dangers of a Multiliteracy Center
attending to functional computer literacy concerns. He brings up the scenario of a student entering the Multiliteracy Center needing help with only one thing: scanning an image. As he writes, this situation can be seen as problematic for Multiliteracy Centers because it could be perceived as reducing the center to a "tech lab where students come not to engage in critical conversations about communication, but to perform mindless technical procedures. Our skill-drills nightmare has been replaced by a point-and-click one" ("All Things" 76). But Sheridan believes there are ways to make functional computer literacy less reductive. Citing thinkers like Selber and DeVoss, he writes,

> A multiliteracy center can be both a part of the infrastructure that supports new media composing and a space where students critically reflect on and learn to exploit the infrastructural resources available to them. It can facilitate a professionally responsible approach to functional computer literacy [...] from this perspective, the nightmare of the student who comes to the multiliteracy center to scan is no longer scary. ("All Things" 81)

As Sheridan notes, Selber attempts to change the perception of functional computer literacy; rather, more accurately, Selber aims to re-imagine functional literacy as it pertains to computer use so that it becomes less reductive in nature. While Selber notes that the critics rightly reject the functional computer literacy that "focus[es] on highly specific, stabilized skill sets detached from particular social contexts" ("Reimagining" 473), he argues that it is imperative to construct a workable functional computer literacy because "students must be able to control technological resources, a task that requires certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes" ("Reimagining" 475). Though Selber believes that there is no exhaustive list of requirements that would make up a functional computer literacy—an issue that Scribner brings up as well—he does give a broad
strokes definition: "functional literacy includes those online activities considered to be customary in English courses at the postsecondary level, particularly in the areas of writing and communication" (Multiliteracies 44). From there he proposes five "parameters" that he hopes will help educators and programs develop their own emphases of what a functional computer literacy should entail. His parameters include Educational Goals, Social Conventions, Specialized Discourses, Management Activities, and Technological Impasses. The following table briefly summarizes these parameters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters</th>
<th>Qualities of Functionally Literate Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Goals</td>
<td>&quot;Functionally literate users confront skill demands, collaborate online, and explore instructional opportunities. In other words, they employ computers in order to further their educational goals&quot; (&quot;Reimagining&quot; 476)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Conventions</td>
<td>&quot;A functionally literate student understands the social conventions that help determine computer use&quot; (&quot;Reimagining&quot; 481)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Discourses</td>
<td>&quot;A functionally literate student makes use of the specialized discourses associated with computers&quot; (&quot;Reimagining&quot; 484)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Activities</td>
<td>&quot;A functionally literate student effectively manages his or her online word&quot; (&quot;Reimagining&quot; 488)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological Impasses</td>
<td>&quot;A functionally literate student resolves technological impasses confidently and strategically&quot; (&quot;Reimagining&quot; 493)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Summary of Selber's Functional Computer Literacy (from Selber's "Reimagining the Functional Side of Computer Literacy")

What makes these parameters unique, though, is how Selber proposes computer users attain functional literate status. For each parameter, Selber gives suggestions on how to teach functional literacy that go beyond lecturing or modeling. For example, when teaching students how to use grammar checkers, Selber advocates an instructor discuss the limitations of grammar checkers (as well as the benefits); drawing from his own classes, Selber suggests that instructors first bring up why grammar checkers are useful (drawing heavily from the work of Alex Vernon) before pointing out the limitations of the grammar checker. To do this, he asks students to run a grammar check on professional documents that are littered with passive constructions. He notes
that "the program flags numerous instances of passive voice and invariably suggests to students that they turn the passive constructions into active constructions. Although computers can offer this type of rule-driven, nonrhetorical advice [...] it is not helpful to students unless they first understand the situations in which passive constructions might be appropriate or effective" ("Reimagining" 477-478). Thus, Selber sees this kind of instruction as not blankly learning how to use a grammar checker, but also questioning the limitations of the grammar checker while also exploring different textual genres and purposes. Similar suggestions are made for each parameter, ranging from having students use multiple internet browsers to having students understand behaviors and conventions of online conversation. The theme is the same in all suggestions: sponsors of functional literacy should encourage students to reflect (or question) and analyze (and understand) contextual cues. Due to this reflection and analysis, Sheridan confidently feels that Multiliteracy Centers can assist students needing functional computer help guilt-free—that is, functional literacy ultimately serves as the gateway to critical and rhetorical literacy.

Given the differing perspectives of functional computer literacy, I was quite interested to see how the Noel Studio handles functional computer literacy concerns, especially since they deal with so many complex compositions that often demand the use of some sort of technology. To some extent, the Noel Studio exercises caution when it comes to helping students with functional computer literacy. While Dr. Carpenter, the director of the Noel Studio, expressed a willingness to work with a student who may be struggling to figure out how to place an image in his/her essay (this is just one example he gave), he stressed that his preference is for the Noel Studio's role to be more rhetorical in nature; that is, Carpenter and the Noel Studio consultants would prefer to have conversations centered on the rhetorical aspects of a composition. Though
he mentioned functional computer literacy can be part of the "conversation" in a consultation, he
emphasized that "it is not a focus of what we do." Simply put, he would rather have the focus be
on the rhetorical effectiveness of a piece and how (and to what level) the student is engaging
with the text. Carpenter stressed that the consultants "main role is to talk about the rhetorical
nature and the effectiveness of the communication to help develop effective communication
pieces." However, he also pointed out that they do ask the consultants to be "computer literate,
but they might not be technology experts."

Interestingly, though, the Noel Studio indirectly supports traditional functional literacy—as do many Writing Centers—through their use of handouts. Readily available in the physical
space of the Noel Studio are handouts on MLA and APA format, proofreading, "how to write a
paper in 10 easy steps," how to write a paragraph, and commas. There are only a handful of
handouts that indirectly support rhetorical and critical literacy; these include pointers on
developing an oral presentation, pointers for PowerPoint, and ideas for using ethos, pathos, and
logos. Thus, while Carpenter may not want the focus to be on functional literacy in a
consultation, they do have tools available for students on this subject. As of now, though, they do
not have these indirect devices (i.e. handouts) to support computer functional literacy.

However, Dr. Carpenter suggests that they do indirectly support a kind of functional
computer literacy by having a member of EKU's IT staff housed directly in the Studio.
Specifically, according to Dr. Carpenter, the Studio has partnered with the library's tech support
in order to have a full time IT member, Emily Bayma, who services both the Noel Studio and
Library's IT needs. Bayma's office is in the Noel Studio, though, and according to Bayma, she is
in charge of all the library's technology "to make sure that everything is working alright for
student use." When I asked Carpenter a bit further about their collaboration with IT, he clarified
that he saw Bayma's role as troubleshooter. He says that her main role, as he sees it, is to troubleshoot technology so that a consultant does not have to spend the time to address these things in a consultation—the tech support comes in and takes care of it for them. For example, if the consultant and a student are having difficulty getting the laptop to hook up to a projector, Bayma is available to help with this. While this does free up time for the consultant to focus more on the content of a consultation, it does not necessarily jive with the non-directive, hands-on approach that the Noel Studio typically boasts; it is conceivable to think that the issue of hooking up a computer to a projector will arise for the student again, and while having a troubleshooter on hand is helpful and convenient, it might also impede a valuable learning opportunity for the student. Additionally, while Carpenter sees Bayma as an extension of functional computer literacy, it seems as though he defines this extension as the ability to operate a computer, software program, or other technological devices without bugs. Thus, I would argue that Bayma, while playing a central role in the Noel Studio, does not truly further functional computer literacy sponsorship as Selber conceives of it, since she does not show students how to fix the errors but instead takes care of it for the consultant and the student herself.

Interestingly, Leslie Valley, the writing coordinator at the Noel Studio, offers a slightly different perspective of functional computer literacy in the Noel Studio than Carpenter. She notes that given the technological nature of their space—and the fact that the Studio serves as open lab during the hours it is open—forces them to think about what, exactly, their role should be in students' functional computer literacy education. During one of our conversations, she discussed this matter.

How responsible are we for teaching technology? How responsible are we to always saying we are just focusing on the effectiveness of the communication? Is
it our role to teach them how to narrate a PowerPoint? Or to include a graphic in a paper? Or whether, if they are working on their eportfolio, how to use task-stream? [...] Our initial stance on that was we don't necessarily teach students how to put page numbers in a word document and that sort of thing. And that idea applies to other sorts of technology as well. (Interview, February 20th 2012)

However, Valley notes that they quickly discovered this may not be the best way to go. While their initial stance was to shy away from providing functional computer help, Valley says they learned that "if students don't know how to incorporate something, then we can't help judge if they are doing it effectively [...] Thus, if they are inhibiting the student from communicating, we do see it as becoming sort of our role [to help]" (Interview, February 20th 2012). Dr. Shawn Apostel, the communication coordinator at the Noel Studio, expressed a similar sentiment, noting that "functional literacy is important if it creates a bridge to rhetorical literacy." Thus, for the Noel Studio, functional computer literacy comes into play when it can actively lead to other discussions about a student's work; they recognize that to some extent, it is impossible to even touch or approach the rhetorical or critical aspects of a piece if students are struggling with functional computer skills.

During my time at the Noel Studio, I did not see many consultations centered on functional computer literacy—which is, in itself, telling. Certainly, one can't read too much into this, because I was only there for a limited time, but on the surface it would suggest that EKU students are comfortable and proficient in functional computer literacy. In fact, in one consultation I observed, the student seemed more functionally computer literate than the consultant. In this consultation—which will be further discussed later in this chapter—the three students receiving assistance on their PowerPoint presentation had to show the consultant, Pam,
how to change slides in a PowerPoint presentation. Pam attributed her confusion to the PC/Mac
difference (she normally uses a Mac, and the presentation was on a PC); additionally, I should
also point out that this brief moment where the students helped the consultant did not disrupt the
flow of the consultation nor did it result in the students treating the consultant poorly. In fact, the
moment passed so quickly that an onlooker might have easily overlooked it. Still, the fact the
students were more comfortable working PowerPoint than the consultant, Pam, seemingly lends
credence to the popular notion that 21st century college students are more technologically adept
than the instructors; Marc Prensky calls these students digital natives, arguing that "students
today are all 'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games, and the
internet" (1).

I did observe one consultation, though, where functional computer literacy needed to be
addressed. In this consultation, the student seemed a bit confused with how to change the design
of a PowerPoint. Specifically, he was struggling figuring out how to change the color of his
slide. This can be seen in the following exchange:

**Consultant**: Maybe this [points to slide background] can be a different color? [refers to a
slide that is white with black text]

**Student**: Um, yeah.

**Consultant**: What color do you think would work?

**Student**: Um, black. Um, but I don't know how to do that.

**Consultant**: Here, let me show you.

The consultant then talked the student through changing the PowerPoint design. She did not do
the work for the student, but rather quickly pointed out the design tools in PowerPoint. After this
exchange, though, and after the consultant demonstrated how to change slide design and color,
she immediately went back to the color of the slide.
Consultant: Why black?

Student: Um, I don't know. It makes things look cleaner, I guess. It is easy to read, right?

Consultant: Yeah, that sounds good. What color should the text be, then?

Student: Um, I don't know. What do you think?

Consultant: What do you think of red?

From there, the two engaged in a conversation about text type and the different rhetorical effects changing the slide design would have. Thus, this conversation ultimately accomplished the Noel Studio's goal of focusing on rhetoric, but this rhetorical conversation could not take place without the student knowing how to change the slide design. This suggests that not only is functional literacy a "gateway" to rhetorical and critical literacies, but that in fact this literacy education can be a recursive process. For example, the student in the above example knew that rhetorically, he should change his slide color to black. However, he didn't have the functional knowledge to make such a rhetorical change. Later, once he learned how to do this, the conversation went back to rhetorical issues with his presentation. Thus, this consultation could be summarized as rhetorical-functional-rhetorical and demonstrates how literacy education can recursive (and also different for every individual). As such, it is important for consultants to be ready to help students with functional, rhetorical, and critical aspects of the students' work.

Additionally, it is important to note that the consultant walked the student through how to change the slide design instead of simply taking command of the keyboard and doing it for him. Apostel notes it is important to be hands-off when it comes to functional literacy; this can be seen in his response to the Sheridan scanning scenario. He says, "We help students scan things [...] but we do this by talking the student through the process. I'm a very 'hands off' instructor and tutor. I want the person asking the question to push the buttons and hold the mouse, and our consultants tend to feel the same." In this particular instance, the consultant did feel the same, as the student was the one making the design changes—the consultant just served as a quick guide.
This instance of functional computer literacy education fulfills the role Valley and Apostel claim the Noel Studio has for functional literacy: that of a gateway to rhetorical work. This mirrors the functional computer literacy education that Selber advocates, as the consultant directly asks the student to think about why a color change is necessary and what the effect of a black slide will have on the reader. For Selber's vision of functional literacy education to be complete, however, the consultant may have further discussed the context of this student's PowerPoint in regards to audience expectation and the genre of his upcoming speech. Of course, this example is a slightly special case. The student did not come in specifically with a request to help change a slide's color—thus varying it a bit from Sheridan's example of a student coming in simply wanting to figure out how to scan an image into a text. The student came in, of his own volition, to go over his PowerPoint to make sure "everything looked good."

Still, the above example, coupled with Selber's notion of functional computer literacy education, suggests that the Writing Center—and particularly the Multiliteracy Center—may be an appropriate place for students to seek functional computer literacy assistance. Valley's assertion (which is echoed by Apostel) that a consultation can only be so useful without functional computer knowledge suggests that addressing functional literacy in a consultation can serve as a gateway to conduct the rhetorical and critical literacy work that Writing Centers and Multiliteracy Centers prefer and advocate.

Training

Preparing consultants for the rigors of working in a MLC is no easy task. This is not to say training consultants in traditional Writing Centers is not difficult. Consultants at traditional writing centers are expected to be able to help students with a variety of composition concepts, including thesis statements, documentation, organization, sentence structure, research, and
brainstorming (among others, of course). However, Multiliteracy Center consultants are asked to not only be able to help students with these areas, but also be able to help students navigate multimodal compositions, such as websites, PowerPoint presentations, posters, e-portfolios, and graphic narratives (among others). As such, consultants need to be familiar—and functionally literate—with a wide array of software packages, including video editors, music editors, presentation platforms, word programs, and website builders. In addition to being able to use these programs, consultants also need to be able to talk about these compositions through a rhetorical and critical lens. Perhaps David Sheridan says it best when he writes "ML consultants are asked to be 'all things to all people.' They are asked to be photographers, graphic designers, illustrators, web coders, technicians, programmers, as well as teachers and meaning makers" ("All Things" 82, emphasis original). Thus, MLC administrators have a difficult task to prepare consultants to be all things to all people. This section addresses these difficulties in three ways. First, I briefly examine both the role and the training of Multiliteracy Center consultants as seen in the published literature; I then relate how the Noel Studio both parallels and departs from said literature. Next, I discuss how the Noel Studio training actually plays out in multimodal composition consultations by analyzing two of these consultations. I then conclude this section by offering some suggestions regarding the training of Multiliteracy Center consultants.

In "When it isn't Even on the Page: Peer Consulting in Multimedia Environments," Teddi Fishman discusses the training of Clemson Writing Center "associates." Like many institutions, Clemson offers a three hour for credit course that introduces new associates to Writing Center theory and practice; however, Clemson's course also addresses "the practical and scholarly aspects of technology and a smattering of both rhetoric and aesthetic principles" (60). Fishman stresses that this course helps new associates learn how to use all the "high tech equipment" their
center employs, ranging from the remote control operating a drop-down screen to their varied
video editing software. She notes that "knowing how to figure out systematically a new piece of
software is as important to developing confidence as it is to becoming competent, so it is
essential not only that the new associates practice, but also that they become aware of how they
are 'learning to learn' [...]" (67). However, learning how to become functionally literate is only
one aspect of their training. Using texts such as Robin Williams' *Non-Designer's Design* (1994),
Donald Norman's *The Design of Everyday Things* (2002), Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores'
*Understanding Computers and Cognition* (1986) and Michael Joyce's "Siren Shapes" (1995), the
associates also discuss the much-valued rhetorical and critical work at play in multimodal
composition as well. Adding another layer to the course, though, is an interaction with more
traditional Writing Center consultant training texts, such as *The Center Will Hold* and *The Allyn
and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*, while discussing how to help students with more
"traditional" composition problems. Though this is all valuable and useful information for
consultants to digest, it is undoubtedly a lot of terrain for one three credit course to cover.

Not every institution has the luxury of offering a three credit course, though, as Jackie
Grutsch McKinney discusses in "The New Media (R)evolution: Multiple Modes for
Multiliteracies." At her institution, Ball State, consultants are asked to attend bimonthly training
meetings throughout the course of a year ("New Media (R)evolution" 213). Because bimonthly
hourly meetings cannot logically address the same number of issues of a three credit course,
difficult decisions about what needs to be discussed have to be made. For Grutsch McKinney,
they chose to not discuss functional computer literacy at length. She writes, "It would be difficult
to fit software and hardware training into this current arrangement [...] The time we have in
training meetings would not be sufficient to also provide tutors with a functional technological
literacy" ("New Media (R)evolution" 213). While this could easily be seen as further evidence for the slight functional computer literacy gets in academia and most Writing Centers, Grutsch McKinney laments the inability to address functional computer literacy issues; she does not disparage the importance of this issue whatsoever.

Grutsch McKinney further discusses the training of Ball State consultants in "New Media Matters: Tutoring in the Late Age of Print." She asserts in this piece that because working with multimodal compositions is radically different from working with traditional alphabetic compositions, they spend a lot of time isolating differences between working multimodal composers and traditional composers. For example, Grutsch McKinney notes that consultants are taught to read traditional texts out loud—a common practice in writing centers—but that such a feat is very difficult to do with multimodal texts. As such, she trains her consultants to talk through texts. By way of example, she notes this conversation that one of her consultants had with a multimodal composer: "Wow this is quite a big document. I see it has lots of pages. This, here, seems to be a title. Is this a collection of writings of sorts? [...] I'm noticing that you've used Winnie the Pooh on each divider page. Why is that?" ("New Media" 39). This, Grutsch McKinney asserts, allows the student composer to hear what a reader sees in the text, which should help them determine what kind of changes to make.

To help facilitate these kinds of conversations, she argues that consultants need to be taught a language to discuss multimodal compositions. Because they are limited to bimonthly meetings, she finds it best to use accessible texts geared towards novice new media composers. As such, she uses Karen Schriver's *A Dynamics in Document Design* and like Fishman, Robin Williams Non-Designers Design Book. Schriver, she asserts, has terms that help consultants talk
about sound, video, and color while Williams has easy-to-understand principles of document
design; these principles include proximity, alignment, repetition, contrast, review, and color.

In many ways, the Noel Studio parallels the strategies suggested by Fishman and Grutsch
McKinney respectively, though they are closer to mirroring the model employed by Grutsch
McKinney and Ball State. That is, like Ball State, the Noel Studio has consultants attend a
weekly, hour-long seminar; this is not a "for credit" class, but rather part of a consultant's
obligation of working in the Studio. However, the Noel Studio also has two separate training
sessions right before the fall semester begins. These sessions are designed for new consultants.
Valley broke down what is covered over these two sessions. The first day they discuss what
actually happens in the consultation, particularly stressing to new consultants that they should be
focusing not on grammar, but rather "higher order concerns." Valley and the other coordinators
also stress how they encourage consultants to have students "learn by doing" and how
"everything should be hands on." That is, they impress on consultants-to-be that they should cede
control of the consultation to the student composer. From there, Valley says, they "move into
rhetoric" paying particular attention to "ethos, pathos, logos and looking at how it applies to
different modes of communication." The second day is "devoted to the space [...] we talk about
all the technology that is in the space [and] how to use the different spaces to facilitate the
consultations." Valley says that the weekly training sessions—referred to as their seminar
series—address "the same training most writing centers do—the same topics" such as working
with ESL students, different citation styles, and local concerns, such as working with students
from a particular class with particular instructor specifications. However, Valley says that during
these sessions, they always "step back and say 'ok, how does this apply across the board? How
do we apply this to all types of composition? Is it just applicable in a paper or does it also apply
to a speech?" Thus, their training blends multimodal and traditional composition, as consultants are asked to treat all compositions the same—with a focus on rhetoric. Here, then, they differ from Grutsch McKinney and Ball State. Where Ball State consultants are asked to treat multimodal compositions and traditional compositions differently, the Noel Studio seeks to address these compositions in the same manner.

To help facilitate the rhetorical training of new consultants, the Noel Studio uses a variety of materials and texts that the consultants are required to read. Though most of these materials are aimed to help consultants with both traditional and multimodal composers, Dr. Carpenter indicated that the Noel Studio uses ideas from Robin Williams *Non-Designers Design Book*—much like Clemson and Ball State—particularly stressing Williams' ideas of contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity. Perhaps the text that was referenced the most during my time at the Noel Studio, though, was Dr. Linda Elder and Dr. Richard Paul's *Aspiring Thinker's Guide to Critical Thinking*, a text put out in 2009 by the Foundation for Critical Thinking. According to Valley, this text—which is endorsed by EKU's QEP—"provides [consultants] with a language to talk about global concerns as they apply to any type of composition." This global language includes talking about compositions in terms of clarity, accuracy, relevancy, logic, precision, depth, breadth, significance, and fairness (16-17); these ideas are referred by Elder and Paul as intellectual standards (16). The text is short—47 pages—and can easily be read in an afternoon, making it a pragmatic text for new consultants to read during a two-day training session in the summer. Additionally, the text offers readers a "checklist of questions" that each intellectual standard lends itself to. This might help future consultants have a tool-kit of "go-to" questions in particularly tough consultations. Though the text is introduced over the summer, each week—during one of the seminars—they address one of the intellectual standards and how it could be
discussed in various compositions (both multimodal and traditional); to do this, the consultants often do a "role play" where one Noel Studio consultant acts as the student and the other as him/herself (i.e. the consultant). Moreover, the ideas presented in this text, along with the tool-kit of questions, can be readily applied to just about any kind of consultation, thus fulfilling the goal of the Noel Studio to treat all compositions similarly.

The consultants I talked with at the Noel Studio valued the Elder and Paul intellectual standards and noted they try to not only use these standards to discuss multimodal composition, but also traditional compositions. Pam, one of the consultants I observed, called this training a "game-changer" in terms of her comfort level working with multimodal composers. Joe and Landon—two graduate student consultants—both indicated that they consistently drew from Elder and Paul's "model of critical thought" (Landon's words). Thus, in terms of comfort level, it seems that the Elder and Paul text has a lot to offer burgeoning consultants for working with both multimodal and traditional composers. Moreover, the reactions of the consultants—particularly Pam, Joe, and Landon—would indicate that the intellectual standards of Elder and Paul are indeed giving consultants "a more focused lens to look at stuff" (Landon's words) and gives consultants a point of entry for conversation with students.

Unfortunately, though, the Noel Studio faces the same time constraints that Ball State has, and thus need to make tough decisions about what to purposefully overlook in their training sessions. Like Ball State, they chose to not emphasize functional literacy as much as rhetorical literacy. Dr. Shawn Apostel notes that this is one of the main conflicts in the studio, saying "We have all this technology, but we don't have the time/funds to train our entire staff to be experts in certain software/platforms." Thus, they do not ignore outright functional literacy because they deem it unimportant, but rather because they lack the time and the funds. To counter these issues,
though, and to make sure that some functional literacy training is provided, the Noel Studio administrators encourage consultants to play around with unfamiliar programs during downtime. Additionally, Apostel notes that "Consultants are also encouraged to come to my special sessions [workshops] which are open to the entire EKU community. I do a Prezi workshop for example." Thus, there are places for consultants to seek what is not explicitly built into the two-day training session and the yearly seminar sessions.

Dr. Carpenter stressed several times that "our consultants are here to talk about communication and their main role is to talk about the rhetorical nature and effectiveness of the communication." The training that consultants go through is evidence of this focus, as the materials and topics they discuss all center on rhetoric and critical thought. To that end, the administrators work hard to provide the consultants with texts, including the Williams' *Non-Designers Design Book* and the Elder and Paul *Aspiring Thinker's Guide to Critical Thinking* that reinforce such a focus. Though the Noel Studio is willing to work with students on functional literacy matters (see the first section of this chapter) it is not explicitly folded in to the training; rather, consultants are asked to use their own time to explore the equipment that the Noel Studio offers and become intimately familiar with. Apostel notes that such an approach has worked well so far, as most consultants are "curious" to begin with and thus are willing to try new equipment in their downtime. Functional literacy training—for both the consultants and the entire university community—can also be found through workshops offered by Noel Studio staff. Though Joe notes that Noel Studio administrators "take great pains to teach us or train us on multimodal aspects," Valley stresses that they are more interested in looking at how different ideas can be applied "across the board." This approach—that is, finding ways to work with composers of traditional and multimodal composers—mirrors the approach Jo Ann Griffin
advocates for Multiliteracy Center consultants. She writes that MLC staff should "focus on approaches that work across the boundaries of different communicative forms" (154). She suggests consultants focus on rhetorical aspects in all consultations including, focusing on audience, purpose, form, context, organization, unity, detail, style, and correctness (154-156). This approach seems to work well for the Noel Studio, as most of the consultants I spoke with felt comfortable working with multimodal composers.

It is, of course, important to see how theory is practiced, so during my time at the Noel Studio, I observed several multimodal composition consultations in order to better understand how the Noel Studio training plays out in real-life, every-day interactions. To that end, two consultations are discussed in detail here. While I narrate the consultations, I also provide some short analysis of how these consultations enact or depart from the Noel Studio training materials and consultation goals. Following the consultation narrations, I provide some initial suggestions regarding the training of consultants working with multimodal composers.

Consultation A: Dr. Shawn Apostel and Haley: A Consultation on a Poster for a Conference Presentation

Haley, a second time visitor to the Noel Studio, brought in a digital version of her upcoming poster presentation entitled "Socrates and Superheroes." Haley indicated that this would be a poster presentation given in one of her undergraduate courses, but she did not elaborate too much beyond that. Her decision to bring a digital version instead of a hard-copy seemed to be made so she could make changes and notes directly to the document as the discussion progressed, as throughout the consultation she made short notes to herself on the document (though she never outright changed the text). The poster was very text-heavy, and the
text was placed in nine different boxes. A handful of these boxes also contained images of superheroes, such as Superman, Spiderman, and Storm.

Apostel primarily drew from the rhetorical triangle (audience, purpose, context) in his conversation with Haley, but he did also work in some of Robin Williams' design ideas in the form of type/font (which Williams categorizes as a kind of contrast). It would seem this tact was a direct result of what Haley wanted to work on, as she directly told Dr. Apostel her primary concern was the amount of text she had on her research poster. She indicated early on that she felt like "text wise, I think [that it] might be a lot. Like too much maybe." This gave Apostel a very easy opening to talk about the relationship of audience, purpose, and context as it pertains to research poster presentations. He quickly affirmed her concern that there was too much text on the poster presentation, but he did not just leave it at that. Rather, he tried to explain why this might pose a problem for a poster. Apostel first tried couching this in terms of purpose.

**Apostel:** So it looks like, um, did you write a paper on this?

**Haley:** Yes.

**Apostel:** Ok, so what it looks like what you are doing is putting big chunks of paper on the poster. So there are a couple of different approaches we can take.

**Haley:** Ok

**Apostel:** We know like the purpose of the poster itself, right? It's not to be really a paper, right?

However, Haley did not immediately respond to this line of thinking. While she nodded and gave short responses, one could sense that she was not immediately grasping where Apostel was going with this—she was not immediately seeing the difference between an essay and a poster presentation. Apostel seemingly sensed this, as he quickly moved to a different approach, moving away from purpose slightly and instead talking more explicitly about audience and design. In a rather lengthy conversation, Apostel indicated that by virtue of having so much text
on the poster, audience members would struggle to see what Haley is presenting on; he pointed out to Haley that because she is using a lot of text in a very small space, she is forced to shrink the text down to a size that is barely readable just to get it all to fit—and such a tactic may not draw people in. Instead, he suggested that she think of ways to make things instantly readable from six to ten feet away. Haley seemed to understand this a bit better, as she started taking detailed notes and engaging in more conversation. Sensing that she was grasping this from an audience point-of-view, Apostel made a swift move to link audience to purpose.

**Apostel:** And really, the point of the poster is to get you to talk about your research.

**Haley:** Ok.

**Apostel:** It's to get people excited about it so you can talk about it. That's really what the point is. So it doesn't have to be a stand-alone. Right? But it does have to be something that illustrates what you are doing, gets people visually excited, and, interested in your topic. And I think you've got a lot of potential with this. Really exciting.

**Haley:** So mostly, the poster is more to draw them in [...] I'm what's actually explaining a lot of what's on there.

**Apostel:** Yes!!!

Clearly, then, Haley gets it, as she tells Apostel what she understands the point of the poster and that she realizes that it is more a visual aid as opposed to her actual paper.

Once Haley recognized she had too much text on her poster, possibilities emerged to discuss visual rhetoric and design; Apostel chose to approach this using two concepts—topic/context and repetition. After establishing the visual possibilities with the poster—Apostel likened it to both a "prop" and a "billboard"—Apostel invited her to think of ways to take advantage of her topic and context; that is, he asked Haley to consider making the poster itself more "comic-esque" so as to take advantage of her topic. He noted to Haley that "comics are extremely visual, as you know of course. So is there anything you can mimic that might be fun here? Like maybe Spiderman should be half in and out of the box?" Here, he refers to one of the
images that Haley had placed on the poster—an image of Spiderman crawling. Haley, then, came up with the idea of using "newspapery dots" to make the poster look a bit more vintage—an idea that Apostel encouraged her to play around with. This lead in to other ideas on how to make the poster more reminiscent of a comic book or strip; this can be seen in the discussion centered on font below.

Apostel: What font are you using? I can't tell.

Haley: That [points to laptop] is Times, just Times New Roman.

Apostel: Ok. Well, is there a better font for a comic book? Than Times New Roman? You think? I don't know...

Haley: [points to some handwriting of her own] I thought of maybe just going with [points again to handwriting of her own]...

Apostel: I think you can play around with the font a little bit without getting too kooky.

Haley: Ok

Apostel: [...] obviously the first choice would be like comic sans to see what it looks like. But, um, that is kind of a popular font. It is kind of overused. But you might want to see if it is readable.

From here, Apostel and Haley talk a bit about fonts and how a desire to make it too much like a comic book might interfere with readability.

Given Apostel's stature as "multimodal composition expert" and "visual rhetoric guru" it was not surprising to see him adeptly work with Haley on her research poster. Perhaps it is because he is so comfortable working with multimodal composers that he never needed to address Elder and Paul's intellectual standards. Apostel focused a lot on the persuasive appeals during the consultation, considering ways that Haley could increase her ethos as a presenter. He discussed ethos through the lens of audience and audience expectations. Additionally, by discussing how to make her visual aide more "comic-esque" he was trying to get her to understand the power of pathos. Throughout the consultation, he asked Haley what kind of
emotional response she thought people would have to seeing comic book characters on a poster—and how she could enhance and play off that response.

What struck me, though, is how Apostel subtly used rhetorical genre theory to fuel the consultation. Rhetorical genre theory departs from traditional genre theory in one key aspect: instead of focusing on form, rhetorical genre theory focuses more on function. To that extent, as David Russell notes, "genres are not merely texts that share some formal features; they are shared expectations among some group(s) of people" (513). Anis Bawarshi furthers this notion by suggesting "genre helps shape and enable our social actions by rhetorically constituting the way we recognize the situations in which we function" (340). Genres, then, are inherently tied to the response of an individual; as Amy Devitt notes, "genres are implicated in the way we experience and enact a great many of our discursive realities, functioning as such on an ideological as well as on a rhetorical level" (339). Thus, genres help individuals conceive and, later, interpret texts. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, genre transcends medium; that is, a genre is not created by material artifacts but rather by the responses to a particular text. Apostel regularly returned to the response of Haley's audience as a way to discuss her project—everything was about the audience. Apostel did mention form on occasion—mainly when he suggested having too much text would be cumbersome for her audience—but he always grounded his comments on form in function and audience—two key tenets of rhetorical genre theory.

Irene Clark feels that rhetorical genre theory offers "useful possibilities for fostering student insight into the nature of academic writing, so that they can develop not only more thoughtful but also more creative responses to their writing assignments" (8). Genre, Clark says, offers a "useful framework for discussing a number of problematic issues in academic writing
that are particularly troublesome for inexperienced writers, enabling them to understand, deconstruct, and creatively expand upon the requirements of their writing assignments" (13). Though Clark is a bit unclear as to how she would do this, I think that the focus on response to a particular text can be particularly useful, as it forces the writer/composer to think about the reactions of an intended readership. Apostel would seemingly concur, and thus, it seems possible that rhetorical genre theory might be another framework for multimodal composition consultants to use for discussion. By talking about expectations of a multimodal composition—whether it is a web page, brochure, PowerPoint, or blog—the consultant may be able to quickly get to the heart of some of the issues with the composition, while asking the student to make serious audience and rhetorical considerations. 

*Consultation B: Pam Golden and Emily, Emily, and Eric: A Consultation on a PowerPoint Presentation to be given before the Kentucky Board of Education*

Emily (1), Emily (2), and Eric are three high school students who attend EKU through Middle College, a program that allows high school students to attend college for general education credits to be put towards both their high school and college education. I had the opportunity to chat with all three before the consultation began, and they were quite excited and proud that they were among the pilot group of Middle College. In fact, Middle College is the reason they were visiting the Noel Studio; the three of them were asked by the Middle College coordinator to give a presentation on their experiences with the program. The presentation was to be given to the Kentucky Board of Education. The Board of Education was using the pilot group to determine whether or not to offer the Middle College program on a regular basis. As such, the three students created a PowerPoint presentation and an accompanying speech to give to the Board of Education; they admitted to being both excited and nervous for this event. This was
their second visit to the Noel Studio for this project, but their first time working with Pam Golden.

Where Apostel is the communications coordinator and the go-to person for visual rhetoric and multimodal composition questions in the studio, Golden (a first year graduate student in English) is a self-professed newcomer to multimodal composition. She told me that initially, "the prospect of a multimodal consultation was terrifying" but that her "fears were short-lived as a result of the weekly Wednesday Seminars." She specifically referenced the help that Apostel gave all the consultants, noting that he often offered "innovative" workshops during the weekly seminars that she found useful. Additionally, she was the consultant who, as mentioned earlier, found the Elder and Paul text to be a "game changer" for her approach to multimodal composition consultations.

The agenda was very quickly set during the meeting. Eric and Emily (1) were very vocal on what they wanted to work on: finding a way to be more concise in both the PowerPoint and the speech and have Pam "critique" them on "everything." As a group, they decided the best approach would be to go over the PowerPoint first, and then if they had time, practice the speech. As they were meeting in a "breakout" room, which has the capability to make video recordings of the proceedings, Golden offered to record the consultation and the practice speech. The three students declined, but did indicate they might be interested in doing this at another time.

As the consultation got underway, Golden primarily provided positive feedback—but it was focused more on the Middle College program as opposed to the content and design of the PowerPoint. For instance, after two slides went by, Golden had the following conversation with the students:

Golden: I taught high school English for five years. And one thing that I saw over and over again was we were not preparing students for college. And it's not like this—I like
that this does [prepare students for college] You know students, they're not used to it [college]. They're not used to, you know, the freedom.

Emily [1]: They don't know how to handle it when they get there.

Golden: They don't.

Emily [1]: And at first we didn't either. We're like, 'we don't have to get up until one o' clock if we have class at two.

However, while this may not be directly related to the PowerPoint or the speech, it certainly went a long way to establishing rapport with the group—they seemed more and more at ease each time Golden praised the Middle College program and complimented Eric, Emily and Emily for being the "grass roots group" of the Middle College program. Additionally, this kind of positive feedback regarding their involvement in the Middle College program may possibly give them added confidence for their speech before the Kentucky Board of Education; that is, these compliments may further their belief that the Middle College Program, and by extension their presentation to promote the Middle College Program, is worthwhile.

As the consultation went along, Golden started to use ideas found in the Elder and Paul text referenced earlier, *The Aspiring Thinker's Guide to Critical Thinking*. Though Golden did not use any of the Elder and Paul questions verbatim—the ready-made tools at her disposal found in the text—she certainly used the ideas found in Elder and Paul's text. Specifically, she was most concerned with the first two intellectual standards: clarity and accuracy. For instance, the students inserted in their PowerPoint a slide that included statistics regarding the average annual income by education level (see figure five). However, what was notably missing were two things: the year
of these statistics and where these statistics were coming from. Pam suggested that in order to be the most accurate, they include both the year and the place they found these statistics. She was also quick to follow that remark up with a compliment about the use of statistics, saying "I'm lovin' it."

Shortly after that, Pam invoked the clarity standard described by Elder and Paul, again taking issue with how statistics were presented on a slide (see figure six). In this instance, the students had included a bar graph that shows the grade distribution of Middle College Students. However, Pam quickly noticed that number of grades given did not match up with numbers on the left-hand side of the graph.

**Golden**: [looking at graph] Is that 20 students or 20... (trails off)

**Eric**: Ummmmm. I...ummmmmm (trails off)

**Golden**: How many students were there [in the program]?

**Eric**: We had thirty...I think because of the first person who got kicked out we had thirty-nine at the beginning of the year um so that should be 39.

**Golden**: Ok, so there were 40 of you guys?

**Emily [1]**: That's 38.

**Golden**: So this right here is 38?

**Eric**: Um...

**Emily [2]**: So it is either 38 or 39.

**Eric**: Oh wait. No, no, no, no. Because one person ended up moving.

**Golden**: But do you see what I mean?

By asking the students to be more clear with the labeling of the graph, they also ended up discovering there was some potentially inaccurate information being displayed on the graph.
This was an important conversation for the students, and they later thanked Pam for noticing the discrepancy on the bar graph.

While Pam and the students made a lot of headway by using the Elder and Paul intellectual standards, there were times Pam seemed a bit apprehensive regarding aspects of the PowerPoint presentation. For example, while the four were discussing the possibility of changing the wording on a slide, Eric noticed that the formatting of their presentation was a bit off—something Golden did not comment on initially. He mentioned that they created the presentation using a Mac, but noted that in the Noel Studio they were using a PC; this difference in machinery is what he thought caused the formatting to be off. More concerning, he said, was that they were unsure if they'd be given a Mac or a PC for the presentation before the Board of Education. Rather than address this functional issue, Golden remarked that they should "make a note of it so [they] don't forget." It seems that this would have been an opportunity to show the three students how to ensure that their formatting was not altered based on the kind of machine being used. That said, it is understandable that Golden overlooked the formatting issue; as mentioned earlier in this section, the Noel Studio coordinators are unable to directly supervise the consultants in matters of functional literacy.

Additionally, Pam did not talk much about the role and function a PowerPoint presentation plays in a speech, where for Apostel that was the focal point of this consultation with Haley. While in some cases this may not be a big issue, it may have been useful in this particular consultation; towards the end of the consultation, Eric, Emily [1], and Emily [2] practiced their presentation. However, it quickly became apparent that they planned to give their presentation simply by reading word-for-word off of the PowerPoint. Given this, it seems as though this would have been an ideal time to talk about the expectations that their audience will
have, much as Apostel discussed with Haley; thus, this may be a place where some rudimentary knowledge of rhetorical genre theory may have benefited a consultant. Additionally, this may be an instance where the Elder and Paul intellectual standards fall a bit short—there is no standard that asks about purpose or response.

Conclusions

Not surprisingly, there are no easy answers for how to prepare consultants to work with multimodal composers, or as Sheridan claims, "be all things to all people." Much of the preparation will be dictated by local context, of course; it makes a difference if a center has a three-credit course in place to train consultants or whether the center has a weekly, hour-long seminar to address consultant training. Likewise, it makes a difference if the training lasts one semester, one academic year, or is ongoing. Some centers may be lucky enough to have both training programs in place. Additionally, it matters if a center has a separate space for multimodal composition consultations or if, like Ball State and the Noel Studio, it is an all-in-one model.

While it may be difficult, and ultimately foolhardy, to offer any definitive training program as "the best" for all centers, this section does present suggestions for centers thinking about working with multimodal composers. The consultations observed also have some interesting implications for the training of Multiliteracy Center consultants. Primarily, the consultations discussed here would seem to support the age-old-adage that practice makes perfect. Apostel has multiple years of experience working with multimodal composers and multimodal compositions; he is the person primarily in charge of readying consultants to work with multimodal composers. Every consultant I spoke with praised the work Apostel does in the weekly seminars to prepare them for working on a variety of multimodal compositions.
Additionally, Apostel is the communications coordinator and has developed several materials on visual rhetoric, as well as developed workshops on software such as Prezi. He is comfortable working with new media and clearly enjoys talking about it. Thus, given his vast experience, it is not too surprising that he deftly was able to discuss Haley's multimodal composition—a research poster for a presentation—in a variety of ways while also ensuring that Haley was on-board every step of the way. Apostel does a nice job of putting the Noel Studio theory—a focus on rhetorical and critical concerns in communication through the language of rhetoric—into practice. Additionally, his consultation reveals that rhetorical genre theory—and its focus on function over form—may be a useful tool for multimodal composition consultants to use.

Conversely, Golden is relatively new to multimodal composition and is not afraid to admit it. Though she claims to feel more comfortable with multimodal composition now (as opposed to before the academic school year began), the discussions she had with Eric, Emily, and Emily seemingly suggest she missed a couple of opportunities to help the students (specifically working towards functional literacy and discussing the function/role of a PowerPoint)—something I would argue can easily happen to new multimodal composition consultants. As indicated elsewhere in this chapter, there is a lot at play in a multimodal composition consultation: there are multiple modes to work with, discuss, and troubleshoot, and this can easily complicate an already complex interaction (the peer consultation).

Thus, I suggest that we can't immediately expect our consultants to become all things to all people immediately, or even after one semester of training. To do so would be dangerous, as it would assume that consultants have extensive functional, rhetorical, and critical experience with different kinds of technology. This is obviously not always the case; some incoming consultants may be virtual "noobs" to technology—just as our students are—and may be starting
from scratch. While Sheridan notes he never had to worry too much about these sorts of issues because he has "been fortunate enough to have worked at writing centers over the past ten years alongside many ML consultants who have more than met these expectations [...]" ("All Things" 83), the reality is that Sheridan's experience is not the norm. Additionally, while several MLCs have the ability to employ two sets of consultants—one set that works with multimodal composers and one set that works with traditional composers—not every center will have the funding or personnel to achieve this. To stave off these kinds of dangerous assumptions, it would seem prudent for Multiliteracy Center administrators consider ways to include functional, rhetorical, and critical literacy instruction as it pertains to both traditional and multimodal composition. This is not to say that consultants new to multimodal composition should not be able to work with multimodal composers; as Pam's consultation demonstrates, she was still able to help the students with several rhetorical aspects of their work, using the Elder and Paul learning standards. Rather, I emphasize that administrators should temper their expectations of new consultants, and be ready to work with them closely on the complexities of this work.

Thus, as administrators of Multiliteracy Centers, it is important to recognize that preparing consultants to work with multimodal compositions will take time and, perhaps more importantly, that it will be important to use texts that are accessible and not too overwhelming and complex. It seems prudent, then, to use texts similar to the Noel Studio for training—texts that use language that is oft connected with traditional compositions (e.g. audience, purpose, context, ethos, pathos, logos) and find ways to, as Valley puts it, make it applicable across the board. Additionally, the Elder and Paul intellectual standards offer new consultants a ready-made toolkit of questions to get students thinking critically about both traditional and multimodal compositions, though extensive discussions with consultants would need to take place in order to
determine how best to apply the Elder and Paul text to Multimodal Compositions. I would also argue that an introductory text to rhetorical genre theory and analysis may provide consultants with another useful tool later on in their training; given the time constraints, I would suggest using an easily accessible, yet useful, article such as Amy Devitt's "Integrating Rhetorical and Literacy Theories of Genre" (which provides a nice comparison of form and function), Anis Bawarshi's "The Genre Function," or Irene Clark's very pragmatic "Addressing Genre in the Writing Center." In addition to these readings, then, I would encourage consultants to take part in some "role play," using the ideas from the readings as a starting point. This role playing of ideas from the readings will help consultants better understand how the ideas might actually play out in a consultation; additionally, it would give the consultants valuable extra practice to help them become more comfortable working with different kinds of compositions.

Representation of the Center

Throughout this dissertation, I have liberally used the term "Multiliteracy Centers" to describe Writing Centers that work with multimodal composers. Such a move was made to parallel the vernacular used in Writing Center scholarship. However, the final section of this chapter calls into question whether or not Writing Center scholarship should be identifying centers working with multimodal composers as "Multiliteracy Centers." This is a point of interest for two reasons. First, the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity—the case study presented in this chapter—is clearly a center that works with a variety of composers, including those working with multiple media; however, they clearly have chosen NOT to adapt the Multiliteracy moniker. Second, the question of "What's in a name?" has been a prevalent issue in Writing Center scholarship for over 35 years because as Jim Addison and Henry Wilson claim, the name of a center represents "the underlying philosophy, role, and functions of a writing center in the
academic community" (56). This section, then, begins by closely looking at the names of centers working with multimodal composers to see if a pattern emerges, before speculating both why the term "Multiliteracy Centers" is common in Writing Center scholarship and why it has not been championed by the Centers working with multimodal composers. It concludes by discussing the reasoning behind the name of the "Noel Studio for Academic Creativity."

The scholarship on "Multiliteracy Centers," which is admittedly small in number, consistently identifies the University of Michigan, Michigan Technological University, Michigan State, Texas A&M, Stanford, and Ball State as institutions with "Multiliteracy Centers." However, while all of these universities do work with multimodal composers, only one (Michigan Technological University) has a center that is technically named a "Multiliteracy Center"—and MTU just underwent the name change in the summer of 2010. To be fair, the University of Michigan used to have a Multiliteracy Center, but they have since changed the name to "The Gayle Morris Sweetland Center for Writing." The other institutions all have similar names: the University Writing Center (Texas A&M), the Hume Writing Center (Stanford), and the Writing Center (Ball State). Michigan State, where David Sheridan works, has two centers: a Writing Center (to work with traditional composers) and a "Language and Media Center" (to work with multimodal composers). So while scholarship has popularized the term "Multiliteracy Centers" it is not a name that has caught on with the centers working with multimodal composers.

Perhaps one reason for this oddity stems from the name "multiliteracy" itself. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, the term "multiliteracies" was proposed by the New London Group in 1996 to encompass two propositions in the changing communications environment. The first, of course, concerns the multiple communication channels afforded to
literate individuals in the 20th and 21st century. The second concerns the importance of cultural and linguistic delivery in a globalized world. Writing Center scholarship seems to have unfairly zeroed in on only one aspect of the term "multiliteracies"—the multimodal aspect. Nancy Grimm sees this happening, writing that multiliteracies are unfairly "reduced to multimodality" ("Taking the Plunge" 5) and Kathy Mills observes that the bulk of the growing body of multiliteracies center research focuses on "the relevance of a burgeoning array of popular, oral, vernacular, and mass media texts" (105). This seems to be the case in Writing Center scholarship; in the edited collection *Multiliteracy Centers: Writing Center Work, New Media, and Multimodal Rhetoric*, only one chapter (of ten) even briefly addresses the multicultural aspect of multiliteracies. Of the handful of articles on Multiliteracy Centers, only one recent article from *Praxis* focuses on the multicultural aspect of multiliteracies. The effect of this is obvious: it perpetuates the association of multiliteracy with multimodality, leaving many readers wondering why a Google search of "Multiliteracy Centers" only yields one actual Writing Center identifying as such.

While the above offers a preliminary answer regarding the prevalence of the term "multiliteracy centers" in Writing Center scholarship, it does little to address why centers are resisting the term. Writing about the problems and concerns encountered when changing the name of her center to a Multiliteracies Center, Grimm identifies five possible reasons why a name change is not imminent on every campus. These include the possibility of "mission creep" (i.e. infringing on other department's territory), confusing students, departing too harshly from the other universities in Michigan, using a word that doesn't exist (Multiliteracies is not acknowledge as a word by Microsoft Word), and distancing themselves from their service mission. Grimm notes that "the term *writing* was one that higher administration preferred"
"Taking the Plunge" 5). While not all of these concerns are applicable to all universities, the first two certainly are of the utmost concern to most writing centers.

The notion of mission creep was an issue for Carrie Leverenz when she worked on establishing Texas Christian University's New Media Lab (another center working with multimodal composers that does not use the multiliteracy center handle). She writes "our College of Communication (which houses the journalism program) eyed our efforts suspiciously, questioning why we were using the term 'media' and intimating to our dean that we were duplicating their program, which raised funds to develop a Media Convergence Lab a few years after our studio opened" (56). Mission creep, then, may be a problem any time a Writing Center seeks to change their name to indicate new services or a new direction—it is not an exclusive problem for centers offering new media assistance.

It seems more likely, though, that centers are hesitant to use the term "Multiliteracy Center" to describe their services due to the possibility of student, faculty, and staff confusion. Grutsch McKinney writes that "I'm not sure students would know they could get (alphabetic text) writing feedback" at a center named Multiliteracy Center" ("Tastes Change" 4). This again suggests that the removal of "writing" from the name somehow confuses the services offered by the Center. Similarly, Mills notes that the term "multiliteracies" often (rightly or wrongly) suggests a marginalization of traditional composition. As this is not the intent of most centers offering services to multimodal composers, it is understandable why some centers are hesitant to fully embrace the name "Multiliteracy Center."

The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, which came into existence as a new center/service for students, did not have to worry about the ramifications of a name change. However, they were still aware that how they named themselves would be the biggest aspect of
how they were represented to the community at large. Carpenter specifically stated that they did not choose the name "multiliteracy center" because they felt that phrase did not a) accurately represent their services and b) depict the image they were striving for. The two key parts of their name, Carpenter feels, are the phrases "studio" and "creativity" and he also asserts that these two ideas are linked. Carpenter says that "studio" invokes an image of an "artist's studio" and that students will hopefully think of "a gallery space." He says this is what "drives" their work in the studio: "the opportunity for students to share their work in ways that really inspire them."

For Carpenter, "Center" doesn't indicate a safe space to share ideas, while studio does. Interestingly, this runs opposite of most writing center literature, as several writing stakeholders have written about how "center" evokes images of a "lightning rod into which the various scattered writing tasks and activities from all across campus can radiate inward" (Addison and Wilson 56). Though there is not an abundance of scholarship on studio approaches to writing center work, there is literature on studio approaches to writing and composition respectively. Sonya Borton and Brian Huot advocate studio review sessions for multimodal compositions, as these sessions will allow writers (both students and teacher) an opportunity to "informally review and respond" to multimodal compositions (104). They further suggest that during these sessions, "teachers should model how to focus on rhetorically based questions about a text's purpose and audience, a student's sense of the rhetorical situation, and the effects of various organizational approaches and production techniques" (104). This is the kind of work being done by Apostel in his consultation with Haley, so in that regard, a "studio" approach to Writing Center/Multiliteracy Center work seems appropriate. Kara Poe Alexander extends the ideas of Borton and Huot by providing eleven tips for studio work; these tips range from providing examples (modeling) to focusing on only three to five rhetorical issues (116-130). As the
previous sections demonstrate, it seems as though Carpenter and the Noel Studio are indeed doing the work of a writing studio, suggesting that their name is appropriate; additionally, Carpenter indicated that several centers are making the "switch" to writing studios, suggesting that a shift is occurring within the field. However, I would also argue that more research needs to be done to further discuss the relationship between "Writing Center" approaches to consultations and "Writing Studio" approaches to consultations.

Carpenter also feels that creativity is an integral part of their mission, and really should be a key part of all Writing Center (or Writing Studio) work. He asserts that "creativity is key to so much that centers do because it involves divergent thinking and convergent thinking." This assertion has been echoed by other writing center stakeholders, including Jennifer Howard. She writes that Writing Center consultants can help "shatter" the idea that academic writing is stifling to individual voices by encouraging "students to write unconventionally [and show] them that many modern scholars incorporate creativity into their own writing" (5). Wendy Bishop has written that creativity leads to "greater engagement and investment" (44) before going on to assert that this means writers will spend more time with their papers (45). And Elizabeth Boquet and Michele Eodice argue that Writing Center work requires creativity to be successful (4); they attempt to prove this by using Frank Barrets' seven principles of jazz improvisation and creativity that are transferable to writing centers (8). These principles include (among others) embracing errors as a source of learning, deliberate efforts to interrupt habit patterns, a reliance on retrospective sense-making, and "hanging out" to foster a membership in a community of practice (8). Carpenter's argument that creative approaches are an intrinsic part of writing center work certainly resonate with Boquet and Eodice's claims.
Furthering notions of creativity in the writing center, Chad Verbais advocates incorporating toys and play theory in the Writing Center. He relates his experience doing this, noting that writing is such a stressful activity that introducing elements of play with toys can help calm them down. He writes "Simply put, some people have already reached a boiling point of stress and nothing will calm them down; however, for a majority of individuals play and fun can be just what is needed to further their educational threshold" (145). The Noel Studio has clearly taken Verbais's advice to the extreme, as their invention space—described earlier in this chapter—is loaded with toys. Given this, it is perhaps understandable that Carpenter has included "Academic Creativity" in their name.

Additionally, by including "creative" in their name, they are further aligning themselves with the work EKU's QEP. The EKU QEP explicitly states that Creative Thinking is part of the University's strategic plan; specifically, they note that the role of the university is to help prepare students for the workplace demands, which requires an ability to "think on their feet, innovate, and solve problems effectively" (16). To help students attain this ability, they argue that EKU must help students become creative thinkers and problem-solvers. Not surprisingly, the QEP designates the Noel Studio as a place to help foster this creative education. They explicitly write that "Through services provided at the Studio, students will become more articulate critical and creative thinkers" (49). Thus, the impetus for naming their space "The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity" is threefold: accurately representing the work they do and goals of the space, presenting themselves as a welcoming space for creative thinkers, and aligning themselves with university goals.

In this section, I argue that while the Multiliteracy Center moniker is popular among Writing Center scholars, it is not a common term actually being employed in Centers across the
nation. Instead, Centers are wisely determining their names by responding to local contexts—just as the Noel Studio responds to EKU's QEP initiative—and by isolating a name that not only represents their services accurately, but enables students to know the kind of work being done in the center. Thus, I would suggest that centers working with multimodal compositions not blindly name their center following the popular scholarship, but rather find ways to respond to local and community dynamics.

Chapter Conclusions

In this chapter, I provide exploratory answers to the research questions outlined in chapter one. These answers, framed as suggestions for Writing Center stakeholders considering an expansion of services to work with multimodal composers, were arrived at through triangulating interviews conducted with Noel Studio for Academic Creativity stakeholders, multimodal consultation observations at the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, and a variety of Writing Center, Multiliteracy Center, and New Media scholarship. I first assert that functional literacy—despite being often disparaged in both composition and Writing Center circles—should have a home in the Multiliteracy Center, as it serves as a gateway to rhetorical and critical literacy-driven consultations. Without an understanding of functional literacy, students will have a hard time understanding and undertaking the nuanced critical and rhetorical moves that Writing Center/Multiliteracy Center consultants deem as important. Secondly, I argue that there are no easy solutions to prepare Multiliteracy Center consultants to be "all things to all people." However, by providing new Multiliteracy Center consultants with tools, such as the Elder and Paul text *The Aspiring Thinker's Guide to Critical Thinking*, which is used in training Noel Studio consultants and texts on Rhetorical Genre Theory, they may be better prepared to help multimodal composers. I also demonstrate that finding ways to connect traditional compositions
to multimodal compositions (such as a focus on audience, purpose, and style), as the Noel Studio
does and Griffin advocates, may be another way to prepare consultants to work with a variety of
composers. Additionally, I argue that consultants need plenty of practice/mock multimodal
consultations, whether through a course-for-credit, workshops, or weekly seminars, so they can
be better prepared to help multimodal composers. Finally, I note that even though I use the term
Multiliteracy Centers liberally, it may not be the best term to describe the work that goes on in
centers working with multimodal composers. I argue that the naming of centers must be dictated
by the local context—that is, the local concerns of an institution; I also maintain that the name
should properly represent the services rendered to students, faculty, and staff, as the name is
entwined with the identity of a center. To be fair, local context should be the guide to all
decisions regarding issues addressed here: functional literacy, training, and representation. For
example, if there is a group on campus that works towards providing students functional
computer literacy, then the Writing/Multiliteracy Center may not need to work with functional
computer literacy issues. Thus, while these exploratory answers have a suggestion feel to them,
they should all be tempered by local context. The next (and final) chapter of this dissertation
begins by summarizing the implications these findings may have for both Writing Center
stakeholders and composition instructors; it concludes by detailing what future studies may
emerge from this project.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

Conclusions and Implications

This dissertation responds to a request made by the participants of the 2011 Computers and Writing roundtable on Multiliteracy Centers: to think about the role Multiliteracy Centers might play in a university setting and, as such, how Writing/Multiliteracy center consultants can best work with a variety of composers and compositions. As such, this dissertation provides a case study of the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, a Writing Center that actively works with multimodal composers (as well as composers of traditional, alphabetic compositions). Using interviews, consultation observations, and Writing Center, Multiliteracy Center, and new media scholarship, I attempted to answer some of the more persistent questions being raised by Writing Center scholars regarding Multiliteracy Center work. The answers I arrived at in chapter four are framed as "exploratory suggestions." While I argue and defend my ideas regarding the intersection(s) of writing center work and multimodal composition throughout this dissertation, I recognize that local contexts may dictate a Writing/Multiliteracy center respond to these situations and issues differently.

First, I addressed the Writing Center's five-decade long (and counting) tumultuous relationship with functional literacy—a relationship marked by the Writing Center stakeholder's constant "fear" of their work being seen as reductive if they work with students on functional literacy concerns. Likewise, Multiliteracy Centers are often hesitant to help students with functional computer literacy concerns. However, building on the ideas of Muriel Harris, David Sheridan, Stuart Selber, and Noel Studio coordinators Dr. Shawn Apostel and Leslie Valley, I argued that Multiliteracy Centers and Writing Centers should be helping students with functional computer literacy concerns. At most universities, including EKU, there are not structures in place
to help students with functional computer literacy concerns, yet instructors often expect students have not only functional computer literacy skills, but advanced computer skills as well. This expectation spills into Multiliteracy Center scholarship, where scholars get caught up in the more complicated sorts of projects that students bring to the center: websites, podcasts, film essays, or PowerPoint presentations. However, it is important to remember that students seeking critical and rhetorical help on these advanced multimodal projects are only one constituency of this new era of literacy; there will also be those who struggle and may just need help scanning an image into his/her paper. Thus, despite the reductive stigma that helping students with "basic" concerns such as functional computer issues might bring (e.g. double-spacing in Microsoft Word, changing slide design in PowerPoint, disabling pop-up blockers in browsers, etc.), centers would be remiss to ignore students with these kinds of questions. Borrowing heavily from Selber's ideas of functional computer literacy education, I demonstrated how functional literacy can not only serve as a gateway to rhetorical and critical literacy education, but how all literacy education (functional, rhetorical, and critical) is often recursive in nature. I would also note here that helping students with functional computer literacy has one other added (pragmatic) benefit: getting the student into the Multiliteracy Center is a victory in itself as perhaps while that student is seeking functional help, the consultant can also ask if the individual needs someone to go over the document with a critical or rhetorical eye.

Secondly, I respond to Michael Pemberton's concern that Multiliteracy Center consultants—or Writing Center consultants, for that matter—cannot be all things to all people. At the heart of his concern, which is echoed by others in the field, is how MLC administrators can effectively train consultants to help students with both traditional compositions—which are complex compositions in their own right—and multimodal compositions, which I have
demonstrated throughout this dissertation to be complex, layered texts. However, I would argue that Multiliteracy Center consultants should never be expected to be all things to all people. Such a goal would suggest an emphasis on being an "expert" on all things that might be brought up in the center, which is an unrealistic goal. Rather, consultants should strive to be informed respondents to student texts. This goal falls in line with the role of Noel Studio consultants and both Writing Center/Multiliteracy Center theory. For instance, Jo Ann Giffin's chapter in *Multimodal Composition*, "Making Connections with Writing Centers," emphasizes that consultants should not feel pressured to completely re-educate themselves on composition, but rather draw on skills they already bring to the table, such as their knowledge of rhetoric (154) and the ability to listen and respond (159). This parallels Jackie Grutsch McKinney's advice that consultants can, at the very least, serve as a respondent to any text brought into a center ("New Media" 37-40). In many ways, this notion of being an informed responder was demonstrated at the Noel Studio by Pam's consultation with Eric, Emily, and Emily. Though she claims to be new to multimodal composition, she was still able to work with the students on a variety of rhetorical aspects of their presentation while also critically responding to issues she saw in their presentation; that is, though she did not isolate every little issue with their multimodal composition, she was still able to provide important rhetorical help that benefited the students.

That said, I do still argue that consultants in Multiliteracy Centers undergo training that will make them more comfortable working with multimodal composers. Though Multimodal Compositions often include elements found in traditional, alphabetic essays—namely written text—consultants may be uncertain on how to handle the other modalities used by composers (e.g. visuals, sound). However, administrators do not necessarily have to start from scratch with their training of consultants. Based on the success of the Noel Studio consultations I observed, I
advise training sessions of new multimodal composition consultants focus on commonalities between traditional and multimodal compositions. One way to approach this would be mimicking the strategy adopted by the Noel Studio (see Appendix F for a summary of how the Noel Studio approaches this training); that is, Noel Studio consultants are encouraged to use rhetoric as a starting point for all compositions, specifically discussing ethos, pathos, and logos. Additionally, I suggest using accessible texts that are concise, such as Elder and Paul's *Guide to Critical Thinking*, to give consultants an easy-to-learn, reasonable, yet helpful vocabulary to help students with all kinds of compositions. Lastly, based on the consultations I observed, I note that Rhetorical Genre Theory might be another tool to introduce consultants to, as the principles of RGT (specifically audience expectations and textual function) may be useful for all kinds of composers. Given the complexities of multimodal composition, training of consultants should extend beyond one semester if possible.

I concluded my arguments by reminding Writing Center and Multiliteracy Center stakeholders that the name of a center is one of the most important ways to represent themselves to students and the larger university (and regional) community. As I demonstrate in the previous chapter, representation is a key aspect of Writing Center work. In a *Writing Lab Newsletter* article, Michael Pemberton asserts that Writing Centers "need to educate students and instructors about what writing centers really are and what they are capable of doing" ("Prison" 15). He goes on to write that just as importantly, centers need to educate those in university settings what they are not; he writes that centers "are not prisons, hospitals, [or] mental institutions. What they are, are resource centers and places where writers can work collaboratively on their texts" (15). One place for this kind of education or enlightenment about what kind of work a center does is in their name. Peter Carino aptly demonstrates this. He notes that centers known as "Writing
Clinics" are often "associated with drill and kill pedagogy" ("What do we Talk" 34) reminiscent of current-traditional rhetoric. Similarly, he notes that "Writing Labs" are particularly controversial because for some it represents a place for experimentation, while for others it too closely paralleled the troublesome "clinic," evoking images of sterile, formulaic, work done by people in white lab coats (35). Carino asserts that he does not wish this article not to be troublesome—he implicitly observes that all names are somehow problematic—but rather that centers, labs, or clinics (or studios or whatever else) can best define what their name means with the work being done in the space provided them (40). While this may be, my work in chapter four indicates that Writing Centers and Multiliteracy Centers should respond to local contexts when selecting a name for their space. Additionally, the name of their space should attempt to accurately represent their work. Just as the politics of naming a Writing Center was an issue of great import for those within the university during the formative Writing Center years, so is the politics of naming a Multiliteracy Center now.

Future Studies

Sustainability

Though sustainability has become a popular buzz word among environmentalists, it can—and has—been used to discuss multimodal composition and technological initiatives in higher education. Dickie Selfe, Danielle DeVoss, and Heidi McKee, in their introduction to the immensely useful edited collection *Technological Ecologies and Sustainability*, note that in the midst of the excitement surrounding computer-supported instruction, universities, departments, teachers, and to some extent students, must be prepared to *sustain* these efforts (1). They go on to say that the terms "ecologies" and "sustainability" are "meant to suggest the important task of maintaining the richly textured technological environments in which composition teachers and
students learn, study, and communicate" (1). Richard Selfe points out that sustaining technological ecologies in the university is an important issue for those devoted to using technology in education because "the rapid pace of technology innovation means that computer-supported instruction continues to be exploratory" (167). While this is true, I might add that sustainability should also be a concern because the rapid pace of technology development and innovation means that the technology currently used by institutions for computer-assisted instruction may quickly become obsolete; thus, institutions devoting substantial sums of money to technology for instruction need to be aware that what today's great technological wonder is yesterday's news. Therefore, I would posit that conversations amongst a variety of individuals in universities (e.g. Librarians, Writing Center Administrators, Student Technology Services, Provosts, etc) need to be started that explore how we can best stay technologically current at an institution without sapping valuable funds. Speaking from experience at the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley, budgets can quickly be taxed due to software, computers, and projectors (among other tools) crashing or becoming obsolete.

Discussions of how to sustain technology-laden initiatives in English studies has just begun to be a popular area for scholarship. The aforementioned edited collection (Technological Ecologies and Sustainability) is an excellent place to start for this line of work; other important pieces include Richard Selfe's "Sustaining Multimodal Composition," Richard Selfe's Sustainable Computer Environments: Cultures of Support for Teachers of English and Language Arts and Ellen Cushman's "Toward a Praxis of New Media: Sustainability and Capacity Building at MSU." While this may be a burgeoning area of research for English Studies as a whole, very few pieces discuss the role of technological sustainability in the Writing or Multiliteracy Center. Jeanne Smith and Jay D. Sloan write about this in their chapter "Sustaining Community and
Technological Ecologies: What Writing Centers can Teach Us" (found in Technological Ecologies and Sustainability). However, while this is a useful chapter, they don't necessarily address some of the key issues regarding sustainability in the Writing/Multiliteracy Center. What they do address is how Writing Centers and writing programs can decide what technology to employ and how to involve others in the academic community to create these efforts. While deciding which technological initiatives to create—and then actually creating them—is an important step in the technological ecology of Writing Centers, it does not effectively address how to keep these initiatives running.

After seeing first-hand the use of technology in the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, it strikes me that this is a very important area ripe for further research. Much of the technology in the Noel Studio that has been discussed throughout this dissertation was brought in through the original financial gift from the Noel family; this includes the bevy of computers, plasma widescreen monitors, impressive software packages, projection units, printers, and so forth. However, the individuals I spoke with at the Noel Studio, particularly Carpenter and Valley, noted that they are constantly looking for more external funding opportunities, knowing that the initial gift will not last forever and that their current operating budget may not be able to support all their proposed initiatives (including increasing their technological tools and widening their community outreach). While they do get substantial financial support from the university, particularly through their association with EKU's QEP, these funds may not be enough to ensure all technology stays up to date. Carpenter noted that the collaboration with the library and Information Technology Services to bring in technology specialists to the Noel Studio has helped immensely, as the technology specialist is able to keep the machines running and can do routine clean-ups of the computers. The Noel Studio stakeholders hope this will help stave off the need
to replace their machines on a regular basis. Still, this is an area that needs to be addressed in Writing and Multiliteracy Center theory and scholarship. With the increase of Online Writing Labs and Multiliteracy Centers, Writing Centers are increasing the amount of technology being used. Quite simply, more work—maybe case study work—needs to be done to address the simple question "how do we sustain these important initiatives?"

However, this is not the only area of sustainability that could be further explored. The second aspect of sustainability that needs to be addressed, particularly with Multiliteracy Centers, is weathering different ideological approaches to Writing and Multiliteracy Center work depending on the director. To clarify, each new director of a space will have different ideas of a) how to run (and design) the space and similarly b) which projects, initiatives, and goals to work towards. For example, Dr. Jackie Grutsch McKinney ran the Ball State Writing Center for several years where, as evidenced by this dissertation, a main goal of hers was to help students with multimodal compositions. However, this past year she took a new position at Ball State, leaving the Writing Center with a new director. This director, Dr. Jennifer Grouling, is not opposed to helping students with multimodal compositions, but has different priorities. This does not mean that one director is "better," but it does obviously suggest that Writing and Multiliteracy Centers will more than likely change with each director. These shifts in goals would be a valuable area of study to see what affect it has on the center, the consultants, the students of the university, faculty and staff at the university, and the larger regional community the center is in.

Space

Writing Center scholarship often focuses on the *feel* that a Writing Center *should* have. That is, Writing Center scholars tend to discuss the kind of environment that should envelop and
embody the work that is done in the center. For instance, Peter Carino notes that many centers strive to attain what he labels the three Cs: coffee, cookies, and couches ("Power" 102). That is, directors should try to make students feel comfortable by creating a "safe house" for students. Carino describes the safe house as a "student sanctuary, a place beyond the competition, evaluation, and grade-grubbing that supposedly marks the classroom. Centers have taken pride in this image in presenting themselves as student advocates, while turning to it for succor when feeling the sting of marginalization" ("Power" 102). Leslie Hadfield et al. note that "home and hominess"—an intangible feeling—often are the main goals of directors when it comes to design (170). But while Writing Center directors are understandably trying to attain some ethereal, abstract feeling of comfort and safety for student visitors, they are missing out on another, under-research opportunity: the design, or architectural space, and materiality of a Center. Such a shift in focus would seemingly be natural: the architecture can go a long way to establishing a certain kind of "feel" to a classroom or educational space. In a special issue of Academe on "The Pedagogical Building" the editors write that "Good rooms will not necessarily make us good teachers, but bad rooms will assuredly make us bad ones" (9). With this in mind, I believe that more studies should be devoted to the design of a Writing/Multiliteracy Center, the material artifacts placed in the Writing/Multiliteracy Center, and finally, how to train consultants to best utilize the space in the center.

Perhaps one reason this issue has not been addressed is that Writing Centers historically have gotten the "left-over" university space. Oftentimes, this results in being placed in nothing more than a glorified closet. Derek Owens writes that Writing Centers are often put in "invisible" locations on campus, such as "a custodian’s closet, under the stairs, or in the attic" of a building (73). He uses his own experience as testimony, noting that he was given an eight foot by ten foot
cubicle as his original writing center space (73). Obviously, when given such a small space, there is not much to think about in terms of design, other than how to fit in consultants, students, and the director without residing on top of one another.

Still, my time at EKU’s Noel Studio for Academic Creativity suggests that there is something more to be studied in this field. In part, this is because of the unique space the Noel Studio boasts. As written about elsewhere in this dissertation, the space at the Noel Studio is not only expansive, but unique in how it juxtaposes new technology, such as brand new PCs and Macs, and "old" technology, such as LEGOs, whiteboards, and building blocks. Two things specifically caught my attention about the space. The first is that in every impromptu conversation I had with consultants, they mentioned how much they appreciated the space. Specifically, they appreciated the variety the space offered them; they could, in theory, work with consultants in multiple parts of the Noel Studio in one consultation. In my interview with Landon, one of the graduate consultants, he noted how "cool" (Landon's word) it was to start with a student in the invention area (to get ideas flowing) before moving to the whiteboards to perhaps hash out an outline and finally concluding by going to a computer to type up their notes in a neat, and orderly fashion. This struck me as particularly intriguing, as I began to wonder what kind of material tools a Multiliteracy Center would benefit from. What are "must-haves" in this kind of "next-gen" space?

Secondly, I was very interested in how the actual spaces were being used while I was at the Noel Studio. Though I was only there one week, which is of course too small a sample to make any binding conclusions, I noticed the following:

1. Because consultants do not—and will not—have offices at the Noel Studio, they were forced to congregate in a variety of areas in the Studio when they were not working
with students. Most consultants chose to hang out by the work-stations with the large, wide screen plasma screens meant for laptop plug-in. Because consultants did not have name-tags, students who desired to use these spaces did not and could not ask consultants to leave because to them, they appeared to be other students.

2. The aforementioned wide screen plasma screens were not used once during my duration at the Noel Studio. Though students (and consultants) liked those particular spaces, they never plugged in their laptops. Rather, students/consultants would all be on individual laptops looking at a document they shared over email or Dropbox.

3. By far, the most popular and in-demand spaces were the quieter break-out rooms. All break-out rooms were in use from open to close.

4. Surprisingly, I only saw the invention spaces used once during my week at the Noel Studio—and the one time it was in use none of the invention "toys" were used. Rather, it was just the home of another consultation conducted face-to-face (no technology whatsoever was involved in this particular consultation).

5. The only time I saw the whiteboards being used was for people to write inappropriate messages that consultants were forced to erase.

6. The space was immensely popular and had a lot of student traffic. Because it doubles as a computer lab, several students would walk in to use the computers only—no contact was made with consultants.

Though only six observations made over a short period of time, this made me wonder about why some spaces were more popular than others and similarly, why some physical materials/tools were used more than others. Clearly, the Noel Studio is lucky to be able to offer students multiple places to work. But there is no denying the quieter breakout rooms were in
high demand. Though I am clearly hypothesizing that this is due to the quiet, private nature of the rooms, I think much could be gleaned from future studies examining the relationship between design, student traffic, and consultation dynamic(s). Likewise, I think it would be fruitful to explore how consultants are trained to use spaces. Valley indicated that consultants at the Noel Studio are trained how to use each specific space, but she did not elaborate much more and the training materials I examined did not reveal any insight either, as there was no mention of how to use the space of the Noel Studio. I think the field of Writing Center research as a whole could benefit from conversations regarding the use of the physical space of the center. Often, scholarship documenting the rigors of consultant training focus on approaches to the consultation (e.g. non-directive, social constructionist, expressivist, and so forth) but does not focus on how consultants should make use of the space. This seems to be an untapped area of research: the intersections of materiality and Writing Center practice.

Thus, I argue that as we look to further the work being done in Multiliteracy Center scholarship, we would benefit from quantitative and qualitative studies examining a) what material tools are necessary for a Multiliteracy Center b) what spaces most benefit students and consultants c) how can we most effectively use these spaces to facilitate the most successful consultation possible and d) what sort of training is necessary to help consultants best utilize the physical space?

**Online Multiliteracy Centers**

Writing Center scholars are still grappling with implementing—or whether to implement—Online Writing Labs (OWLs), as discussed in Chapter II. In that chapter, I discuss how some Writing Centers have OWLs that allow for online, concurrent consultations; other Writing Centers have OWLs that only have a place for asynchronous consultations, while there
are others that only provide certain kinds of handouts and worksheets to help students with common problems (such as thesis statements or MLA documentation). Of course, there are some OWLs that provide a combination of all three. Additionally, as Chapter II demonstrates, there is extensive literature on Online Writing Labs, and discussions over the merits of OWLs remains a pertinent issue for writing center scholars. For instance, Beth Hewett's 2010 *The Online Writing Conference* talks about how to best teach writing online and, more relevant to this project, examines how Writing Center pedagogy might change with the continuation of Internet consultations. Nominated for the International Writing Centers Association "Outstanding Book of the Year" award, it is an excellent example that even in the 21st century, discussions of online consultations are ongoing; further evidence can be seen in the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, as at least once a year, and usually more, an article surfaces that discusses "best practices" for engaging in online consultations. However, what has not been discussed in Writing Center scholarship is how Writing Centers can—or whether writing centers should—work with multimodal compositions online; that is, there is a dearth of literature on how one might go about creating an Online Multiliteracy Center (OMLC).

Therefore, I strongly suggest that future studies examine what the possibilities are for creating—and sustaining—an OMLC. This seems to be an important area of research for a variety of reasons. Beth Thomsett-Scott and Frances May estimate that more than two-thirds of higher education institutions offer online courses with several of them offering entire online degrees (112). Though it may be safe to assume that online courses are not assigning PowerPoint or Prezi presentations, it is entirely plausible that online courses ask students to compose Podcasts, Blogs, Wikis, and hybrid essays (that combine visual with alphabetic text). It would seem prudent, then, for these distance learning students to have the option to seek the rhetorical,
critical, and functional assistance afforded their counterparts near the physical university (and by extension, the Writing/Multiliteracy Center).

There are a myriad of reasons that research regarding OMLCs has not taken off in a big way. Dr. Carpenter explains that there are two reasons why the Noel Studio hasn't yet broached the possibility of creating an OMLC, both of which are related to local context. The first, Dr. Carpenter says, is because there isn't the need for one. He notes that EKU is in a huge deal of flux right now. Writing Centers need to move forward cautiously when rolling out a service. The amount of work and funding it takes to set something up...there needs to a very clear alignment. And so we've kind of waited until the university has some solid footing with its online courses so we align our goals.

This, of course, makes sense. If a Center is located at a university that offers only a handful—or even no—online courses, this might suggest there are fewer distance learning students who would need such a service.

The second caveat when thinking of starting any kind of online Writing Center, Carpenter says, is spatial issues. That is, he mentioned that EKU had just spent a substantial amount of money—most of it from a donation—to create the 10,000 square foot Noel Studio. He suggested that creating an OMLC might discourage students who live on campus to visit the impressive space. He brings up an interesting point. It would be difficult to recreate the invention space in an online environment, for example. Additionally, the Noel Studio stakeholders and more broadly, EKU administrators want students to be visiting the space. They want students to use the open computer lab and they want students walking through. Thus, Carpenter feels that an
OMLC might run contrary to the Noel Studio's initial mission. That, coupled with the sparse online course offerings, has done enough to dampen their enthusiasm for the time being.

A third caveat might also include the actual logistics of setting up an OMLC. Right now, it is difficult to think of a platform that is capable helping students with multimodal compositions. Though asynchronous consultations may be possible—students can easily email PowerPoints as an attachment, Prezis and films (if uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo) as links for feedback, synchronous consultations may be a bit more challenging. Dr. Carpenter suggested that one possibility would be to have students email the multimodal compositions and then conduct a Skype interview with the student—but that fails to capture the same sort of feel that an in-person consultation would have; rightly or wrongly, capturing this feel of in-person consultations in an OWL or OMLC continues to be a goal of Writing Center stakeholders pursuing online consultations.

However, these caveats and uncertainties only underscores the notion that more research and exploration needs to be done in this area. Because there are more questions than answers, it strongly suggests that exploring how Multiliteracy Centers can venture into an online environment is an area of research for burgeoning Multiliteracy Center scholars. Additionally, it would also strongly suggest that directors and consultants might need to do a bit of experimentation with this; however, it is important to document and write about this experimentation so others can learn from people's failures and successes.

**Expanding Multimodal Composition**

Pippa Stein asserts that all learning is multimodal and that any way instructors can encourage or mandate students to compose in any multimodal manner—digital or otherwise—has long-lasting value (874). Stein's belief has two very interesting implications for Multiliteracy
Center work—and, for that matter, all of composition studies—that should be further explored in other studies. The first aspect of Stein's assertion is that all learning is multimodal. While this has been explored some in education and composition studies—the work of Howard Gardner is especially relevant—it has not necessarily been explored to the fullest in writing center and Multiliteracy Center work. While the edited collection *Creative Approaches to Writing Center Work* broaches the topic of how different tools, such as toys, games, drawing, and role-playing, can help writing, much more can be done in this area. Dr. Carpenter of the Noel Studio affirms this, noting that he sees the writing process, particularly the invention process, as very multimodal in nature, but that "this is something that has not gone on in any sort of way in writing centers." In this regard, Writing Center and Multiliteracy Center stakeholders may benefit from reading the first chapter of Jason Palmeri's *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Pedagogy*. In this chapter, he writes that "experimenting with multimodal composing" could be a way to "re-see or re-imagine the alphabetic writing process" (24). He later asserts that "If we restrict students to word-based planning activities (for generating ideas, for defining rhetorical purpose, for analyzing audience), we may be unduly limiting their ability to think deeply about their rhetorical tasks" (34). Thus, I would call for Writing and Multiliteracy Centers to not only explore how the composing process is multimodal in nature—and how multimodal tools can inform a student's writing process—but also how they can capitalize on this to better help students with alphabetic and multimodal projects. This is an especially important conversation for Writing Center/Multiliteracy Center stakeholders to start, considering the emphasis on *process over product*; it is important to understand all the tools at a students' disposal to better help the student understand and refine his/her own composing process. Additionally, thinking about the writing process as multimodal is not limited to either alphabetic
or multimodal compositions—it applies to all kinds of compositions. Thus, it would seem this would have implications for traditional writing centers as well.

Secondly, Stein claims that multimodal compositions can be digital or otherwise. Too often, it seems, multimodal composition is being equated to digital compositions, such as videos, podcasts, and the like. But Pamela Takayoshi and Cynthia Selfe suggest that even traditional, alphabetic compositions are multimodal, as they combine words and visual elements (e.g., document design) such as layout, font, font size, and white space (1). In my conversations with Dr. Shawn Apostel, he revealed that he had a similar thought process. Apostel says

I realize in the academic sense, we don't see things like MLA papers to be multimodal, but they are. Have you ever graded a paper that smelled like cigarette smoke? It changes the way you read the paper. The same is true with paper quality. Thicker paper or cotton paper feels better than thinner paper. This also changes the way we read the paper. A paper that is stapled is different than a paper that has the edges folded to keep it together. So our sense of touch, smell, and sight are all incorporated into our reading of an MLA paper. All these things communicate something to the reader.

Given this, it seems these are things that consultants should consider addressing with students who visit the Center. This notion of including the senses in multimodal composition is also quite intriguing, and it seems both composition and Writing/Multiliteracy Center studies would benefit from further research and narratives regarding this.

Conclusion

The three research questions this dissertation sought to answer all stem from the overarching question of "How can writing centers best help students in this era of new literacy,
new media, and multimodal composition?" While this dissertation does make three separate arguments regarding functional literacy, consultant training, and politics of naming centers respectively, it also hopefully serves as a narrative of how one institution—the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity—works with multimodal composers. This dissertation is not a "final step" for any research or studies pertaining to Multiliteracy Centers, but rather a first step—an opening step, if you will. This is an exciting time for Writing/Multiliteracy Centers, as the surge of multimodal composition throughout the academy will assuredly change the work being done in the center. I wish to close this dissertation by echoing the plea found in most Multiliteracy Center scholarship: an entreaty for those in writing centers to experiment working with multimodal composers and just as importantly, tell the story (or stories) that result from those experimentation.


Kirchoff 146


APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED TO WRITING CENTER DIRECTORS AS PART OF A HSRB APPROVED FOCUS STUDY

What kind of Institution is your Writing Center in?

a. Community College/Technical College
b. 4-year university
c. 4-year university with graduate degrees offered

How long have you directed a Writing Center?

a. 1-5 years
b. 6-10 years
c. 11-15 years
d. 16-20 years
e. 20+ years

How many tutors do you employ?

a. Less than 5
b. 6-10
c. 10-15
d. 16-20
e. 20+

Who are your tutors?

a. undergraduate students
b. graduate students
c. both

From what disciplines do you hire your tutors?

a. Only English
b. Only the Humanities
c. Across the Disciplines

**How do you train your tutors?**

a. Course for Credit  
b. Weekly Meetings  
c. both  
d. other (please specify)

**Where is your Writing Center "housed" (please select all that apply)?**

a. English Department  
b. Library  
c. Student Union  
d. Several Locations  
e. other (please specify)

**Who does your Writing Center Serve (please select all that apply)?**

a. faculty  
b. undergraduate students  
c. graduate students  
d. community members  
e. other (please specify)

**What Kind of Essays do you traditionally work with (please select all that apply)?**

a. Traditional, alphabetic 8.5" x 11" essays  
b. web documents  
c. pod-casts  
d. videos  
e. hybrid essays (alphabetic and visual)  
f. other (please specify)
Do you believe Writing Centers should help individuals with multimodal compositions if they are not "traditional" essays? For the purposes of this survey, I'm defining multimodal compositions as any text that goes beyond the alphabetic; these texts may include images (both still and moving), sound, color, music, animations, etc.

a. yes
b. no

If yes, what kind of help should Writing Centers offer? If no, why not?

[comment box]

What do you find to be the most important aspect of Writing Center Work?

[comment box]

What do you see as being the biggest challenge(s) to creating a "Multi-literacy" center (a Writing Center that helps students with compositions beyond "traditional" alphabetic essays)?

[comment box]

How might a "Multi-Literacy" center change your tutor training practices? Your tutor recruitment practices?

[comment box]

What alternatives do you see to creating a "Multi-Literacy" center that still services a myriad of compositions?

[comment box]

What kind of technology does your Writing Center currently employ?

[comment box]
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MULTILITERACY CENTER DIRECTORS, MULTILITERACY CENTER TUTORS AND MULTILITERACY CENTER TUTEES

Interview Questions for MLC Directors

How long have you directed this Multiliteracy Center? When was this Multiliteracy Center created?

What do you see as the principal differences between the services a technical support office might offer, and the services your Multiliteracy Center offers?

How might technical support services and Multiliteracy Centers work together? Are there opportunities for collaboration?

How did you decide which services to offer to students in your Multiliteracy Center?

How similar or different do you find your Multiliteracy Center to be when compared with a traditional writing center model?

Can you talk about how you funded the Multiliteracy Center in its infancy? Has your funding methods changed?

How did you go about recruiting tutors for your Multiliteracy Center? Did you find this to be a challenge? Or is it similar to the recruiting process of a Writing Center?

How have you trained your Multiliteracy Consultants so that they're not only knowledgeable with sound tutoring practices, but are also comfortable with a variety of media programs?

What kinds of documents do you provide online? Traditional Writing Centers typically offer Online Writing Labs providing documents for MLA (Modern Language Association) citations, thesis statements, etc. Do you feel a Multiliteracy Center can offer visual rhetoric sorts of documents online?

To that end, do you think that Multiliteracy can or should offer online tutorials? Why or why not?

David Sheridan has said that he feels Multiliteracy Centers should not be afraid to help students with activities typically viewed as "rote" or "basic" such as scanning an image. What are your views on the role "functional literacy" might play in a Multiliteracy Center?

Interview Questions for Tutors

What is your tutoring strategy with multimodal compositions?

How does this compare to your strategy of tutoring more traditional compositions?
Do you feel prepared to tutor these kinds of documents? What additional training might you wish to have?

What is your understanding of the Multiliteracy Center? What role does it play in the institution? How does it compare to Student Technology Services?

**Interview Questions for Tutees**

What were you hoping to get out of this tutorial? Why did you visit the Multiliteracy Center?

How did the tutorial go? That is, what it useful?

What is your understanding of the Multiliteracy Center? What role does it play in the institution? How does it compare to Student Tech Services?
APPENDIX C: SAMPLE MEMO CRAFTED DURING VISIT TO EKU

The following memo was composed following my interview with Dr. Russell Carpenter (Rusty); it is a brief memo, because immediately after my interview with Carpenter, I was to observe a consultation. Originally composed in a notebook, I have typed it here for clarity's sake. All typos, abbreviations, emphases, and notations are original.

Memo→2.20 After Interview w/Rusty

- The Space is open. It invites noise. In library, but sequestered from it by Glass Doors. The Space is open to students to use. It is like a walk-in space. Students w/appts. are welcome, yes, but walk-ins can use the space as well.

- The space is unique, and Rusty mentions the space in detail. Certainly, there seems to be something I can do w/materiality—what spaces are being used, by whom, for what projects, etc. An implication of this work, perhaps. I'd also be interested to see how the openness of the space affects consultations—do students feel unnerved? Or does it invite participation?

- Rusty talks about invention and multimodality. There's something to that, I think, that hearkens back to the creativity in the center. This whole notion of creativity, play exists very strongly here. How does that play out in a consultation I wonder? This seems to be at the core of what they do. [That's their theory, I think → how does it translate to practice?]

- Tech is impressive, but that seems to almost be downplayed.

- More interested in Rhetorical Work here (though they do acknowledge how they sometimes need to address func. lit); but the Rhet. seems to be at the heart of it all.
APPENDIX D: SAMPLE ANALYSIS OF TEXT USING CHARMAZ’S EIGHT QUESTIONS FOR EXTANT ANALYSIS

The following is a typed-up, brief analysis of one of the texts I analyzed. This particular text is a handout found in the Noel Studio entitled "Pointers for PowerPoint."

1. What are the parameters of the information?


2. On what and whose facts does this information rest?

*Created by Apostel with contributions from other consultants. Thus, it is knowledge created by individuals and does not rely on published scholarship for ethos (no citations); its ethos is entirely based on the (perceived?) expertise the Noel Studio provides.

3. What does the information mean to various participants or actors in the scene?

*Simply put, this is a nice little tip sheet for those looking to tighten up a presentation.

4. What does the information leave out?

* Well, its focus is on PowerPoint, so we can't say that it leaves out other presentation softwares. But what is really missing are a lot of tips on design. All we get are "use colors that are easy to read," use special effects sparingly" and "use your space wisely." Perhaps this is the grad student in me, but I would think more detail would be useful. Also, very surprising that no mention of audience is here.

5. Who has access to the facts, records, or sources of the information?

* No citations. See above.

6. Who is the intended audience for the information?

* Students, specifically undergrads.

7. Who benefits from shaping and/or interpreting this information in a particular way?

*The Noel Studio benefits if the tip sheet is used as intended—if students like the sheet, they may be more inclined to visit the center, recommend the center, etc. The students benefit if they understand the pointers, as they should theoretically create a crisper PowerPoint which in-turn should help achieve their goals (presentation for class, community, family, etc).

8. How, if at all, does the information affect actions?
That is up to the students using it. If the sheet receives poor reviews or is never used by students, Noel Studio stakeholders may choose to revise it for further clarity.
APPENDIX E: SKETCH OF THE NOEL STUDIO (FIRST FLOOR)

Below is a hand-drawn rendering of the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity (first floor). It was drawn on the morning of 2.21.2012.
APPENDIX F: FUNCTIONAL, RHETORICAL, AND CRITICAL LITERACY IN THE NOEL STUDIO FOR ACADEMIC CREATIVITY: A SUMMARY

The following outlines much of what is discussed in the dissertation; that is, it summarizes how the Noel Studio addresses functional, critical, and rhetorical literacy. Since the Noel Studio has attempted to create a common vocabulary for multimodal compositions and alphabetic compositions, no distinction is made here.

**Functional Literacy**

- Indirect tools available to students in the form of handouts
- Technical Support on-hand to help with operational computer issues, such as computer freezes, virus concerns, etc.
- Be sure to *converse* and *dialogue* with the student regarding functional literacy concerns that revolve around software (e.g. a student does not know how to change the font in a program); do not just *tell* the student how to do something.
- Ask the following questions before helping students with functional literacy:
  - Is there a functional issue, such as inability to use Microsoft Word, preventing a student from communicating?
  - Can you productively use conversations regarding functional literacy as a bridge, or gateway, to rhetorical and critical conversations? Always try to show the relationship between functional literacy and critical/rhetorical literacy.

**Critical Literacy**

- Ground discussions of Critical Literacy in the Elder and Paul Intellectual Standards.
- Use the following categories and questions, adapted from Elder and Paul, to get students thinking critically about their work. The questions here represent only one of many questions that could be asked for each category.
  - Clarity (  
    - Accuracy (How can we ensure there is no distortion of truth?)
    - Precision (Where can we include more details?)
    - Relevance (Does all information work towards enhancing the argument/issue at hand? If not, why not?)
    - Depth (What are some of the complexities that are a result of the issue discussed?)
    - Breadth (What would the other point of view say about your perspective?)
    - Logic (How do the ideas presented here work together?)
    - Significance (What is the most central idea to focus on? Why?)
    - Fairness (How are you approaching this issue in a non-biased manner? Should you be non-biased?)
• Be sure to *converse* and *dialogue* with the student; this is not meant to be a lecture for the student.
• Be sure to use critical literacy conversations as a bridge or gateway to rhetorical concerns. Address functional concerns as needed.

**Rhetorical Literacy**

• This should hopefully be the foundation of consultations.
• Discuss works in terms of ethos (how do you establish credibility as an author?), pathos (how can you elicit an emotional response from the audience?), and logos (how can you effectively use logic to enhance your argument?).
• Ground conversations in audience awareness: it starts and ends with the audience.
• Consider elements of document design. Think about color, font, size, image placement, image use, spacing, alignment, repetition, etc.
• Consider using the following questions as the starting point for rhetorical work:
  - Why are you composing this piece?
  - Who are you crafting this piece for? That is, what is your audience?
  - What do you know about your audience that can help your work better achieve your goals?
  - What expectations do your audience have for this composition?
  - What form best suits the purpose and audience of this composition? Why?
  - Are your words appropriately and accurately conveying your purpose?
  - How can you best arrange your text to achieve your purpose and reach out to your audience?
  - How can you design your text to achieve your purpose and reach out to your audience? Think about color schemes, font selection, image selection & placement, voiceovers, sound effects, music, etc.

• Address functional concerns as needed.

→ Remember that you do not need to be an expert in all things, but rather an informed, engaged responder.
APPENDIX G: HSRB APPROVAL

October 20, 2011

TO: Jeff Kirchoff  
Rhetoric and Writing

FROM: Hillary Harms, Ph.D.  
HSRB Administrator

RE: HSRB Project #: H11D265GX2

TITLE: Expanding the Safe House: Re-Evaluating Writing Center Theory and  
Practice to Accommodate Multimodal Compositions

The Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) has reviewed the requested  
modifications you submitted for your project involving human subjects.  
Effective October 14, 2011, the following modifications have been approved:

Include observations of a Multiliteracy Center and interviews of Multiliteracy  
Directors, Tutors, and Tutees. Interviews will be conducted in person, but in some  
situations, they may be conducted electronically (via email) or phone. In  
case of tutorial observations, consent will be secured by both the tutor and tutee  
or the observation and recording will not take place. New consent forms.

You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. The  
consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the  
only valid version and, if it is a revision to previously approved document(s),  
supersedes those versions. Copies of the dated document(s) must be used in  
obtaining consent from research subjects.

If you seek to make any additional changes in your project activities, complete  
the Request for Modifications/Addendum application and submit it to the  
HSRB via this office. Please notify me in writing upon completion of your  
project (or email: hsr@bgsu.edu).

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of  
assistance as your project proceeds.

COMMENTS:
Stamped consent forms are coming to you via campus mail.

C: Dr. Kris Blair
Informed Consent for Writing Center Directors

Introduction
You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is being conducted by Jeffrey S.J. Kirchoff from the English Department at Bowling Green State University; this study is part of his dissertation. Your participation in this study will involve a short series of interviews; you are also being asked to let me observe the day-to-day activities of your Center. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Purpose
The purpose of this research study is to understand how Writing Centers are adapting to the increase of New Media, Web 2.0 and Multimodal Compositions in the college curriculum (I'm defining multimodal composition as any text that goes beyond the alphabetic; these texts may include images--both still and moving--sound, color, music, animations, etc.).

Procedures
Because you are a Writing Center Director who actively tutors students with multimodal compositions, I have recruited you via email. I will ask for your consent to participate in a short series of interviews (which I will record) where I will ask you questions about your Writing Center; specifically, I will ask questions about tutor training, your Center’s mission statement, budget constraints, programmatic tensions, local contexts, and advice for other Writing Center Directors. Additionally, I will observe and interview (with their consent) individuals who tutor and are being tutored in your Center. These interviews and observations will also be recorded, either by video or audio means.

Voluntary Nature
Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw participation at any time. Your participation in this research study will not impact grades, class standing, or your relationship to the institution.

Confidentiality
You and your institution will be offered pseudonyms that will be used in my dissertation and in any publications resulting from my dissertation. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to review all drafts of my work so you can see exactly what is being written about you and your institution.

Potential Risks
Even though pseudonyms are being offered, your responses will be subject to scrutiny from any readers or listeners of this research project.

Benefits
The possible benefits of this study include a better understanding of how Writing Centers are accommodating students with Multimodal Compositions and whether such an accommodation is necessary. Moreover, this study will examine what sorts of programmatic shifts must take place in order for Writing Centers to accommodate multimodal compositions. While the information collected may not benefit you directly, the information learned may be helpful to some current and future Writing Center Directors.

Contact Persons
Should you have any questions about this study or need any clarification, please contact me at (419)372-7548 or jkircho@bgsu.edu; you may also contact the chair of my dissertation committee Dr. Kris Blair at (419)372-7543 or kblair@bgsu.edu. If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of BGSU's Human Subjects Review Board at (419)372-7718 or hrsb@bgsu.edu.
Consent
By signing this document, you acknowledge that you have read the above document and agree to participate in the project.

Name: ____________________________________________

Signature: _________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________
Informed Consent for Tutor/Tuttee Observations

Introduction
You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is being conducted by Jeffrey S. J. Kirchoff from the English Department at Bowling Green State University; this study is part of his dissertation. Your participation in this study will involve having tutorials observed by the researcher, a short discussion with the researcher after the tutorial, and possibly follow-up correspondence; the data compiled from the observation and discussion will be analyzed as part of Kirchoff's dissertation. Participation in this study is voluntary.

Purpose
The purpose of this research study is to understand how Writing Centers are adapting to the increase of New Media, Web 2.0 and Multimodal Compositions in the college curriculum (I'm defining multimodal composition as any text that goes beyond the alphabetic; these texts may include images--both still and moving--sound, color, music, animations, etc.).

Procedures
Because you are a Writing Center Tutor/Tuttee, you have been verbally recruited to participate in this study. I will ask for your consent to observe your tutorial and ask a few follow-up questions after the tutorial. These follow-up interviews will be conducted individually; that is, I will interview the tutor separate from the tuttee. You will be asked to keep this discussion confidential, however. Observations and subsequent interviews will be recorded.

Voluntary Nature
Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw participation at any time. Your participation in this research study will not impact grades, class standing, or your relationship to the institution.

Confidentiality
You will be referred to a pseudonym in any published research findings. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to review all drafts of my work so you can see exactly what is being written about you and your institution.

Potential Risks
Even though pseudonyms are being used, your responses will be subject to scrutiny from any readers or listeners of this research project.

Benefits
The possible benefits of this study include a better understanding of how Writing Centers are accommodating students with Multimodal Compositions and whether such an accommodation is necessary. Moreover, this study will examine what sorts of programmatic shifts must take place in order for Writing Centers to accommodate multimodal compositions. While the information collected may not benefit you directly, the information learned may be helpful to some current and future Writing Center Directors.

Contact Persons
Should you have any questions about this study or need any clarification, please contact me at (419)372-7548 or jkircho@bgsu.edu; you may also contact the chair of my dissertation committee Dr. Kris Blair at (419)372-7543 or kblair@bgsu.edu. If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of BGSU's Human Subjects Review Board at (419)372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu.
Consent

By signing this document, you acknowledge that you have read the above document and agree to participate in the project.

Name: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

212 East Hall
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0292

www.bgsu.edu/departments/english

BGSU MSSB - APPROVED FOR USE
ID #        H112267
EXP: 09-18-16

Photo 419.372.2576
Fax 419.372.0333