POST-LITERACY:
DESIGNING WRITING CURRICULA AROUND EMERGING LITERATE ACTIVITIES

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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

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This dissertation, titled “Post-Literacy: Designing Writing Curricula around Emerging Literate Activities,” focuses on the integration of digital and multimodal literacies in first-year writing curricula. This dissertation situates itself among other scholarship in new literacies, such as the work of Gee, Selfe and Hawisher. Using an Actor-network theory (ANT) methodology, this project focuses on indentifying and describing how digital and multimodal literacies are being used throughout one first-year writing curriculum. Additionally, it identifies who is using these literacies, and where these digital/multimodal literacies are being incorporated into the writing curriculum. The primary research methods used in this study were largely ethnographic, specifically site conversations, observations, and artifact collection. Based on the work of Bruno Latour and other ANT scholars, I articulated and translated the actors most apparent in the emergence of digital and multimodal composition within the first-year writing curricula at the site studied. Based on my findings, I trace literacy as network and give specific recommendations on how to best use and incorporate digital and multimodal literacies in college writing curricula.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout this process the members of my dissertation committee—Dr. Kris Blair, Dr. Lee Nickoson, Dr. Sue Carter Wood, and Dr. Lan Li—have offered valuable advice, support, and much appreciated patience. I am grateful for all the work they have put into my growth as a student, scholar, and colleague.

I would like to give particular thanks to my advisor, Dr. Kris Blair whose insights and advice have help guide me as both a teacher and scholar. It has been my privilege to work with her on this project.

Finally, I would like to thank all my participants at MCU. It was my honor to work alongside you.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The interaction of pictures and text is constitutive of representation as such: All media are mixed media and all representation and heterogeneous; there are no ‘purely’ visual or verbal arts...
—W.J.T Mitchell

For Mitchell all arts—verbal, visual, aural, etc.—are multimodal, occurring and interacting across media using numerous and various techniques and technologies. One such art, the art that directly concerns this project—writing—is evolving and changing through the emergence of new digital and multimodal communication. In the digital age writing occurs in various environments in a wide array of media. To be a “good” writer in the new media age, students need to learn to interpret and produce texts in various media, using different modes, while writing or composing with different tools. The increasing modes of textual production, however, cause an increase in the literacies needed to be a skilled writer in a variety of settings. This increase of these literacy demands has risen along with the value that society has placed on digital texts.

These demands, however, are not adequately being adapted for current first-year college writing curriculums. Though there is much in the way of research on digital and multimodal literacies, as Peter Goggin notes in his book, Professing Literacy in Composition Studies, the tendency in composition scholarship has been to focus on the classroom as a site for digital and multimodal literacies (25). With such focus on classroom as sites for these literacies, the larger social, curricular, and extracurricular contexts that are at work within writing programs becomes largely ignored. Though many composition and literacy scholars (Blair, Hawisher, Moran, Selfe) interested in computers and writing are paying attention to the use of digital and multimodal texts within first-year writing programs, a large number of programs solely focus on traditional academic prose as the main artifact produced within first-year writing. The ways in
which these multiple literacies are being developed and included in these programs has become disregarded, and what remains is a writing curriculum that has largely remained unchanged, focused primarily on a textual understanding of literacy. Deborah Brandt notes the emerging trends in literacy:

Rapid changes in literacy and education may not so much bring rupture from the past as they bring an accumulation of different and proliferating pasts, a piling up of literate artifacts and signifying practices that haunt the sites of literacy learning. These complicated amalgamations of literacy’s past, present, and future help to formulate the interpretive opportunities and complexities facing current generations of literacy learners.

(665)

The changing spaces and mediums, from blogs to new media texts, require a new way of identifying, teaching, and developing writing curricula for these rapidly changing literacies.

Because digital writing and multimodal texts have become ubiquitous outside of academic spaces and the increasingly changing literacy demands, first-year writing programs that do not have some sort of digital or multimodal component need to better adapt and incorporate projects that meet the literacy demands of writing in the digital age. This dissertation begins with this idea as its starting point and shifts the focus from the classroom as a site of digital and multimodal literacy and composition research to the curriculum. In order to better understand the larger curricular context at work, this study focuses on one first-year writing program that does not have explicit or even implicit goals of including digital or multimodal texts and literacies; however, the writing program is a site where digital and multimodal composition projects occur in spite of the lack of curricular motivation to include them. For all intents and
purposes, the writing program that is being studied could be considered a neutral site for digital literacy and multimodal composition.

The goal of studying a neutral research site is to see how digital literacies and multimodal composition are occurring within writing classrooms without curricular or institutional motivation—or, that is, how these literacies and projects are occurring organically within the writing program. Moreover, by responding to Goggin’s notion that literacy research needs to examine more than just the classroom context, the purpose of this dissertation is to discover various artifacts, entities and exigencies that are not apparent in a singular classroom, all of which shape how digital and multimodal literacies are developed and sustained throughout a writing program. There are numerous reasons why this dissertation focuses on the larger context of the curriculum and new media literacies. First, focusing on the classroom limits the scope of what is being seen to have an impact on the way digital and new literacies are taught. Widening the scope of research beyond the classroom allows for the examination and analysis of curricular and institutional nuances that mediate literacy development. Second, the development of these literacies within a curriculum is much more complex than how they occur in a singular classroom. Many studies that examine the inclusion of digital literacies within the writing classroom fail to analyze how institutional and curricular actors mediate the emergence of multimodal compositions. And third, this dissertation attempts to take account of all the various relationships at work, which go into developing and sustaining a multimodal pedagogical model.

As I approached the study of these new literacies in the first-year writing curriculum, I began by reviewing relevant literature on literacy as it is generally conceived. The literature reviewed for this study broadly fits into two categories: Literacy and post-literacy. The first section, literacy, confines literacy into a Foucaultian operation, where literacy is seen as means
of control and power. The second section, titled post-literacy, attempts to break away from viewing literacy as Foucaultian operation and moves it toward understanding literacy as an organic and open activity.

In this opening chapter, I begin by reviewing relevant and recent scholarship that addresses the complexity of defining literacy and literate activity. From here, I move on to look at what I define as Post-literacy and how it differs from traditional notions of literacy. Based on these reviews, I give specific definitions of two terms integral to this dissertation: Literacy and Post-literacy. Once establishing the scholarly context for these terms, I outline my specific research questions and give a brief outline of the remaining chapters. Finally, I end this chapter by discussing the potential implications that this dissertation has for the discipline of rhetoric and composition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literacy

In its ubiquity, the term literacy has been defined, appropriated, reappropriated, and misappropriated to such an extent in academic scholarship that it has come to mean many things. There so many types of literacy—visual literacy, computer literacy, digital literacy, cultural literacy, etc.—that ‘literacy’ may have lost its meaning altogether. Glynda Hull writes, “[w]e think of reading and writing as generic, the intellectual equivalent of all-purpose flour, and we assume that, once mastered, these skills can and will be used in any context for any purpose” (qtd. in Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola 352). Hull’s assertion still begs the question: What is literacy? Notions of literacy were largely tied to the ability to read and write. But these antiquated ideas of literacy do not hold with contemporary notions of what it means to be
literate. Moreover, the domains of literacy are more diverse, and, even more importantly, are beginning to overlap and converge. Literacy no longer is just tied to print, but images too. Literacy is also more than just an ability to consume some sort of literate artifact; it is tied to the ability to produce those artifacts. And the abilities to interpret and to produce literate artifacts have become integrally tied to technologies, which are not wholly considered to be the domain of writing and reading instruction. Cynthia Selfe suggests that, “[t]oday’s literacy demands and the cognitive choices available to meet those demands are starkly different from those afforded by the culture” (29).

Within societal conceptions of literacy, literacy has always been tied to technology. In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong suggests that, like technologies, writing is artificial to human life. Furthermore, he writes, “[h]igh literacy fosters truly written composition” (94). Ong’s notion of literacy demands that literacy be conceived in technological terms. Additionally, literacy was connected to the consumption of literature and the ability to use the technologies of literacy to be an effective worker and citizen. But this is precisely why the current notions of literacy have become so complex, specifically the pervasive use of computer and web 2.0 technologies in producing writing and compositions, and also the ability to distribute these compositions in various modalities and among large numbers of possible interested—and not so interested—readers. Moreover, composition classrooms are allowing for a wider array of texts to be produced and consumed; many even focus on multimodal texts and compositions. It is commonplace for writing classrooms to use various Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs and wikis, both of which allow for the writers to use a variety of media in their creation. Also, beyond simply using Web 2.0 tools, many college writing classrooms utilize videos in creating arguments or as a way for students to show a rhetorical understanding of a given genre. However, before
examining the notions of these multimodal or new literacies, I first examined traditional notions of literacy, specifically the place of literacy in a societal context.

In the essay “Drafting U.S. Literacy,” Deborah Brandt notes the change of literacy from the nineteenth century to twentieth. Brandt’s work with literacy is paramount to the understanding of this project. It becomes apparent that no matter the century, literacy is tied to some notion of success. During the nineteenth century, to be successful morally, one needed to be literate—to read the Gospels, of course. Brandt goes on to note that the moral imperative tied to literacy was a means of control and not necessarily tied to academic learning (488). And, during the twentieth century, literacy was tied to academic and economic success. Brandt writes, “Literacy as a cultural mandate is now taught and learned in terms of school success and economic viability” (487). Literacy during the twentieth century, as Brandt notes, was integrally tied to notions of productivity, moving away from moral conceptions of literacy (487). Literacy was an important cog for an industrial society.

These traditional notions of literacy merge into what Hirsch discusses as “cultural literacy.” Hirsch explains, “[c]ultural literacy lies above the everyday levels of knowledge that everyone possesses and below the expert level known only to specialists. It is the middle ground of cultural knowledge possessed by the “common reader”” (19). It seems that Hirsch’s notion of literacy focuses more on the idea of literacy as knowledge, but a knowledge that is more akin to a cultural zeitgeist, than it is a literacy tied to the ability to produce and consume cultural texts. Patricia Bizzell, discussing Hirsch’s concept, suggests, “A cultural context is necessary to invest the feature of the system with meaning” (144). Connecting literacy to a culture at large is largely a move to stigmatize ways of interpreting and producing texts that are not culturally acceptable or conventional. However, Hirsch is conceiving of cultural literacy less as a cog in industrial
society, but more as general rhetorical knowledge and skill of the common reader. Regardless of the imperative for literacy—moral or productivity—traditional notions of literacy are imbricated with issues of control, access and social privilege.

However, traditional notions of literacy are not tied to just text literacy. We hear echoes of many economic and civic reasons in some digital literacy scholars as well. In the book *Literacy in the Digital Age*, Hank Withrow writes, “Literacy is the foundation for success in schools. What literacy means in a digital age is the ability to analyze critically all that is read, viewed and listened to” (45). Success, just like in textual literacy, is tied to an idea of institutional competency.

*Toward a Post-Literacy*

It is apparent that the idea of literacy is changing. How we conceive of literacy and the way that these conceptions of literacy are changing the notion of teaching is quite profound. The notion of literacy has changed in two specific ways regarding the theoretical and cultural conceptions of literacy. In the book *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Gunther Kress notes:

> The modes which occur, together with the language-modes of speech and writing, on pages or screens, are constituted on different principles to those of language; their materiality is different; and the work that cultures have done with them has differed also. The theoretical change [of literacy] is from linguistics to semiotics—from a theory that accounted for language alone to a theory that can account equally well for gesture, speech, image, wring, 3D objects, colour, music and no doubt others. (36)
The key notion that Kress emphasizes is that literacy is not relegated to the domain of linguistics and languages, but encompasses the entirety of what could be considered a sign. By expanding literacy beyond the domain of linguistics, Kress calls for a semiotic understanding of literacy. Kress is not the only scholar who notes this change in the domain of literacy; James Gee writes that “language is not the only important communicational system. Images, symbols, graphs, diagrams, artifacts, and many other visual symbols are significant” (17). Moreover, most texts produced do not rely on simply one medium; most texts are multimodal, mixing and juxtaposing written, image and aural domains, creating one hybrid, yet singular text.

Likewise, the other key difference in contemporary notions of literacy is put forth by Henry Jenkins. In his book, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*, Jenkins suggests the other key change is that literacy should not be considered to be an individual skill need to be a good productive worker and citizen. Jenkins writes, “[t]he new media literacies should be seen as social skills, as ways of interacting within a larger community, and not simply as individualized skills to be used for personal expression” (32). James Gee echoes this point, writing:

> Reading and writing in any domain, whether it is law, rap songs, academic essays, superhero comics, or whatever, are not just ways of decoding print, they are also caught up with ways of doing things, thinking about things, valuing things and interacting with other people—that is, the are caught up with different sorts of social practices. (18)

If we are to accept Jenkins’ “twenty-first century” notion of literacy, the burden of teaching digital literacies is of the utmost importance. The twenty-first century notion of literacy connects the traditional rhetorical education principles, because it values the notion that a rhetorical
education is necessary to being a better, more productive citizen; however, it goes beyond simply being a better citizen; it is about being able to work, adapt and live in a technological society. In the digital age, the idea of being a good citizen is much more complex and the notion of “good” is much vaguer, especially compared to a more simplistic Aristotelian notion of the “good citizen.” The “good citizen” in the digital age is a citizen whose literacies make them a functional cog in the economy. Furthermore, the notion of “good” is less tied to moral character participation in the body politic and is tied to economic and labor productivity.

I would contend that the way both Kress and Jenkins have changed the conception of literacy, and therefore literacy education, is quite substantial. But Jenkins’ notion would require a host of changes in the educational system, as compared to Kress’s. I would suggest that a move from a linguistic to a semiotic understanding of literacy, though complex, would not be as radical a paradigm shift in thinking as Jenkins’ belief about a more social and material notion of literacy.

These changes in literacy have a real effect. More so, the numbers of people creating media on the net are intriguing. In a 2005 study conducted by the Pew Internet & American Life, “more than half of all American Teens—and 57 percent of teens who use the internet—could be considered media creators” (Jenkins 3). The Pew study shows that more and more teens are using computer and web 2.0 technologies for creative purposes. And these media creations are not simply textual, they are multimodal. However as Henry Jenkins notes, one problem is that “although youths are becoming more adept at using media as resources (for creative expression, research, social life, etc.), they often are limited in their ability to examine the media themselves” (20). For Jenkins, this is a problem of “transparency.”
One specific area where composition and learning specialists have paid particular attention to the idea of literacy is regarding literacy in video games. In the book *What Video Games have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*, Gee situates his work with video games within three areas:

- **Situated Cognition**: a theory of learning that argues that learning is more than just what goes on inside of the brain; learning, also, is embodied fully in the material social reality.
- **New Literacy Studies**: a theory of reading and writing that suggests that reading and writing are tied to social and cultural practices and tied to economic and political issues.
- **Connectionism**: a theory of learning that suggests people learn through their own personal experiences in the world, where learning is tied to specific patterns of recognition (Gee 9).

As Gee notes, none of these areas exclusively represent a universal standard or belief on the nature of learning and literacy; however, as Gee asserts, “these three areas capture central truths about the human mind and human learning” (9). Additionally, another area which Gee points to, in his book *New Digital Media and Learning as an Emerging Area*, is New Literacies Studies, a field that studies “new types of literacies beyond print literacy—especially new digital literacies and literacy practices embedded in contemporary popular culture” (9). New Literacies Studies views different digital tools as technologies for making and receiving meaning, which is much like how language is conceived. Gee’s three main theories connected to videogames and learning, in conjunction with the concept of New Literacies, paints a notion of literacy that isn’t tied to the traditional control model of literacy, but highlights a model that is integrally tied the
notion of post-literacy. These conceptions of literacy create a model that structures learners as the primary motivator in their own literacy experience, where they are both reacting to the culture, as well as defining elements, artifacts and the technologies, which others in the culture interact with.

Before moving into a more detailed look at those working within New Literacies Studies, the focus is on how scholars within composition have taken up Gee’s work with video games and literacy. Two of the most important scholars researching digital and gaming literacies are Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher. Their two books *Literate Lives in the Information Age* and *Gaming Lives in the Twenty-First Century* provide insights into the way new literacies develop and converge within the composition classroom. Each book provides case studies of individual writers and their varying new literacies. Outside of Hawisher and Selfe’s work, numerous other scholars have looked at the place of gaming in writing instruction. *Computers and Composition* devoted its September 2008 issue to the place of games in pedagogy and literacy. Much like Gee, Hawisher and Selfe situate their understanding of literacy as a set of practices and values that can be understood only in a particular historical period, cultural milieu, or cluster of material conditions (32).

In the chapter “Computer Gaming as Literacy,” Selfe et al. note that “Visual, interactive images are more compelling to the user. Perhaps, in some way, they are more biologically familiar to the human mind than print-based communicative modes” (29). The assertion that the visual in some way is more familiar in a biological sense is new compared to most theorists within composition studies. But, it seems at least within the realm of new literacies, the materiality and cultural weight associated with digital and computer literacies does have some connection to the human body and its experience within material reality. Gunther Kress, in his
book *Multimodality*, echoes this connection to the human body, stating, “in the engagement with any sign, the materiality of modes—where sign and mode are understood broadly—interacts with physiology of bodies” (77). In another chapter from Hawisher and Selfe’s book, “Lost (and Found) in Translation,” Erin Smith and Eve Deitsch, observe “critical literacy in this semiotic domain have been informed not only by internal and external design grammars, but by forces beyond these local contexts and affinity groups” (54). This is of particular note, because it emphasizes key terms in literacy studies:

- **Semiotic Domain**: “Any set of practices that recruits one or more modalities (e.g., oral or written language, images, equations, symbols sounds, gestures, graphs, artifacts, etc.) to communicate distinctive types of meanings” (Gee 19).

- **Internal Design Grammar**: “the principle and patterns in terms of which one can recognize what is and what is not acceptable or typical content in a semiotic domain” (Gee 28).

- **External Design Grammar**: “the principles and patterns of which one can recognize what is and what is not an acceptable or typical social practice and identity in regard to the affinity group associated with a semiotic domain” (Gee 29)

- **Affinity Group**: the group of people associated with a particular semiotic domain (Gee 27).

These terms provide the basic framework of understanding new literacies, especially in the context of new emerging literacies. Affinity Groups, or as Henry Jenkins calls them, “Affinity Spaces,” differ from formal educational systems in that the learning is experimental, innovative,
dynamic, and localized. Furthermore, Jenkins suggests that “affinity spaces are also highly generative environments from which new aesthetic experiments and innovations emerge (10).

The concept of new literacies begins to blur and merge with ideas of participatory and convergence culture. The primary figure in this area is Henry Jenkins. His book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* is the seminal work examines the collision of media and culture. Convergence culture, as Jenkins describes it, is “where old and new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways” (2). The concept of Jenkins’ convergence culture is integrally tied to the idea of new literacies, tied to notions of political and economic ecologies and tied to the idea that many compositions are multimodal, combining aspects of old and new media. Moreover, Hawisher et al. suggest that such compositions may also become highly intertextual in terms of their resonance across media boundaries (208). This type of intertextuality is best represented by Jenkins’ example of Evil Bert, which was an internet meme that used the Sesame Street character, implying that he was the mastermind behind the JFK assassination and 9/11. However, for the idea of the convergence culture to work, it does rely to some extent upon Hirsch’s conception of cultural literacy.

Convergence culture, Jenkins writes, is about the relationship between three concepts: media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence. These three terms are key to understanding and defining some of Gee’s concepts about new literacies.

- **Convergence**: “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences” (2).
- **Participatory Culture**: Is a blurring of traditional conceptions about media, where media producer and consumers do not necessarily have separate roles (3).
• Collective Intelligence: “Assumes that consumption is a collective process, where no one knows everything, but as a collective, we can put all the pieces together” (4).

Most importantly, the idea of participatory culture dovetails well with concepts in new literacies. As Jenkins writes in his book *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*, a participatory culture has low barriers for artistic creation and expression, a push to share user generated content, members who believe their work matters, there is some social connection—at least assumed—by members. And members are mentored by more experienced community members (6).

In their book *YouTube*, Jean Burgess and Joshua Green take a Cultural Studies approach to studying YouTube. Their study is one that highlights many of Jenkins and Gee’s designs on literacy and participatory culture. As Burgess and Green note:

YouTube’s value is not produced solely or even predominantly by the top-down activities of YouTube, Inc. as a company. Rather various forms of cultural, social, and economic values are collectively produced by users en masse, via their consumption, evaluation, and entrepreneurial actives. (5)

If viewed as a semiotic domain, YouTube calls for the use of multiple modalities, governed by both internal and external design grammars, which emerge from the affinity space. Moreover, the ties to political and economic ideologies of YouTube are quite clear. The writers note “YouTube illustrates the increasing complex relations among producers and consumers in the creation of meaning, value and agency” (14). Burgess and Green’s book describes an area that is an example of a post-literate activity. Building on of the idea of post-literacy, their study highlights the social, technological, and literate complexities of being literate in the digital age. Furthermore, YouTube serves as a common venue for multimodal writing projects. It is
representative of a variety of cultural and rhetorical genres that student writers interact with and reproduce in both academic and non-academic environments.

In terms of post-literacy, the classroom represents a space where the convergence of all aspects of literacy, convergence culture, and multimodality converge. Additionally, a turn toward new/multimodal/semiotic/digital literacies is a move toward a post-process theorized classroom and pedagogy. Granted, the entire notion of a post-process pedagogy becomes absurd at a certain point, but as post-process theory is generally conceived, the use of new literacies fits into the general framework. Most learning happens in semiotic domains that are not the least bit educational. In their book *New Literacies: Everyday Practices & Classroom Learning*, Colin Lankshear and Michele Knobel suggest a notion of new literacies that moves away from literacy as classroom practice, instead focusing “on new literacies as everyday social practices” (2). They conceive of this literacy in connection to a Friararian pedagogical model. Moreover, Lankshear and Knobel take a move away from video games and literacy and develop similar notions with mobile devices. When new literacies are viewed from the perceptive of a first-year writing curriculum, adapting and evolving for new technologies and spaces makes teaching writing quite a bit more difficult. Since these changes in technologies allow for various textual compositions. Furthermore, the places where these texts are composed and published are constantly changing, most of these technologies and spaces are largely remediated from older technologies and media (Bolter). Because the technologies of literacy are dynamic, this dissertation hopes to discover and isolate the key factors into the inclusion of digital and multimodal texts in writing programs. The notion that literacy is tied to some social phenomena is a key element that connects new literacies with post-process theories of pedagogy.
New Literacies theory overcomes one of the main objections of post-process theorists about the process movement, that process typically ignores the local context (Olson 7). New Literacies studies places an emphasis on the semiotic domains that are contextually rich, where learning emerges instead of simply being a gauge of teaching. Similarly, the social nature underlining a post-process pedagogy is highlighted by Bruce McComiskey, who imagines what he terms “social-process rhetorical inquiry” (42). For McComiskey, this type of pedagogy/inquiry places emphasis on cultural production, contextual distribution and critical consumption (47). Though not tying this pedagogy to the digital realms, McComiskey’s approach reflects the social nature of new literacies and participatory culture. Building out of this post-process notion, Mary Hocks, who wrote the essay “Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments,” moves beyond these social notions of learning toward the rhetorical. She emphasizes that students have hybrid literacies, ones much similar to those Gee and others define as New Literacies; however her suggestion ties these literacies to a more traditional notion of a rhetorical education, while also remaining aware of the highly digital nature of writing environment (631). Hocks’ perception of visual rhetoric dovetails well with Hirsch’s notion of cultural literacy. And like Hirsch, visual rhetoric education and knowledge is inadequately discussed, taught, and used within writing programs. It would be logical, then, for students to better work with the various media, modalities and spaces for digital and multimodal texts, students must have a better foundation in the subject of visual rhetoric. Overcoming these shortcomings for students is a major issue moving forward with the implementation of digital texts across writing curricula.

Gaming literacies, multimodal, digital literacies and new literacies, in general, I would define as post-literacies or post-literate activities. By post-literacy, I mean, a literacy that
emerges from and is separate to the traditionally defined notion of literacy (the working
definition for this project). It is a type of literacy that is not sponsored by a political or social
entity; it is one that emerges, naturally within communities without outside socio-political
motivation.

This notion of post-literacy is built on of the work scholars like Gee, Kress and Jenkins,
but also the work of J. David Bolter and Stuart Selber, particularly Selber’s notion of a rhetorical
literacy. Specifically, by post-literacy or post-literate activity I suggest that literacy is not so
much tied to becoming successful in an institutional sense, but that post-literacy allows for
people to “participate in our ongoing cultural redefinitions of self, knowledge, and experience”
(Selber 189). This differs from the traditional notion in one major way: access. The traditional
notion of literacy serves a disciplinary function as defining individual as competent or not;
whereas, post-literate activities assume a participatory culture that is not imagined by the
traditional conceptions of literacy.

Building on Bolter’s work, Selber’s notion of “rhetorical literacy” begins to blur how we
are to understand post-literate activity. For Selber, the rhetorically literate student has awareness
of four parameters: “persuasion, deliberation, reflection, and social action” (139). The first two
of the parameters seem to fit more snugly into the traditional notion of literacy. But the latter
two fit more into the notion of post-literacy or post-literate activity. Furthermore, Selber notes
that much of the use of computing infrastructures used within educational environments creates
what he describes as a technology façade (5). Within writing instruction, Selber’s idea of the
technology façade is almost commonplace within writing programs. Instead of producing digital
texts, students in an educational environment that operates under the “technology façade” simply
produce standard texts, not combining the various other media available to them. It is common
that technology in these environments is simply an instruments used for traditional literacy practices.

Building upon this current review of literature, it is important to break down the operational definitions for both literacy and post-literacy as they are used within this dissertation. Simply, the working definition for literacy is built upon the traditional models of literacy, where literacy is seen in terms of reading and writing for educational environments for the primary purpose of reifying cultural norms, ideologies and thought processes. Furthermore, literacy is seen as a skill that denotes value to society in an economic sense.

Contrary to the definition of literacy, post-literacy and post-literate activities are largely based on exigencies and developments made within the culture, separate from those educationally mandated. Post-literacy should be seen as an umbrella term that encompasses the ideas of literacy and literate activities put forth by Kress, Bolter, Gee, Jenkins, the New London Group, and one that seeks to work within notions of literacy as it understood by composition scholars Hawisher, Selfe, Selber. Furthermore, post-literacy incorporates the various types and forms of literacy and there functions, specifically those that connect new technologies and media, including computer, new media, Web 2.0, and other digital literacies.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Literacy: A Working Definition**

For this project, the definition of (traditional) literacy is based largely off of the scholarship of Deborah Brandt: Literacy is an institutionally prescribed way of learning to interpret and produce texts in order for a person to be deemed “competent” as a productive member of society.
Post-Literacy: A Working Definition

A literacy that emerges from and is separate to the traditionally defined notion of literacy (the working definition for this project). It is a type of literacy that is not sponsored by a social entity; it is one that emerges, naturally within communities without outside hierarchical motivation.

RESEARCHER QUESTIONS AND METHODS

For my project, I observed assembled and analyzed processes, artifacts and people associated with the writing program of one university. I collect data primarily through two methods—observation and interviews. To situate my study, I take an Actor-Network Theory (ANT) approach. ANT is a social approach to studying human networks—in this case, literacy as it pertains to first-year writing curricula—which maps the relations between human and non-human agents, which act and have effects within the network.

Conceived in the 1980’s by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon, Actor-Network-Theory has since been used a tool for analysis in a range of disciplines including geography, social science, and organizational analysis, but it is most commonly is used in the information sciences and the study of HCI (Human-Computer Interaction). Latour describes ANT as a tracing of actors, that is caught up with learning the numerous actor’s innovations in order to learn “what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make [the network] fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish” (12). Speaking generally, ANT is a tool that tries to create a framework that links the various relations between actors and the various exigencies at work within the network.
Literacy, in this case, should be seen as a social innovation whose topology is being mapped socially in a first-year college program.

My first goal with this study was to discover where digital and new media literacies were occurring within a writing program. Because there was not a multimodal requirement or a specifically designed curriculum for writing instructors, there were a variety of these literacies popping up throughout the program. I hope that because of this lack of focus within the program, the emergence of digital and multimodal projects occur more organically within the program. The use of ANT allowed me to incorporate and analyze a wide array of factors at work in the emergence of these literacies within the writing program. Furthermore, for this dissertation, ANT allows non-human agents to have a role within the shape and development of the network, i.e., how post-literacy and post-literate activities emerge and develop within a first-year writing program.

Research Questions

The main question guiding this study was “why are non-privileged and digital literacies occurring within a first-year writing program?” In order to answer this question, I attempted to answer seven other questions, which once answers are yielded will better answer the guiding research question for this study.

- What literacies are privileged in first-year writing curricula?
- How are these literacies developed in the first-year writing curriculum?
- What literacies are used and developed in the first-year writing classroom?
- What shape do non-privileged literacies or post-literacy projects take?
- How do assignments utilizing privileged literacies and non-privileged literacies compare?
• Who are the instructors using digital writing and multimodal composition in the first-year writing classroom?

• Where is digital writing and multimodal composition occurring within the first-year writing curriculum?

Approaching my study using actor-network theory as my methodology, I am going to design and implement a study of literacy of a first-year writing program focusing on the idea of literacy in the FY writing curriculum as an actor-network. I believe that to fully examine how literacies are taught, used and developed, an actor-network theory approach is best because, unlike other socio-historical approaches, like activity theory, ANT places agency for innovation and development among every actor, not just a singular tool. An ANT approach accounts for teaching practices, teacher development, the documents involved, and the instructors of writing to work in a fashion that make relations between the various actors more visible. In contrast in activity theory, these practices are viewed as tools; tools which are value-neutral and do not have agency.

The idea of using actor-network theory is not new to the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Others, such as Clay Spinuzzi, have used these social theories in scholarship in rhetoric and composition. Moreover, in the February 2011 issue of College Composition and Communication, Chris Gallagher calls for networked approaches to assessment in the discipline. I believe, like Spinuzzi’s work with Network and Gallagher’s call for using network theory in assessment, that literacy in the first-year writing curriculum calls for a networked approach. Few, if any, studies of literacy in first-year writing curriculums have thus far used an actor-network model for research. A networked study of literacy in the first-year writing curriculum
would give detail in to the teaching, development and privileging of particular literacies in the composition classroom, as well as, seek to find ways to incorporate other non-privileged literacies into the writing classroom.

Building from an ANT methodology, after document collection, the majority of data collection comes from ethnographic methods—mainly observation—and interviews with instructors and the WPAs for the program that are the focus of this study. The use of ethnographic methods and interviews in this study were typical of most studies using actor-network theory as its guiding methodology. The ethnographic methods were primarily used to gather data of actors that most simply could be defined as processes. Additionally, I want to note the word choice of “ethnographic method,” instead of “ethnography.” This choice was made, because the study does not have the scope or depth of traditional ethnography; however, the study utilized ethnographic methods for data collection.

In the case of this study, the two major processes that were examined using ethnographic methods were the yearly teacher instruction, which happens before the start of fall semester; and meetings of the composition committee, which occur throughout the semester. I feel that these two processes are important to be viewed as actors in this study because they have some direct—and some indirect—influence over the place of literacy in the writing classroom.

My role as a researcher for this study remains undetermined. My role as researcher is a negotiable one. If I were the only one determining this role, I would prefer to be in the position of what Lauer and Asher call the participant observer (42). My own inclination toward this role is because I feel that the role of the participant observer allows me to give back to those allowing me access to the research site. And, regarding any question of objectivity, I think it is important
to remember, “No ethnographer can be objective, nor is that the goal. The researcher’s perspective becomes an important part of the environment studies” (Lauer 42).

I limited the focus of my study to one institution: Midwest City University\(^1\). The participants of this study solely came from this institution. With ANT as the foundation for this study, participants observed in various situations within the writing department at Midwest State University. Also, some of the participants were interviewed. The participants consist of administrators and teachers of the first-year writing program at Midwest State University.

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Chapter 2: Methodology, Methods, and Examining the Research Site

Chapter Two examines the particulars of my study, including my methodological approach, data collection methods, and specifics about the research site. I give a detailed explanation of my choices and the heuristics at work within this project. The main purpose of this chapter is to explicate the guiding principles informing my methods and methodology in order to keep with what Richard Haswell describes as RAD Research—replicable, agreeable, and data-supported scholarship. Furthermore, it situates the use of actor-network theory as the guiding methodology for this project.

Chapter 3: The Cast of Characters

In this chapter, I systematically define all the actors at work in how post-literacy practices develop. I separate this chapter into two sections: human and non-human actors. The main goal of this chapter is to articulate, or list, the actors present; what these actors do; and the relationship of the actors to each other. For this project, the actors that I specifically note have some effect on the emergence of digital and multimodal literacies within a writing program.

\(^1\) For this study, I have chosen not to name the institution where the study took place.
Chapter 4: Actors at Work

This chapter takes the individual actors and places them into a dynamic system of complex relationships. Based on the articulations for chapter three, I translate the dynamics and relationships between actors as they interact. The goal of this chapter is to show how the various actors—human and non-human—create barriers and openings for the emergence of digital and multimodal literacies within a writing curriculum. Moreover, this chapter serves to situate the emergence of post-literate activities within the processes of the university.

Chapter 5: Implications

I conclude the dissertation discussing the implications of my study for the field of rhetoric and composition. I synthesize my findings with current scholarship that discusses the impediments and innovation of digital literacies within writing programs. Based on my synthesis, I suggest a complexity model as the model to best incorporate and develop digital and multimodal literacies within college writing curricula. My intention is that this dissertation serves as a framework to analyze curricular process and digital literacies, as well as, complicate how we understand their emergence within college writing curricula.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this dissertation was to describe how literacy was used and valued within writing classrooms and writing curriculum. Moreover, it seeks to find moments when post-literate activities find their way into these spaces and how post-literate activities are used, developed, and valued within educational spaces. My goal is to understand the emergence of these activities and to create a curricular framework that would foster pedagogical innovation that is founded on the data collected at MCU.
The proposed study reverberates across the various roles we occupy as composition scholars: administrators, teachers and scholars. First, for administrators, by utilizing an Actor-network theory approach, I intend to provide a general framework to best adapt post-literacy and post-literate activities in first-year writing programs. Additionally, the methodology used provides administrators an analytical lens at analyzing their own programs.

As teachers of writing, this project reveals how small changes within their current program allow them to better include post-literate activities, utilizing multimodal and digital texts better within their classrooms. Additionally, it brings attention to the role that non-human actors—syllabi, textbooks, assignments sheets—have on including and developing post-literate activities for the first-year writing classroom, serving to cause more attention and reflection about the relationship writing practices and pedagogies have to these non-human actors.

Lastly, as scholars whose expertise is on written and multimodal discourse, this dissertation highlights the relationships and effects of both human and non-human factors in curriculum design and how these factors effect what texts are used and produced in first-year writing programs. Also, I believe that this study effects composition as a discipline, allowing it to work toward better avenues of incorporating various post-literate activities across the writing curriculum. This study reveals the effects that both human and non-human actors have upon the literacies valued in our writing pedagogies, departments and the literacies we value as a discipline.
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY, METHODS, AND THE RESEARCH SITE

Tracing literacy, especially post-literacies, as a network is not a simple science, because there are numerous seen and unseen factors at work in the development and sustainability of post-literacies in any writing program. Given the tenuous nature of identifying all the actors at work within the network and understanding the effect of those actors on the emergence of post-literate activities at MCU, this chapter serves to paint a detailed and in-depth description of the methods, methodology and research site. A rich description of the research site is needed, not just for the purpose of getting at the forces that are at work at developing and sustaining digital literacies in FY writing programs, but to provide one account—an actor-network theory account—of why these literacies and literate activities are emerging within writing curricula. Accounting for these forces establishes institutional, curricular, and programmatic context. By unpacking these contexts complements the methodological exigencies of ANT. The goal of this approach is to provide a general framework to examine the complexity of emerging literate activities across departmental and programmatic contexts.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, I provide a rich description of the research site—Midwest State University—and the grounds for why this site was chosen, a detailed account of actor-network theory and the rationale of its use in this study and finally a description of the methods used in the data-collection for this study. By explicating in detail the rationale for the site, methodology and methods, it is my intention that my study can serve as a general framework for other programs and administrators interested in developing and understanding emerging digital literacies and within their own programs. Furthermore, by thoroughly describing the research site, it is my intention to make clear the institutional and programmatic context of the program.
THE STAGE: A DESCRIPTION OF MIDWEST CITY UNIVERSITY

This chapter paints the landscape of the FY writing program at MCU. It provides information related to both the university and writing program, which includes information related to the history, size and general make up of each. This description provides the institutional and programmatic contexts and exigencies present at the university.

Located in Northeast Ohio, Midwest City University is a moderately sized urban university with an annual enrollment of approximately 14,000 students. It offers more than 100 undergraduate majors and 35 masters and doctorate programs. The FY writing program, like most college writing programs, is housed and run by the English department at MCU. The English department offers two undergraduate tracts, one in literature and the other in technical writing. Additionally, it offers three master’s degrees in English, technical writing and creative writing.

The FY writing program is run by the “composition committee” and housed within the English Department at Midwest City University. The composition committee consists of a core group of tenured and adjunct faculty and, also, graduate students—all English Department stakeholders are represented. The general make up includes—at minimum—two facilitators, the Director of the Writing Center, one full-time faculty representative, one adjunct faculty representative, and two graduate student representatives who are voted in by their cohort (one graduate student representative for both first and second year graduate students). While this is the core make up, typically other tenured track and adjunct faculty volunteer to be part of the composition committee, so the total number ranges from twelve to fifteen members.
The composition committee is responsible for running both the traditional FY writing sequence and the developmental writing courses at MCU. The traditional FY sequence consists of a Writing I and Writing II; writing I is an introduction to academic writing and Writing II is viewed as a research writing class. In addition to these two courses, the composition program is responsible for two developmental writing courses: Fundamentals of College Writing and Introduction to College Writing. In a typical semester, the program is responsible for about 170 sections of composition, which includes upward of 4000 students. In order to staff all these sections, the English Department devotes upwards of seventy-five instructors to teach all these sections each semester.

Though the composition committee generally oversees the entire FY writing program, very specific duties are required of the composition committee. The first is syllabus construction. Though each individual instructor creates his or her own syllabus for his or her writing class, the composition committee constructs departmental syllabi for each course that instructors in the program use as a basis for their individual syllabi. These departmental syllabi function as general guidelines, giving instructors relative autonomy to create their own assignments. Additionally, these departmental syllabi are given to students who are enrolled in any of the FY writing courses at MCU. Other duties that the composition committee at MCU is responsible for include:

- syllabus review
- textbook selection
- plagiarism issues
- national day of writing projects
- coordinating WAC and teacher and student development workshops
• Syllapolooza (End of semester workshop/meeting)
• Departmental and University Assessment
• High School English Festival
• Adjunct Training
• Graduate Student Training

Overall, the composition committee at MCU is responsible for supervising and running the entire FY college writing program.

I chose this research site for a number of reasons. The first was that my previous background with the program gave me a basic understanding of and greater access to the research site. The second was that the FY writing program did not have any specific demands about using multimodal or digital composition in the classroom—the projects that occurred happened without curricular mandate. Additionally, the FY writing program was generally open about the assignments and pedagogies that its instructors used in the writing classroom. Lastly, the program has a diverse student population. Approximately seventy percent of the students are white, seventeen percent are black non-Hispanic, and 8 percent are Hispanic. As compared to similar institutions, MCU does not use exclusively adjunct and graduate student instructors to teach FY writing; tenure-track instructors are also responsible for teaching at least one section of composition per academic year. Because of the range of diversity of who is teaching the course and the various expertise and backgrounds of the instructors teaching FY writing, it can be assumed that the writing program at MCU should yield a range of data.

More specifically, the choice of the research site was a result of these specific characteristics:
• The diversity of the student population.
• The pedagogical autonomy granted to instructors in the FY writing program.
- The variety of assignments used in the FY writing classroom.
- The lack of a rigid curricular structure.
- The use of instructors at all levels—tenured, tenure-track, adjuncts and graduate students—to teach the FY writing courses.

Because of these five reasons, the data collected was more useful and yielded greater information. The diversity of the student population creates a more varied student body, with a wider range of literacy experiences. Including a larger number of literacy experiences results in instructors coming in to contact with varied literacies, in turn resulting in the possibility of those literacies being utilized in the instructor’s courses. Additionally, the lack of programmatic rigidity and overall instructor autonomy makes the research site a more interesting space for examining how and why post-literate activities emerge in FY writing curricula.

The goal of this study is not to critique or praise the FY writing program at MCU, but to discover how the various people, organizations, activities and artifacts impact how multimodal and digital compositions occur in the FY writing program. I use the findings from this research site as a foundation for proposing ways to better integrate and develop multimodal writing projects into FY writing curricula. In addition, it is my intention that the descriptions of my methods and methodology serve to help others into inquiring and interrogating their own writing curricula, allowing them to discover how best to adapt multimodal writing into their own programmatic and institutional contexts.

In this dissertation I offer the findings of my research into multimodal and digital literacies in the FY writing program at MCU. The data I have collected provide a thick and rich description of the program, elucidating the complexities and the variety of contexts at work within the FY writing program. Furthermore, this dissertation serves as a general framework for
using Actor-Network Theory in educational contexts, specifically viewing the development and inclusion of multimodal and digital literacies across institutional bounds.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND RATIONALE

Actor-Network-Theory

Actor-Network-Theory, or ANT, is a theory whose origin is found is the social sciences. Founded in the 1980’s, Actor-Network-Theory has since been used a tool for analysis in a range of disciplines including geography, social science, and organizational analysis, but it is most commonly is used in the information sciences and the study of HCI (Human-Computer Interaction). As Geoff Walsham writes, “Actor-network theory is concerned with investigating the social and the technical” (467). More explicitly, Fenwick and Edwards write:

ANT analyses trace how all things that are taken to be natural, social or technical are more accurately some messy mix of these which are enacted in webs, how they associate and exercise force, and how they persist, decline and mutate (vii).

Additionally, one major feature that sets ANT apart from other approaches is the agency of non-human actors. For actor-network theory, all organizational structures consist of numerous human and non-human actors. For example, Walsham points to the case of information technology, which includes “people, organizations, software, computer and communications hardware, and infrastructure standards” (467). In this case, we can see, generally speaking, that if information technology is looked at through an ANT lens, there are definitely human (people and organizations) and non-human (hardware, standards, software) actors.

A prominent concern of actor-network theory is the divide between what is technological and what is social. For ANT scholars, this is a false binary. Most, including Callon and Latour,
would suggest that the elements at work in any network are, generally speaking, hybrids; that is: they are socio-techno. Arthur Tatnall and Anthony Gilding write, “ANT deals with the social-technical divide by denying that purely technical or purely social relations are possible” (957). Moreover, Latour generally speaking writes, “There is something invisible that weighs on all of us that is more solid than steel and yet so incredibly labile” (21). Though slightly more ephemeral, Latour’s notion is one that places emphasis on the fact that the socio-techno reality or society at times is not always a concrete thing, but an invisible force. The purpose behind these heterogeneous conceptions is to render all association equal, instead of favoring or privileging one type of relationship over the other. The conception of elements as socio-techno is predicated upon ANT’s history in both social and technological determinism (Latour 27). ANT analyses conceive of a network where the social interactions and innovations occur where tensions exist between actors, which are largely mediated and determined by the network.

The socio-techno dichotomy also is reflective of the human/non-human actor. The hybridity of terms, relations and actors, as John Law notes, is based primarily off of two theories: the Semiotics of Materiality and performativity (4). The insight of semiotics that ANT takes is that objects are produced in relations to one another. Secondly, performativity is a way of bridging the paradox that networks are static, while also being flexible. Another theory central to the understanding of ANT is grounded theory, which was first described by Strauss and Corbin.

In order to better understand these basic foundations of ANT I give a brief history and a definition of these theories and their relation to ANT. First, Material Semiotics, as Law notes in the essay “Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics,” “describes the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors
including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, ‘nature’, ideas, organizations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements” (2). Material Semiotics, then, as it understood by ANT, assumes that all of these various actors have agency and have power in arranging, creating and changing the network. For example, in a network that is looking at how teaching innovations occur, ANT allows for an artifact like a departmental syllabus to have agency, allowing it to have real effects on teaching. A syllabus, for example, can limit how a teacher can teach, what assignments the teacher can use, and/or even what type of relationships can be cultivated between a teacher and his or her students.

Performativity, in the sense of a semiotic approach (therefore an ANT approach) realizes that entities achieve meaning or form from their performance and activity with other relations within a given context. John Law suggests that these entities “are performed in, by, and through those relations” (4). ANT then uses peformativity as way to understand how ‘things’ within a network become realized. For ANT, the locations where two entities come into relation, interact, and therefore have some sort of effect on each other.

The last underlying theory explicit to ANT is grounded theory. Defined in the introduction to Basics of Qualitative Research, grounded theory is “a specific methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss for the purpose of building theory from data” (1). ANT derives it understanding from the network in the same fashion. It does not require a pre-existing hypothesis, nor begs for one. The material relations and the performance of those relations is the data that an ANT methodology focuses upon, using the data gathered and its analysis as way to build a theory toward innovations, changes and disruptions in a given network. Underlying this dissertation is that the data being generated is not used to test an existing hypothesis or theory, but it is used for building a theory toward the development and sustainability of multimodal and
digital literacies within FY composition programs. For this project, the Grounded Theory approach acts as the lens for analysis of site conversation and observation notes, as well as analysis of the documents collected. Though grounded theory sets the stage of a rich understanding of the data, it is also compliments an ANT analysis, which focuses on untangling the action, local, and social dynamics of a network.

CRITICISMS OF ANT

The first criticism of actor-network theory is that it provides a limited analysis of social structures. Walsham points out that, “[ANT] addresses the local and contingent, but that it pays little attention to broader social structures which influence the local” (472). As an example for this study, one of the larger social structures that may have an effect upon the network that is not something that can be accounted for is the increase in tablet computers, such as Apple’s IPad. Tablet computing is changing the way in which people interact with texts. Unlike a laptop computer, tablets have limited ability to create original texts, both traditional and new media. Consequently, this seemingly unrelated social structure has some sort of effect upon the network that I am analyzing. Generally speaking, the concern here is that too much attention is paid to the micro, disregarding the influence of the macro on the micro. However, as Latour notes, in terms of networks, the micro is composed of the same elements as the macro (118). In other words, Latour is saying that some assumptions can be made. Moreover, actor-network theory does account for the possibility of moving between layers.

Secondly, ANT is criticized for its socio-political amorality—or as I would claim, neutrality. Some scholars claim that actor-network theory does not account for the political biases that underlie choices by human actors (Walsham 474). First, there have been numerous
uses of ANT for socio-political purposes (see Star, Biker, Monteiro and Hansbeth). However, I would claim that ANT, at least from an Instrumentalist perspective, should not to be confused with amorality. An Instrumentalist perspective assumes, like with any tool or technology, the use of tools are typically declared neutral from conventional viewpoints. The intention of the user, however, may not be founded on an idea of neutrality.

The third problem is the equal agency attributed to human and non-human actors, or “symmetry.” For example, Pels writes, “Spokespersons may indeed symmetrically speak for both people and things, but only humans can act (can be permitted to act) as spokespersons” (qtd in Walsham 475). I would agree that non-human actors do not actively act. However, as in any system or discipline, artifacts and social conventions do create particular ways in which, to use Pels’ example, a spokesperson can interact with “network.” Though, human actors do have physical or active influence in the network, non-human actors do have a materiality of their own which shapes and defines interaction amongst differing actors. As an example, look back to the example I provided about departmental syllabi.

The final problem typical of ANT is the large number of possible actors at work within the network. Many suggest that the sheer number of actors in any network make it impossible to effectively study any network. However, one aspect of ANT analyses makes networks simpler to understand by limiting the number of relevant actors. In ANT studies, it is important to note that these actors do not have any effect within the network being studied. Typically, these actors I speak of are either too far removed for the locale being studied, or they are ubiquitous across similar networks. Actors whose presence cut across networks of similar types have negligible effects: for example, the State Board of Regents. The Board of Regents is an actor that a considerable amount of control on educational expectations within the network. However,
because it is so disconnected from the social context of the network studied and because it is ubiquitous across all networks where this study could possibly occur, there are no real measurable effects. And because it has no tangible effect, it may as well not be defined as an actor. Regardless, the number of possible actors needs to be limited for the sake of description and detail.

Though these are the four typical problems explicated by various scholars and researchers of ANT, I feel that one remains that typically is not discussed and needs to be accounted for, specifically the addition of the researcher as actor. Using ANT simply as a tool makes it easy to ignore the researcher’s role within the network. It creates a lens to gaze through, not a lens that reflects. This is important because the addition of the researcher inevitably has effects on various other actors and, without reflection, some data may be construed improperly.

THE STUDY

Approaching my study using actor-network theory as my methodology, I designed and implemented a study of literacy of the FY writing curriculum focusing on the idea of literacy in the FY writing curriculum as an actor-network. I believe that to fully examine how literacies are taught, used and developed, an actor-network theory approach is best. It allows the placement of teaching practices, teacher development, the documents involved, and the instructors of writing to work in a fashion that make relations between the various actors more visible.

The idea of using actor-network theory is not new to the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Others, such as Clay Spinuzzi, have used these social theories in scholarship within the discipline. Moreover, in the February 2011 issue of *College Composition and Communication*, Chris Gallagher calls for networked approaches to assessment in the discipline.
Additionally, the use of ANT goes beyond just the discipline of rhetoric and composition and has been used in various environments that are tied to education and learning.

Actor-network theory has been used in other educational environments. In the article, “Communities of Practice, Foucault and Actor-Network Theory,” Stephen Fox discusses the use of ANT as it is tied to communities of practice with a particular emphasis on organizational learning. The learning process for Fox “is tied to ongoing activities and practices and these are done by communities of people through social interaction rather than by isolated individuals” (854). Building out of his notion of learning, ANT moves beyond simple human organizations and communities and complicates the environment of learning in these environments including actors beyond simply human actors. Fox goes on to note that “[f]orce can work with or with out human intention” (860). Force in this case is the power and actors at work within the network of learning, which moves learning from simply a social or human effect, to one that it is both sociological (human) and technological (non-human). This notion has been echoed by many ANT scholars and is one that is central to this study on the development of multimodal and digital literacy in the FY writing curricula.

Tara Fenwick and Richard Edwards suggest that both the human and non-human should be examined in learning/education environments are discussed further by. In the article, “Introduction: Reclaiming and Renewing Actor Network Theory for Educational Research,” Fenwick and Edwards explain that “ANT constructs to explore and perform educational change in highly diverse manifestations.” They go on to note various ways in which ANT can play out in education research, such as, “integrating new technology, a large-scale school improvement initiative, everyday curriculum enactments, development of international standardized tests, introduction of teacher evaluation systems and implementation of a literacy program (1). Further
exploring the various avenues of ANT research in the context of education, Fenwick and Edwards go into more detail in their book *Actor-Network Theory in Education*, exploring issues of curricula, standards and accounting for learning. Pedagogy, teaching, learning and even the literacies employed in an educational setting are activities that are not simply relegated to individual human action, but are tied to material effects of non-human actors as well.

Studying literacy in the FY writing curriculum calls for a networked approach. ANT studies ‘look down’ at the material of the social—the body of practices, people, and artifacts—tracing that materiality throughout the network. Tracing literacy through an ANT lens, as Fenwick and Edwards note, “opens conceptual black boxes…to examine how these phenomena actually, and often surprisingly, emerge in real-time among a whole series of heterogeneous relations” (153). Few if any studies of literacy in FY writing curriculums have thus far used an actor-network model for literacy research. However, generally speaking, Fenwick and Edwards have seen the use of ANT regarding computers and other technologies within educational landscapes, specifically “networking technologized learning” (70). A networked study of literacy in the FY writing curriculum would give a rich and detailed description into the teaching, development and privileging of particular literacies in the composition classroom, as well as, seek to find ways to incorporate other non-privileged literacies into the writing classroom.

Unlike other ethnographic methodologies, which also provide rich and thick descriptions, ANT disperses agency throughout the research site, not simply connecting agency and innovation to the human. Studying the emergence of new literacies and pedagogical innovation in any given context, it is essential to not overlook every aspect of a research site—human and non-human. Actor-Network Theory privileges neither the human nor non-human, which is
essential to the study of innovations in a curriculum. Powers is exerted through institutional and curricular artifacts, not just the people in the system.

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

For this project, Actor-network theory is best understood as a methodology for examining the formation and development of literate practices in a college writing program. Of particular interest is the notion that literacy/literate activities function as an innovation of sorts, best aligning the approach to the project with notions of ANT from fields of technology and the social sciences. Moreover, I believe that it is important to catalog some of the more important terms that are related to Actor-network theory:

- **Actor**: a human or non-human entity that “does something” and does not simply “be” (Latour 172).
- **Actor-Network**: a heterogeneous network of “aligned elements” including human and non-human actors. (Walsham 468 and Callon 142).
- **Mediation**: Relation between two actants. (Spinuzzi 86).
- **Translation**: explanation of power applied to change (Spinuzzi 88).

For the purposes of this project, I viewed the teaching, choice and development of literacy in a social structure. As a methodology to approach data collection and interpretation of literacy in a particular social context, I used ANT as my diviner rod in interpreting the network of literacy in a FY college writing program.

DATA COLLECTION
Latour commands that ANT approaches begin by following the actors. He writes that the purpose of an ANT approach “is to catch up with [the actors’] often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands” (12). Following those actors, however, begins by choosing a starting point. Fenwick and Edwards note the choice of a starting point is based on the researcher’s questions (145). The starting point for this study was the composition committee meetings. Because of the amount of activity and large number of actors present, I felt that the composition committee meetings were the best place to begin following the actors. The composition committee meetings serve as a central transfer point, where documents, processes, and people contact.

Using these meetings as a starting point, I situated myself as a both an observer and participant in the processes taking place. Functionally, I was both a researcher and member of the composition committee at MCU. My role within the composition committee allowed me access to observe the various actors and collect institutional and curricular documents. My approach fit the mold of ANT research explicated Fenwick and Edwards, who suggest “to choose a site and just sit in it for a while or wander about in it, watching, listening, thinking, perhaps talking with people in the site, until something of interest emerges” (149). Following this mold, I began my data collection, observing and talking with people on site, observing the various processes within the institution related to the FY writing program, and collecting the documents used within the program.

What this approach contributes a perspective to the research that does not focus on the social structures and patterns of the FY writing program at MCU, “but to trace the micro-movements through which little humdrum bits, human and non-human, negotiate their joinings (or their unjoinings) to assemble the messy thing we often try to ignore or explain away in our
everyday worlds of education” (Fenwick and Edwards 146). Explaining this social mess, is the goal of the ANT methodology and the methods I chose to understand the emergence of post-literate activities at MCU. Building on well-known ethnographic approaches, this study focuses on observations, systematic note taking in real-time, site conversations with participants, artifact and document collection, and analysis of that data.

Building out of the ANT methodology, after document collection, the majority of data collection comes from ethnographic methods—mainly observation—and site conversations with instructors and the WPAs for the program. The duration of these observations began in August and occurred throughout the fall semester at MCU. As noted before, the use of ethnographic methods and interviews in this study are typical of most studies using actor-network theory as its guiding methodology. The ethnographic methods primarily used focus little on individual actors and more on the actors as collectives, who are part of curricular process and institutional groups.

In the case of this study, the two major processes that are examined using “ethnographic methods” are the yearly teacher instruction, which happens before the start of fall semester and end of spring semester, and composition committee meetings, which occur throughout the semester. These two processes are important to be viewed as actors in this study because they have some direct—and some indirect—influence over the place of literacy in the writing classroom. Furthermore, the composition committee is the central node where my study begins, and from there I trace the various actors throughout the literacy network at MCU. Additionally, all other activities that are a part of, or related to, the composition committee were observed.

Site Conversations

By conducting talking with instructors and administrators in the MCU FY writing program, I gained access to their perspectives, philosophies, pedagogies and practices about the
use of multimodal and digital literacies. I began this process with a set of conversations, which began with a set of pre-written and loosely scripted questions (Appendix 1), which were written, for the most part, to be open ended and nonspecific. During this process I had site conversations and interviews with the composition committee chairs, the Director of the Writing Center, and ten other English faculty members. Keeping the questions open allowed my participants to be more open and free with their answers. Based on my discussions, I would ask follow-up questions of the participants. As it might suggest, the site conversations were designed to be conversational, a way to keep the interview focused on my participants’ experiences. Additionally, the site conversations were designed to minimize my own influence and biases during the data collection process. The choice of site conversations I felt were less intrusive and created relationship between myself and my participants that fostered my role as a colleague and not simply a researcher. Keeping with the tenets of grounded theory, the interviews, as such, were not focused or biased in a way to generate specific answers; the conversations were designed to gather more general information, which then could be extrapolated and analyzed based off the data, not in connection with some hypothesis. For this process I kept systematic notes, which contained the date, time, name of participant, in addition to the subject and context of our conversations. The last two of these topics were of particular importance, because there were numerous times during the research process where data was yielded during the process as part of my own participation within the composition committee. Additionally, there were times where I was tracing investigative threads from one space to another, and keeping track of the subject of the conversations was of particular importance.

Initial site conversations with the participants were conducted throughout the months August to December. Based off the initial set of interview questions, I came up with various
avenues of further investigation. The initial set of interviews took less than an hour. Participants were asked about their own teaching practices and literacy experiences in the classroom. The goal of the initial set of conversations was to create a variety of other avenues to trace post-literacy development throughout the curriculum at MCU.

Observations

Central to the data collection of this project was observations that occurred at the research site. My observations began with the fall semester orientation and followed the various meetings and processes that occurred that were relevant to the composition committee throughout the fall semester. During this process I kept detailed notes that included such information as the date, who was in attendance, topics covered, purpose of meeting, and my general impression of the various processes. The site observations were central to tracing the various actors at work within the network at MCU. Moreover, because of my role as a participant in the composition program, the observations produced many opportunities for additional site conversations with the participants.

Artifact Collection

Artifact collection was another primary mode of understanding the development of post-literacies at MCU. The artifacts collected included handouts, schedules, rubrics, assignment sheets, syllabi, learning outcomes, and numerous other institutional and curricular documents. Many of the artifacts collected came in the form of handouts, which were collected during my observations of the various processes at the University, including composition committee
meetings and departmental orientations. Furthermore, I also collected assignment sheets and syllabi from various instructors throughout the program.

After collecting these documents I cataloged them based on where they were created in the hierarchy at MCU. For instance, these categories included the classroom, composition committee, English Department, and institution. Throughout this process, I sorted the documents into ones relevant to the curriculum and the emergence of post-literacies. Through this process, the collection of classroom documents did not yield relevant or substantive data in correlation to my study. So the focus was on documents created by the composition committee and higher university entities.

The combination of site conversations, artifact collections and observational data gave me much to work with. Like most ANT studies, the data collected seeks to see exactly how “literacy” as a network develops, changes and “fails.” But for this particular study, it is not so much about failure, as it about the innovation of post-literate activities in the classroom. The data collected provides a strong pool of information that best answers my research questions, especially regarding the various networked ties between actors.

Likewise, the observational data that was collected was intended to give a better illustration of the ties and relationships between various actors within the network. The observational data, specifically, seeks to make apparent the subtleties that may not come out during the site conversations and interviews, data that describes the dynamics of power at work within the network and how that power shapes the emergence of post-literacies. Overall, the observational, conversation, and artifacts collected should allow me to triangulate and describe network as well as triangulating the findings of the data collected.
ROLE OF RESEARCHER

My role as a researcher is what Lauer and Asher call the participant observer (42). By being a participant observer, my role within the community is one that is more intimate with my participants. Simply being an observer would limit my interaction with my participants, and consequently, would limit the overall findings of this study. Additionally, my own inclination toward this role is because I feel that the role of the participant observer allows me to give back to the research community, too. By serving as a member on the composition committee I help reduce the overall workload and, also, be able to lend my expertise within composition and rhetoric to FY writing program as a whole. And, regarding any question of objectivity, I think it is important to remember, “No ethnographer can be “objective,” nor is that the goal. The researcher’s perspective becomes an important part of the environment studies” (Lauer 42).

Another important aspect of my role is my own history with my research site. It is important to note that I am an alumnus of MCU. I received both my Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from this institution. Having graduated with an English degree from MCU, I was able to begin my study with some essential knowledge of the program and preexisting relationships with faculty and students within the program. I feel that my prior relationship with the program and institution moved my position as a researcher to one that would participate more in the processes that I would be observing. I believe there were two reasons for this: first, I had already participated in most of these processes at some point during my time as a Master’s student in the program, and second, I felt the need to give back to the program in tangible ways as gratitude for them allowing me the opportunity to use them for this study.

Though I had acquired some sense of insider status because of my previous relationship with the program, I feel that I began my research as somewhat of an outsider. This, I believe,
was partially a result of not being completely open with specifics about my research, because of a fear of invalidating specific data. However, when the first days of my observations began I saw the veil that I perceived begin to dissipate and my role within the community as one that was viewed as a genuine insider by others within the program. Moreover, I think it is important to note that I believe this veil was one constructed entirely in my own head; an idea that was not substantiated by my interactions with the community. It became apparent on my first day of research that many of professors and instructors when I knew during my time as a student approached me as a previous college and student, even after discovering I was their to do research.

CONCLUSION

The three methods for data collection and analysis were chosen because they provide the most appropriate means of discovering information regarding my methodology and research question. By analyzing and identifying the various factors and actors at work within the FY writing program at MCU I have come up with richer and more dense understanding of the relations and contexts underlying the development of digital and multimodal composition within the FY writing program. Additionally, my role as a participant observer gave me more access within the community, because I had more intimate and vested interactions with participants within the research site. By drawing on the data collected with my methods I hope to create the landscape of multimodal and digital literacy development at MCU, and hopefully transfer these findings to the rhetoric and composition community at large.

In this chapter I have described my research site, methodology, the limitations of my methodology, my methods, my role as a researcher and the theoretical and practical rationale
behind these choices. In doing so I hope that I provide a clear path to understanding my own process, as well as my own subjective position. Additionally, I hope that these descriptions set the foundations for the validity of my findings and analysis of the data collected and give a clearer understanding of how I identified the actors at work within the network, which are identified, cataloged and described in full in chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3: THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

Having described in detail my research methods and methodology as well as the underlying theories associated with actor-network theory in chapter two, I transition into the first step of understanding the emergence of digital literacies and multimodal composition at Midwest City University: the actors. The primary purpose to this facet of my study was to develop a list of the relevant actors present in the literacy network at the research site. In this chapter, the data I present serves as the foundation for understanding the dynamics of the network in motion and how digital literacies and multimodal compositions emerge within the FY writing program at the university. Before understanding those dynamics, however, the actors at work must be identified, cataloged and categorized.

In the following chapter, I provide a detailed description of the actors at work within the literacy network at MCU and then classify the actors identified into two primary categories: human and non-human. These data sections reflect current practices within the field of actor-network theory and dovetail with current philosophical and theoretical understandings of ANT. These categories are not intended to be arbitrary distinctions and as such, human actors should be understood as actors whose primary makeup is social, i.e.: instructors, committees, organizations, institutions, etc. Likewise, non-human actors should be seen as actors that are products, effects or technologies associated with the social, for example, computers, syllabi, access, etc. The notion of the non-human includes a wider range of what could and can be considered an actor. As noted, these actors could take the form of a physical artifact—computers—or exist as a bodiless effect—access. After reporting the data in these sections, I give a detailed description of each actor and note the relationships and connections between the variety of actors at work within the literacy network overall.
THE ACTORS

HUMAN

As I described in the chapter one, actor-network theory concerns itself with both human and non-human actors at work within any network. However, although ANT concerns itself with both types of actors, the first set of the actors I identify and describe are the human actors. Though I separate the actors into two broadly defined categories, neither set of actors should be seen as representing a higher position or of having more importance within the literacy network at Midwest City University. The distinction between human and non-human, as Fenwick and Edwards note, is that there is an ill-conceived hierarchy, which “privileges humans in an a priori way” (35). A human actor is not simply an autonomous being of thoughts, motivations and skills; it is mobilized, mediates and is mediated by the network and technologies at work within the network. “Action is not done under the full control of consciousness,” Latour suggests, noting, “[it] should rather be felt as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled” (44). Though it is apparent that there is a certain impossibility of completely separating each individual actor from the ether of motivations and materiality working within the network, I nonetheless catalog and describe the various actors present and responsible for shaping digital literacy and multimodal composition at Midwest City University.

The composition of human actors listed within this section can be broken down into three general categories:

- Individuals: individuals are lone human actors, whose makeup consists of just one person. Examples include teachers, writing program administrators and chairpersons.
• Organizations: organizations are human actors that consist of more than one human agent that is responsible for the organization’s overall composition. Examples include departments, universities or committees.

• Human Processes: human processes are human actors that are activities or functions that have a specific goal or purposes and are coordinated by other human actors. Examples include teacher training, workshops and assessments.

Using these three categories as the foundation for the cast of human actors, I arrange each of the following sections based on these definitions.

**Individuals**

The first category of human actors that I examine are the individual human entities that are present within the network at MCU. These individuals are responsible for many effects—both overt and covert—regarding the emergence of digital literacies and multimodal composition at the university. These individuals, as Fenwick and Edwards would suggest, occupy different cyborgian enactments and embodiments of practices within any given network. They write:

> The proliferating infusion of technologies into every aspect of education as well as workplace practice draws particular attention to the issues of what makes objects of knowledge distinct, what constrains enactments of knowledge, and how different enactments of the same object function together. They point to different emerging practices, multiple subjectivities, a multiplication of author(ity), and different cyborgian embodiments of what I might signify to be human or a teacher/learner. (84)

Though not simply limited to just teachers, this section examines how the various individual human actors effect the development of digital literacies and multimodal composition at Midwest City University. Additionally, the suggestion, by Fenwick and Edwards, is that in the
educational setting, the individual is not the lone agent responsible for practices and knowledge in the network, since both humans and non-humans are mediating and mediated by various technologies present. These actors, though all different, are responsible for the enactment and material emergence and sustainability of digital literacy and multimodal composition at the institution.

*Composition Program Coordinator(s)*

Because of the amount of work associated with the position of the composition committee coordinator, the English Department at Midwest City University has two people occupy the role of coordinator. The composition program coordinators are responsible for running and planning the FY writing program and composition committee meetings. Some of their duties include staffing and scheduling for both developmental and FY composition courses. They also work closely with the Writing Center, library and General Education committee.

As the head(s) of the composition committee they have a variety of duties essential to the teaching of FY writing and overall development of digital and multimodal literacies within the composition program at Midwest City University. As for heading the composition committee, the composition committee coordinators are responsible for focusing and delegating such tasks as syllabus review, computer lab scheduling, new instructor and teaching assistant trainings and workshops, writing course descriptions and goals and overall assessment of instructors and the composition program.

The composition program coordinators take the lead in a variety of tasks and events specific to their institution. They play an integral role with the University’s English Festival—a writing and literature festival for students in grades seven through twelve, which has approximately three thousand student participants each year. Also, the composition program
coordinators are responsible for engineering a project for the National Day on Writing, which is typically delegated to another member on the composition committee.

As agents responsible for developing digital and multimodal literacy and composition at Midwest City University, the composition program coordinators walk a fine line between mandating writing practices and giving the instructors autonomy to design their own classes and projects. As for incorporating digital and multimodal projects in the FY writing program, the composition program coordinators give very general direction, asking instructors to incorporate technology into their classes; this results mostly in the instrumental use of technologies such as using computers for writing and the occasional PowerPoint presentation. However, they make sure that every writing class—developmental and FY—have access during class time to computers for writing. The coordinators specifically schedule every class with at least one day in a computer lab per week, so that students get to write and work on computers.

Chair of the English Department

The English department chair at Midwest City University has held the position for nearly the last decade. His roles and responsibilities are synonymous with those of any other department chair: He is responsible for designing the department’s strategic plan and making sure it is in concordance with the overall university plan; he is responsible for focusing and assessing departmental teaching and research goals; he is instrumental in curriculum design, faculty searches, promotion and tenure, hiring and faculty governance. Lastly, he acts as a lead for student concerns and issues.

At Midwest City University, I observed, that the English department chair was actively involved in all these areas. Much like the composition program coordinators, the English department chair was very active in the University’s English Festival. Furthermore, though there
was a directed focus to much of their interactions with other faculty and organizations, largely
the role the English department chair played was more as a facilitator, letting conversations and
discussion flow as they may without much—if any—intervention.

In the context of the literacy network at MCU, the English department chair is largely
absent—at least in the context of FY writing. However, the chair is responsible for motivating
the use of new technologies and literacies, generally, within the English department. Though he
does not actively engage digital and multimodal composition in the context of the FY writing
program, whose general motivation has trickle down effects, which are exhibited within both the
English curriculum and FY writing program. The place that technology occupies within the
English department is one which is mostly instrumental, even though there are various places
that digital literacies and multimodal compositions are being utilized and assigned. Mostly these
technology projects take the form of information literacy projects—at least within the FY writing
program; however, in the FY writing program and English curriculum, generally, the traditional
text-based writings are not the only required projects. It isn’t uncommon that the forms these
projects take vary, ranging from YouTube videos, podcasts and even dioramas.

Director of the Writing Center

Needless to say, the Director of the Writing Center is responsible for managing and
overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Writing Center at Midwest City University. Some of
the director’s responsibilities include scheduling and staffing at the Writing Center, training
Writing Center tutors and maintaining the Writing Center website. The director of the Writing
Center holds a position separate from the English faculty; however, at the university, though she
is not considered a faculty member, they occupy many of the same roles and responsibilities that
tenured faculty occupy. As director of the Writing Center at MCU, they are required to
participate in both English faculty meetings and as a member of the composition committee. Also, two other major areas which they are responsible for are participating in writing placement and writing assessment initiatives at the University. At the institution, the director of the Writing Center is also the English department liaison for a university-wide writing assessment project, called the ROAD assessment.

The collaboration between the Writing Center, FY writing program and English department is seamless. It is this collaboration that assists in placing the Director of the Writing Center as a position of importance throughout the composition committee and the literacy network, both. Even though, there is not an official hierarchy within the composition committee, the Director of the Writing Center seems to be at the center of many of the programs, projects and various initiatives of the composition committee. The Director of the Writing Center typically takes the lead in implementing many of the initiatives and projects assigned to the composition committee, such as the National Day of Writing project.

Furthermore, the Director of the Writing Center is one of the most integral agents in developing and sustaining digital and multimodal literacies within the FY writing program at Midwest City University. Her position amongst a number of committees and projects places them in a central role. Perhaps this is because of her designation as a staff member instead of a full-fledged, tenured-track English faculty member. Though they may not be actively taking full advantage of their position at integrating digital and multimodal writing and literacies, I believe that the Director of the Writing Center is best positioned and equipped to help develop and sustain digital initiatives at Midwest City University. Regardless, the Director of the Writing Center, whether purposefully or not, utilizes more technologies within the realm of their job than most other human actors within the network. They have integrated Twitter into their webpage
and were responsible for suggesting a digital publication featuring FY student writing from the university. Moreover, she also offers more technological resources for students, such as working with students on PowerPoint presentations and working with podcasts. Overall, the Director of the Writing Center seems to be one of the main human actors in integrating and utilizing new media and web 2.0 applications.

*General Education Coordinator*

The General Education coordinator at Midwest City University is responsible for developing, monitoring, facilitating and assessing plans that address the needs of faculty and students, as well as making sure that the General Education curriculum at MCU complies with all governmental regulations involving General Education. Moreover, at the university, the General Education Coordinator is responsible for leading and identifying new educational programs, which are related directly to student achievement. In addition to these general duties, the General Education coordinator heads the General Education Committee at Midwest City University and, currently, is one of the two leads on the university’s ROAD assessment.

Because of the position they hold, guiding, identifying and developing emerging education programs for the university, the General Education Coordinator should play a primary role in the development of digital and multimodal literacies. With this role in mind, the General Education Coordinator would be one of the main actors responsible for responding to these new and developing literacies and integrating them into the General Education curriculum at Midwest City University. Given the centrality to spearheading new educational initiatives, it seems that there is an overall lack of emphasis on integrating digital literacies and multimodal composition.

*Organizations*
Human nonetheless, organizations vary from the other two types of human actors that are present at Midwest City University. First, they are comprised of more than one individual human entity and, secondly, they have guidelines for access and enrollment into their organizational body. As actors, these organizations are best defined, as what Latour describes as an institution. In Pandora’s Hope, he writes, “institution refers to a site and to laws, people, and customs that continue in time” (307). For both Latour and the scope of this project, organizations provide the necessary materiality and mediations to be considered a human actor. Organizations, as many ANT scholars would suggest, occupy a precarious position; a position that occupies a node of the individual human actor, but is also a node where an assemblage of human and non-human actors, policies, protocols, and process converge. Regardless, these organizations which fit within the scope of this research project, have very specific and varied effects that can be strictly traced to the organization, separate from the array of actors at work within the body of the organization.

Composition Committee

At the university, the operation of the FY writing program falls on the composition committee. Typically, the composition committee meets once a month in the fall and spring semesters to take care of programmatic responsibilities. Even though there are two coordinators for the program, the material realities associated with the day-to-day operation, such as work and time, would be far too much work for even two people to accomplish, while still having the time to focus on their research and teaching functions. The composition committee is made up largely by volunteers from the English department. These volunteers do not receive any special privileges—i.e. course releases—for their participation. Despite that the majority of participants are volunteers, there are six members who are not: the two coordinators, the Director of
Writing Center, a member of the adjunct faculty, and two graduate student representatives—one graduate student from each cohort. The adjunct faculty and the graduate student representative were elected by their peers. Along with the required participants, the remainder of the committee is made up of another seven individuals with varying ranks and specializations. There are both full-time and adjunct faculty who make up the rest of the committee, with specializations across the English discipline, including linguistics, literature, technical writing, English education and journalism. Generally, the make-up of the committee stays the same year-in-and-year-out. Many of the full-time faculty have been on the committee for more than two years, which can also be said of some of the adjuncts serving on the committee.

To manage the FY writing program effectively, the composition committee is responsible for numerous programmatic, departmental and university duties. Within the program, the composition committee sets the learning outcomes for all of the writing courses, as well as the general scope of work and assignments within the FY writing program. With the aim to do this effectively, the committee has several processes in place, including syllabus review and textbook selection, just to name a few. Furthermore, the composition committee also runs workshops for writing instructors throughout the year. In addition to these responsibilities, the composition committee members also have roles on various university sub-committees. The designated subcommittees of the composition committees include:

- National Day of Writing
- ROAD Assessment
- Enrollment
- Distance Education
- Plagiarism/Academic Honesty
• Textbook Selection

Typically, these subcommittees are made up of two to three individuals from the composition committee, and sometimes one member may be on more than one of these subcommittees.

English Faculty Committee

Regarding the English program specifically, and the FY writing program, generally, the English faculty at Midwest City University are responsible for adjusting, developing and monitoring the programs and curriculum of the English Department as an entire entity. In order to best gauge and assess all their responsibilities, the Faculty committee is comprised of more than just tenure-track faculty; it is also comprised of the Director of the Writing Center, two adjunct representatives, and two graduate student representatives—one elected from each cohort. Largely, most meetings are directed toward scheduling, course assignment and responding to university initiatives.

General Education Committee

The General Education committee at Midwest City University consists of sixteen total members. The committee is made up of one coordinator and chair, six elected members, seven appointed members, and two student representatives. Its members represent the various colleges and departments across the university. There is one representative from the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, Health and Human Services, Fine and Performing Arts, Education, College of Business and Accounting, and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Science. In addition to the members from the respective colleges, there are also members from institutional assessment and one advisor. Not including the representative from assessment and advising, the appointed members represent the areas:
• Artistic and Literary Perspectives
• Personal/Social Responsibility
• Natural Sciences
• Math/Writing Skills
• Societies and Institutions

The overall goal of these areas, according to the committee’s video on General Education, is to give students a larger breadth of knowledge and experiences, building toward concepts of World Citizenship, cross-cultural world views, life-long learning and the transfer of general skills.

First-year Writing Instructors

The instructors teaching FY writing at Midwest City University are a diverse and varied group. Of this group, the majority of the courses taught—as would be expected—fall upon a large group of adjunct writing instructors, which is comprised of over seventy instructors. Most of this group has at some point received one, if not both of their bachelor’s and master’s degrees from MCU, many having begun their teaching as graduate students in the English program. Overall, most of the adjunct pool have not received degrees beyond the master’s.

In addition to the large number of adjuncts teaching in the FY writing sequence there is a pool of nearly fifteen graduate students who are responsible for teaching a variety of courses. Mostly, the course that the graduate students are responsible for teaching is the writing 1 course; however, when needed, some of the graduate students have the opportunity to teach the writing 2 course or one of the developmental writing courses as well.

As far as Midwest City University goes, one of the more interesting facts is that all full-time/tenured faculty within the English Department are responsible for teaching at least one section of FY writing. They may not, however, teach the full sequence. Typically, all faculty
teach a minimum of one section a year, unless they have received a course release for the FY
writing course. Though they get the opportunity to teach one course, they typically teach an
honors level of the course or writing 2.

HUMAN PROCESSES

Human processes, for the scope of this project, are considered human actors. They are
human actors in so far as they are repeated effects and embodiments of both individual human
actors and organizations. Verran writes, “All entities lie suspended between enactments of their
possibilities. Entities lurk or loom in the interstices between the repetitions by which they are
done” (38). What makes a human process is the repetitions of that process, being enacted over,
and over again. These processes, moreover, are responses and embodiments of individual and
organizational protocols, as Fenwick and Edward would describe. They see these protocols as
scripted processes that direct the various activities and “trajectories” of a given network.
Furthermore, as I would suggest, these processes are responses to various human exigencies set
forth by both individual human actors and the institution at Midwest City University. These
processes directly relate to the emergence of digital literacies and multimodal composition at
MCU.

Fall Semester English Department Orientation

The Fall Semester Orientation for the English department involves all faculty—adjunct
and tenured—associated staff, including the Director of the Writing Center and librarian
assigned to the English department, and all graduate students. Usually it is held over two days,
two weeks prior to the start of the fall semester. Directed by the English department, the
orientation serves three primary purposes. The first of these is to inform the department about
departmental and university goals and initiatives and any changes to the curriculum or the university strategic plan. The second purpose to the fall semester orientation is to serve as a space for teaching workshops. Finally, the last of these goals is for the faculty to set the various goals and learning outcomes for the department and courses offered within the English department.

Initially, the orientation began with the entire group meeting as a whole with the English department chair’s welcome. During this initial session, after the chair’s welcome, there was a brief update on all summer programs and various groups within the English department, i.e. Journalism, Linguistics, English Education, Creative Writing, the Composition Committee, and the Writing Center. After these updates, the orientation broke up into two breakout sessions.

The two sessions were split down the line between tenured faculty and non-tenured faculty. The session dedicated to tenured faculty was oriented around integrating technology and alternative/digital texts into the major. This session was led by an instructor who was already integrating these alternative projects into her own classroom. The goal of this session was to discuss integrating these texts into the learning outcomes of the English curriculum and various courses offered by the department. Specifically, the faculty established new learning outcomes for students in the three English majors: Literature, Professional Writing and Editing, and Journalism. (Appendix 2) Two of the stated goals, PWE and a Literature, paid attention to issues of technology. PWE specifically noted it, the document states, “PWE majors will design documents professionally, using appropriate technological resources, software and hardware, as well as appropriate elements of design.” The literature section, however, was less blatant, nodding to technology much more vaguely, the document states that students should be able to, “effectively present and discuss ideas about literature and language in a manner that is
appropriate for the situation.” Though not specifically mentioning the production of digital texts, the faculty members who most took advantage of non-text based assignments were the literature faculty.

In the other session, which was attended by adjunct faculty and graduate students, the general goal was to discuss changes to the writing program and to serve as a workshop for assignments the instructors would be using in their individual composition classes. Prior to the workshop portion, the primary discussion was focused on changes to the departmental writing syllabus. Once finished with the discussion, the instructors were split into groups of three and four to exchange and workshop assignments. There were a variety of assignments that were being workshopped, including both traditional text assignments and multimodal compositions—podcasts, video interviews and profiles, and visual presentations.

Composition Committee Meetings

The composition committee meetings are the once-a-month meeting for the composition committee at Midwest City University. All members are expected to attend. These meetings are led by the composition coordinators and are designed to assess current practices and standards present within the FY writing sequence. Also, these meetings are used to begin planning implementing various documents, processes, and initiatives that are required for the following year’s composition sequence.

Most of the work in the composition committee occurs with the group as a whole; however, there are numerous times when the committee separates into sub-groups. These sub-groups are usually responsible for a variety of processes and elements that are required of the composition committee. These subgroups are tasked to work on such issues as online course shells, plagiarism and academic honesty, National Day of Writing, and textbook selection. To
accomplish the large variety of tasks assigned to these groups, the composition coordinators arrange and choose the participants in each subgroup.

The normal meeting begins with an agenda given to the committee by one of the composition coordinators, followed by brief follow-ups items from the previous meeting. The meeting time is mostly used for discussion of agenda items; however, the meetings also serve to act as blocks of time in order for major program processes to take place, such as the syllabus review, which assesses every writing program instructor’s syllabus to make sure it is aligned with program, department, university, and governmental policies and goals.

Syllapolooza

Not much different than the fall semester English department orientation, Syllapolooza serves as a mandatory end of the year workshop for all instructors in the English department. Normally, it is scheduled for the week following finals.

Admittedly there seems to be very little difference between the fall semester orientation and Syllapolooza, except for the date that each occurs. One way in which it differs, however, is that it also is designed to serve as an-end-of-the-year celebration. Additionally, Syllapolooza moves the focus from workshopping assignments to focusing on other documents used in the FY writing course. For instance, instead of workshopping assignments, the workshops focused on assessment documents and procedures, such as rubrics used for grading. Another way in which Syllapolooza differs from the pre-semester orientation is that the sessions are not segregated: all—tenure, adjunct, and graduate students—instructors participate. So, when the group is split up into groups, workshop groups consist of persons of varying rank and experience. Also, since all faculty are present, this time is also used to update everyone on things going on within the
profession, for instance, when the new MLA guidelines were introduced the English department used Syllapalooza as a way to update the faculty.

*ROAD Assessment*

ROAD (Repository of Old Assessment Documents) was initially discussed in the Fall of 2010. It was conceived by the General Education Committee (GEC) at Midwest City University as a “poor man’s E-portfolio.” This “E-portfolio” was created to assess writing development over the four years of a student’s degree program and, secondly, to assess overall quality of writing being done at the university. MCU’s use of the electronic portfolio mirrors Diane Penrod’s assertion that “electronic portfolios are a start toward college instructors documenting student growth and accountability in writing” (27). In addition to the stated goals, as noted in the GEC minutes from September 2010, there are two not-so-specific purposes to the ROAD assessment: first it could be used as a monitoring tool, making sure that students are writing in their major; and it also can be used as way to assess critical thinking.

In order to meet these assessment goals, the ROAD assessment was designed as a digital tool where students would submit their final research paper from the writing 2 courses, which would be scored by evaluators and serve as the baseline for gauging a student’s writing progress through their academic career. In addition to the baseline document, students would also submit a paper from the capstone course in the student’s major that would be evaluated using the same scoring rubric used for their paper from the writing 2 courses. Built into the assessment tool, student papers would be marked with a unique, anonymous identifier, so that all their submissions would be together for comparison.

With this assessment process as its goal, the GEC established an interdisciplinary committee to work on the assessment rubric and work as a think tank that would look at possible
issues and problems. This committee was made up of at least twenty members representing the
different colleges, departments, and university offices essential to the ROAD assessment,
including and not limited to, representatives from the English department, composition
committee, Writing Center, GEC, institutional assessment.

*Graduate Student Training*

With the emphasis on having their graduate students prepared to teach in the FY writing
sequence, the English department and FY writing program make it one of their primary goals to
have their teaching assistants ready to teach their own classes by the student’s second semester in
graduate school. With this as a goal, the graduate student training takes a three-pronged
approach:

- Teaching Mentorship
- Teaching of Writing course
- Teaching Practicum

All three of these processes happen concurrently throughout the student’s first semester in the
master’s program at Midwest City University. The only one of these facets that continues
beyond the first semester is the Teaching Practicum.

The first of these processes, teaching mentorship, is the graduate assistant’s first foray
into the writing classroom. Each new graduate teaching assistant is paired with an adjunct
faculty member—and on occasion a full-time faculty member—who has experience teaching the
FY writing course sequence. The roles and experiences each student gains throughout this
process is quite varied, since the roles that the student plays in the writing classroom are largely
tied to what their mentor allows them to do. At minimum, each graduate assistant is expected to
lead at least one class, to participate in course discussions and workshops, and to get some hands-on experience with assessing and commenting on student papers.

Coinciding with their time as mentees in the writing classroom, all new graduate students are required to take a graduate-level pedagogy course in the teaching of writing, which is always a graded course. Specifics largely depend on who is teaching the course, but generally students learn a brief history of composition, a wide array of writing pedagogies, and a large variety of revision, drafting, and prewriting strategies. Requiring all new teaching assistants in the writing program to take the teaching of writing course makes each student self-sufficient and gives students a wide array of pedagogies and strategies so that they can begin to build their own writing course.

Because most of the new teaching assistants are teaching for the first time, the Teaching Practicum is viewed a support course for all of the new graduate assistants. The Teaching Practicum is a credit-only course that is required for all of the new assistants. The goal of the Teaching Practicum course is three-fold: to provide new assistants a space to discuss issues and success in their teaching; to serve as a workshop for assignments, teaching documents, and teaching practices; and to supplement learning in the teaching of writing course. The Teaching Practicum is always taught by one of the composition committee coordinators, who in order to meet the last of these goals, is in contact with—if they are not themselves teaching the pedagogy course—the instructor of the teaching of writing course.

*Syllabus Review*

The syllabus review is a process run by the members of the composition committee. This process is fully digital; instructors are asked to submit their syllabi through Blackboard and each syllabus is reviewed by the members of the composition committee. For the process, thirteen
members of the composition committee were responsible for reviewing all writing syllabi. The review is anonymous. To keep the identity of the reviewers anonymous all reviews are sent to one of the composition committee coordinators and they send the reviews out.

For the process, the reviews are given a set of instructions and syllabus review checklist. This checklist functions as a very general rubric that is designed to check to make sure all necessary policies and procedures are listed. Along with policy and procedures, one area of the rubric is dedicated to the design and layout of the syllabus. If anything is found to be wrong, instructors are required to resubmit their revised syllabus with the reviewed checklist.

Overall, this process, which takes a substantial amount of work, was efficient and streamlined. It took the reviewers about two hours to finish all their reviews.

NON-HUMAN ACTORS

I begin this section on non-human actors with Frohmann’s assertion that:

[N]either nature, nor society, nor language can provide explanatory closure for scientific or technological artifacts, because the distinctions between their natural, social and discursive properties are the tentative and shifting outcomes of the practices whereby the network that determines an artifact's stability and form is constructed. (6)

Frohmann’s suggestion, asserts that no singular actor in a network is completely human or non-human; actors are all hybrids, cyborgs of a sort. Because of the hybrid nature to actors, ANT seeks to analyze a structure’s adaptation reflecting the actors cyborg nature. “Actor-network theory,” John Law writes, “is a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located” (2). In this section I articulate the various non-
human actors present within the literacy network at Midwest City University. This articulation is what serves to “cyborg-up” the variety of actors, obfuscating their very natures as completely human and completely non-human actors. Many of the actors listed in this section have obvious ties to the human: most are products or responses to human need or design.

**Writing Center Website**

The Writing Center’s website at Midwest City University is the main portal and contact for many students and instructors. The website notes the various services offered by the Writing Center, in addition to writing tutoring, including assessment of strengths and weaknesses, preparation advice for writing portions of standardized tests, and available technological resources. Included among these resources are rehearsal opportunities for visual presentations and tutorials for podcasts. Additionally, the Writing Center offers a series of instructional podcasts on specific areas of the writing process. Overall, the website includes a variety of digital and web resources available for students and instructors.

**General Education Requirements Documents**

The General Education requirements for students at the university highlight the various skills and knowledge domains that General Education at MCU hopes that students achieve. Specifically, the site notes four “essential skills” that students are to acquire, including writing, speaking, critical thinking, and mathematics. Moreover, the particular knowledge domains essential to the General Education requirements include courses in Arts and Humanities, Natural Science, Social Science and Social and Personal Awareness.

The document also highlights the General Education committee’s beliefs about the writing courses, noting that Writing I students learn “Strategies for writing as a means of critical inquiry, with a focus on processes and on the roles of writer, audience and purpose as they affect
writing”. Likewise, the description of writing 2 goals reads that students learn “writing with emphasis on the process of investigation: exploration of topics, formulation of tentative theses, collection of data, and clear and appropriate presentation of the results of these inquiries”. It is important to note that among all the skills listed—writing, speaking, critical thinking, and mathematics—only the writing courses have a detailed description of what students are expected to learn.

**General Education Learning Outcomes**

The list of learning outcomes for Midwest City University can be separated into two areas: Core Competencies and Knowledge Domains. The stated goal for the learning outcomes of the core competencies takes a general form, stating:

Students will demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively, reason quantitatively, and think critically so they are prepared to perform appropriately in their professions upon graduation. These skills will be applied in the major and culminate in the successful completion of a senior capstone project.

This goal connects specifically with what the General Education Committee defined as “essential skills” under their requirements document. The goal aligns with the writing, speech, and mathematics courses, which are required as part of the General Education at Midwest City University. Furthermore, this document goes on to list the various goals and learning outcomes for each knowledge domain.

**Departmental Syllabi for First-Year Writing**

Along with the individual instructor’s syllabus typically given out on the first day of class, the FY writing program also has departmental syllabi for each of the four classes offered
(Appendix 3), which is also given to students. These syllabi are as much for the students as they are for the instructors teaching the courses. They serve as very general guidelines to the instructors when designing the courses. Each departmental syllabi follows a standard format and listing of information provided on it. The information listed includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course name and number</th>
<th>Course Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Activities</td>
<td>Incomplete Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Fees</td>
<td>Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Texts</td>
<td>Academic Support Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The included content varies based on the course; however the major categories remain the same. A few things of note: first, the list of course texts lists possible texts available, students do not use all of them for each course. Also, under course goals, there are sections devoted to information literacy and computer lab classrooms on each syllabus.

Overall the departmental syllabi serve as a very general springboard for instructors designing the courses. Each syllabus leaves much of the design and pedagogy up to the instructors. As for students, these syllabi give a minimum expectation of the work and content involved in each course.

**ROAD Assessment Rubrics**

In order to evaluate the student writing and critical thinking and the development of these skills over time, the ROAD committee generated a rubric (Appendix 4) to score the various traits and outcomes. The rubric is broken into two major categories: Writing Rubrics and Critical Thinking Rubrics. Each of these categories is further separated into sub-categories. Under the heading of the “Writing Rubrics” are the categories of Context of and Purpose for Writing, Content Development, Writing Conventions, Sources and Evidence, and Control of Syntax and
Mechanics. Though not as large, the “Critical Thinking Rubrics” contained just two categories: Student’s position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) and Conclusions. Each of these categories are scored from 1-4, with 4 being the highest score for any category and 1 the lowest.

*English Department Computer Labs*

The English Department at Midwest City University is responsible for running eight computer labs. These labs are used for a variety of courses, but most are allotted to the FY writing program. Each class in the writing program is scheduled lab time for one class period a week. These labs are staffed by student assistants hired through the English department. Most of lab computers are packaged with only the Microsoft Office Suite. However, the English department at Midwest City University has one lab, which typically used for Professional Writing and Editing Classes, which in addition to Microsoft Office, included the Adobe Suite, which can be used to design a variety of textual and web documents.

**CONCLUSION**

The cast of actors working in the literacy network at Midwest City University provide the basis for understanding the dynamics that shape digital and multimodal composition in the university’s FY writing program there. This basis extends into translating the material and power relations the spring from the dynamics of the network. Articulating the network is only the first step, because a network is not just simply identified; it emerges through the various relations and interactions between both human and non-human actors. As Jeff Rice writes, “a network is not something that you look for and identify but rather is the process of figuring out agency, influence, connectivity, and other factors in a given moment or situation” (28). Furthermore, networks, as Nathaniel Rivers suggests, “are articulated and are made real through
and across the entanglements of humans and non-human alike.” This chapter functions only to identify the actors at work; but in order to see the reality of digital and multimodal literacies at Midwest City University, the entanglements, the nodes—where the frictions between these actors occur—that is where the network truly begins to shape.

The next chapter examines those nodes and seeks to unravel the curricular and institutional entanglements. I trace the convergence and divergences of the various actors as they come into contact with each other. The energy created and the social constructs which arise from the interaction of these various actors across the literacy network at Midwest City University will be mapped in the next chapter. Specifically, I examine how the various actors that have been articulated through this process, manifest semiotic, material, and social realities for each actor in the network.
CHAPTER 4: ACTORS AT WORK

The art to Actor-Network Theory is not simply casting—articulating—the right actor for the role; it is about the movements, the chemistry, the tensions between the actors. It’s about transformation. Similar to stage-play, every actor in a network transforms the scene and the other actors on stage. The transformations that occur in a network are not simply reflections of human action; they are tied to the host of human and non-human actors, alike. In *Pandora’s Hope*, Bruno Latour writes, “action is a property of associated entities” (182). For Latour, the composition of action and transformation is a property of all associated actors in a network. It is these transformations, where action takes place, which this chapter seeks to unravel. This chapter examines those nodes where actors come into contact with one another and the dynamics and changes that occur when they do so. All of their interactions are put under the magnifying glass. For this project, each node is dissected and analyzed to see how digital literacies and multimodal composition emerge at Midwest City University.

This section takes the actors articulated in the previous chapter and places them on stage to see how the action plays out. I discuss the various points of contact—the nodes—throughout the literacy network at MCU that are responsible for the emergence of post-literacy activities, which include digital and multimodal compositions within the writing program. In the sections that follow, I identify the nodes within the literacy network at the university that both facilitate and restrict the emergence of post-literacies. Additionally, I examine the dynamics and interactions between the actors and analyze them based off of my observations and relevant scholarship in education and composition. Before I discuss and analyze the nodes, I situate these analyses within current analytical frameworks in Actor-Network Theory scholarship.
FRAMEWORKS OF ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

While the previous chapter identified and articulated the actors at work in the literacy network at Midwest City University, this chapter focuses on translating the relationships and interactions between those actors. John Law writes, “Translation is both about making equivalent, and about shifting. It is about moving terms around, about linking and changing them” (5). The shifting and linking, the moving and changing is what is being traced by ANT protocols and the nodes where these actions are taking place are where the various actors come into contact and construct, develop, reify, alter the dynamics of the network. Latour notes, in *Reassembling the Social*, “to designate this thing which is neither one actor among many or a force behind all the actors transported through some of them but a connection that transports, so to speak, transformations, we use the word translation” (108). Translation is the art behind actor-network theory; it is the art that defines the network.

Situating the translations from the data I collected through observations, interviews, and documents, I trace the translations within the literacy network at MCU. Much work has been attributed to translation within education curriculum. Fenwick and Edwards suggest that though various factors at work within curricula are real, they should not be viewed as deterministic factors; they write, “despite the attempt at standardization of learning outcomes in the prescribed curriculum, its uptake of individuals, things and organizations is multiply enacted and incapable of control due to the practices of translations” (59). Curricular practices are not determined from a top-down model, but are a series of enactments, negotiations, and emergent practices within the existing curricular structure. As I begin translating the various nodes, in no way should these translations be seen as a prescriptive process—but a descriptive one.
Each translation exists as a particular node. Though actors may overlap and exist in multiple nodes, I frame the nodes by the dominant actor or process. For instance, the composition coordinators are present across all nodes of translation, such as Training and Assessment, which have specific and varied effects toward the emergence of post-literacies within the FY writing curricula at Midwest City University. The nodes are where the enactments and the shape of practices and effects are negotiated among a variety of actors. In the course of this project, the focus is on those nodes that are relevant to the enactment and emergence of post-literate activities.

THE NODES

Teacher Training

The foundation of the literacy network and the FY writing program at MCU are the instructors. The instructors teaching in the program teach a range of courses and occupy a variety of ranks, including teaching assistants, adjunct instructors, and full-time and tenure-track faculty. Not including the majority of tenure-track faculty, a majority of the instructor pool at MCU were trained within the program, beginning as teaching assistants, eventually moving on to teaching as adjunct or full-time instructors. Responsible for teaching both developmental and the traditional writing sequence, the instructors use a range of traditional text-based assignments and digital and post-literacy activities. Though a minority of instructors utilize non-text based writing within the classroom, a larger number combine some sort of visual and digital literacies products for students to consume. Regardless of the small number of instructors utilizing digital and multimodal compositions within the curriculum, a variety of projects are assigned: podcasts, video profiles, PowerPoint and Prezi presentations, and instruction manuals. Though some of
these assignments are specifically designated by the instructor, other forms are produced by students because instructors leave their assignments open, which has allowed for the rise of digital cookbooks, web videos and photo documentaries.

However, what actors are behind this emergence? Though I have titled this node “Teacher Training,” there are a few specific actors who are responsible for the emergence of post-literacies within the node of “teacher training.” The responsible actors include graduate student/teaching assistant training and mentorship, pre-semester orientation and Syllapolooza, the Writing Center, the composition committee and the coordinators, the computer labs and the departmental syllabi. It seems that there are a large number of actors at work within this tiny node. As such, I begin to unpack these actors and connect the emergence of digital and multimodal literacies to the relationship of the actors to teacher training.

The first of these actors to be analyzed is the graduate student training. I choose to examine the graduate student/teaching assistant training first, because the majority of instructors teaching FY writing have come up within the writing program and have been trained at MCU and have taught, mostly, exclusively at that university. It is this training that sets the foundation for the various pedagogies and classroom practices responsible for the emergence of post-literate activities in the writing program.

Teaching assistant training at Midwest City University generally follows what Stancliff and Goggin would describe as a multiphilosophical approach. Accordingly, the multiphilosophical approach places the emphasis of developing pedagogical practice and philosophy consistent with the individual teaching assistant’s practice and beliefs about teaching and writing (14). The structure of the multiphilosophical approach at MCU reveals itself in four aspects of the teaching assistant training and instruction: The Teaching of Writing course,
Teaching Practicum, TA mentorship, and Writing Center/developmental teaching apprenticeship. These four aspects to the multiphilosophical approach serve and support a rich environment for the development of post-literate activities.

The first of these aspects that I discuss is the Teaching of Writing course, which is offered every fall semester. Despite being a requirement for all new TAs, the focus on the course is not limited to college writing; it focuses on the teaching of writing at all levels. However, the majority of students enrolled in the course are those new TAs, so the focus naturally gravitates toward the teaching of writing in college. That being said, depending on the instructor teaching the course the assignments and readings vary widely. Typically, the aim is to have one of the composition committee coordinators serve as instructor of the Teaching of Writing course. This fact, in combination with the large population of new teaching assistants in the course, keeps most discussions focused on the college writing classroom and writing pedagogy and theory focused on college writing.

Generally, the approach to the course is one that exposes students to a variety of pedagogies, theories, and practices relevant to the teaching of writing. Students receive a wide breadth of scholarship on composition, including expressivist, critical cultural, process, and computer based pedagogies. The wide array of scholarship examined in the course confers to new teaching assistants a large scope of philosophies and practices that can be merged with their own beliefs and practices about teaching and writing. One way in which these ideas are expanded upon, normally, is that the students are given an assignment to examine one area specific to composition, resulting in an annotated bibliography or literature review. Some of the issues examined by the students include technology/computers in composition, invention strategies, assessment, and voice.
Apropos to the emergence of post-literate activities, the teaching of writing course grants new teaching assistants at MCU a varied and broad pedagogical and philosophical skill set. Because the majority of instructors in the program are trained as teaching assistants who go on to the ranks of instructors, the teaching of writing course sets the stage for multiple approaches and pedagogies that are utilized in the program. The large number of approaches to the teaching of writing at MCU, developed through the teaching of writing course, serves as fertile ground for the emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition.

The Teaching Practicum, unlike the teaching of writing course, does not focus on theory. It is the other side of the theory/practice coin, which has been area of contention in composition scholarship, as noted by Olson (25). The Teaching Practicum, instead, works on the fundamentals of teaching as well as serves as a space for the students to examine, reflect, and workshop their emerging pedagogies and classroom practices. Despite the Teaching Practicum’s practical focus, the course’s goal is for students to align their theoretical knowledge and pedagogical ideologies with classroom practices. Like the teaching of writing course, the Teaching Practicum is required in the fall; however, students also must enroll in it in the spring as well. During fall, the practicum serves as a space to discuss how the mentorship program is going and, also, as workshop for the new teaching assistants to develop their syllabus and assignments.

Unlike in the fall, where the space is used more as a workshop, Teaching Practicum in the spring is designed to be a reflective space. Students discuss and analyze what is happening in their courses, how students are responding to their courses, and how they are assessing their students. One particular aspect to the spring is that considerable time is spent seeing how their classroom practices match up with teaching philosophies constructed during the fall practicum.
Much of the oversight does not stress a particular curricular structure for new teaching assistants; its focus is on making sure new instructors align their teaching philosophies with their classroom praxis. As a way of supporting this, it is common for the instructor to assign teaching observations and also to comment upon the graded assignments of the TAs.

For the emergence of post-literate activates, the Teaching Practicum is an environment designed more for support and reflection. Though it does not have specific material effects for the emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition, like the teaching of writing course, the environment is one not of restriction of teaching practices, but of innovation and creation. It serves as a proverbial pedagogical playground, where students can grow, change, and fail.

The synergy created between the teaching of writing course and the practicum acts as an intersection where new TAs build a broad theoretical and practical framework. This design situates TA training on both sides of the theory/practice debate. MCU’s TA training structure, as Ching would suggest, emphasizes that “theory is not separate from material reality, but instead has the potential to map out some of the uncharted territory between the real and the not-yet-realized” (459).

The third essential aspect of the teacher training, which fosters the development of post-literate activities, is the teaching assistantship mentorship. Every fall, when the semester is about to begin, all new teaching assistants are paired up with an existing FY writing instructor. This instructor is meant to serve as a mentor for the new TA. The role and responsibilities of the TA is largely up to the mentor. The TA is expected to be present in all classes and act as an assistant to the instructor. Typically, the TA leads a few classes and grade a few assignments. Because every class has one day in a computer lab; every TA is afforded the chance to see how current
instructors in the program are integrating technology into the classroom. Mostly, however, the integration of computers in most of the writing classes results in no more than simply having FY students use the computers to search for information and type out papers. However, it is encouraging that new TAs get some time observing the use of technology within the writing course, so they are somewhat prepared to integrate within their own teaching.

Finally, the fourth major aspect to the multiphilosophical approach for TA training is the time new TAs spend in the Writing Center and working with students in developmental English. Along with their mentoring duties, each assistant spends time connected with a developmental writing course, during their first semester. They act as an assigned Writing Center tutor who works exclusively with one class. Their responsibilities are not different than any other tutor in the Writing Center, except that they work only with students in one class.

Working essentially as a Writing Center tutor, teaching assistants are afforded the opportunity to be in contact with a wider array of cultural and social literacies. Ianetta, et. al suggest that “tutoring provides valuable experience in talking about writing and broadens TAs’ understanding of writers and writing processes” (104). The experience in the Writing Center permits new TAs to develop their own theoretical understanding of the writing process and how it relates to their own students. Also, by extension, the Writing Center serves as a space where new TAs come into contact with a wider range of literacies and literacy practices, thus broadening the number of available literacies a TA comes into contact with, and increasing their experiences with literacies that are not solely text-based. Furthermore, since some instructors at MCU assign multimodal texts, there is a chance, however small, that TAs in training may be assigned to a student needing help with a digital project. That being said, with the current structure for TA involvement in the Writing Center this opportunity would not arise, because the
TA is limited to one developmental class, and, currently, there are no instructors assigning multimodal work in the developmental writing courses.

Though the TAs lack some opportunities to engage with multimodal compositions in their roles as tutors, they do get the opportunity to become acquainted with some digital assignments. The Writing Center at MCU is one of the few university entities utilizing technology beyond simple instrumental integration. The Writing Center offers PowerPoint and podcast tutorials for instructors who assign either type of assignment. The Writing Center at MCU is meeting many of the features of a multiliteracy center that John Trimbur outlines in his article, “Multiliteracies, Social Futures, and Writing Centers,” including online tutorials, which take the form of PowerPoint and podcast tutorials (89).

Though TAs get experience with multimodal texts during their time in the writing center, it is essential to note that current TAs are not assigning much in the way of cutting edge digital texts. One current TA is having students do visual analysis essays; however the assignment is strictly textual and they are not being asked to create a new visual text. The multimodal assignments assigned by new TAs are of a much more traditional fare: PowerPoint presentations and instruction manuals.

Each of these aspects, I claim, result in what Stancliff and Goggin defines as “reflective conflict.” Reflective conflict “encourages teachers-in-training to draw on their own conceptual resources and experiences…[it allows] teaching assistants the opportunity to make their own theoretical links between composition theory and their home fields…[it] encourages the kind of teaching habits that can sustain careers” (12). Effective TA training builds toward reflective conflict. The new TA training at MCU offers students the opportunity for reflective conflict. The required Teaching of Writing course serves to give students a broad theoretical and
pedagogical base. Additionally, the Teaching Practicum and mentorship new TAs experience creates a reflective environment, which focuses on praxis. Lastly, it is apparent, given the large number of instructors who began as TAs at MCU, the TA training grants students the skills and the theoretical, pedagogical, and practical foundation to sustain careers as teachers of writing.

This reflective conflict, which the TA training cultivates, is the underlying motivation behind the emergence of post-literate activities within the writing program at Midwest City University. The broad theoretical and practical and reflective training floods the instructor pool at MCU with teachers who are able to adapt to various curricular and pedagogical exigencies, including the inclusion of digital and multimodal composition. Though new TAs may not be assigning more imaginative multimodal compositions, adjunct instructors who spent time as teaching assistants within the program are responsible for the inclusion of the majority of multimodal texts, including video profiles and podcasts. The TA training at MCU sets the stage for the TAs to experiment pedagogically and theoretically during their development as instructors. Eventually, this experimentation moves to experimentation beyond just different classroom techniques; it moves into experimenting with the texts students create, the genre, formats, and technologies of writing.

The next aspect under the auspice of teacher training that contributes to the development of post-literacies at MCU is the fall semester orientation and Syllapolooza. Both are trainings, except the former is also an orientation—as the name would suggest—and the latter functions as an end of semester celebration. Separate from these two functions, the focus of both is on workshopping and training the faculty. During both events, instructors are asked to bring assignments they are thinking of using in class, or assignments that are relatively new in the instructors’ assignment rotation.
Within the scope of the literacy network, the fall semester orientation and Syllapolooza serve as contact zones where instructors have the opportunity to see what the other writing instructors are currently working on and doing in the classroom. As Pratt defines, a contact zone refers “to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (34). Unlike Pratt’s conception of the contact zone, which is connected to issues of colonization and slavery, contact zone here refers to a social space where competing ideologies, particularly pedagogical ones, interact. During these sessions instructors split into workshop groups of three and four, integrating teachers-in-training with experienced professionals. New teaching assistants were split up between the groups, so no group had more than one TA participating in the session. As a workshop, the goal was to generate feedback from the other instructors on various aspects of the assignment, including:

- Whether the assignment and expectations are clearly described.
- If the expectations of the assignment are realistic.
- Whether the assignment meets curricular learning outcomes.

Generally, these were the three main issues being discussed. However, groups also discussed issues of the formatting of assignment sheets and visual design. Though the focus was on the assignments, a large number of discussions moved quickly away from the script, and focused on discussing the instructor’s pedagogy or reasoning behind the assignments. In three of the groups, at least one assignment turned toward visual analysis, and in one group the assignment moved to the creation of a photo narrative. The photo narrative had students use photos that they took themselves, which they integrated with a traditional narrative. In another assignment, students were to use a piece of art in a narrative and create before or after stories using the picture as impetuous. In these groups it was common for instructors who were not familiar with
multimodal texts to investigate and inquire in more depth and detail about student learning and how the assignments corresponded with the curricular and institutional learning outcomes. Though there were extensive conversations regarding multimodal assignments, rarely did an instructor use another instructor’s assignments as impetuous for a new assignment of their own. However, in one case, a teaching assistant did include a similar project—a visual analysis—in her own course, after having gone through the workshop.

As is the case with actor-network theory neither of these interactions nor the actors should be viewed as deterministic. They are simply associations (Latour 108). The context of teacher training underlies the associations between the current training structure at Midwest City University and the literacy network there. Moreover, the node of teacher training provides rich soil for the development of post-literate activities, one that provides new instructors a sound theoretical and practical and reflective background. Furthermore, the training throughout the year offers contact zones where new and experienced instructors share and respond to each other in an innovative environment that allows for the development of digital writing and multimodal composition.

Institutional and Curricular Documents

The next node, institutional and curricular documents, is a set of non-human actors (or actants) that have material effects within the literacy network at MCU. Latour suggests, “[actors] can be human or nonhuman, and each can have goals” (180). In educational institutions many of the goals are associated with learning outcomes. However, the institutional and curricular documents I examined are not limited to learning outcomes. Also, included among these documents and material artifacts were syllabi and other documents that are used
within the Writing program, English Department and the General Education committee at Midwest City University. In each of these sections I analyze the documents and the mediation of post-literate activities within the context of the literacy network at Midwest City University.

It is clear that one emphasis of ANT is that non-humans have agency and mediate action. Likewise, texts, as Cheryl Geisler writes, “have much in common with other objects that serve to both mediate and complete a variety of everyday activities” (298). Texts serve to constrain and permit action. Within the literacy network at MCU, institutional texts serve to direct and produce particular actions; however, when the texts interact with other actors in the network, the mediation becomes reciprocal. The human actors also adapt the text to a given context and this interaction, the moment and effect of, is another node underlying the literacy network at the institution.

The first set of documents I examine is the documents created and circulated by the composition committee. These documents are directly related to the FY writing program at MCU and the emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition. The initial set of documents that I discuss, in the context of the literacy network, are the departmental syllabi for the courses in the FY writing sequence.

There are four different syllabi (Appendix 3) for each course in the FY writing sequence. These syllabi represent the core expectations and policies of the composition program and English Department at the university. The departmental syllabi are distributed to every composition student on the first day of class, in conjunction with a syllabus created by the instructor. More importantly, the departmental syllabi are given to each instructor in the program, serving as a foundation for the development of individual syllabi and assignments. The departmental syllabi set the stage for the possibility of digital writing and multimodal
composition. Though none of the syllabi require the use of post-literate activities, they do, as Oddo and Parmelee indicate public texts become part of the social context. As part of the context at MCU, the syllabi act as the \textit{prime mover} in syllabi and assignment designs. The departmental syllabi are partially responsible for mediating all possible variations of instructor syllabi and assignments.

Like most syllabi, the content of the four departmental syllabi at Midwest City University focuses on the goals and policies of the courses. Specifically, each includes the following:

\textbf{Course Information and Requirements}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>Course Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>Fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texts</td>
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<td>Engagement in the Learning Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty</td>
<td>Academic Support Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1

Further examination of the syllabi also reveals specific attention paid to the integration of technology in the classroom. The syllabi exhibit particular attention to the integration of technology under the sections of Course Goals and Engagement in the Learning Process. In each of the four syllabi there is a goal devoted to the use of technology. The title of the goal, “Access and use a variety of learning tools and technologies,” remains the same; however, the language changes across the syllabi. In the developmental courses—English 1539 and 1540—the goal specifically states that students learn to use “email, the Internet, and word processors.” Moving out of the developmental writing courses into the traditional writing sequence the goal becomes a
little more complex. In the 1550 syllabus, the traditional writing 1 course, the language adds specificity to the use of the word processing technology. The goal reads that students should be able to use “email, the Internet and word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word) for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts.” However, though the language becomes more specific between the developmental writing sequence and the writing 1 course, the language in the writing 2 course (English 1551) syllabi echoes the original language from the developmental writing syllabi. In the stated goal, there is an additional subsection that emphasizes the students’ ability to use research databases, electronic sources and the library to access and incorporate sources.

The change in language under the goals reflects institutional exigencies regarding developmental writers. The integration of digital writing and multimodal composition runs counter to the goals and perceptions of developmental writing. These courses are so focused on getting student writing (prose) in line with English 1550 standards that having students create multimodal texts seems unproductive and does not meet institutional, departmental, and curricular goals. Juxtaposed with the developmental writing course, the writing 2 course is the most advanced course in the writing sequences; however, it uses the same language regarding technology integration. This, in part, is due to the focus on “research” and the “research paper” that is the capstone to the course. Focusing on research in writing 2 shifts the use of technology to an information literacy model, instead of one that utilizes multimodal writing.

Furthermore, the language seems to underlie the development of post-literate activities at MCU, specifically the location of multimodal assignments: the writing 1 classroom. The language in the examined documents creates a larger niche for the inclusion of assignments that are not strictly text-based. The majority of digital writing projects and multimodal compositions
are assigned in the English 1550 course; rarely are they assigned in any of the other courses in the FY writing sequence at MCU. Also, the course goals from the writing 1 syllabus seem to emphasize the process of writing, loosely defined, and connect this process with the use of a variety of tools and technologies.

Likewise, another place in the departmental syllabi also shows a similar pattern as the course goals, which would seem to limit the location and development of multimodal assignments to the writing 1 course. At the very bottom of the front page of each syllabus there is a section of text that seems almost out of place, couched between the Course Goals and Engagement in the Learning Process. The text reads the same for the developmental writing syllabi and differs for both the writing 1 and writing 2 syllabi. The section of text reads as follows:

Developmental Writing Syllabi (English 1539/1540): All course assignments should aim to prepare students for English 1550 (Writing 1). At least one major assignment should ask students to demonstrate a basic familiarity with the rudiments of a standard documentation style (manuscript format, in-text citations, and a list of sources).

Writing 1 Syllabus (English 1550): Writing 1 prepares students for Writing 2 (English 1551). Students use summary, paraphrase, and quotation as they incorporate their readings into their essays; with that, they use appropriate citation conventions. All assignments should aim to help students respond to texts critically and to write college-level prose, but instructors may use other kinds of readings and writing activities to help students meet this goal.
Writing 2 Syllabus (English 1551): All course assignments should aim to help students respond to and produce research-based arguments, but instructors may use other kinds of readings and writing activities to help students meet this goal.

There are some subtle and not-so subtle variations in each of these descriptions. First, none of the sections specifically state what types of assignments instructors must use or assign, leaving the possibility for instructors to experiment with assignments and their own strengths and skills as teachers and writers. Moreover, each section of text discusses preparation for the following course in the sequence, or in the case of writing 2, research writing beyond the composition classroom. However, one major difference in the sections of text is that in the writing 1 and writing 2 texts both suggest that “instructors may use other kinds of readings and writing activities to help students meet this goal.”

The vague, or open, discourse apparent in these blurbs constructs a wide range of possible interpretations, granting instructors the autonomy to experiment and utilize different types and media and assign a variety of traditional prose-based texts and new media ones, as well. Also, the nature of the discourse in these sections allows for both the instructor and the composition curriculum at MCU to adapt their pedagogies for changing technologies and social and educational exigencies that may arise. A few examples of thee evolving exigencies include new genres (i.e.: blogs, wikis, and flash documentaries), new publication forms (i.e.: YouTube, Pintrest, and Instagram), and new technologies (i.e.: tablets and cell phones). In this fashion, the discourse of the syllabi sets up social and material constraints, which both limit and allow the emergence of post-literate activities.
Serving as guidelines, the departmental syllabi, as mentioned before, set the stage for instructors to develop their own syllabi for their classes. Though they function as guidelines, they are not strict templates. However, each syllabus is reviewed for required content. This review is completed by the composition committee. The review takes place electronically and is scheduled for two hours, taking place during the fall semester. Noted on the Syllabus Review Checklist (Appendix 6) the committee assesses the content, design, and rhetoric of the syllabus. Most of the checklist is devoted to the required items—attendance policy, required texts, grading policies, etc. But it also reviews such issues as effective design and page layout, use of white space, fonts, and tone for students and “other audiences.” The scope of the syllabus review does not, however, include evaluating the assignments of the instructors.

Focusing on the content, design, and rhetoric of the syllabi limits a reviewer’s evaluation of the syllabi. During the syllabus review, the rubric did not prevent the committee members from discussing specific assignments aloud with the committee. Reviewers frequently asked questions of each other during the review. Often, the members would comment about a particularly interesting assignments or syllabus design. However, not once was the appropriateness of any assignment questioned during the review, whether the assignment was traditional prose or multimodal.

The general tone and focus of the Syllabus Review Checklist mirrors the tone of other documents used by the composition committee. By and large, the focus is on the bones—the structure—and major required features of the documents. The flesh—the day-to-day activities and assignments—are largely overlooked, which creates an environment for experimentation and innovation. It is the autonomy and agency granted to instructors in this environment that allows
for pedagogical and philosophical autonomy, which permits the emergence of a variety of texts, utilizing a range of social and technological literacies.

The last of the documents examined are those connected with the General Education program and committee at MCU. Whereas the documents used and created by the composition committee have more blatant effects, the effects of the General Education documents are much more subtle and nuanced in the interactions between the texts and effects of the composition committee and FY writing program. The FY writing sequence falls under the shadow of the General Education Program. Two documents have specific connection with the FY writing program: The 2012 Learning Outcomes and the 2012 Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree.

The learning outcomes are broken into two specific sections, Core Competencies and Knowledge Domains. Of the learning outcomes, the one specifically connected to the composition courses at MCU falls under “Core Competencies.” Though writing is mentioned generally throughout the section “Knowledge Domains,” the specifics of how writing is perceived by the General Education committee is represented by the competencies. The focus of the core competencies views writing as a skill, not something that exists as specific knowledge. It is clear that the focus of the learning outcomes, as they pertain to writing, focuses on writing as a skill. It is clear that more of this document is concerned with effective writing and source integration. Though not specifically stated, the outcomes understand writing and the writing process as primarily textual. This is apparent by the focus on “sound arguments” and the “ability to write and speak effectively.” Moreover, the learning outcomes highlight that “these skills are applied in the major and culminate in the successful completion of a senior capstone project.” It is clear that there is a textual bias in the General Education committee’s conception of writing, by the insistence that these skills are used in the senior capstone project. The conception of
writing as strictly textual and as a competency echoes an unstated bias of the place of writing and what writing is and can do.

These biases show up in the “2012 Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree” as well, specifically the notion that writing is skill, not a knowledge domain. Instead of listing writing as a core competency, the requirements document has it listed as an essential skill. Moreover, this document explicitly states the goals and scope of the actual writing courses, specifically the writing 1 and writing 2 courses. The section on writing reads as follows:

To learn the skills of effective writing, students will take two courses:

Writing 1 — Strategies for writing as a means of critical inquiry, with a focus on processes and on the roles of writer, audience and purpose as they affect writing.

Writing 2 — Practice in writing with emphasis on the process of investigation: exploration of topics, formulation of tentative theses, collection of data, and clear and appropriate presentation of the results of these inquiries.

Though the language is general, the implicit emphasis of the writing 1 section is the rhetorical situation. More explicitly, however, the emphasis of writing 2 is clearly writing in the context of research and academic prose.

The discourse regarding both classes sets specific expectations, constraints and allowances. Throughout the General Education documents the focus is on the perspective of writing as a skill. This perception permeates the culture of writing at MCU as a whole, though not as much so within the composition committee. Moreover, the description of the courses, combined with emphasis on sources, reflects the understanding of the writing 2 course as an
academic/research writing course. The perception of writing 2 as the research paper course creates unseen effects, which were exhibited in the location of multimodal assignments: the writing 1 course. The language in the document seems to create a structure that focuses or limits the types of writing utilized and assigned to simply academic prose.

The texts, or as Geisler would describe them, “textual objects,” that are at work within the literacy network at MCU change the dynamics and are part of the development of digital writing and multimodal composition. It is apparent that these texts—syllabi, General Education outcomes, and rubrics, for example—as Latour and other ANT theorists suggest, carry agency. Moreover, they appear to fit the frame-work set out by Geisler:

(a) texts sometimes move from private meditational means to public motive; (b) in this sense, texts act a lot like “objects”; and finally, (c) texts as objects can be understood as can be understood as part of the shifting consciousness sustaining everyday life in complex organizations. (“Textual Objects” 298)

Throughout every textual interaction between a human actor and a non-human (textual) actor a negotiation occurs, a form of kinetic friction, which results in variety of effects throughout the network. Some of those effects limit the possibility of the emergence of new literacies; however, on the whole, the discourse of the documents is hegemonic, reinforcing the ethos and character of the curriculum. But the discourse of the documents creates open spaces for friction to occur between the texts and the instructors, resulting in variety of interpretations, which in turn, results in a variety of assignments and pedagogies. The language of these documents and the documents themselves further the potential for the development of post-literate activities within the FY writing curriculum at Midwest City University.
**Assessment**

The ROAD assessment (Repository of Old Assessment Documents) at MCU is the final node within the literacy network at Midwest City University. The Road assessment is tied to an interdisciplinary group of faculty across the campus, including members from Chemistry, Communication, English, Sociology, etc. The purpose of this assessment was to have a system in place that would assess the writing development of students. In order to accomplish this assessment, students submit their final research essay from the second writing course into a university database. Later during their careers, those same students submit their written senior capstone project into the database. Both essays are scored and evaluated with a standardized rubric, which is utilized to score both documents. In *What we Really Value: Beyond Rubrics in Teaching Assessing Writing*, Bob Broad suggests, “traditional rubrics and scoring guides prevent us from telling the truth about what we believe, what we teach, and what we value in composition courses and programs” (2). While Broad’s understanding of Rubric is coming from a curricular context, the same assertion could be made for institutional rubrics, giving us a sense of institutional ideologies about writing.

Much like the effects of the departmental syllabi, the ROAD assessment was mediating writing instruction, constructing a social consciousness that was mediating the circumstances and the emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition. It was a Procrustean Bed, where only specific post-literate activities arise—the writing 1 course. Because of the way artifacts are accepted, collected, stored, and assessed, the ROAD assessment’s major concern is writing in the most traditional sense. It demands writing in a strictly textual sense. Concerning these demands, it is apparent in the ROAD assessment rubric that the focus is on written discourse.
The rubric (Appendix 4) at first glance seems to generally focus on notions of rhetoric and writing. The focus on more general notions of rhetoric and writing leaves numerous interpretations available for instructors to construct assignments. However, upon further examination, the document focuses less upon the generic rhetorical elements and pays more specific attention to elements associated with strictly text-based assignments. Under the criteria “Control of Syntax and Mechanics,” the emphasis is on the use of language in the student texts, not a more generic term like “discourse,” which would open up the number of possible interpretations. The focus on language in the document leaves out other semiotic devices, like images and audio, which utilize other media and textual modes.

In the article “Scoring Rubric and the Material Conditions of Our Relations with Students,” David Martins argues that rubrics are prescriptive and reductive; standardizing how teachers think about student work (127). Martin’s argument narrows its gaze on evaluation of student text; however, this standardization can be seen on a larger scale, prescribing notions of writing, how writing is conceived, and the literacies that constitute and define writing. The ROAD Assessment and the rubric it uses to score create a set of ideologies and values associated with writing in the writing 2 courses at Midwest City University. These are values that seem to limit the use of literacies other than academic and text based literacies.

These values are further reinforced through an implicit function of the ROAD Assessment—Oversight. The scoring of the essays, though not designed to score instructors, creates an environment that constrains the instructors, limiting their assignments’ and limiting the possible literacies used and valued within the writing 2 course. The gaze of the assessment serves a hegemonic function, creating an environment where only traditional text-based assignments are valued and assigned. Moreover, the tool used to collect student assignments, not
just the one used to score them, limit assignments to strictly text based. The system that collects the students’ papers in turn limits the available format submissions to text only.

The apparent lack of multimodal and digital writing assignments in the writing 2 course were indeed tied to strict adherence of the academic genre, and was due to the institutional exigency of assessment—not one reflected by documents created by the composition program. In “The Technology of Writing Assessment and Racial Validity,” Asao Inoue describes assessments through the lens of technology:

Assessment as a technology can be articulated as: An historically situated, hegemonic environment in which power is made, used, and, transformed, that consists of sets of artifacts and technical codes, manipulated by institutionally-sanctioned agents, constructed for particular purposes that have relations to abstract ideas and concepts, and whose effects or outcomes shape, and are shaped by, racial, class-based, gender, and other socio-political arrangements. (108)

Inoue’s definition of assessment as a technology makes it clear that writing assessments can be responsible for mediating the culture around the assessment model, which seemed to be the case of how digital literacies were not being used in the writing II course at Midwest City University. Moreover, in (Re) Articulating Writing Assessment, Huot suggests scholars consider assessments through the lens of technology, because technologies (assessment) are “imbued with various political and ideological orientations” (140). Technology, for assessment, is an actant aht does not simply use the assessment as a tool, but is a set of social constructs that mediate practice, pedagogy, and curriculum. At MCU it is clear that the university’s values of writing are connected largely to strictly textual prose. The agents—as Inoue calls them—are not just human
agents, but also institutional artifacts and procedures, echoing an institutional ideology that places value on written academic prose.

If a writing 2 instructor had students compose multimodal research projects, these assignments would not fit with the ROAD assessment: First, because of the material effects of the rubric and creating the rubric in a manner to allow for multimodal and digital composition and second, because the system for depositing the document wouldn’t allow anything other than text documents. Students depositing essays were requested to submit the document in Rich Text Format. The limitations of the ROAD assessment are not simply due to institutional exigencies—the focus on written academic prose; they are also due to technological constraints.

CONCLUSION

Actor-Network Theory paints a picture of the literacy network at MCU where both possibilities and limitations to the emergence of post-literate activities exist. The nodes throughout the network create the possibility for teaching innovation, innovations that include the possibility for digital writing and multimodal assignments. Each of the three nodes echoes some of those same limitations and gives insight to some of the underlying ideologies of the curriculum and institution that allow for the emergence of post-literate activities. Each node constructs a set of social, ideological, and material conditions, which are mediated by non-human and human actors throughout the network at the university. The dynamics between these actors, however, should not be seen as deterministic, but frictions of possibility. As each human actor uses a tool for a specific action, the tool also mediates the actions that any give human actor can take.
For example, the discourse of the departmental syllabi and the ROAD Assessment rubric create a set of ideologies and material realities, creating a context for the emergence of digital literacies. The possible set of those realities are a set of semiotic constructs, creating contact zones where human and non-humans interact and create a set of interpretive circumstances. And it is those interpretations—the allowance of possible interpretations—that create a writing curriculum of possibility.

The translation of the three nodes—Teacher Training, Institutional and Curricular Documents, and Assessment—give a richer understanding of the emergence of post-literate activities in the FY writing program at Midwest City University. Each plays a role in the possibility of including post-literate activities. In the following chapter, I draw upon the analysis of these nodes to create a curricular model that is centered on innovation and the inclusion of digital writing and multimodal compositions.
CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS

The first four chapters of this dissertation provided a detailed description and analysis of the various actors responsible for the emergence of post-literate activities at Midwest City University. Within these previous chapters I provided a review of the relevant literature regarding literacy and new literacies, defining both literacy and post-literate activities. Furthermore, I established a clear concern for the study of digital writing and multimodal composition from a curricular context. After the review of literacy and new literacies scholarship, I discussed the methods and methodology that foregrounded this project. In chapter two, I focused on the specifics of the research site and the guiding methodologies of this dissertation—grounded theory and actor-network theory. Moreover, I discussed my data collection methods and my role as a researcher. In chapter three, I gave a detailed taxonomy of the various actors that were at work within the literacy network at MCU. Chapter four took the list of actors and put them into motion, categorizing them into specific nodes, examining and analyzing the dynamics of the actors—human and non-human. In chapter four I separated the interactions into three primary areas: Teacher Training, Institutional and Curricular Documents, and Assessment. In this final chapter I conclude the dissertation by explicating the data and analysis from the third and fourth chapters in order to address the research questions from chapter one. After returning to the research questions, I propose a curricular model to assist in the innovation of post-literate activities, which focuses on issues of training, assessment, and document design.

RETURNING TO THE QUESTIONS
In chapter one, the main question guiding this study was “why are non-privileged and digital literacies occurring within a FY writing program?” In order to understand the emergence of digital literacies and multimodal composition at MCU, I constructed a set of seven questions that served to better understand and answer the guiding question for this study. These questions included:

- What literacies are privileged in first-year writing curricula?
- How are these literacies developed in the first-year writing curriculum?
- What literacies are used and developed in the first-year writing classroom?
- What shape do non-privileged literacies or post-literacy projects take?
- How do assignments utilizing privileged literacies and non-privileged literacies compare?
- Who are the instructors using digital writing and multimodal composition in the first-year writing classroom?
- Where is digital writing and multimodal composition occurring within the first-year writing curriculum?

I began this project seeking to address these questions, using them as the framework to guide my methods and methodology. During the process of conducting research at MCU I received answers to all of these questions. The answers to these questions functioned as touchstones for understanding the underlying motives and exigencies that fostered the emergence of post-literate activities at Midwest City University. Though I found answers to these questions, I finished the research process with several unanswered questions. In the section that follows I give detailed descriptions and answers to those unanswered questions based on the data collected during my research process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What literacies are privileged in first-year writing curricula?</td>
<td>Two primary types of literacy are directly privileged: written and information literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are these literacies developed in the first-year writing curriculum?</td>
<td>Written literacies are fostered through extensive use of process and use of written academic examples. Information literacies are developed in connection with the university library through in-class testing and library workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What literacies are used and developed in the first-year writing classroom?</td>
<td>Along with textual and information literacies, various instructors foster multimodal and new media writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What shape do non-privileged literacies or post-literacy projects take?</td>
<td>The forms these take include: Instruction Manuals, Video Profiles, Podcasts, Visual Presentation, Visual Narratives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do assignments utilizing privileged literacies and non-privileged literacies compare?</td>
<td>The majority of digital and multimodal compositions occur in the writing 1 course. Assignment utilizing non-privileged literacies tends to be less research oriented, in a traditional academic sense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are the instructors using digital writing and multimodal composition in the first-year writing classroom?</td>
<td>The range of instructors assigning multimodal projects includes both tenured and adjunct instructors. The tenured instructors typically have a background in technical writing. The majority of instructors utilizing multimodal assignments are adjunct instructors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is digital writing and multimodal composition occurring within the first-year writing curriculum?</td>
<td>Multimodal assignments by and large occur in the writing 1 course.</td>
</tr>
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Table 2.1

The guiding questions set the foundation for understanding the primary question this project seeks to address: “Why are non-privileged and digital literacies occurring within a writing program?” As noted before, these questions function as areas where I could begin to
trace the development of post-literacies at MCU. Those questions act as points where strings weave in-and-out connecting to other nodes within the institution, leaving traces that can be followed back to various specific institutional and curricular constructs. Findings from my data-collection suggest that those strings link to teacher-training, institutional and curricular documents, and assessments, all of which significantly influence the teaching philosophies, practices, and pedagogies utilized by instructors. Consequently, the data suggests that these three areas also impact the emergence of post-literate activities within college writing curricula. These areas altered, shifted, and created stages for the inclusion of digital writing and multimodal composition throughout the FY writing program at MCU. The evidence from my observations and analysis suggest that these three areas are quintessential to the constraints and autonomy exhibited by individual instructors. And it is the imposition of limitation and freedom that creates the spaces for the utilization and inclusion of digital literacies in the writing classroom.

The limitations created and autonomy fostered in the FY writing curriculum at Midwest City University occurred coincidentally to the institutional and curricular context. Although the limitations created and autonomy fostered occurred as mostly unintended reactions to the various actors and dynamics within the network. The reactions and dynamics revealed a general framework for understanding how best to include new and emergent literacies within FY writing programs and, generally, how to foster pedagogical and technological innovations in teaching.

As I began understanding the emergence of post-literate activities at MCU, I tried best to describe the phenomena behind their emergence as a way to answer the main question of this study. The occurrence of post-literate activities at the university derived from the level of the classroom, working their way through the writing curriculum. The writing classroom is the
epicenter for the emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition in the curriculum at the university. This “bottom-up” emergence echoes concepts from network theory, specifically a complexity model. In the following section I describe complexity theory and how it can be used to develop and design writing curricula. I end this section by giving a basic framework for writing curricula that fosters pedagogical and technological innovations, allowing for the development of digital writing and multimodal composition.

COMPLEXITY MODEL FOR WRITING CURRICULA

Complexity theory is largely situated within the fields of strategic systems and organizational management. However, as Mark Taylor demonstrates in his book, *The Moment of Complexity*, complexity theory has also been applied much more broadly to cultural, social and philosophical developments. More recently, the scholarship of complexity and its application have veered toward educational subjects including student learning, pedagogy, and curriculum design and development. Some scholars are even claiming complexity science “as a properly ‘educational’ discourse” (Davis 50). These discussions, however, have remained mostly theoretical in scope. They refrain from giving specifics on design, focusing instead on generalities from complexity theory. Though the generalities serve as a way into utilizing the scholarship of complexity, writing program administrators and curriculum designers seek a quicker end to understanding how it works and the best ways to foster complexity within their curriculum. In this section, I define complexity theory; why a complexity model needs to be embraced in writing curriculum design and, propose a specific framework for fostering complexity in writing curricula.

Complexity theory is based on the concept of the complex system. Garnett Williams defines complexity, or complex systems, as those “in which numerous independent elements continuously interact and spontaneously organize and reorganize themselves into more and more
elaborate structures over time” (34). Though there are numerous characteristics associated with complex systems, scholars agree that the two essential attributes of complex systems are ‘emergence’ and ‘self-organization’. Mason writes, “emergence implies that, given a significant degree of complexity in a particular environment, or critical mass, new properties and behaviors emerge that are not contained in the essence of the constituent elements, or able to be predicted from a knowledge of initial conditions” (5). Emergence is a central concept for complexity theorists. The ‘critical mass’ noted by Mason is best understood as what most complexity theorists refer to as ‘the tipping point’. The “tipping point” is a central metaphor for complexity theorists. Taylor writes:

The easiest way to understand the dynamics of the tipping point is to imagine a sand pile to which individual grains of sand are gradually added. As the grains accumulate one by one, the pile approaches a critical state in which the addition of one more grain of sand can unleash an avalanche in the pile as a whole. (148)

When those sands, described by Taylor, topple, that moment is the moment of emergence, where the system reacts in unpredictable ways. Those reactions are systemic innovations that occur within a given system naturally over time. And the system reorganizes itself enveloping the new innovation. However, emergence does not occur in a vacuum. In order for emergence to be fostered effectively the system must also be adept at ‘self-organization’.


The kind of change characteristic of complex systems lies somewhere between the pure order of crystalline snowflakes and the disorder of chaotic or turbulent flow. So identified, complex systems are systems that have a large number of components that can interact simultaneously in a sufficiently rich number of
parallel ways so that the system shows spontaneous self-organization and produces global, emergent structures. (170)

Because of its delicate nature, fostering complexity in any given system would seem to require a highly technical and epistemological skill set. However, achieving the balance needed to achieve complexity can occur in very simple ways, especially in college writing curricula.

For writing program administrators complexity theory provides a general model for fostering innovation within institutional and curricular structures. Though it provides a model that holds innovation (emergence) as a key factor in its design, there is no specific framework to approach it within curricular settings. So how can we adapt our current curricular models to foster innovation? Furthermore, what does emergence and innovation mean for writing curricula?

Innovation can occur throughout the writing curricula. Innovations can be pedagogical, technological, or even textual; there is no limit to how or what innovations occur within writing programs. The scope of this project was concerned with innovations connected to literacy, specifically those defined as post-literate activities. As both teachers and researchers, a complexity curricular model grants more opportunities—practical and theoretical—for new innovation within teaching and opportunities to study those innovations. Moreover, a complexity model fosters a system that is more democratic, since emergence and innovation occur as a bottom-up phenomenon. Innovation is in the hands of the teacher, located, not in the upper hierarchies of an institution, but in the classroom.

The foundational notion essential to building a writing curriculum which fosters innovation and complexity is that the system (or curriculum) needs to be open. Mark Taylor notes, “for complex systems to maintain themselves, they must remain open to their environment
and change when conditions require it” (156). For a writing curriculum to be viewed as an open system, one that places the value on innovation, the system needs to foster autonomy and the individual agency of every agent— instructors, administrators, students, etc…. This openness, however, does not just simply occur by granting complete freedom to everyone involved in a curriculum; it must be fostered and nurtured. Fostering complexity occurs through identifying specific “transformation points”.

In every system, as Byrne suggests, there are transformation points where the system has multiple trajectories into which it can move (22). In a curriculum these points are the structures, processes, assessments, documents, etc that exert influence on the agents and pedagogy. As was the case in my study, the areas of teacher training, curricular documents, and assessment were just three transformation points that led to innovation, innovation that allowed for the emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition.

The first transformation point, as suggested by my research at Midwest City University, I noted at MCU was teacher training. The teacher training established a large breadth of theoretical, pedagogical, and practical knowledge for its teaching assistants. The general knowledge and skills fostered by the training program at the university created a pool of writing instructors with skills and knowledge sets that allowed them to adapt to new social, institutional, and educational exigencies. In the case of my study, the inclusion of digital literacies within the writing program occurred mostly in the classroom of instructors who were first trained within the writing program as teaching assistants and went on to become adjunct instructors within the writing program.

Teacher training and preparation that fosters complexity fits the multiphilosophical approach as defined by Stancliff and Goggin. Moreover, the approach advocated by Stancliff
and Goggin is predicated upon the notion of reflective conflict. Reflective conflict, as they conceive of it, shares values with complexity theory. Stancliff and Goggin write that reflective conflict requires an “open environment in which such conflict and exchange can happen” (24-25). It is apparent that both reflective conflict and complexity dovetail in their value of open environments. Furthermore, reflective conflict gives teachers in training freedom to experiment pedagogically, because it supports a sound theoretical and pedagogical foundation.

As noted in chapter four, another key factor for the emergence of post-literate activities at MCU was the assessment procedures in place. Constructing assessment processes in ways that foster complexity is crucial for writing curricula that seek pedagogical innovation. Assessments as noted by Huot and echoed by Inoue, function as a technology. However, technology should not be viewed as a tool, like a hammer or pipe wrench. Technology, in this sense, refers to a “social system that restructures the entire social world as an object of control” (Feenberg 7). This conception of technology is described as the substantive view of technology. Writing assessments and assessment procedures, generally, function substantively. Assessments are hegemonic, normalizing teaching and pedagogy. Within the scope of complexity, assessment practices serve as a possible transformation point that either restrict innovation or foster it. In the case of MCU, the ROAD assessment functioned in both restrictive and innovative fashions. However, these transformation points function much like the proverbial door/window. Though the ROAD assessment closed the door (the location) on the emergence of post-literate activities, it left a window open: the writing 1 course. Though there was still a window of innovation left open by the assessment practices at MCU, the goal of a complexity model would allow innovation to occur throughout the curriculum—not in only one small area.
Despite the assessment’s influence on the possible emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition, it was clear that institutional and curricular documents exerted control over the location of innovation as well. The function and mediation of public texts are more effective at constructing systemic activity. According to Windsor, public texts pressure and highlight the individual responsibility of individuals within a system (213). In the case of curriculum design, institutional and curricular documents act in either productive or restrictive ways. Echoing Windsor, Geisler notes that placing texts in the public record “[has] significant consequences for participants” (301). At MCU the departmental syllabi, rubrics, and learning outcomes constructed spaces that restricted and motivated instructor autonomy. The classroom spaces where digital literacies were being developed were the ones where the departmental syllabus gave free reign to the instructors to design their own writing assignments and were those spaces where the ROAD Assessment had no direct effects. For example, the departmental syllabus for the writing 2 course required so much attention to information literacy and the research process that there was not an opening for instructors to assign texts other than research papers.

Documents, like assessments and training, can foster complexity. However, the openness and autonomy cultivated does not rely on knowledge and experience as it did with teacher training at MCU. Nor does it rely on ideas of oversight in the case of assessment. Autonomy and innovation fostered in institutional and curricular contexts rely on a form of open discourse, which I believe should be viewed as a *discourse of innovation*. I conceive of this discourse as way to design institutional documents, relying on language choices that navigate the rigid prescriptivism of mandating pedagogy, while simultaneously allowing just enough structure to produce frictions where new and emerging innovations occur.
The transformations points I have identified are not the only ones relevant to the study at MCU, nor are they universal across every curriculum. However these points have effects throughout most FY writing curricula. While doing my research I also noted one other specific area that seemed to be a rich line of inquiry. But, due to research protocols and guidelines, it could not be examined during the course of this project. The specific transformation point that needs to be further studied is the osmosis of cross institutional curricular ideology and pedagogy. Two instructors at MCU who were integrating multimodal compositions in their classrooms also utilized these assignments at another local university, where a multimodal assignment was a requirement of the FY writing course.

Due to the HSRB protocol I could not explore these connections beyond just superficially noting them. However, even on the surface, it seems that the presence of multiple institutional experiences lend itself to notions of a complexity model, especially in furthering pedagogical innovation within education curricula. The inclusion of adjunct instructors who have work experiences across institutional boundaries in a writing program yields a greater number of possible nodes for pedagogical innovation. The area of cross institutional curricular ideology and pedagogy could yield more data that could support curricular models of complexity, or, in the very least, reveal data that shows the insignificance of this node of complexity.

CONCLUSION

During the course of my research for this dissertation I studied the FY writing curriculum and the emergence of post-literate activities in one university’s writing program. I began by conducting observations of one program, taking notes of possible processes, documents, people, and locations that seemed to be tied to the emergence of multimodal composition. During this
process I also observed various departmental and institutional committee, training sessions, and processes. Additionally, I traced these associations through the program by interviewing various subjects about those connections. These interviews provided clearer details regarding the various actors at work responsible for the emergence of digital writing and multimodal composition. Furthermore, I examined and analyzed various curricular and institutional documents that exerted and mediated agency within the literacy network at Midwest City University.

Based on my findings and analysis, digital literacies, and literacy more generally speaking, emerge within writing programs based off a complexity theory model. If we as scholars and teachers in computers and writing want to best develop new technological literacies and adapt them to our current curricula, we need situate our curricula in a way to foster complexity. The complexity model I described in this chapter is one not limited to fostering the emergence of simply multimodal composition; it is a model that can create innovation in any area of curriculum development. Viewing pedagogical innovation, and therefore literacy, as a complex system furthers future pedagogical development, technologies, and digital literacies to develop and evolve. Curricular evolution depends on an amount of randomness existing within writing curricula. This randomness, I believe, was responsible for the emergence of digital and multimodal projects to emerge at Midwest City University.

Though I suggest a complexity model for innovation within writing curricula, I believe it is important to remember that my research was conducted and limited to one specific curricular context. Furthermore, as actor-network theorists warn, the findings and data collected utilizing an ANT methodology should never be viewed as deterministic or prescriptive; they are mere
correlations, suggestions and patterns of behavior that emerge from the process of collection and analysis.

Before concluding this dissertation, I want to reflect upon the notion of post-literacy and my definition of it. Throughout this project I concentrated my definition of post-literacy on one singular institution. I want to acknowledge that the literacy at one institution could be the post-literacy of another. The definition of post-literacy that I used was one that was highly based on institutional and curricular context. It is because of its contextual limits that I wish to redefine my notion of post-literacy. From the outset I saw post-literacy as literacy that existed outside of social and institutional hierarchy; however, upon further examination, the notion of post-literacy runs parallel to Jenkins’ concept of convergence. Convergence as Jenkins conceived was the world where old and new media collide (2). Post-literacy operates in the same way; it’s the collision of traditionally defined academic literacy and literacies that are emerging within the community.

Finally, I conclude this project making an appeal to writing program administrators and curriculum designers for instructor autonomy. If the goal of education is to move beyond simply learning what is already known and understood where we are creating new theories and technologies, then our curricula need to foster these theoretical and technological innovations through autonomy and experimentation. It is common to question the role of having students compose multimodal assignments in FY writing. Many ask, “how can we teach students to compose multimodally, when they need to learn academic writing?” To which I respond, “How can students learn to write academically, if we do not teach our students to compose multimodal compositions?”
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APPENDIX 1: SITE CONVERSATION GUIDING QUESTIONS

Personal Questions

1. What background do you have in Teaching FY Writing?
2. What do you value in writing/freshman writing?
3. What experience do you have with new media and multimodal texts?

Chair(s) of FY writing

1. What is the general make up of the writing program? Adjuncts, full-time, tenured?
2. What is the make up of the student population?
3. What is the structure to the writing program?
4. What is the goal for your FY writing program?
5. What literacies do you want to develop in your program?
6. How are you developing those literacies?
7. Have instructors used multimodal, new media or alternative text assignments in your program? Who? When? What was your opinion?
8. Do you encourage new media or multimodal texts in the classroom?
9. Why/Why not?
10. What type of support is offered for teachers that try to use alternative texts in the classroom? i.e, new media or multimodal texts.

Composition Committee

1. When you look at a syllabus what are you basically looking for?
2. When it comes to assignments on the syllabus, what do you need to see?
3. If you encountered an assignment that was not strictly textual, how would you handle it?
4. Was it a major assignment, or minor?
5. Have you encountered assignments that asked students to produce an artifact or text that was not written academic prose?
APPENDIX 2: ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND EDITING

The English Department has established the following learning outcomes for students completing the professional writing and editing major:

- PWE major will define, state, and achieve a specific purpose and target audience, recognizing and adjusting for budgetary and timeline constraints.
- PWE majors will create and implement appropriate formats and designs for specific audiences and purposes.
- PWE majors will use a problem-solving approach and a variety of resources to investigate a problem, acquire and assess information, and organize it effectively.
- PWE majors will design documents professionally, using appropriate technological resources, software and hardware, as well as appropriate elements of design.
- PWE majors will evaluate others’ writing, accept and implement the recommendations of others in revision and editing. They will edit appropriately, using conventional grammar, spelling, and diction, and they will apply the appropriate style guide.

ENGLISH

The English department has expressed its mission in four goals. By completing the program, students will develop the following abilities:

- Deploy varied strategies for engaging with literature on the levels of words, appropriate parts of texts, whole texts, contexts, and criticism.
- Situate texts in the appropriate literary, historical, and cultural contexts.
- Analyze how the production and reception of language and literature are influenced by differences of form, culture, and identity.
- Effectively present and discuss ideas about literature and language in a manner that is appropriate for the situation.

JOURNALISM:

- Understanding of News
- Understanding of the First Amendment
- Understanding of how to find and extract news
- Understanding of how to write news, feature and opinion stories
- Understanding of how to evaluate others’ work
- Understanding of how to recognize bias in the media
ENGLISH 1539: Fundamentals of College Writing
English Department General Syllabus

Course Description
"Intensive individualized instruction in written communication and college-level reading practices in a computer-assisted environment. Open to students based on their Composition Placement Test results; does not count toward the graduation requirement in composition. Grading for English 1539 is ABC/ NC." 4 s.h.

Course Focus
English 1539 focuses on the fundamentals of drafting and revising college-level writing assignments. English 1539 is designed for students whose placement scores indicate the need for greater individual instruction in college writing fundamentals than is offered in English 1540. Students who pass English 1539 may take English 1550.

Placement
English 1539 is open to students based on Composition Placement Test results along with ACT English sub-scores, SAT Verbal sub-scores, and/or COMPASS™ Reading Test Score. An in-class diagnostic essay will be assigned during the first week, to further ensure appropriate placement.

Fee
MCU requires students to pay a technology and materials fee in English 1539. This fee is used to maintain and replace equipment, software, and supplies when necessary.

Course Activities
Students receive instruction in a standard classroom and a lab classroom; the fourth hour of instruction is used to meet students’ individual writing needs. During the fourth hour, students will receive individualized writing assistance.

Writing assignments are designed to help students develop their communicative and critical thinking abilities, with an emphasis on preparation for English 1550.

MCU Syllabus Requirements
Per MCU/MCU-OEA Agreement, Article 28.3, all syllabi must include a grading policy and an attendance policy.

Texts
Unless otherwise noted, the most recent editions of textbooks will be used. Required textbooks include EasyWriter 4e with MLA/APA Updates: A Pocket Reference by Andrea A. Lunsford, and one of the following (according to the instructor’s syllabus):

- America Now (Atwan), 9th ed.
- Mirror on America (Mims/Nollen), 4th ed.
- College Culture, Student Success (Anderson)
- The Prentice Hall Reader (Miller), 10th ed.

Students are also encouraged to purchase a good dictionary, such as Webster’s New World College Dictionary (4th edition).

Course Goals
Upon completion of English 1539, students should be able to:

1. Comprehend, discuss, and write clearly about assigned readings.
2. Communicate effectively in writing by:
   - responding successfully to a range of assignments (e.g., multiple-draft essays, in-class writing, journal writing)
   - using appropriate rhetorical strategies for developing and organizing ideas
   - completing written work that responds appropriately to the assignment
   - completing written work that displays a minimum of errors
• incorporating both instructor and peer feedback in the revision process

3. Access and use a variety of learning tools and technologies, such as:

• email, the Internet, and word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word)
• academic support services such as the Writing Center and the Center for Student Progress

All course assignments should aim to prepare students for English 1550 (Writing 1). At least one major assignment should ask students to demonstrate a basic familiarity with the rudiments of a standard documentation style (manuscript format, in-text citations, and a list of sources).

Engagement in the Learning Process

Engagement in the learning process is a key goal of a college education. Instructors are expected to create conditions in English 1539 that invite active student engagement. Students in English 1539 are expected to:

• Read all text selections assigned by the instructor.

• Do at least three in-depth writing assignments, each comprising at least one rough draft as well as a final draft that shows evidence of significant revision. Typically, these writing assignments involve the completion of a formal work that expresses the student's perspective and shows engagement with some set of readings. Instructors customize these assignments within the parameters of English 1539's general goals.

The individual writing assignments will vary in length, but students will write at least 3,000 words, primarily in formal projects, although other writing assignments may count.

• Complete all other assignments required by the instructor (e.g., in-class or out-of-class writing, graded or ungraded writing, prewriting, and revision or rewriting.)

• Follow the schedule and policies in the instructor's syllabus regarding preparation, attendance, classroom participation, and assignment deadlines.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is essential for all MCU students. To enhance students' information literacy, instructors are expected to introduce students to resources at The Library during at least one class session. Instructors may conduct these introductions themselves or with the assistance of library staff.

Computer Lab Classrooms

When class is held in a computer lab, instructors are expected to take advantage of technologies useful in engaging students in the activities of the course. Instructors are also expected to introduce students briefly to the hardware and software necessary for completing the course successfully; students requiring additional assistance may be referred to the Center for Student Progress or the Disability Services office. At minimum, students are expected to learn to use email, the Internet, and Microsoft Word.

Grades

Final grades for English 1539 are A, B, C, and NC (No Credit): Students who earn a grade of A or B have fulfilled course assignments at an outstanding or higher than average level; a C indicates satisfactory performance in the course.

A final average of less than C will earn a grade of NC for the course. An NC does not affect the overall GPA, but it does appear on the student's transcript, and the student must repeat English 1539. It may be retaken only once without the approval of the dean. Successful completion of English 1539 is required before a student can take Writing 1 (English 1550).

Students are responsible for being aware of their grade in English 1539 before completing registration for their next semester's classes.

Policy on Incomplete Grades: The instructor may assign a grade of Incomplete (I) only if the following conditions are met:

• the student has requested the Incomplete ahead of time;
• all course work prior to this request has been satisfactorily completed;
• the Instructor agrees that an I is warranted.

MCU policy states that students have until Mar. 1 to complete a Fall semester Incomplete and until Sep. 1 to complete a Spring semester Incomplete; instructors are permitted to require that the work be completed in a shorter amount of time. If no formal grade change occurs by the specified deadline, the I automatically reverts to an NC.

Audit Policy: Students who register to audit a composition course should consult the instructor about minimum requirements.
Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

All assignments completed in English 1539 must be the product of the student’s own thought and inquiry.

Plagiarism means presenting words, ideas, or information found in works written by others as if they were your own.

Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, all forms of cheating, as well as receiving inappropriate assistance from others in completing an assignment.

Instructors are responsible for teaching students about plagiarism and for distinguishing between intentional plagiarism and unintentional errors of citation. However, students are responsible for any actions that might constitute plagiarism. The penalty for plagiarism ranges from failing the assignment to getting an NC in the course. For more information, please see the MCU Student Code, particularly Articles I and IX, at http://www.MCU.edu/thecode.pdf.

Academic Support Resources

The Writing Center
Students may seek one-on-one or group assistance at the Writing Center by calling or visiting http://MCU.mywconline.com to make an appointment with a Writing Center Consultant. The Writing Center has hours Monday through Friday whenever classes are in session. Plus, Sunday hours are available in fall and spring semesters. Check out the various Writing Center locations at the Writing Center website: www.MCU.edu/writingcenter

Americans With Disabilities Act
Anyone requiring special adaptations or accommodations should inform the instructor as soon as possible, preferably at the beginning of the semester. In accordance with University procedures, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the Center for Student Progress Disability Services. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through Disability Services and provide their instructor with an official letter of accommodation.
ENGLISH 1540: Introduction to College Writing
English Department General Syllabus

Course Description
“Practice in adapting college-level writing conventions, organizational strategies, and revision and editing techniques to a variety of writing tasks. Focus on responding to written texts in ways that demonstrate expressive, analytical, and evaluative thinking. Students divide their time between regular classrooms and computer classrooms, where they have the opportunity to acquire and develop basic word-processing and electronic communication skills. Does not count toward the graduation requirement in composition. Open to students on the basis of Composition Placement Test results. Grading is ABC/NC. 3 s.h.”

Course Focus
English 1540 focuses on fundamentals of drafting and revising college-level writing assignments. English 1540 is designed for students whose placement scores indicate the need for additional instruction in college-level writing before taking Writing 1 (English 1550).

Placement
English 1540 is open to students based on Composition Placement Test results along with ACT English sub-scores, SAT Verbal sub-scores, and/or COMPASS™ Reading Test Score. An in-class diagnostic essay will be assigned during the first week, to further ensure appropriate placement.

Fee
MCU requires students to pay a technology and materials fee in English 1540. This fee is used to maintain and replace equipment, software, and supplies when necessary.

Course Activities
Students receive instruction in a standard and lab classroom. Writing assignments are designed to help students develop their communicative and critical thinking abilities, with an emphasis on preparation for English 1550.

MCU Syllabus Requirements
Per MCU/MCU-OEA Agreement, Article 28.3, all syllabi must include a grading policy and an attendance policy.

Texts
Unless otherwise noted, the most recent editions of textbooks will be used. Required textbooks include EasyWriter 4e with MLA/APA Updates: A Pocket Reference by Andrea A. Lunsford, and one of the following (according to the instructor’s syllabus):

- America Now (Atwan), 9th ed.
- Mirror on America (Mims/Nollen), 4th ed.
- College Culture, Student Success (Anderson)
- The Prentice Hall Reader (Miller), 10th ed.

Students are also encouraged to purchase a good dictionary, such as Webster’s New World College Dictionary (4th edition).

Course Goals
Upon completion of English 1540, students should be able to:
1. Comprehend, discuss, and write clearly about assigned readings.
2. Communicate effectively in writing by:
   - responding successfully to a range of assignments (e.g., multiple-draft essays, in-class writing, journal writing)
   - using appropriate rhetorical strategies for developing and organizing ideas
   - completing written work that responds appropriately to the assignment
   - completing written work that displays a minimum of errors
   - incorporating both instructor and peer feedback in the revision process
3. Access and use a variety of learning tools and technologies, such as:
   - email, the Internet, and word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word)
   - academic support services such as the Writing Center and the Center for Student Progress

All course assignments should aim to prepare students for English 1550 (Writing 1). At least one major assignment should ask students to demonstrate a basic familiarity with the rudiments of a standard documentation style (manuscript format, in-text citations, and a list of sources).
Engagement in the Learning Process

Engagement in the learning process is a key goal of a college education. Instructors are expected to create conditions in English 1540 that invite active student engagement. Students in English 1540 are expected to:

- **Read all text selections** assigned by the instructor.

- **Do at least three in-depth writing assignments**, each comprising at least one rough draft as well as a final draft that shows evidence of significant revision. Typically, these writing assignments involve the completion of a formal work that expresses the student's perspective and shows engagement with some set of readings. Instructors customize these assignments within the parameters of English 1540's general goals.

  The individual writing assignments will vary in length, but students will write at least 3,000 words, primarily in formal projects, although other writing assignments may count.

- **Complete all other assignments** required by the instructor (e.g., in-class or out-of-class writing, graded or ungraded writing, prewriting, and revision or rewriting.)

- **Follow the schedule and policies** in the instructor's syllabus regarding preparation, attendance, classroom participation, and assignment deadlines.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is essential for all MCU students. To enhance students' information literacy, instructors are expected to introduce students to resources at The Library during at least one class session. Instructors may conduct these introductions themselves or with the assistance of library staff.

Computer Lab Classrooms

When class is held in a computer lab, instructors are expected to take advantage of technologies useful in engaging students in the activities of the course. Instructors are also expected to introduce students briefly to the hardware and software necessary for completing the course successfully; students requiring additional assistance may be referred to the Center for Student Progress (330-941-3538) or the Disability Services office (330-941-1372). At minimum, students are expected to learn to use email, the Internet, and Microsoft Word.

Grades

**Final grades for English 1540 are A, B, C, and NC (No Credit):** Students who earn a grade of A or B have fulfilled course assignments at an outstanding or higher than average level; a C indicates satisfactory performance in the course.

A final average of less than C will earn a grade of NC for the course. An NC does not affect the overall GPA, but it does appear on the student's transcript, and the student must repeat English 1540. It may be retaken only once without the approval of the dean. Successful completion of English 1540 is required before a student can take Writing 1 (English 1550).

Students are responsible for being aware of their grade in English 1540 before completing registration for their next semester's classes.

**MCU Policy on Incomplete Grades:** The instructor may assign a grade of Incomplete (I) only if the following conditions are met:

- the student has requested the Incomplete ahead of time;
- all course work prior to this request has been satisfactorily completed;
- the Instructor agrees that an I is warranted.

MCU policy states that students have until Mar. 1 to complete a Fall semester Incomplete and until Sep. 1 to complete a Spring semester Incomplete; instructors are permitted to require that the work be completed in a shorter amount of time. If no formal grade change occurs by the specified deadline, the I automatically reverts to an NC.

**Audit Policy:** Students who register to audit a composition course should consult the instructor about minimum requirements.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

**All assignments completed in English 1540 must be the product of the student’s own thought and inquiry.**

Plagiarism means presenting words, ideas, or information found in works written by others as if they were your own.

**Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, all forms of cheating, as well as receiving inappropriate assistance from others in completing an assignment.**

Instructors are responsible for teaching students about plagiarism and for distinguishing between intentional plagiarism and unintentional errors of citation. However, students are responsible for any actions that might constitute plagiarism. The penalty for plagiarism ranges from failing the assignment to getting an NC in the course. For more information, please see the MCU Student Code, particularly Articles I and IX, at [http://www.MCU.edu/thecode.pdf](http://www.MCU.edu/thecode.pdf).
Academic Support Resources

The Writing Center
Students may seek one-on-one or group assistance at the Writing Center by calling or visiting http://MCU.mywconline.com to make an appointment with a Writing Center Consultant. The Writing Center has hours Monday through Friday whenever classes are in session. Plus, Sunday hours are available in fall and spring semesters. Check out the various Writing Center locations at the Writing Center website: www.MCU.edu/writingcenter

Americans With Disabilities Act
Anyone requiring special adaptations or accommodations should inform the instructor as soon as possible, preferably at the beginning of the semester. In accordance with University procedures, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the Center for Student Progress Disability Services. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through Disability Services and provide their instructor with an official letter of accommodation.
ENGLISH 1550: Writing 1
English Department General Syllabus

Course Description
Strategies for writing as a means of critical inquiry, with focus on writing processes and on the roles of writer, audience, and purpose as they affect writing. Students divide their time between regular classrooms and computer classrooms, where they have the opportunity to acquire and develop basic word-processing and electronic communication skills. Open to students on the basis of Composition Placement Test results or successful completion of ENGL 1539 or ENGL 1540. Grading is ABC/NC. 3 s.h.

Writing 1 is a general-education requirement.

Students in Writing 1 will
• Read, discuss, and critically analyze primarily nonfiction prose; other readings may be given as supplements.
• Write primarily nonfiction, expository essays; other writing assignments may be given as supplements.
• Develop their essays through the use of multiple drafts, peer reviews, and instructor comments.
• Use computer labs and other online resources as tools for cultivating their writing.

MCU Syllabus Requirements
Per MCU/MCU-OEA Agreement, Article 28.3, all syllabi must include a grading policy and an attendance policy.

Course Focus
Writing 1 aims to help students cultivate college-level reading, writing, and thinking abilities, in a way that will serve them well as educated citizens and as students at MCU.

Placement
Placement into Writing 1 is based on successful completion of English 1539 or 1540, or Composition Placement Test results along with ACT English sub-scores, SAT Verbal sub-scores, and/or COMPASS™ Reading Test Score.

Fee
MCU requires students to pay a technology and materials fee in Writing 1. This fee is used to maintain and replace equipment, software, and supplies.

Course Goals
Upon successful completion of Writing 1, students should be able to

1. Comprehend, discuss, and critically analyze assigned readings.
2. Communicate effectively in writing by
   • responding successfully to a variety of assignments
     • using appropriate rhetorical strategies for developing and organizing ideas
     • incorporating both instructor and peer feedback in the revision processes
     • completing written work that responds appropriately to the assignment and displays a minimum of errors
3. Access and use a variety of learning tools and technologies, such as
   • email, the Internet, and word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word) for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts through such venues as attached electronic files or BlackBoard.
   • academic support services such as the Writing Center.

Writing 1 prepares students for Writing 2 (English 1551). Students will use summary, paraphrase, and quotation as they incorporate their readings into their essays; with that, they will use appropriate citation conventions. All assignments should aim to help students respond to texts critically and to write college-level prose, but instructors may use other kinds of readings and writing activities to help students meet this goal.

Texts
Unless otherwise noted, the most recent editions of textbooks will be used. Required textbooks include EasyWriter 4e with MLA/APA Updates: A Pocket Reference by Andrea A. Lunsford, and one of the following (according to the instructor’s syllabus):

Writing (as) Work (Bedford), 2nd ed.
Norton Reader (SHORTER) (Peterson), 12th ed.

Language Awareness (Eschholtz), 10th ed.
The Prose Reader (Flachman), 9th ed.

Students are also encouraged to purchase a good dictionary, such as Webster’s New World College Dictionary (4th edition).
Engagement in the Learning Process

Engagement in the learning process is a key goal of a college education for all students. Students will actively participate in their learning in Writing 1 by reading, writing, revising, and working with their peers. Students in Writing 1 are expected to

- **Read all text selections** assigned by the instructor.

- **Do at least three in-depth writing assignments**, each comprising at least one rough draft as well as a final draft that shows evidence of significant revision. Typically, these writing assignments involve the completion of a formal work that expresses the student's perspective and shows engagement with some set of readings. Instructors customize these assignments within the parameters of Writing 1's general goals.

The individual writing assignments will vary in length, but students will write at least 5,000 words, primarily in formal projects, although other writing assignments may count.

- **Complete all other assignments** required by the instructor (e.g., in-class or out-of-class writing, graded or ungraded writing, prewriting, and revision or rewriting.)

- **Follow the schedule and policies** in the instructor's syllabus regarding preparation, attendance, classroom participation, and assignment deadlines.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is essential for all MCU students. To enhance students' information literacy, instructors are expected to introduce students in Writing 1 to resources at The Library during one class session. Instructors may conduct these introductions themselves or with the assistance of library staff, who can offer directed, customized instruction.

Computer Lab Classrooms

When class is held in a computer lab, instructors are expected to take advantage of technologies useful in engaging students in the activities of the course. Instructors are also expected to introduce students briefly to the hardware and software necessary for completing the course successfully; students requiring additional assistance may be referred to the Center for Student Progress or the Disability Services office.

At minimum, students are expected to learn to use email, the Internet, and Microsoft Word.

Grades

**Final grades for Writing 1 are A, B, C, and NC (No Credit):** Students who earn a grade of A or B have fulfilled course assignments at an outstanding or higher than average level; a C indicates satisfactory performance in the course.

A final average of less than C will earn a grade of NC for the course. An NC does not affect the overall GPA, but it does appear on the student's transcript, and the student must repeat Writing 1. It may be retaken only once without the approval of the dean. Successful completion of Writing 1 is required before a student will be permitted to register for Writing 2 (English 1551).

**Students are responsible for being aware of their grade in Writing 1 when they register for their next semester's classes.**

**MCU Policy on Incomplete Grades:** The instructor may assign a grade of Incomplete (I) only if the following conditions are met:

- the student has requested the Incomplete ahead of time;
- all course work prior to this request has been satisfactorily completed;
- the Instructor agrees that an I is warranted.

MCU policy states that students have until Mar. 1 to complete a Fall semester Incomplete and until Sep. 1 to complete a Spring semester Incomplete; instructors are permitted to require that the work be completed in a shorter amount of time. If no formal grade change occurs by the specified deadline, the I automatically reverts to an NC.

**Audit Policy:** Students who register to audit a composition course should consult the instructor about minimum requirements.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

**All assignments completed in English 1550 must be the product of the student’s own thought and inquiry.**

Plagiarism means presenting words, ideas, or information found in works written by others as if they were your own. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, all forms of cheating, as well as receiving inappropriate assistance from others in completing an assignment.

Instructors are responsible for teaching students about plagiarism and for distinguishing between intentional plagiarism and unintentional errors of citation. However, students are responsible for any actions that might constitute plagiarism. The penalty for plagiarism ranges from failing the assignment to getting an NC in the course. For more information, please see the MCU Student Code, particularly Articles I and IX, at [http://www.MCU.edu/thecode.pdf](http://www.MCU.edu/thecode.pdf).
Academic Support Resources

The Writing Center
Students may seek one-on-one or group assistance at the Writing Center by calling or visiting [http://MCU.mywconline.com](http://MCU.mywconline.com) to make an appointment with a Writing Center Consultant. The Writing Center has hours Monday through Friday whenever classes are in session. Plus, Sunday hours are available in fall and spring semesters. Check out the various Writing Center locations at the Writing Center website: [www.MCU.edu/writingcenter](http://www.MCU.edu/writingcenter)

Americans With Disabilities Act
Anyone requiring special adaptations or accommodations should inform the instructor as soon as possible, preferably at the beginning of the semester. In accordance with University procedures, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the Center for Student Progress Disability Services. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through Disability Services and provide their instructor with an official letter of accommodation.
ENGLISH 1551: Writing 2
English Department General Syllabus

Course Description
Practice in writing with emphasis on the process of investigation: exploration of topics, formulation of tentative theses, collection of data from suitable primary and secondary sources, and clear and appropriate presentation of the results of these inquiries. Students divide their time between regular classrooms and computer classrooms, where they have the opportunity to perform research on the World Wide Web. Prerequisite: ENGL 1550 or Composition Placement Test results. Grading is ABC/NC. 3 s.h.

Writing 2 is a general-education requirement.

Course Focus
Building upon the critical reading, thinking, and writing skills learned in Writing 1 (English 1550), students in Writing 2 work to refine their ability to construct credible, authoritative, and appropriately-documented arguments.

Placement
Placement into Writing 2 is based on successful completion of Writing 1 (English 1550) or Composition Placement Test results along with ACT English sub-scores, SAT Verbal sub-scores, and/or COMPASS™ Reading Test Score.

Fee
MCU requires students to pay a technology and materials fee in Writing 2. This fee is used to maintain and replace equipment, software, and supplies.

Students in Writing 2 will
- Read and critically analyze texts, especially texts containing arguments, focusing on the rhetorical strategies authors use to advance their claims.
- Critique their own and their peers’ writing using various evaluation strategies.
- Write primarily nonfiction, argumentative essays built upon writing-process materials such as drafts, peer reviews, and instructor comments.
- Use computer labs and other online resources as tools for cultivating their writing.

MCU Syllabus Requirements
Per MCU/MCU-OEA Agreement, Article 28.3, all syllabi must include a grading policy and an attendance policy.

Texts
Unless otherwise noted, the most recent editions of textbooks will be used. The required handbook is EasyWriter 4e with MLA/APA Updates: A Pocket Reference by Andrea A. Lunsford. In addition, instructors may require one of the following textbooks (however, a textbook is not required for 1551):

- Aims of Argument (Crusius), 7th ed.
- Everything’s an Argument (Lunsford), 5th ed.
- Elements of Argument (Rottenberg), 10th ed.
- Good Reasons: Researching and Writing Effective Arguments (Faigley), 5th ed.

Students are also encouraged to purchase a good dictionary, such as Webster’s New World College Dictionary (4th edition).

Course Goals
Upon successful completion of Writing 2, students should be able to

1. Comprehend, discuss, and critically analyze assigned readings.

2. Produce credible, authoritative, and appropriately documented arguments by
   - developing and organizing the components of argumentative essays (e.g., claims, evidence).
   - writing in a way that meets the demands of specific audiences (e.g., by considering counter-arguments).
   - incorporating both instructor and peer feedback in the revision processes.
   - knowing when to use specific citation styles (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago, AP) and where to find guidance for using them.
   - producing final drafts of written arguments that display a minimum of errors.

3. Access and use a variety of learning tools and technologies, such as
   - articles, books and other materials at The library to locate, assess, and incorporate data from electronic sources, particularly academic venues, such as ________, JSTOR, and university-supported websites.
   - email, the Internet, and word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word).
   - academic support services such as the Writing Center.

All course assignments should aim to help students respond to and produce research-based arguments, but instructors may use other kinds of readings and writing activities to help students meet this goal.
Engagement in the Learning Process

Engagement in the learning process is a key goal of a college education for all students. Students are expected to engage in their education through completing in- and out-of-class assignments, participating in in-class discussions and being prepared for and actively involved in peer-editing processes. Students in Writing 2 are expected to:

- **Read text selections** assigned by the instructor.

- **Draft and revise several writing assignments that culminate in a final researched argument.** The total number of words will be at least 5,000 words. Students will plan and carry out a research project, including determining what support they need and from where they might get it, using various kinds of credible sources, and composing a final project that incorporates varied, academically credible sources.

- **Follow the schedule and policies** in the instructor’s syllabus regarding preparation, attendance, classroom participation, and assignment deadlines.

Information Literacy

Information literacy is essential. In Writing 1, students were introduced to the Library and using readings in their essays. Now, to enhance students’ information literacy and facility with research in various formats, they will use the Library’s, electronic sources made available through ________, and other credible websites in projects, culminating in a final researched argument.

Computer Lab Classrooms

When class is held in a computer lab, instructors are expected to take advantage of technologies useful in engaging students in the activities of the course. Instructors are also expected to introduce students briefly to the hardware and software necessary for completing the course successfully; students requiring additional assistance may be referred to the Center for Student Progress or the Disability Services office.

At minimum, students are expected to learn to use research from ________ credible Internet websites in their writing.

Grades

**Final grades for Writing 2 are A, B, C, and NC (No Credit):** Students who earn a grade of A or B have fulfilled course assignments at an outstanding or higher than average level; a C indicates satisfactory performance in the course.

A final average of less than C will earn a grade of NC for the course. An NC does not affect the overall GPA, but it does appear on the student’s transcript, and the student must repeat Writing 2. It may be retaken only once without the approval of the dean.

**Students are responsible for being aware of their grades in Writing 2 when they register for their next semester’s classes.**

**MCU Policy on Incomplete grades:** The instructor may as-sign a grade of Incomplete (I) only if the following conditions are met:

- the student has requested the Incomplete ahead of time;
- all course work prior to this request has been satisfactorily completed;
- the Instructor agrees that an I is warranted.

MCU policy states that students have until Mar. 1 to complete a Fall semester Incomplete and until Sep. 1 to complete a Spring semester Incomplete; instructors are permitted to require that the work be completed in a shorter amount of time. If no formal grade change occurs by the specified deadline, the I automatically reverts to an NC.

**Audit Policy:** Students who register to audit a composition course should consult the instructor about minimum requirements.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

All assignments completed in Writing 2 must be the product of the student's own thought and inquiry.

**Plagiarism means presenting words, ideas, or information found in works written by others as if they were your own.**
Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, all forms of cheating, as well as receiving inappropriate assistance from others in completing an assignment. Instructors are responsible for teaching students about plagiarism and for distinguishing between intentional plagiarism and unintentional errors of citation. However, students are responsible for any actions that might constitute plagiarism. The penalty for plagiarism ranges from failing the assignment to getting an NC in the course. For more information, please see the MCU Student Code, particularly Articles I and IX, at http://www.MCU.edu/thecode.pdf.

Academic Support Resources

The Writing Center
Students may seek one-on-one or group assistance at the Writing Center or visiting http://MCU.mywconline.com to make an appointment with a Writing Center Consultant. The Writing Center has hours Monday through Friday whenever classes are in session. Plus, Sunday hours are available in fall and spring semesters. Check out the various Writing Center locations at the Writing Center website: www.MCU.edu/writingcenter

Americans With Disabilities Act
Anyone requiring special adaptations or accommodations should inform the instructor as soon as possible, preferably at the beginning of the semester. In accordance with University procedures, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the Center for Student Progress Disability Services). Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through Disability Services and provide their instructor with an official letter of accommodation.
### APPENDIX 4: ROAD RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Rubric Attributes</th>
<th>Rubric Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Error in message</td>
<td>Error in the mean of the message</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Less logical than usual</td>
<td>Less logical than usual</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reason for the decision and criteria for the decision</td>
<td>Reason for the decision and criteria for the decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>- With evidence presented</td>
<td>With evidence presented</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conclusion without evidence</td>
<td>Conclusion without evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conclusion in clear evidence</td>
<td>Conclusion in clear evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Control of syntax and punctuation</td>
<td>Control of syntax and punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Control of spacing</td>
<td>Control of spacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Word choice and expression</td>
<td>Word choice and expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Appropriate use of the vocabulary</td>
<td>Appropriate use of the vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Symbols and notation</td>
<td>Symbols and notation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conclusions that are clear</td>
<td>Conclusions that are clear</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conclusions that are supported</td>
<td>Conclusions that are supported</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conclusions that are developed</td>
<td>Conclusions that are developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Appropriate and relevant to the context</td>
<td>Appropriate and relevant to the context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conclusion that is clear and supported</td>
<td>Conclusion that is clear and supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Education Writing & Critical Thinking Rubric**

If a criterion is not met, a score of the highest value indicated by the initial criterion shown that will be assessed is assigned to the work. If a criterion is met, a score of the highest value indicated by the initial criterion shown that will be assessed is assigned to the work.

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General Education Writing & Critical Thinking Rubric

If a criterion is not met, a score of the highest value indicated by the initial criterion shown that will be assessed is assigned to the work. If a criterion is met, a score of the highest value indicated by the initial criterion shown that will be assessed is assigned to the work.
APPENDIX 5: HUMAN SUBJECT REVIEW APPROVAL DOCUMENTS

June 15, 2011

TO: George Bret Bowers
ENG

FROM: Hillary Harms, Ph.D.
HSRB Administrator

RE: HSRB Project No.: H11D207GE7

TITLE: Post-Literacy: Designing Writing Curricula around Emerging Literate Activities

You have met the conditions for approval for your project involving human subjects. As of June 8, 2011, your project has been granted final approval by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). This approval expires on March 31, 2012. You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and you must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.

You are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB and to use only approved forms. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, send a request for modifications to the HSRB via this office. Those changes must be approved by the HSRB prior to their implementation.

You have been approved to enroll 10 participants. If you want to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

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

Comments/Modifications:
Stamped original consent forms are coming to you via campus mail.

c: Dr. Kris Blair
Research Category: EXPEDITED #7
Department of English

G. Bret Bowers
Doctoral Student
English Department
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43402
bowersg@bgsu.edu

Research Project Title: Post-Literacy: Designing Writing Curricula around Emerging Literate Activities

Informed Consent Form for the Head of the Youngstown State University Composition Committee

Introduction and Background Information

You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by G. Bret Bowers from the Department of English at Bowling Green State University as part of his dissertation. Your participation in this study will involve giving the researcher access to summer training sessions and composition committee meeting held between August and December at Youngstown State University.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the different literacies being used in college writing classrooms and curricula and how best to incorporate multimodal/computer literacies in existing writing curricula. For this study, multimodal/computer literacies are those literacies which are not completely text based literacies that are typical of academic writing. Examples include YouTube videos, websites, and photo editing, just to name a few.

Procedures

I will ask you to participate in one interview session where I will ask you questions on the use and development of literacies in the college writing curriculum and classroom. The interview will be conducted at a time of your convenience during the summer or fall semester of 2011. Additionally, I will be observing composition committee meetings and teacher training sessions before and throughout the fall semester. I will take notes and participate throughout the training and meetings.

Potential Risks

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study.

Benefits

The benefits of this study include how to better adapt multimodal/digital literacies into first year writing curriculums. Specifically, the participants involved they will get a better picture as how to best adapt those literacies for their program. For the field at large, this study attempts to find where and how these literacies are being developed and learning how best to deploy these literacies across writing curricula.
Confidentiality

Research participants will be referred to by pseudonyms. Research findings will also refer to research participants' institution as a pseudonym too. Any information collected will be coded and any names blacked out. All data collected can only be accessed by the primary researcher and his/her advisor. The data will be stored on a password-protected computer and any physical materials provided will be placed in a locking file cabinet, which only the researcher has access to. In addition, any information that can link a particular participant to data collected—for instance, history and personal or academic background—will be deleted in both the dissertation and recommendation to make the data less likely to be traced. However, even with these precautions there is a potential risk that some of the data given could potentially be identified by other individuals.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty.

Research Subject's Rights and Contact Persons

You acknowledge that all your present questions have been answered in a language you can understand and all future questions will be treated in the same manner. If you have any questions about the study, please contact Bret Bowers (cell): 330-277-9531 or (email): bowersgp@bsu.edu. You can also contact Dr. Kristine Blair, project advisor, at kblair@bsu.edu.

If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 or via email at (hrb@bg.edu) or Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs at YSU (330)-941-2877.

Consent

By signing below you agree that you have read and been informed of the above information and hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this study. You also agree that you have been given a copy of the consent.

Informed Consent Form for Research Participants
Post-Literacy: Designing Writing Curricula around Emerging Literate Activities

Signed 

Date
G. Bret Bowers  
Doctoral Student  
English Department  
Bowling Green State University  
Bowling Green, OH 43402  
bowersg@bgsu.edu

Research Project Title: Post-Literacy: Designing Writing Curricula around Emerging Literate Activities

Informed Consent Form for all Research Participants

Introduction and Background Information

You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by G. Bret Bowers from the Department of English at Bowling Green State University as part of his dissertation. Your participation in this study will involve answering questions during a one hour interview session related to your use of literacy and multimodal/computer literacies in the writing classroom. The interview will be audio recorded and should last no longer than approximately one hour. In addition to the interview I will ask you for various documents, including syllabi, assignment sheets and rubrics, to name a few. Also, as part of this research I will be observing composition committee meetings and the pre-fall teacher training sessions.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the different literacies being used in college writing classrooms and curricula and how best to incorporate multimodal/computer literacies in existing writing curricula. For this study, multimodal/computer literacies are those literacies which are not completely text based literacies that are typical of academic writing. Examples include YouTube videos, websites, and photo editing, just to name a few.

Procedures

I will ask you to participate in one interview session where I will ask you questions on the use and development of literacies in the college writing curriculum and classroom. The interview will be conducted at a time of your convenience during the summer or fall semester of 2011. Additionally, I will be observing composition committee meetings and teacher training sessions before and throughout the fall semester and taking notes during these sessions. In addition to taking notes, I will participate throughout the training and meetings. During the observations of these meetings I will take notes on specifics pertaining to this project, specifically anything tied to issues of digital and computer literacies.

Potential Risks

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study.
Benefits

The benefits of this study include how to better adapt multimodal/digital literacies into first year writing curriculums. Specifically, the participants involved will get a better picture as to how best adapt those literacies for their program. For the field at large, this study attempts to find where and how these literacies are being developed and learning how best to deploy these literacies across writing curricula.

Confidentiality

Research participants will be referred to by pseudonyms. Research findings will also refer to research participants' institution as a pseudonym too. Any information collected will be coded and any names blacked out. All data collected can only be accessed by the primary researcher and his/her advisor. The data will be stored on a password protected computer and any physical materials provided will be placed in a locking file cabinet, which only the researcher has access to. In addition, any information that can link a particular participant to data collected—for instance, history and personal or academic background—will be deleted in both the dissertation and recommendation to make the data less likely to be traced. However, even with these precautions there is a potential risk that some of the data given could potentially be identified by other individuals.

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If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University's Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 or via email at (hsrb@bgsu.edu) or Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs at YSU (330)-941-2377.

Consent

By signing below you agree that you have read and been informed of the above information and hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this study. You also agree that you have been given a copy of the consent.

---------------------------------  ----------------------------------
Informed Consent Form for Research Participants  
Post-Literacy: Designing Writing Curricula around Emerging Literate Activities

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ________________