

USING WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES TO TEACH “LITERACY FOR LIFE”:  
HOW TO USE *MULTIMODALMATTERS.COM*  
TO FACILITATE TRANSFER IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

by

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This thesis is dedicated to my father and the memory of my mother.

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## ABSTRACT

Composition programs across the country have re-imagined their first-year composition (FYC) courses in response to student needs and have chosen to incorporate technology to improve transfer of knowledge and skills. Middle Tennessee State University's English department is transitioning to a revised FYC course called "Literacy for Life." As I prepared to teach this course, I consulted scholars such as Andrea A. Lunsford, Rebecca S. Nowacek, Susan McLeod, Cheryl E. Ball, Gail E. Hawisher, and Cynthia L. Selfe. These scholars had me reconsidering my pedagogy and seeing the need for improved access to Web 2.0 technologies in FYC. The creation of *MultimodalMatters.com* allows instructors and students to utilize Web 2.0 technologies within an online space which provides the instructor the ability to encourage appropriateness, manage distribution, and address any technical difficulties. On *Multimodalmatters.com*, instructors saw the greatest potential for transfer with *NotaBene*, *WordPress*, and Media Galleries, noting the transfer facets of improved meta-cognitive awareness, knowledge of real-world audiences, and assessment of new genres as particularly evident.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

University English departments are in a constant state of flux, always reacting to the paradigms fighting for dominance. This is especially the case in first-semester composition courses. Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) recently experienced one of these transitional times in its first-semester composition course, English 1010. This course had previously been titled simply “Expository Writing,” but Lower Division Director Dr. Laura Dubek saw the need for this class to be more than a way for students to learn modes-based composition methods or for them to create “academic” essays without a specific, real-world audience or context in mind. Dr. Dubek saw a need for students to create texts that would help them develop transferable skills and be precursory to those they would produce in their later college courses and in their future careers and personal lives. This led to the implementation of a pilot program that would add a subtitle to the Expository Writing course, “Literacy for Life.” She assembled a task force to perform research and develop the new course, which included Dr. Allison D. Smith, Dr. Julie Myatt Barger, Jennifer Rowan, Patricia Baines, and others. The group began to investigate just how to achieve these new goals and started to prepare the Graduate Teaching Assistants and selected first-year composition instructors to create and teach these new classes.

### **Creating *MultimodalMatters.com* on the Path to “Literacy for Life”**

That infectious investigative spirit about “Literacy for Life” took hold in me during the spring of 2013 (my second semester in the English graduate program at MTSU). In Dr. Allison Smith’s “Seminar in Teaching Literature” course, my



classmates—Jonathan Bradley<sup>1</sup> and Donna Swaner— and I began to consider the rather sparse scholarship about teaching literature at the collegiate level. I was intrigued by what we were able to find because some of the available scholarship showed that both high school and college instructors were using instructional technology and Web 2.0 technologies to teach students about literature and to have students produce their own multimodal texts. I was somewhat passively preparing the course documents for an “Expository Writing” course that I was slated to start teaching in fall 2013, and these instructors’ uses of technology seemed brimming with possibilities.

My classmates and I had discussions about the successes and failures of the technologies being used to teach literature, and those discussions led to Jonathan and I investigating ways that these technologies could be used to engage students in the composition classes that he was already teaching and I would soon be teaching. In the literature pedagogy seminar, each student developed a theme-based literature survey course, but both Jonathan and I used this as an opportunity to explore Web 2.0 technologies that might have pedagogical implications in our first or second-semester composition classes as well.

We found many promising Web 2.0 technologies, but our research did uncover some challenges. First was the challenge of accessibility. Although these technologies were all over the internet, the logistics of sending students to use them on their own proved difficult in some instructors’ previous applications. Second was the challenge of

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<sup>1</sup> During the development of *MultimodalMatters.com*, Dr. Jonathan Bradley was still a graduate student in English at MTSU. For short, he will be referred to as “Jonathan” throughout the introduction and as “Dr. Bradley” in subsequent chapters, which take place after he received his doctoral degree.

supervision. In our research, having students use technologies that were housed on external websites and that were open to the entire internet posed both privacy and civility issues. This was also seen in the personal experience of other GTAs who were trying to implement the “Literacy for Life” class model. The final challenge that we focused on concerned sustainability. As students used these Web 2.0 technologies, their data and texts were being scattered across the internet. This made it exceptionally difficult to maintain access to the texts for assessment purposes or to use them as models in future semesters. Our literature seminar class discussed these and other issues, deciding that there must be a way to mitigate the challenges and take advantage of the excellent pedagogical tools that we saw these technologies to be.

Despite being a Ph.D. student in the English program, Jonathan had experience with website development and programming, and those skills became the way to address our challenges. Through our pedagogical discussions, he and I decided that there should be a web portal that allows students to easily take advantage of multiple Web 2.0 technologies without asking them to venture all over the internet. Both as our professor and as the returning Graduate Teaching Assistant Coordinator, Dr. Smith was very supportive of this idea and saw it as a way to help the GTAs take steps toward incorporating the Web 2.0 technologies in their FYC classrooms as well as their literature classrooms.

After this realization, Jonathan began to investigate the logistics of establishing a website of our own that would have the functionality that we needed to accomplish our pedagogical goals. We determined that it would take a small monetary investment to get

started before we could move any further. We applied for a small grant from the Graduate Teaching Assistant program to purchase a domain name and web hosting that would allow Jonathan more administrative control than we would have had on the university's highly regulated server.<sup>2</sup> For more detailed information about the setup process for *MultimodalMatters.com*, please see Appendix A. We were granted the funds and were able to start experimenting with a variety of instructional technologies that would have been more difficult or impossible for our students to access before. In conference with Dr. Smith, we decided to name the site *MultimodalMatters.com* as a way reinforce the importance of multimodal literacies. The name helps connect the more general concept of multimodal composing with the *Research Matters* text that is already being use for "Argumentative Writing" at MTSU.

During the remainder of that 2013 spring semester, our seminar class completed technology-infused syllabi for our proposed, theme-based literature courses, but Jonathan and I were also looking for ways to utilize these technologies and *MultimodalMatters.com* in our composition courses to encourage transfer. This search continued into the summer, and Dr. Smith<sup>3</sup> provided some funding so that Jonathan would be compensated for some of the hours he spent choosing, installing, and testing software. During a summer directed reading with Dr. Smith, I researched various aspects of transfer and considered how our project might help me facilitate greater transfer in my

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<sup>2</sup> The GTA program provided \$30.08 to purchase the domain name for five years and \$161.64 to pay for hosting through *GoDaddy.com* for three years.

<sup>3</sup> Faculty members in the English department at MTSU are provided \$600 per year for professional development and travel. Dr. Allison Smith used her funding for the 2012-2013 academic year to compensate Jonathan.

“Literacy for Life” course. Ultimately, Jonathan and I settled on several instructional technologies that we saw as more of a starting point than a definitive list. These technologies included:

Table 1. *MultimodalMatters.com* Original Technologies

<b>Technology</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>NotaBene</i>	Open source group annotation software
<i>WikkaWiki</i>	Open source wiki software that allows students to create, edit, and comment on pages that have been created within the system.
<i>WordPress</i>	Open source blog software to create and maintain blog pages.
Student Websites	This area allows instructors to post links to websites that students create.
<i>Open Journal Systems</i>	Open source system to create and maintain a journal, facilitate peer-review, or create a collection of student work.
<i>Canvas</i>	Open source Learning Management System, similar to <i>Desire2Learn</i> or <i>Blackboard</i>
<i>Media Galleries</i>	Media Gallery pages allow students or instructors to post YouTube videos, images, and audio files to share with other users.

At this stage we also saw a need to create a term for our new web portal. Due to the persistent nature of the online resources and the ability to maintain past student work to use in future classes, we coined the term “Enduring Learning Community” (ELC) to describe *MultimodalMatters.com* and others like it that may be created in the future. With our vision for the ELC and our chosen technologies in mind, Jonathan and I crafted our

fall 2013 “Literacy for Life” classes and started to spread the word about this new instructional resource throughout the department.

During August 2013, we first focused on informing the GTAs about the uses of *MultimodalMatters.com*. At MTSU, GTAs who will be teaching during the fall semester are required to attend a set of orientation activities designed to help them prepare course documents and reinforce pedagogy before the semester begins. Jonathan and I were invited to speak about *MultimodalMatters.com* at the orientation, and Clint Bryan, a GTA who had had success with multimodal assignments during the pilot, joined us as we shared strategies for creating multimodal assignments and presented the functionality that *MultimodalMatters.com* offers instructors.<sup>4</sup> Later in August, Dr. Dubek asked Jonathan to share *MultimodalMatters.com* with the lower division faculty at the fall 2013 Lower Division Curriculum Meeting. His presentation was similar to our talk for the GTAs and simply provided an overview of the technologies that the website included and suggested how they could be utilized in “Literacy for Life,” “Argumentative Writing,” and various literature classes to facilitate multimodal assignments that promote knowledge and skills transfer. These were the first opportunities for the GTAs and FYC faculty to ask any questions they had about the system and to request their own instructor pages. Unfortunately, we got a lukewarm response. I was not prepared for so many of the GTAs and FYC faculty to be resistant to *MultimodalMatters.com* and incorporating multimodality in their classrooms; however, more instructors showed interest as the first semester progressed.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix D to review a copy of the syllabus and schedule I used during the most recent semester, Spring 2014.

In the fall of 2013, Jonathan had graduated and was no longer a GTA. He was now a Lecturer in the English department, which required that he teach five classes per semester<sup>5</sup>. With this new position, Jonathan was unable to be both the programmer and administrator of the website. To address this new need in the department, the GTA Coordinator Dr. Allison Smith decided to create a new position of Digital Media Specialist who would be responsible for administering the website, mentoring other instructors, creating resources to ease the implementation of the instructional technologies, and organizing and leading workshops to train instructors to take advantage of the possibilities offered through *MultimodalMatters.com*. I was offered this position for the 2013-14 academic year, and it accounted for half of my assistantship responsibility, a total of 10 hours per week. During the first semester, the GTA coordinator and assistant coordinators determined that being the administrator for the website and being a contact for the department was an important position that needed to remain filled. To make sure this continues after I graduate, a Digital Media Specialist in Training position was created, and Sarah Gray began serving in that capacity in January 2014.<sup>6</sup>

During the first two semesters *MultimodalMatters.com* was operational, twenty-five GTAs and lower division faculty, including Jonathan and myself, requested access to the site and utilized it to varying degrees. Some used the site to experiment with the

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<sup>5</sup> In fall 2013, Jonathan taught two sections of “Literacy for Life,” two sections of “Argumentative Writing,” and one section of “The Experience of Literature.” He used *MultimodalMatters.com* for all of his courses.

<sup>6</sup> This “in training” position will only be utilized during the semester before the current Digital Media Specialist will be leaving the program. Typical longevity for this position should be one to two years.

technologies and consider how they may want to slowly integrate any of them in their own pedagogy, meanwhile others chose one or two specific technologies that they were interested in and attempted to implement them in the classroom immediately with differing degrees of success. Several of the instructors were excited to adopt *MultimodalMatters.com*, taking advantage of multiple technologies over the course of the first semesters, discovering what worked for them, and personalizing their individual webpages to include brief information about their personal and professional lives as well as their contact information and other course details. During the first two semesters, some issues arose and showed us the limitations of the system, forcing us to adapt to the ever changing digital environment.

Some of *MultimodalMatters.com*'s initial challenges were ultimately similar to those we were trying to avoid by establishing our own ELC. Our *WikkaWiki* installation was accessible to outside input by design, but the safeguards that were supposed to allow us to regulate who could create and respond to articles were not enabling us to block spam comments or disable external users' ability to create articles. When our space was breached, we were forced to disable the Wiki for the remainder of the fall 2013 semester and install a different software program that would give us the administrative power that we needed to keep the learning environment safe for students. The other two major issues that we experienced during the first semester of the project had to do with the volume of students we were dealing with. Having several instructors with multiple classes who wanted to use *MultimodalMatters.com* was exciting, but our server restrictions would not allow us to have a central database of students. First, this meant that we had to add each

student to technologies like “Media Galleries” and *WordPress* one-by-one. With a little research and by paying some small fees,<sup>7</sup> we were able to utilize applications that would allow us to upload a class of students or multiple classes of students at once. Second, this meant that students were still required to create and maintain separate user names and passwords for several of the technologies. Students were encouraged to use their university assigned user name and a password that they would easily remember, but many students required password resets. This was more prevalent with *WordPress* than with other technologies because there was a system hiccup which resulted in students being sent the wrong randomly generated passwords. This meant that they were unable to sign in initially and reset their own passwords. Through addressing these challenges, we discovered that some fundamental aspects of *MultimodalMatters.com* must be redesigned before it could expand beyond MTSU’s FYC instructors.

Outward momentum is integral to the open access goal of the digital Enduring Learning Community idea. Jonathan and I see the pedagogical benefits of a site like *MultimodalMatters.com* reaching far beyond FYC or even the English department. We are in the process of trouble-shooting problems as they present themselves and see our next steps necessitating a move to a different underlying website structure. Since a number of our challenges could easily be addressed with more administrative privileges on the server that hosts our ELC, we intend to move forward with plans to create a sister-site to *MultimodalMatters.com* that would allow us to test these new improvements

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<sup>7</sup> The *Arra User Migrate for Joomla* (\$9.99) plugin made it possible for us to add multiple students to *MultimodalMatters.com*, and the *Batch-Create* (\$19) plugin made it possible for us to create students accounts in bulk on our *WordPress* installation.



without suspending functionality on the current site. Pedagogically, we are both passionate about making instructional technology accessible to educators across the disciplines and hope to see this project continue to grow as an open access community to encourage learning throughout the university and transfer among university courses.

### **Developing “Literacy for Life” in First-Year Composition at MTSU**

The Lower Division English administrators at Middle Tennessee State University have always been in charge of taking steps to better prepare their FYC students to successfully communicate in later university courses. The department first assessed “Argumentative Writing,” the second course in the required FYC sequence, and took steps to create a course that would better help students develop the skills needed to succeed in the university.<sup>8</sup> In the fall of 2011, the Lower Division Committee investigated the first-year composition sequences at several comparable universities<sup>9</sup> and found that the “Argumentative Writing” redesign made the MTSU course similar to comparable courses at other universities that were including Writing Across the Curriculum in their comparable classes. Unfortunately, the investigators also found that the “Expository Writing” course being taught at MTSU was dated, and similar level classes at other universities involved different content as well as different pedagogical approaches. Using the Committee’s investigation as guidance, Lower Division Director Dr. Laura Dubek reconsidered the *Harbrace Handbook* which was the required handbook

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<sup>8</sup> The dates, names, and details in the “Developing ‘Literacy for Life’ in First-Year Composition at MTSU” section can be found in correspondence with and documents received from Dr. Laura Dubek and personal communication with Dr. Allison Smith. For detailed citation information, see the Works Cited list.

<sup>9</sup> In “It’s all Communication: 8/22/2013,” Dr. Dubek includes a list of 18 peer institutions. Several of these include Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, University of Central Florida, George Mason University, Georgia State University, and Georgia Southern University.

at the time. She also raised questions about the identity of the English program at MTSU, posing her questions to the department as a whole.

This department-wide discussion resulted in Dubek and Dr. Allison Smith developing and presenting ideas to the Graduate Teaching Assistants Coordinator, Dr. Julie Barger, and her assistant coordinators, Jennifer Rowan and Patricia Baines, early in the spring of 2012. Over the next several weeks, the group drew inspiration from Andrea Lunsford's focus on real-world writing and encouraging students to see themselves as authors. With Lunsford's scholarship in mind, the group coined the name "Literacy for Life" for the new course and established teaching and learning objectives that were informed by current pedagogical research in the field of composition and showed a focus on transferable skills and knowledge. See Appendix B for a full list of the original "Expository Writing" objectives and Appendix C for the newly created "Literacy for Life" objectives. The new requirements for the revised course differed in some fundamental ways from the previous requirements. For example, instructors were encouraged to have students create multimodal texts, which made it difficult to quantify completion of the course by fulfilling a word count requirement. Previously, "Expository Writing" had required writing four papers consisting of at least 1000 words each. The variety of real-world genres that would be assigned in the "Literacy for Life" courses made it impossible to translate this previous requirement directly to the revised course. With this and other challenges in mind, the group also decided that this new variation of the course should be tested as a pilot program with a select few instructors and carefully chosen textbooks that address the new objectives of the course. After soliciting academic

publishers for appropriate books, the task force chose *The Call to Write* (by John Trimbur) and *How to Write Anything* (by John J. Ruszkiewicz) as the initial texts that instructors would be able to choose between. Beyond these textbook options, instructors were required to use a newly customized handbook, *Easy Writer* (by Andrea Lunsford). Armed with the newly created objectives and approved textbooks, the group of Graduate Teaching Assistants and selected faculty prepared to launch the pilot program.<sup>10</sup>

The first pilot “Literacy for Life” courses were offered in fall 2012. Throughout the term, various aspects of the pilot were assessed, including the textbook selections, and the program leaders addressed issues as they arose. The Lower Division Committee also reviewed the syllabi instructors were using to teach “Literacy for Life” and compared them to the revised learning objectives. While collecting input and data from the first semester of courses, Dr. Dubek participated in a Faculty Learning Community concerning Common Core K-12 Standards and general education courses at MTSU to better understand the preparation that future FYC students will have. Her findings regarding the Common Core reinforce the move away from the “Expository Writing” course and toward the “Literacy for Life” course that had been designed. Finally, during the fall of 2012, Dr. Dubek distributed a survey to all English instructors that asked for their goals and strategies for teaching “Expository Writing.” With these responses, feedback from the first semester of courses, and the syllabus review, the Dr. Dubek was preparing to present “Literacy for Life” to English Department as a whole.

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<sup>10</sup> Pilot faculty teaching “Literacy for Life:” Laura Dubek, Robert Petersen, Jennifer Rowan, and Ethan Castelo

The January 2013 spring Lower Division Curriculum Meeting featured a presentation that explained “Literacy for Life” to the lower division English faculty and discussed the previous semester’s pilot courses. Those first pilot courses had been restricted to two textbook options, but the Graduate Teaching Assistant Coordination (GTAC) administrators in conjunction with the Lower Division Committee had expanded the approved book list to five options for the second semester, spring 2013. This new list of texts added *Everyone’s An Author* (by Andrea Lunsford, Lisa Ede, Beverly Moss and Carole Clark Papper), *Write Now* (by Daniel Anderson), and *Writing Today* (by Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine). After this change was made and the results of the first semester had been considered, the Lower Division Committee reviewed and critiqued a draft of the formal proposal for the new “Literacy for Life” course that would be submitted to the university’s General Studies Curriculum Committee.

During the spring of 2013, Dr. Dubek again surveyed the faculty, asking for opinions about the focus and direction of the composition program to gain additional information concerning the current perceptions of the department. With the perspectives of the department in mind, Dr. Dubek planned the August 2013 fall Lower Division Curriculum Meeting to best suit the needs of the department as it prepared to make the transition to “Literacy for Life” and facilitate students as they worked to cultivate skills that they could carry with them for their rest of their academic and professional careers. The fall 2013 meeting included an emphasis on multimodality and introduced the newly developed *MultimodalMatters.com* to the faculty for the first time. The multimodal focus was an attempt to demonstrate the possibilities of teaching with multimodal assignments

and better explain the pedagogical expectations of using these assignments in “Literacy for Life” courses. The group of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) teaching “Literacy for Life” in fall 2013 had the benefit of better preparation and input from the previous two pilot semesters. This departmental preparation and the presentation at the Lower Division Curriculum meeting led to many instructors, both GTAs and faculty, embracing multimodal projects and several taking advantage of *MultimodalMatters.com*.

Throughout the fall 2013 semester, Dr. Dubek and Dr. Barger also participated in the Faculty Learning Community on Common Core K-12 Standards<sup>11</sup> and general education at MTSU to continue to become better familiar with the standards that will be used to prepare students in K-12 and will ultimately influence the abilities of the students in the FYC courses at MTSU. This further investigation reinforced the importance of the changes that “Literacy for Life” would bring to the composition program in the English department. To better ensure that the assignments included in these “Literacy for Life” courses would be in line with the program’s goals and objectives, Dr. Dubek asked several instructors to share assignments at the January 2014 spring Lower Division Curriculum Meeting. This gave instructors the opportunity to showcase successful assignments and get input on struggling ones while also giving other instructors who had not transitioned to the pilot the opportunity to see how “Literacy for Life” assignments varied from those assignments they currently used in their FYC courses.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information about the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, go to [http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards.pdf)

Informed by the data gathered during the pilot, Dr. Dubek and Dr. Barger revised the Course Change Proposal for “Literacy for Life” during the spring 2014 semester. Dr. Barger drew on her experiences with the Faculty Learning Community on Common Core K-12 Standards and her own research to create a *crosswalk*. This crosswalk shows how the revised course addresses and is informed by the regulations that are already in place to ensure that students are getting a quality, consistent education by presenting the goals of the Common Core Standards, the Tennessee Board of Regents regulations, and “Literacy for Life” side-by-side. At the end of spring 2014, Dr. Dubek put together a timeline of the process from conception through the pilot program and into the final stages of revision and submission to the Lower Division Committee for approval. As of May 2014, the Lower Division Director is waiting for approval of the course redesign proposal<sup>12</sup> from the Lower Division Committee so that she can pass it along to the chair of the department, the dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and ultimately, the General Studies Curriculum Committee which has the power to approve the new course offering and allow it to replace “Expository Writing.”

Though the course is not officially approved at this time, the pilot process has greatly influenced the way composition is being taught at MTSU. During the pilot of the “Literacy for Life” course, the department certainly supported instructors through the pre-semester Lower Division Curriculum meetings, but those were not the only professional development opportunities for instructors to prepare themselves for the revised course. During each spring semester, the GTA program hosts the Virginia Peck Composition

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<sup>12</sup> Dr. Dubek and Dr. Barger collaborated to compose the course redesign proposal document.

Series, which features a major figure in the field who gives presentations and leads workshops about composition at no charge for area composition instructors. In spring 2013, Dr. Andrea Lunsford spoke about strategies to encourage students to see themselves as writers and to value their own compositions as “real” writing. She also discussed publication and public presentation as ways to facilitate students developing this ownership. As mentioned previously, Lunsford’s work was very influential in the development of the “Literacy for Life” course, to the extent that the task force adopted Lunsford’s handbook as a required text for the course and included her textbook *Everyone’s An Author* and one of the five options for those teaching the pilot. In spring 2014, Dr. Cheryl Ball spoke about asking students to create multimodal compositions and about creating our own professional multimodal compositions. She addressed some of the concerns that instructors have about assigning multimodal or multimedia projects including assessment and hands-on instruction about the technologies themselves. Both of these day-long events were beneficial to instructors as they worked to reimagine their courses as “Literacy for Life” instead of simply “Expository Writing.” Through the scope of the pilot program, the GTA program and the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC) at MTSU also hosted periodic workshops that would help instructors as they worked to develop familiarity with using instructional technologies, grading multimodal assignments, creating digital resources for students, and crafting appropriate assignments that addressed multimodality and “real-world” writing.

The development of this “Literacy for Life” course was largely influenced by the contemporary research and scholarship in FYC specifically and the teaching of composition and communication skills in general. The creation of *MultimodalMatters.com* was also greatly influenced by those sources as well as texts concerning aspects of transfer, writing across the curriculum, multimodal pedagogies and literacies, and the implications of technology in the composition classroom. I discuss specific influential texts from these subject areas in the following literature review.

The English Department at MTSU has been forever changed by these recent pedagogical developments. Although there was a pedagogical change among the GTAs and more open-minded faculty in 2002 to rhetorically-based FYC courses, modes-based methods of teaching composition had still been prevalent at MTSU in previous decades. The current administration’s dedication to moving the program forward and better serving the students made the radical revision of “Expository Writing” into “Literacy for Life” possible. The *MultimodalMatters.com* project and the twenty-five brave instructors who were willing to take the first steps toward this world of new pedagogical possibilities will help others in the department take advantage of what Web 2.0 technologies offer as well as the possibilities that Enduring Learning Communities offer for specific instructors, classes of students, and paired or clustered classes.

In this research project, I explore the background and pedagogical underpinnings that have led to the “Literacy for Life” curriculum shift in general and the development of *MultimodalMatters.com* in particular. Following this discussion, I present three sets of sample assignments using three different instructional technologies available through



*MultimodalMatters.com: NotaBene, WordPress, and Media Galleries.* Within each chapter, I will make connections between the facets of knowledge and skills transfer each assignment includes, the goals of “Literacy for Life,” and the benefits of using our open access Enduring Learning Community, *MultimodalMatters.com*.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Transferring Knowledge and Skills**

Instructors expect their students to take the knowledge and skills that they develop in one class and use them in subsequent courses. This is the essence of transfer. In fact, that goal partially underpins the graduated curriculum structure that is present in the American kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) system and the idea of general education requirements that are mandated across most universities. Despite the concept of transfer being inherent to our education system, its study in academia has been a relatively new phenomenon.

Over the past three decades, composition instructors at the K-12 and university levels have been studying how what is taught in one class can be transferred to future courses or the workplace. This research has spread across multiple areas of composition and has been particularly important for those in the secondary education field. In a two volume series called *What Is “College-Level” Writing?*, editors Patrick Sullivan, Howard Tinberg, and (for the second volume only) Sheridan Blau and their contributors explore the expectations present when those in the field talk about “college-level” writing while also considering the way high school teachers see these expectations and how these teachers are preparing students to make the transition from high school to college and “college-level” writing. In his contribution to the first volume, Sullivan addresses the underlying issue that makes a discussion of transfer between high school and college difficult. In “An Essential Question: What is ‘College-Level’ Writing,” he shows this to be a rather difficult question to address because the parties involved do not agree on the

answer. Sullivan recounts his experience in a statewide meeting of the Connecticut Coalition of English Teachers in 2001 where the participants were, in part, tasked with defining “college-level” writing to arrive at a set of standards that could be used to prepare students to transfer skills from high school English to FYC courses at community colleges. The teachers could not agree on a universal definition of “college-level” writing and the discussion kept returning to a set of difficult questions, which included

- ◆ What makes a piece of writing college level?
- ◆ What differentiates college-level writing from high school-level writing?
- ...
- ◆ And finally, how do college students define college-level writing? What experiences have students had in high school and college classrooms that might help us define college-level writing more effectively? (Sullivan 1-2)

Shortly after this meeting, Sullivan raised the issue of “college-level writing” at a meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English / Two Year College English Association Northeast Conference and found the same disagreement. This group also discussed how this difference of opinion led to a variety of assessment problems and other issues that are explored by the assembly of scholars who contributed to the two volume set (2).

Because high school teachers do not typically work closely with FYC instructors, some teachers misunderstand or are unaware of the expectations that students face in

college classrooms. With little specific knowledge about those expectations, these high school teachers are asked to prepare students for a diverse set of futures, ranging from vocational or military aspirations to plans to pursue post-secondary educations at colleges and universities all over the country that may have different foci concerning composition and varied levels of rigor. In “Am I A Liar? The Angst of a High School Teacher,” Jeanette Jordan<sup>1</sup> considers how far removed high school teachers are from the FYC classroom and how they cannot really know how well they are preparing students until those students return and tell them how prepared or unprepared they felt. Jordan explains, “My visions of college English are updated mainly by alumni who visit and share their experiences with me. I eagerly listen to what they have to say as I question them” (39). She shares some of the questions she asks of students as well as some assignments that have been revised based on that feedback. One exceptional honors student met extreme opposition when a college professor read her researched essay, and Jordan used the professor’s comments on that student’s paper while revising the research project that she assigns in her classes. Unfortunately, this kind of direct and timely feedback is difficult for high school teachers to get, and Jordan admits that the experiences she hears from students may not be representative of others’ experiences and may be practices that are already dated by the time she learns about them. High school teachers’ varying knowledge about the expectations of the college classroom also contributes to students arriving in college with different training and different levels of skill. (Sullivan 6-7)

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<sup>1</sup> with Karen K. Nelson, Howard Clouser, Susan E. Albert, Karen M. Cunningham, and Amanda Scholz

After successfully completing the revision of “Argumentative Writing” in 2011 to address student’s interdisciplinary needs, the Director of Lower Division English at MTSU, Dr. Laura Dubek, wanted to take the next step and revise “Expository Writing.” In her presentation at the fall 2012 GTA orientation, Dr. Dubek shared that the Lower Division Committee had reviewed 18 FYC programs at “peer institutions”<sup>2</sup> and determined that “Expository Writing” should be updated to better meet the diverse needs of students arriving in FYC with different skills from their previous educational experiences. Of course, this diversity of skills and preparedness is not a problem specific to MTSU, and in 2010, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers published the Common Core Standards to address the issue by establishing one set of standards for education in the K-12 system across the United States (“Frequently Asked Questions”). These standards are intended to offer a solution to the disproportionate levels of preparation students get in their K-12 careers and make it easier for college instructors to plan their courses for students who have certain levels of prior, (hopefully) transferable knowledge. Dr. Dubek and other administrators at MTSU, including Dr. Allison Smith, Dr. Julie Barger, Jennifer Rowan, and Patricia Baines, were spurred to drastically revise the “Expository Writing” course in 2012, using the K-12 transition to Common Core Standards, the Lower Division

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<sup>2</sup> These “peer institutions” include Florida Atlantic University, Florida International University, University of Central Florida, George Mason University, Georgia State University, Georgia Southern University, Old Dominion University, University of New Orleans, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of North Texas, University of Southern Mississippi, and University of Texas-Arlington. This list was compiled by the MTSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Research.

Committee's findings of disparate courses at similar universities, and current scholarship as the basis for their revision (Dubek).

Learning Communities is one method other universities have tried to help students work together to compensate for differences in previous education and to encourage the discreet and explicit transfer of skills from one course to another. Students function as a cohort taking two or more classes together in a semester or in several semesters. This allows instructors to work closely with one another to accentuate the knowledge or skills that may overlap between the courses. MTSU's administration tried this strategy as early as 2001, but the program has changed as funding and needs shifted over the years (Witherow). Those early communities were Residential Learning Communities, which were based on housing assignments, and had freshmen who lived together take two or more classes together. More recently, "Raider Learning Communities" have been offered in two configurations: one that had students in the same major take a pair of classes together and the other that had incoming freshman students take four to five classes together for the semester regardless of housing. Unlike typical learning communities, MTSU's program did not require instructors to work closely with one another to identify and exploit potential transfer but did encourage them to communicate with each other, providing space for this collaboration when there was available funding. Though the Raider Learning Communities have changed as administrators and instructors joined and left the project and as funding became available from different sources, paired courses are being offered primarily for honors students in

upcoming semesters. Other colleges and universities have also implemented Learning Communities beginning in the early 2000s with varying degrees of success. (Witherow)

In Rebecca S. Nowacek's *Agents of Integration: Understanding Transfer as a Rhetorical Act*, she discusses transfer and recontextualization at a small Catholic university in an Interdisciplinary Learning Community, which was designed with the cooperation of instructors teaching three individual courses that were being taken by the same group of honors students. In the semester that Nowacek describes, these courses included Interdisc Literature II, Interdisc History II, and Interdisc Religious Studies II (5). While discussing her views on transfer and recontextualization, Nowacek boldly states that "[p]revious scholarship takes too limited a view of transfer" and that "[t]ransfer is both more common and more complex than research currently recognizes" (18). She describes how, though the terms *transfer* and *recontextualization* are "largely interchangeable," recontextualization is inclusive of transfer while also elaborating upon it (Nowacek 18). Under this system, transfer is the way readers and composers develop and utilize genre knowledge about what is expected in a given rhetorical, or social, situation and apply that to new similar or dissimilar contexts, so they are not required to "reinvent the communicative wheel with each interaction" (Nowacek 19). After seeing how these aspects of transfer played out in that Interdisciplinary Learning Community, Nowacek draws implications for First-Year Writing instruction in different contexts (as part of an Interdisciplinary Learning Community and as part of a Stand-Alone First-Year Composition Course). For the stand-alone FYC course, she suggests students should be taught to see themselves as "agents of integration" and offers two specific goals: 1) "to

help students to understand their rhetorical situation as agents—seeking to transfer not only their writing-related knowledge but other knowledge, ways of knowing, identities, and goals as well” and 2) to get “students to question how the genre knowledge they already possess might apply or need to be reconstructed in order to provide an optimal framework for their work in other classes” (133). These transfer strategies could be applied using different techniques, but Nowacek suggests a strong focus on reflective assignments as a way to help students develop metacognition and awareness of their own writing and abilities that would help them accomplish the previously mentioned goals (133).

One method instructors use to incorporate more reflection is to have students analyze the genres of each assignment before composing their own texts. As Elizabeth Wardle comments in “‘Mutt Genres’ and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?,” simply teaching students “decontextualized ‘skills’ or rigid formulas” will not ultimately lead to transfer (770). She argues that instructors should teach “general and flexible principles about writing” and explicitly discuss “similarities between new and previous writing assignments” with students as they work with new genres (770). Using real-world genres within an authentic context helps students apply their genre knowledge and use previously acquired skills to analyze newly encountered genres.

Some instructors use the Rhetorical Genre Studies approach to facilitate this transfer within their classroom. In “Rhetorical Genre Studies Approaches to Teaching Writing,” Anis S. Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff describe the rhetorical genre studies



(RGS) approach, explaining, “students learn how to recognize genres as rhetorical responses to and reflections of the situations in which they are used” (192).

Understanding this rich context also helps “students learn how to use genre analysis to participate and intervene in situations they encounter” (192). Using this approach, students develop skills that will be beneficial in future classes as well as in the workplace. Like Nowacek, Bawarshi and Reiff discuss the connections they see between RGS and fostering the development of metacognitive and transfer skills. Bawarshi and Reiff draw connections between transfer and the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) approach to teaching composition, asserting:

An approach to WAC or WID (Writing in the Disciplines) that integrates genre analysis can bridge the gap between writing to learn and writing in the disciplines and can focus on the importance of metacognitive awareness that facilitates the transfer of knowledge from one writing context to another. (207)

This strategy presented by the authors is certainly poised to nurture a transfer-rich environment, and though the chapter does offer some prompts to help instructors start conversations about genre, it is not easily accessible. Another piece of recent scholarship, on the other hand, presents transfer in a way that is accessible to both practitioners and students and helps students put those transferred skills into practice.

In the 2014 textbook *Building Bridges through Writing*, Trixie G. Smith and Allison D. Smith present a list of strategies that help students transfer what they have already learned or will be learning into new situations. These “Facets of Knowledge and

Skill Transfer” discussed in *Bridges* will serve as the basis for a coding system that will be used in Chapters 3 through 5 of this text. The original full list of facets can be found in Appendix E. The original list is student-centered, whereas the following list has been adapted to better serve the instructors’ perspective as she reflects on or develops writing assignments.

#### Facets of Knowledge and Skill Transfer to Include in Writing

##### Assignments:

1. Developing a structural familiarity with writing
2. Interpreting writing assignments as a genre
3. Cultivating meta-cognitive awareness and skills
4. Employing empathy when considering multiple perspectives
5. Assessing and recreating newly encountered genres
6. Developing knowledge of real-world audiences including their expectations and preferences and the skills to compose for a specific audience
7. Setting writing goals that will help students meet future academic and professional needs
8. Reflecting on the evolving writing process and previous writing
9. Promoting student ownership over their own education and encouraging students to continue working on communication skills
10. Investigating the student’s individual field and the communication expectation there in. (Smith and Smith 9-11)

Smith and Smith also present the concepts of “near” and “far” transfer, which are important to a discussion of its application in FYC classrooms. In *near transfer*, a student applies knowledge or skills in a very similar context, e.g. using the MLA formatting she learned for the first essay on the second essay. On the other hand, in *far transfer*, a student applies knowledge or skills from one context to a different context, e.g. using the ability to read and access a citation manual to learn and implement Chicago style for a paper in a future history class (Smith and Smith 8). Both types of transfer are useful for students, but it is typically the goal of FYC instructors to help students develop their transferable skills to eventually use them in far transfer situations in their major coursework or in the workplace.

The basic idea of transfer, taking knowledge or skills gained from one context and applying them in a different context, is generally consistent across the transfer scholarship that I have encountered; however, approaches and the implications of these transferred skills can vary greatly. One area of scholarship that typically includes extensive discussions of transferring skills is Writing Across the Curriculum.

### **Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing in the Disciplines**

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) scholars look for ways to teach the types of knowledge and skills that students need to communicate effectively as they move into their majors and into the workplace. This focus has evolved at MTSU over the last several years, and Susan McLeod’s “The Pedagogy of Writing Across the Curriculum” was one text that influenced the development of this discussion. In her essay, McLeod presents the origins of WAC

pedagogy in the nearly thirty-five-year old education reform movement that began because instructors in a variety of disciplines were faced with students who did not know how to complete the required writing assignments. McLeod reasoned that her students were not ready for the writing demands in other disciplines because, like many other composition courses at the time, her course was based on “literary notions of what good writing was” and did not prepare the students to write in any other contexts (150). She discusses some of the major aspects of WAC pedagogy, including the distinction between “writing to learn” and “writing to communicate” and the importance of the writing workshop. Writing to learn (WTL) allows teachers to “use writing as a tool for learning as well as a test for learning” (151). This type of writing assignment can help students develop their skills while also working toward some larger goal. McLeod describes these kinds of writing tasks as the analog for the “expert’s notebook,” saying that “[i]t is not polished work intended for an outside audience; sometimes it is comprehensible only to the writer” (152). Beginning in Fall 2012, Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, encouraged participants in the MTSU “Literacy for Life” pilot to assign this kind of writing in the classroom in addition to the “writing to communicate” work that is typically done<sup>3</sup> (Dubek). McLeod describes “writing to communicate” as focusing “on writing to an audience outside the self in order to inform that audience” and says that “the writing therefore is revised, crafted, and polished” (153). This kind of assignment allows students to practice using genres that are expected in their respective disciplines. These two purposes for writing in the composition classroom and the focus on spreading

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<sup>3</sup> These “writing to communicate” tasks are also known as “learning to write” (LTW) tasks.

knowledge about writing to faculty and students alike through workshops are foundational to the WAC movement and have been influential as the MTSU English department administration has worked with professors from within and outside the English department to help students become better prepared for the composing tasks that they will face in the future.

The WAC movement's influence at MTSU is seen in the scholarship of the department as well as its practice. The final text mentioned in the "Transferring Knowledge and Skills" section of this thesis, *Building Bridges through Writing*, shows MTSU's involvement in the current pedagogy concerning Writing Across the Curriculum because it is a WAC-based textbook that was written by the previous Writing Center Director (Trixie G. Smith) and the current Graduate Teaching Assistant Coordinator (Allison D. Smith) with the help of a previous graduate student (Holly Hamby). These authors describe WAC in a very practical way as "a method of teaching and learning writing" that is grounded in the ideas that "writing and writing instruction should occur throughout [a student's] entire undergraduate education and that all types of reading and writing enrich [a student] as a person and better [her] overall writing skills" (Smith and Smith 2). The authors also offer lists of writing-to-learn and writing-in-the-disciplines (also called learning-to-write and writing to communicate in other texts) activities as examples of these types of assignments. These lists will be used as a guide to characterize the sample assignments discussed in Chapters 3 through 5. Examples from these lists include Annotations, Discussion Blogs or Logs, Outlines, and Reading Responses for "Writing-to-Learn Activities" and Grant Proposals, Literature Reviews, Memos, and

Rhetorical Analyses for “Writing-in-the-Disciplines Activities.” The full lists can be found in Appendix F. Smith and Smith provide information about both academic and workplace literacies and organized the chapters in *Bridges* to explore examples of writing from various disciplines, including Arts & Humanities, Education, and Business, among others. Despite growing out of the conditions in higher education over thirty years ago, this WAC approach is still validated by the frequent surveys that show the communication skills of college graduates are not meeting employer expectations.

A recent survey performed by St. Louis Community College showed that, based on a 2013 series of telephone interviews with 1,200 employers, “soft skills were still the major shortcoming of job applicants and that a lack of qualified graduates in various disciplines was the most cited reason for skill shortages” (St. Louis Community College Workforce Solutions Group ii). For the purposes of the survey, the group defined “soft skills” as including “communication, organization, and customer service” and stated that communications was “the most demanded basic skill” (12). Of the “Top Ten Basic Skills in Greatest Demand,” at least seven are skills that could be addressed in a WAC-based FYC classroom: “Communication Skills,” “Organizational Skills,” “Writing,” “Leadership,” “Problem Solving,” “Planning,” and “Microsoft Office” (St. Louis 12). Unfortunately, though these skills are in high demand, a section of the report that discusses the “Shortcomings of Job Applicants” shows that ““Soft skills’ once again far outpaced technical skills such as math and computer skills as the most lacking in the workforce” and says that “Less than one in ten employers found no significant shortcomings in their job applicants” (St. Louis 30). A further disappointing aspect of this

report is that 91% of student respondents to the “Program Completion Survey 2013” rated themselves as feeling “prepared” in the area of “soft skills” (St. Louis 50). With statistics like these juxtaposed with the “nearly six in ten employers [who] felt that job applicants were lacking in soft skills,” it is easy to see why educators are striving for improved transfer of knowledge and skills that are informed by the academic and professional work that will be expected of students (St. Louis 48).

To accomplish teaching these “soft skills,” WAC-focused instructors have taken many different approaches. In Christopher Thaiss’s “Theory in WAC: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going?,” he explores how most, if not all, of the key terms in Writing Across the Curriculum have been interpreted different ways by different practitioners and scholars at different times. Thaiss claims part of these differences originate from the purpose of implementing WAC, whether it is for conformity or originality. He explains, “Some faculty and governing boards are attracted to WAC because it promises greater conformity: to these advocates, ‘learning to write’ means learning correct usage of Standard English, the learning of modes and formats characteristic of a discipline, consistency of documentation, and consistency of application of disciplinary research methodology” (301). Conversely, Thaiss describes how some “others see in WAC the potential for the student’s growth as thinker and stylist; this direction is toward the more individual, less easily defined or prescribed, more evanescent development of style and confidence characteristic of insiders in a discourse” (301). This seeming dichotomy is indicative of the loose interpretation that has been applied to the key terms “writing to learn” and “learning to write,” but Thaiss

carries the fluid interpretation of terms into the components of the name itself. For example, he discusses how a simple term like “writing” is rarely defined, could hold many meanings, and is often used in “sweeping pronouncements” (300). After considering the different interpretations that have come before, Thaiss considers where WAC is going, and he sees it greatly tied to the inclusion of technology in the classroom and the expectation for students to create “written” texts that are not alphabetic but visual instead. He does not “see any reason why the trend in higher education to adapt to the career interests of prospective students should be interrupted” because of these technological advancements, and in fact, he says this “technology will facilitate further interplay between ‘student,’ ‘professor,’ ‘worker,’ and ‘manager,’ with blurring and perhaps eventual merger of aspects of these roles” (Thaiss 318). Essays like this one that offer a forward glance at the future of FYC in general and WAC programs specifically were reviewed as administrators at MTSU planned the new “Literacy for Life” course and were also influential to the development of *MultimodalMatters.com*.

### **Multimodal Literacy**

In the same way that Writing Across the Curriculum has meant a variety of things to different scholars throughout the years, multimodal compositions and multimodal literacies have been interpreted different ways by practitioners and scholars. To some, “multimodal” has become synonymous with a digitally-created text, and beyond that, some even treat the terms multimedia and multimodal as interchangeable. Not all multimodal texts are digital nor are all multimodal texts multimedia. At its most basic, “multimodal” is used to denote a text that incorporates more than one “mode.” In *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects*, Kristin L. Arola, Jennifer



Sheppard, and Cheryl E. Ball present their “Five Modes of Communication,” which are based on a diagram originally created by the New London Group and include the Linguistic, Visual, Aural, Gestural, and Spatial modes (4). The authors see any text that spans more than one “mode” as multimodal. Arola, Sheppard, and Ball contend that this definition is inclusive of all texts because even visual cues like formatting on an essay “influence the way the audience reads it” (3). Other scholars, such as Danielle Nicole DeVoss, in her book *Understanding and Composing Multimodal Projects*, disagree, claiming that a text only composed of words would be a monomodal text (MM1-b). Though scholars continue to debate this point, more scholars, such as Frank Serafini, are accepting the distinctions between other terms, such as “multimodal” and “multimedia.”

In *Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Teaching Multimodal Literacy*, Frank Serafini presents the distinction between multimodal and multimedia by starting with the root words. He distinguishes the medium of a text as the technology that is used to render the text (Serafini 15). For the purposes of Serafini’s discussion, these media include “television, radio, the Internet, electronic books, and DVDs” (15). He further explains, “Modes draw on semiotic resources for the articulation, representation, and interpretation of texts, whereas media draw on semiotic resources for the dissemination of texts” (Serafini 15). This view of multimodal and multimedia texts complicates explanations like the one found in Arola, Sheppard, and Ball. Their description of media is “the way in which your text reaches your audience” and they give pictures, “video, speech, or paper,” as possible media (Arola, Sheppard, and Ball 14). These two texts are representative of the variety with which some scholars discuss topics associated with multimodality and

multimedia. When discussing a scholar's contribution to this field, it is often necessary to see how they are defining the terms. This proved somewhat difficult as MTSU began asking instructors to design and assign multimodal texts to their students. Without a unifying definition, the confusion added to the resistance.

The differing definitions and terms can lead to some points of contention within the scholarly community. One point of contention in the scholarship briefly mentioned above is the idea of a monomodal text. Even though DeVoss supports this idea, Serafini cites visual theorists such as Stockl, Mitchell, and Duncum "who would assert there are no purely visual artifacts or monomodal texts" (16). Serafini suggests imagining all texts on a continuum; however, his continuum only reaches from "Textually Dominant" to "Visually Dominant," not allowing for other types of composition that may be dominated by a different mode (16-17). We find a second point of contention when we consider multimodal texts outside the digital sphere. Jody Shipka is one scholar who has embraced the alternative multimodal assignment. In her essay "A Multimodal Task-Based Framework for Composing," Shipka describes several sample texts that students have created for her class. Some of them are digital, such as that of the student who submitted a floppy disc with a spooky explanation of the word "scare," and some of them are tactile, such as that of the student who submitted her work as a set of wrapped gifts in numbered boxes with a note that instructed the reader to pass the boxes along after reading each paper and signing the enclosed card (Shipka 279-281). After seeing the students' use of unique presentation media, Shipka addresses limitations that other scholars had placed on students, stating "that the rhetorical, material, methodological, and

technological choices students made while engineering these complex rhetorical events merit serious and sustained attention” (282). As practitioners redefined “writing,” they were also forced to reconsider what it meant to “compose.”

In the prologue to *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*, Jason Palmeri discusses his discomfort with “*what it meant to be a compositionist*” under the new focus on multimodal composing (2). This is not to say that Palmeri is anti-multimodal by any means. In fact, he states that he was “singing the praises of multimodality to anyone who would listen” and cites many scholars who have influenced his use of multimodal composition assignments in his classroom practice, explaining that he “began to recognize that many students were already composing multimodal texts outside of school, and that [his] composition course might lose relevancy if [he] didn’t make a space for composing beyond the printed word” (2). This realization and the conflict that followed were not dissimilar to the general consensus of administrators at MTSU as they began to consider how the new “Literacy for Life” course would be constructed and what it would value. Palmeri felt that teaching alphabetic composition was easily grounded in the early composition scholarship but that his multimodal composition pedagogy was not grounded in adequate disciplinary knowledge or training, and this made him question himself as well as the validity of using multimodal composing in the mandatory FYC course (2-3). To address his perceived shortcomings, Palmeri returned to many of the important composition works from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s that helped establish composition theory and found that early scholars, such as “Berthoff; Corbett; Costanzo; Elbow; Emig; Flower and Hayes; Kyle;

Murray; Shor; Smitherman; Williamson,” were discussing the integration of multiple modes (alphabetic, aural, and visual) to create rhetorically sound compositions long before the digital multimodal movement became popular in the 1990s (3). He ultimately decided that “embracing multimodal composing did not necessarily mean turning away from the composition tradition—that in fact the composition tradition had many insights to offer contemporary digital multimodal teachers” (3). In Palmeri’s book, he provides more detail situating multimodality in the history of composition, and later in the book he discusses how “Composition Has Always Been Multimodal” and how ““All Media Were Once New”” (viii). After considering the stance of Palmeri and scholars like him, it is time to redefine “compositionist” yet again for the “Literacy for Life” classroom and the students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

One aspect of multimodal literacy that has helped to define what it means to be a compositionist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is visual rhetoric. The use and analysis of visual rhetoric has been present since antiquity; however, much of the study of these visuals have taken place in “fields as diverse as art, history, design, philosophy, and graphic arts to ethnography, cultural studies, typography, and architecture” instead of the field of composition (Handa 3). Carolyn Handa discusses this development and integration of visual rhetoric into the study of composition in the introduction to her book *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World: A Critical Sourcebook*. The text includes articles from books and journals that were written for a variety of disciplines but could be used to improve the compositionist’s understanding of visual rhetoric and visual argument.

Because visual rhetoric in particular and multimodal literacies in general have been excluded from the field of composition for so long, they can be a drastic change from more traditional FYC offerings. Until the early 2010s, the English department at MTSU offered many traditional, modes-based composition course and some rhetorically-based FYC courses.<sup>4</sup> Transitioning to the new “Literacy for Life” course and incorporating visual rhetoric and multimodal literacies have proven somewhat challenging for both GTAs and faculty, but the change has also been rewarding for both instructors and students. In “Multiple Modes of Production in a College Writing Class,” Alanna Frost, Julie A. Myatt (Current professor and former Graduate Teaching Assistant Coordinator at MTSU), and Stephen Smith discuss their experiences at the University of Louisville as they began to experiment with technologies in the composition classroom that would allow students to explore the arguments presented rhetorically in a variety of texts and to compose their own arguments using the most rhetorically appropriate modes available. Like the investigation of other aspects of composition mentioned above, the experiment presented by Frost, Myatt, and Smith forced them to reconsider the meaning of common terms. The authors explain that “the word *composing* itself grew increasingly more important to [them]” and became about teaching students “how to get their ideas across, to make meaning, to say what it is they want to say regardless of the medium they choose” (182). In their classrooms, multimodal literacy became just one of a set of literacies students were developing that allowed them to communicate in a more

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<sup>4</sup> The GTA program transitioned to rhetorically-based classes in 2002. Some English department faculty also revised their courses around that time, but many continued teaching their FYC courses with few changes.

thoughtful and rhetorically effective way. Each of the authors explores his or her personal experience with implementing multimodal assignments in his or her classroom. In Frost's classroom, her students developed an awareness of audience and purpose that was sparked by "questions about the amount of detail to include" and seems largely based on the students' own responses to one another's compositions instead of teacher interaction (184). In Myatt's classroom, after rhetorically analyzing multimodal texts and executing their own texts, students saw themselves as "not only writers, but designers whose choices are informed by the insights they gain while critiquing someone else's design choices" (187). Through each of these experiments, the instructors were determined to make the skills being learned through the multimodal assignments more transparent and easier for students to see as similar to work they had done in the past. They had more dialogs with students that "lead to discussions about the assignment criteria" and allowed both instructors and students to "translate [their] past composing experiences to the multimodal assignment at hand, seeing connections between the assignment requirements and what [they] knew of composing generally" (191). These courses show examples of near transfer of skills through instruction in multimodal literacies and are indicative of the results other English departments, including the instructors designing "Literacy for Life" courses at MTSU, would like to see as they update their composition courses to help students apply composition skills in broader communication contexts.

### **Technology in the Composition Classroom**

The instructors in the University of Louisville experiment mentioned above allowed technology into their classrooms and their students' compositions, but they were

somewhat apprehensive (191). Unfortunately, this is a typical response to the introduction of technology in general and Web 2.0 technologies in particular to the composition classroom. Using computers for pedagogical purposes in the classroom has been part of the scholarship for over 25 years. One prominent example is *Computers and Composition: An International Journal*, which Kathleen Kiefer and Cynthia L. Selfe started producing as a newsletter November of 1983 and grew into a peer-reviewed journal in 1985 (“A Brief History of *Computers and Composition*”). Despite some hesitancy, technology has been used in composition classrooms for a variety of purposes. In the “Multimodal Literacy” section of this thesis, these purposes included presenting information (Frost, Myatt, and Smith) and composing multimodal assignments (Frost et al. and Shipka), and in the “Technology in the Composition Classroom” section, this will include distributing feedback (Warnock), building a class community (McArdle), and experimenting with real-world audiences (Mooring and Zemliansky).

Some of the most basic ways that technology started to make it into composition classrooms was with computer-mediated writing through a word processor. Eventually, this became more complicated than students simply typing up their papers on a typewriter instead of writing them out long-hand. In *Computers and the Teaching of Writing in American Higher Education, 1979-1994: History*, Gail E. Hawisher, Paul LeBlanc, Charles Moran, and Cynthia L. Selfe describe the role of computers in the composition classrooms of late 1970s to early 1980s saying, “So naturally did microcomputers and attendant word-processing software lend themselves to writing that this has come to be the primary use of microcomputers in most educational settings” (41). Computers have

evolved beyond their early capabilities and now have the capacity to check the writer's spelling and make suggestions based on grammar, syntax, and context. This kind of interference, for lack of a better term, has certainly changed the way that students and scholars compose. Hawisher et al. explain saying, "as a group, we believe that computers are changing the nature of the writing classroom in fundamental ways" (7). The authors claim that "students writing on computers-turned-word-processors are finding themselves writing differently—not better, but differently" (7). Despite considerable research on composing with computers during the early 1980s, these changes in the composition process did not lead to immediate adoption of technology into most composition classrooms.

Many composition programs were slow to embrace and integrate technology into the composition classroom. Like was the case at MTSU, it is often prodding from individuals that encourages departments to try new things. In *Multimodal Literacies and Emerging Genres*, Tracey Bowen and Carl Whithaus present a collection of essays from such progressive individuals and state that "Changes to composition programs, however, only happen as individuals begin to avail themselves of the opportunities to present and create knowledge in new formats" (10). For example, the English department at Miami University worked to stay in touch with the current technologies and attempted to incorporate them as they became pedagogically viable, including Listservs in the mid-1990s for "extending class discussion," course management systems by 2000, and a password-protected composition wiki in 2005 "for collaborative writing projects" (Adsanatham, Alexander, Carsey, Dubisar, Fedeczko, Landrum, Lewiecki-Wilson,



McKee, Moore, Patterson, and Polak 284). Even with this openness to technology at Miami, composition courses were not being taught in computer classrooms. Only a small group petitioning the university in 2005 drawing support from the WIDE Research Center's 2005 article "Why Teach Digital Writing" was able to spur change. The group wanted to see Miami provide more technology for students and support for faculty and administrators who wanted to update the program goals to reflect the importance of multiple literacies and more diverse skills in rhetorical analysis (Adsanatham et al. 286). The group's argument was successful and fortunately coincided with a laptop purchasing program that Miami was starting that "strongly encouraged" incoming students to purchase a laptop. The infusion of student supplied technology coupled with funding from "the provost and vice president of information technologies" supported the creation of several "digital classrooms" (286). The first classroom was unveiled in 2006 and featured a wireless network that was exclusively for the Composition Program as one of its numerous digital resources. The technological expansion continued at Miami over the following semesters, and by 2011, the Composition Program had seven digital classrooms, allowing them to hold 85% of their FYC courses in "laptop or hard-wired classrooms" in the fall of 2011 (Adsanatham et al.285-6). See the progression in Table 2.

Table 2. Digital Classrooms for Composition Use at Miami

Year	Number of Classrooms Added	Percentage of Composition Classes Taught with Technology
2006	1	
2007	1	30%
2008	1	42%
2009	1	
2010	3	
2011		85%

Unfortunately, similar programs at other universities that have attempted to embrace technology in the classroom have met with more resistance to the funding of such projects.

In “Thinking outside the Text Box,” Jerome Bump discusses the difficulties the University of Texas at Austin’s English department has had up to the 2013 publication date with implementing various types of technology. About his experience, Bump states, “I anticipated some of these problems but not the uncertainty of institutional support for research on the new operating systems caused by ever-changing security, disability, privacy, and financial issues” (113). At his institution, multiple projects had been abandoned without taking any steps to preserve the data from the experiments, effectively destroying countless hours of research (113). The volatility that Bump faces likely makes some composition programs wary of taking the risk to embrace computers in their composition classrooms. In the “Introduction” to *Multimodal Literacies and Emerging Genres*, Bowen and Whithaus tout the chapters within their book as proof that “the genres of multimodal assignments were themselves unstable” in the 2000s and cite “the speed with which information and communication technologies were emerging” as the cause (8-9). This uncertainty can be difficult for students, instructors, and administrators to face, especially when it involves a sizable monetary investment.

Despite the risks involved, scholars like Dànielle DeVoss, Gail E. Hawisher, Charles Jackson, Joseph Johansen, Brittney Moraski, and Cynthia L. Selfe, in their essay “The Future of Literacy,” advocate the inclusion of technology in the composition classroom to “meet the needs of students who compose meaning not only with words, but

also with digitized bits of video, sound, photographs, still images, words, and animations and to support communications across conventional linguistic, cultural, and geopolitical borders” (183). They see this inclusion as necessary to produce students who possess the literacies that they will need to transfer to future classrooms, the workplace, and their everyday lives. The authors juxtapose this ideal with their own experiences over the past four decades, explaining that they “found their formal English composition instruction to be of limited interest,” which narrowly focused on the alphabetic (208). Furthermore, the authors claim that the traditional classes will not fully prepare “young people for a world that will depend on visual literacy, web literacy, gaming/simulation literacy, in short, multimodal literacies” (208). The only way to fully accomplish these forms of literacy is to allow students to practice with appropriate technologies inside and outside the classroom.

Requiring access to and the use of technology in the composition classroom (or any other general education classroom) presents another issue that numerous scholars are quick to mention: access. In “Access: The ‘A’ Word in Technology Studies,” Charles Moran discusses the difficulties students have purchasing and accessing technology. This affects students in the K-12 system as well as the college or university system, and a student’s inexperience during his or her primary and secondary education will continue to hurt the student’s chances of using technology effectively in an educational setting. In his chapter, Moran criticizes compositionists for ignoring this digital divide in order to forward their “own research and writing agendas” (206). Moran makes an impassioned argument for researchers and instructors to be mindful of the economic realities of the

students they serve and take steps to offer the same level of preparedness for future academic or workplace demands while not causing an undue burden on impoverished students or students from impoverished backgrounds. Instructors can take steps toward this goal by knowing what technology is accessible to students on campus or at little or no cost within the community. Challenges with access are not a reason to abandon instructional technology, and it is often students from impoverished backgrounds who need additional instruction and support in order to successfully master the digital literacies that they will be expected to use later in life. In her 2012 article “Digital Divide Strikes College-Admissions Process,” Nora Fleming discusses how students from low-income backgrounds and first generation students are more likely to become overwhelmed during the college application process and are less likely to have the skills and support they need to be successful (15). Due to a lack of access and training, these students struggle with “seeking out digital resources and determining credibility of information”; furthermore, the author found that these challenges using digital resources “follow students when they enter college” (15). Fleming explains that education leaders “see the admissions challenge as part of a bigger problem: that of integrating digital-literacy instruction into schools, particularly high schools, with diverse student populations” (15). Despite the limited access to technology among some groups of K-12 and higher education students, it is important that teachers help students develop digital literacies, especially in the composition classroom, and teach students how to use technology to help themselves. Digital literacy is and will be expected of college

graduates, which makes it that much more important to address the needs of underprepared students.

Computer-based technologies can be used to provide that additional help some students need. Beyond simply having students use computers to create texts, some instructors are using technology to give students audio or audio-visual feedback on written assignments. In “Responding to Student Writing with Audio-Visual Feedback,” Scott Warnock discusses the development of audio feedback throughout the last fifty years and focuses on the more recent developments that allow instructors to give students better feedback with the help of technology<sup>5</sup>, such as *Camtasia Studio*. Warnock cites several “Advantages of AV Feedback,” which include:

- Specificity
- Conference-like, Personal Feedback
- Quantity of Feedback
- Positive Feedback
- Balancing Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Legibility Issues
- Expanding Response beyond the “Bounds of Print”  
(207-209)

Concerning the student perspective on his use of *Camtasia Studio* for audio-visual feedback, Warnock cites his own research in which he distributed an anonymous survey to students in his online class at the end of the semester. Overall, nine out of the 26 students who responded said they liked conferences best, but seven stated that they preferred audio-visual feedback the best, and four stated that they wanted written

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<sup>5</sup> *Camtasia Studio* is a screencapture and editing software sold by TechSmith Corp. They also provide a free alternative with limited functionality called *Jing*. Several instructors at MTSU, including me, use *Jing* to provide audio-visual student feedback.

feedback (213). The remaining students marked no preference. Warnock also asked which feedback method his students liked the least, which yielded some complaints about the technology itself and the difficulty of accessing digital feedback. Twelve of his students did not mark a “worst” form of feedback, but 10 marked written feedback as the worst, three chose audio-visual as the worst, and one selected conferences as the worst (213). Warnock shows that not all students are comfortable with audio-visual feedback, but the number of receptive students was significant for the late 2000s, and a more recent study may show increased receptiveness. For example, after Chris Anson spoke about using *Jing* to respond to student work during the 2011 Virginia Peck Composition Series at MTSU, some instructors decided to provide audio-visual feedback through *Jing* and have gotten positive responses from students who like the detailed feedback that they can easily access at any time. After attending Anson’s presentation, Jonathan Bradley, then a GTA in the department, saw such potential in audio-visual feedback using *Jing* that he tested the program and hosted a session at the January 2012 Lower Division Curriculum Meeting to help faculty and other GTAs become familiar with the benefits of audio-visual feedback. In addition to the advantages cited in Warnock, this audio-visual feedback can also help instructors create a more familiar and welcoming atmosphere for students. Warnock even claims that it allows him to “be more supportive” because he is “not trying to economize every word” like he might in written comments (208). This method of providing feedback can still provide an economic use of time. Based on Warnock’s data from his own grading experience, with written feedback, he could comment on four drafts per hour, and with audio-visual feedback, he can comment on six

or more drafts per hour (210). This roughly 30% decrease in grading time helps instructors, and allowing students to hear the instructor's voice—including the tone, pace, and emphasis—helps them better interpret the instructor's feedback.

Computers have also been used to create a communal atmosphere in FYC. Casey R. McArdle discusses the use of Web 2.0 technologies in her classroom in “Using Web 2.0 to Foster Community and Public Writing in Composition Classrooms.” When, twelve weeks into the 16 week spring 2009 semester, McArdle was faced with the reality that her students did not know each other's names, she had to ask herself, “How do I establish a sense of community within a 16 week college level composition course?” (67). Using blogging, she asked the students to interact with one another outside the classroom as a community of writers and discovered that student blogging did more than create community; it also brought composition concepts like public writing and audience awareness into the classroom along with the more social issue of class involvement (68). The students' class involvement expanded into more social involvement as the students' Web 2.0 relationships grew beyond the bounds of the class blog and spilled over onto their personal *Facebook* pages (68). Throughout the semester, McArdle was also able to use the communal blog space to discuss more complex composition issues with her students in an authentic context. However, blogs are not the only community building Web 2.0 technology that can be used to spur learning in the composition classroom.

In “A Wiki Writing Project as a Means of Teaching and Learning Writing, Collaboration, and Project Management,” Brandi Mooring and Pavel Zemliansky share an assignment that Zemliansky assigned in class and Mooring contributed to as a student

of the course. This particular assignment was used for an upper-level course as opposed to FYC course, but it could be easily adapted for use in MTSU's "Literacy for Life." Using *Wikibooks.org*, the students created a "Beginner's Guide to Digital Rhetoric" (159). The "Guide" is composed of eight chapters, which explain and define a variety of important terms associated with "digital rhetoric," and it also includes a ninth chapter, which contains several examples of "digital writing" (159). Through the process of completing the assignment, students in the class worked together in small groups and created a system of management and accountability to ensure the project was completed at the appropriate level (160). Wiki software makes this kind of assignment possible because it not only allows the students to collaboratively write the text and compile it, but it also encourages students to consider the real audience of their text in addition to the instructor or their classmates. Because students created the entire guide, each student implicitly expected a certain quality of work from his or her classmates to create a rhetorically and linguistically effective guide book. When students posted their texts for public view, it raised the stakes of the work by reinforcing the stated audience for the assignment and giving that audience the opportunity to respond to the text. These assignments from McArdle and Zemliansky use Web 2.0 technologies to create a more tangible sense of audience and community, which can be beneficial to students as they compose in their FYC courses and prepare to transfer communication skills beyond the FYC classroom.

Each aspect of composition scholarship discussed previously—transfer, Writing Across the Curriculum, multimodal literacies, and computers in composition—



contributed to the decision to revise “Expository Writing” to create “Literacy for Life” and informed my collaborator and I as we created and implemented *MultimodalMatters.com*. It was the extensive research in these areas that guided us as we chose technologies to include, drafted assignments for our classes, and designed workshops to share information about the technologies and strategies with our fellow practitioners. In the following three chapters, I describe *NotaBene*, *WordPress*, and Media Galleries, which are included on *MultimodalMatters.com*, and I provide practical suggestions for assignments that would take advantage of the pedagogical benefits that the technologies offer.

CHAPTER III: FYC PEDAGOGY AND *NOTABENE*Table 3. *NotaBene* Sample Assignments<sup>1</sup>

<i>Assignment Description</i>	<i>Type of Assignment</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Facets of Transfer Possible</i> <sup>3</sup>
<p><b>Group Annotations</b></p> <p>The class reads a text individually, in small groups, or as a class, and they comment in the margin to encourage student engagement with the text.</p>	Learning to Write	1- Structural Familiarity 3- Meta-cognitive Awareness 4- Multiple Perspectives 7- Setting Writing Goals 9- Ownership in Education
<p><b>Rhetorical Analysis</b></p> <p>The class reads a text and analyzes it based on rhetorical principles—such as purpose, audience, and context—while identifying rhetorical appeals and strategies used.</p>	Writing to Learn	1- Structural Familiarity 3- Meta-cognitive Awareness 4- Multiple Perspectives 6- Audience Awareness 7- Setting Writing Goals 9- Ownership in Education
<p><b>Peer Review Training</b></p> <p>The class reads a model text based on an assignment that they are completing for the class. The students respond to this text as they would during a Peer Review session to help the author improve his or her own text during subsequent revisions. The class reflects on the notations made.</p>	Writing to Learn	1- Structural Familiarity 2- Writing as a Genre 3- Meta-cognitive Awareness 4- Multiple Perspectives 8- Self-reflection 9- Ownership in Education

Deciding what technologies to include on *MultimodalMatters.com* was an arduous process, and we considered many applications and software throughout the spring and

<sup>1</sup> This table is intended to provide an overview of the sample assignments included in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> For a description of *Learning to Write* and *Writing to Learn*, see Chapter II, pages 29-31.

<sup>3</sup> For full descriptions of the “Facets of Knowledge and Skills Transfer”, see Chapter II, page 27. This list is derived from *Building Bridges through Writing* by Smith and Smith.

summer of 2013. We wanted to help facilitate the goals and objectives of “Literacy for Life” without limiting the scope of application to a FYC class. A group annotation software was among the technologies that Jonathan and I considered to help incorporate interactive reading for literature classes that we were planning, and we later found and decided to use *NotaBene*.<sup>4</sup> During our literature pedagogy class, we thought about reading instruction in the literature classroom, and consequently, considered how difficult it was to teach reading in the composition classroom and how integral reading instruction is to “Literacy for Life.” In our FYC classrooms at MTSU, having students complete readings individually and discuss those texts in class did not offer the depth of engagement that would ultimately help the students develop critical reading skills that could be transferred to future contexts. To give students additional accountability for reading assignments and the opportunity to see how other students read the text and what questions they had, we decided that reading needed to be more communal in the composition classroom, like it was in the literature classes we were planning. In some classrooms, this could be accomplished with small group discussions of readings allowing students to be more open about their responses as well as any questions they may have. However, this was not the best option for every class or for every reading, so we considered using a software program that would allow students to collaboratively read a text in or outside of class while still offering the accountability and depth of engagement that we were looking for. We experimented with several programs but

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<sup>4</sup> The original annotation program we were using was *Crocodoc*. Unfortunately, this program allowed contributors to post anonymous comments. To make sure students were getting credit for their participation and to ensure that no students were able to anonymously post inappropriate comments, we decided to use *NotaBene* for group annotations.

decided to include *NotaBene* on *MultimodalMatters.com* because it met our requirements well, being offered for educational use at no charge and allowing flexibility for instructors and students.

*NotaBene* is open-source<sup>5</sup> software that was created by the Haystack Group in the Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (“About”). The Haystack Group is an interdisciplinary group which performs “Research on Information Access, Analysis, Management, and Distribution” to “make it easier for people to collect, organize, find, visualize, and share their information” (*Haystack*). After the program was created, it was used in classes at MIT starting in 2009 and has since been made available for free for any educator or student to use (“About”). *NotaBene*, *nb*, found online at <http://nb.mit.edu/welcome>, is downloadable<sup>6</sup> for an individual’s web server and is undergoing constant revision. The software has “undergone three major development cycles” but is still being actively researched (“About”). To facilitate its use and further research, the researchers have established forums where users can raise questions, comment on issues, and discuss possible improvements to the software.

With these updates and the feedback from instructors, the developers continue to improve *NotaBene* but maintain one primary function as espoused by the website: group

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<sup>5</sup> “Open source” means that the software is available for anyone to use for any purpose without paying a license fee.

<sup>6</sup> Though the software is downloadable as a git file, installing and using the software is too complicated for a novice. Because the creators are still using the software as a research project, they prefer users to take advantage of the hosted site, allowing researchers to collect additional data.

annotating lecture materials. On the “About” page, the developers discuss the “Benefits of using *nb*” and explain its primary function stating,

As staff members, we often notice the two following phenomenon. First, many questions that students ask could be answered correctly by other students. Second, a single question can be asked many times by different students, by email for instance. Replying to all those emails is tedious, and doesn't benefit the rest of the class, which may also have the same question.

Using *NotaBene* is beneficial to the instructor for its practicality and assistance with time management and to the students for empowerment and quick peer response to common questions. Though this was its original purpose, I discuss additional uses of *NotaBene* in FYC classrooms.

*NotaBene* is open-access, but it is also protected behind a login which allows instructors the ability to make many different documents available to students without being worried about those files being publicly visible. This feature can also alleviate some copyright concerns for texts that may be legal to use in educational settings with certain restrictions but should not be made openly accessible. To begin the process, an instructor creates an account at <http://nb.mit.edu/> and creates a “group” that includes his or her students. These can function as different courses or different sections, allowing the instructor to invite multiple classes to view one text or invite each class to interact with their own set of documents. After the group is created, the instructor invites students to the group by selecting the “Invite Users” button at the top of the homepage and typing

their email addresses into the box provided. From the group's homepage, the instructor also uploads PDF files of any course documents including notes, readings, and images by selecting the "Add file" button. After students follow the email invitations, they join the group and gain access to the documents the instructor has posted. Once logged in, students will be able to read and comment on the PDFs. The instructor can set permissions that allow students to comment on one another's questions or not and permissions that allow students to post comments that are only visible to the instructor or teaching assistant. For a more in-depth description of the process to get started with *NotaBene*, please see Appendix G.

### **Sample Assignment: Group Annotations<sup>7</sup>**

With this exciting, interactive instructional technology, many possibilities for classroom application exist. The first sample assignment is a variation on the original use for *NotaBene* presented previously. Because the "Literacy for Life" course objectives include instruction in reading for a variety of purposes, instructors are asked to assign readings from the required textbooks and are given the option to include supplemental readings from other books, journals, and online sources. As students review the required readings, instructors use *NotaBene* to have them complete a Group Annotations assignment. Building on the benefits of more traditional annotation assignments, Group Annotations using *NotaBene* encourage multiple "Facets of Knowledge and Skill Transfer" (Smith and Smith 9-11).

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<sup>7</sup> The full assignment descriptions for each sample assignment are available in Appendix J.

To discuss these facets, I draw on the list presented in Chapter II (pg. 27). Group Annotations provide students with the opportunity to develop a structural familiarity with writing as they analyze presented texts for organization, form, and grammar in addition to content [Facet 1]. Similarly, this assignment can help students cultivate meta-cognitive awareness and skills by considering the way a given text affects them as a reader or by attempting to empathize with the author of the text and understand his or her intentions and process [Facets 3 and 4]. By asking students to consider the writer of assigned readings, instructors encourage students to use what they learn through meta-cognition to set goals that help them develop as writers and work toward the communication skills needed in the class as well as those needed in the future [Facets 7 and 9]. Though these facets of transfer should be present in countless variations on the Group Annotation assignment, I discuss two examples that show how *NotaBene* allows instructors to improve the depth and breadth of content in the classroom (Smith and Smith 9-11).

First, the Group Annotations assignment includes having students contribute a specific number of annotations (possibly with a word count) for a reading or group of readings for a given class period. For example, each student is asked to read the text and contribute an average of two to three annotations per page (a five page reading would require 10-15 annotations total). This encourages students to attempt engagement with the text before discussing it in class or using it in a writing task. The annotations are due before the class meeting, and the instructor views the students' comments, addressing them during class discussion. By foregrounding student comments and questions about the text, both the instructor and other students feel more confident raising questions and

providing commentary or feedback. This attempt at increased comfort is also the goal behind the second variation on the Group Annotations assignment.

Due to the rapid pace of the semester and the heavy course load for many students, instructors are often faced with difficult decisions about which readings to privilege and which to remove from the schedule. By having small groups read different texts and share them with the class, *NotaBene* is used to foster cooperation in the classroom and address the time limitation. For example, an instructor assigns each small group an essay or article, uploading a PDF of those documents to *NotaBene* and allowing the small groups to work in class or outside of class to read the text closely and annotate it in preparation for the following class period. Students pose questions to one another and explain complex concepts in the margins as they prepare to share the essay or article with the rest of the class. Each group then shows their annotated text to the class as they give a brief summary and discuss the most important aspects of the text. After this exercise is complete, the students should be more familiar with several texts related to the course and have annotated documents that they can return to if they want to know more throughout the semester. By only requiring each group to read part of the material and share what they learned with the rest of the class, instructors enable the students to benefit from the information presented in multiple texts and also allow students to practice their annotation, summary, and analysis skills in a more intensive and focused way. Those analytical and textual processing skills are particularly important for “Literacy for Life,” and this assignment provides practice that can help students prepare for Learning-to-Write assignments that will require skills such as analysis, summary, and



recontextualization, allowing students to transfer what they learned to later in the semester or in subsequent semesters.

### **Sample Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis**

*NotaBene* can be used specifically for students to practice analyzing texts rhetorically. Completing a Rhetorical Analysis of a text using *NotaBene* can make the concepts more explicit to students while preparing them to write a Rhetorical Analysis Essay or simply preparing them to write a similar text. So far in the application through *MultimodalMatters.com*, this assignment has two somewhat distinct possibilities: the Genre Analysis and the more general Rhetorical Analysis.

In both variations, the Rhetorical Analysis assignment leads to transfer, helping students become familiar with the expected structures in the presented genre while also considering the similarities or differences between the presented text and previously seen organizational and grammatical structures [Facet 1]. By carefully considering the rhetorical effectiveness of a text and the rhetorical strategies the author uses, students contemplate the text's effect on them as a reader and how it may affect different readers in other ways [Facets 3 and 4]. Because Rhetorical Analysis requires that students respond as readers and consider other possible responses, it can be used to help students construct the real-world audience that a text may have been written for [Facet 6]. Using the text itself to determine the audience can help students better understand that their own texts should be constructed with a specific audience in mind. Practicing this skill is not necessarily a writing goal, but encouraging students to analyze their audience in a variety of academic and non-academic settings helps them meet future academic and

professional needs [Facets 6 and 7]. Similarly, the Rhetorical Analysis assignment is used to show students that rhetoric is being used around them all the time, and they should embrace learning about the use of rhetoric because it can help them communicate effectively throughout their personal, academic, and professional lives [Facet 9] (Smith and Smith 9-11).

Next, I present the first of two subcategories of Rhetorical Analysis—the Genre Analysis. As she prepares students to work in a new genre, an instructor helps them understand what makes that genre different or similar to writing they have experienced in the past. One way to help students see these similarities and differences is to include several sample assignments from a variety of sources<sup>8</sup> in one PDF document on *NotaBene* and have students analyze the examples in the context of their previous experience, identifying the traits of the presented genre. Through *NotaBene*, students are able to add annotations noting places where a given model adheres to or deviates from the norm for the genre. This exercise gives the instructor the opportunity to talk with students about the expected genre conventions of their upcoming assignment, as well as models in which authors decided to stray from genre expectations. By recognizing the attributes of a given genre, students are better prepared to make educated choices about their own texts and able to approach similar assignments more confidently in the future, transferring their new genre knowledge. This depth of contemplation about texts in the Genre Analysis can also be applied to the course readings through a more general Rhetorical Analysis.

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<sup>8</sup> Students benefit from comparing sample student writing from previous semesters, real-world writing in the genre, and instructor or professionally created samples.

Although performing a Genre Analysis is beneficial for the assignment at hand, students also benefit from learning how to analyze a text for rhetorical moves in addition to genre. The more comprehensive Rhetorical Analysis helps students complete other assignments in FYC courses and communicate in a variety of contexts beyond the FYC classroom. Using *NotaBene*, students—working in small groups or together as a class—can analyze course texts, models, or the work of peers to identify the rhetorical situation, including the author, audience, purpose, and context, as well as the specific rhetorical moves made within the work. After analyzing unique texts within the same genre or on the same topic but spanning different genres, the class discusses how different authors respond to a variety of rhetorical situations and how learning about those choices can help students as they compose their own texts and participate in a variety of communicative situations in the future. By annotating the assigned text together, students have the chance to help each other deconstruct and understand the assigned texts before sharing with the rest of the class. Similar to the Genre Analysis, this broader Rhetorical Analysis allows students in FYC courses to develop analytical, summary, and presentation skills, helping them complete subsequent FYC assignments in expository or argumentative classes, be successful in future general education or discipline-specific coursework, and be competitive in the workplace.

### **Sample Assignment: Peer Review Training**

As students analyze texts from their books, academic journals, and supplemental readings, they learn how to comment thoughtfully on texts. This practice is quite beneficial as it prepares students for peer review, an important aspect of many “Literacy

for Life” classes and “Argumentative Writing” classes. In the “Literacy for Life” course, instructors use *NotaBene* to teach students how to give appropriate peer review feedback on student writing. By reviewing sample assignments, students develop their structural familiarity with the genre at hand [Facet 1]. Comparing the sample assignment to the assignment sheet helps students better understand the instructor’s expectations as they learn to interpret writing assignments as a genre [Facet 2]. Understanding those genre expectations, students respond to the sample text as both a reader and a writer. These different levels of engagement help students develop their own meta-cognitive awareness about the composing and reading processes and help them consider how their own perspective many align with or deviate from the perspective presented in the sample text [Facets 3, 4, and 8]. The sample peer review foregrounds a discussion of the evolution that many writers experience and helps encourage students to reflect on their own process and style periodically to ensure their communication skills meet the requirements of the social, academic, and professional situations they encounter [Facet 9] (Smith and Smith 9-11).

Introducing students to peer review is difficult, especially when students are uncomfortable criticizing each other’s work. This discomfort is rooted in different issues, but several students in my classroom attributed it to their status as amateur writers.<sup>9</sup> By allowing students to practice peer review skills on a model text that does not belong to a classmate, the instructor helps the students develop a strategy for offering appropriate and helpful feedback. Every student responds as a reader first, and then by referring to the

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<sup>9</sup> This information is based on informal class discussions from my “Literacy for Life” classes about peer review during the 2013-2014 academic year.

assignment sheet, they can also respond to the text as an author who understands the genre expectations of the text. To accomplish this assignment, an instructor uploads a model paper to *NotaBene* and assigns students to complete peer review comments on the paper. This could be a student paper from a previous semester or a text written by the instructor for the purposes of this exercise. Both strategies prove beneficial to students. After addressing student discomfort, timing follows as one of the most important factors for the usefulness of this assignment.

Peer Review Training is done early in the semester to help students get more familiar with both annotating texts and giving thorough, specific feedback. To simplify this process for the instructor and to limit students' influence on each other's comments, students select "Instructor and TAs" from the "Share with" menu when posting comments.<sup>10</sup> This setting allows the instructor to read all students' comments on one document but does not allow other students to read the comments before they are shared in class. In a classroom with individual student work stations, students share their own comments in small groups before offering suggestions to the rest of the class. After they have had this practice, students read through a new sample text in class and offer feedback verbally or in a group annotation format. Preparing students to offer clear and appropriate feedback helps them develop as writers while also building the class community. Many students tell me that they do not let anyone read their assignments before they turn them in and do very little proofreading or editing. By having students participate in this exercise early in the semester, the instructor shows that revision is an

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix G (page 132) for a screenshot of this interface.

important part of the writing process and that the students' comments are very helpful to their classmates. The instructor's feedback also plays a role in the validation of student feedback. When the students submit their peer review comments and share the most important comments with the rest of the class, the instructor shows his or her comments on the same paper. With this example, students see how closely their primary concerns align with the instructor's. This helps students give better feedback and prepares them to complete their own assignments later in the semester. Furthermore, students better understand how to give constructive feedback that their peers will feel is beneficial after seeing the instructor model peer review and participating in the Peer Review Training process themselves.

Though this Peer Review Training could be accomplished using more traditional means, such as printed copies of the sample essays, when students hone their peer review skills through a digital commenting system, they feel more comfortable adding their own comments to the conversation about an author's work.<sup>11</sup> With physical papers and face-to-face peer review, some students feel like they are intruding on the writer's text and refrain from offering the thorough feedback the author really needs. By having students practice digital peer review through *NotaBene*, they are better prepared to participate in actual peer review using "Track Changes" in *Microsoft Word*, online commenting tools present in a Learning Management System (LMS) such as *Canvas*, or *NotaBene* itself. When students use digital methods for peer review practice and the required peer review,

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<sup>11</sup> This observation was found during class discussion in my spring 2014 "Literacy for Life" course. I look forward to exploring this phenomenon more through my future research.

an additional benefit occurs: the commentary is easy for both the reviewer and the author to refer back to when revising or completing future writing tasks.

I see *NotaBene* as one of the best pieces of software to begin with if a FYC instructor is interested in incorporating more instructional technologies. *NotaBene* is especially useful in the “Literacy for Life” classroom as it allows for assignment and genre analysis as well as focused reading instruction, but practicing those skills is also beneficial in second-semester writing courses, advanced writing courses, and literature courses. This instructional technology is also beneficial beyond the English classroom. By holding students accountable and helping them take ownership of their reading, instructors better prepare students for the types of reading and writing they will be asked to perform in the future. Students may or may not discuss readings each day in chemistry, calculus, or engineering courses, but instructors in those classes expect them to be able to read, comprehend, summarize, and respond to the course texts without much additional instruction or guidance. The Lower Division English administration at MTSU hopes that the “Literacy for Life” course prepares students to meet these future expectations and show well-developed communication skills in future courses and once they enter the workplace.

## CHAPTER IV: FYC PEDAGOGY AND WORDPRESS

Table 4. *WordPress* Sample Assignments<sup>1</sup>

<i>Assignment Description</i>	<i>Type of Assignment<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Facets of Transfer<sup>3</sup></i>
<p><b>Blogging (Free Writing/Brainstorming)</b> Each week, the student writes an entry on a topic of her choice. These entries must meet a minimum length requirement, stay on topic, and include appropriate attribution.</p>	Writing to Learn	3- Meta-cognitive Awareness 6- Audience Awareness 7- Setting Writing Goals 8- Self-reflection 9- Ownership in Education
<p><b>College Student Manual</b> Students contribute entries to a manual for future students at the university. These entries will give incoming students information and guidance that the current students have acquired about campus services, students organizations, and academic processes.</p>	Learning to Write	1- Structural Familiarity 2- Writing Assignment as Genre 4- Multiple Perspectives 5- Assessing/Recreating Genres 6- Audience Awareness 7- Setting Writing Goals 9- Ownership in Education
<p><b>Review Article</b> Students select a product to analyze and review. The student describes the product in detail, including properly cited images or videos as appropriate, and analyzes attributes of the product based on a predetermined set of criteria.</p>	Learning to Write	1- Structural Familiarity 2- Writing Assignment as Genre 3- Meta-cognitive Awareness 4- Multiple Perspectives 5- Assessing/Recreating Genres 6- Audience Awareness

<sup>1</sup> This table is intended to provide an overview of the sample assignments included in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> For a description of *Learning to Write* and *Writing to Learn*, see Chapter II, pages 29-31.

<sup>3</sup> For full descriptions of the “Facets of Knowledge and Skills Transfer”, see Chapter II, page 27. This list is derived from *Building Bridges through Writing* by Smith and Smith.



*WordPress* was one of the earliest technologies we agreed should be included on *MultimodalMatters.com*. Having students write regularly in class and out of class helps them practice their writing skills, think about the possibilities for their writing, and realize how much writing they typically do in their daily lives. During my spring 2014 “Literacy for Life” course, few students raised their hands when I asked how many of them consider themselves authors. This is likely due to the way students think about “writing” and “authorship.” In *Everyone’s an Author*, the textbook that they are asked to purchase for my “Literacy for Life” class, Andrea Lunsford, Lisa Ede, Beverly J. Moss, Carole Clark Papper, and Keith Walters contend that the rapidly changing technological environment has put the power of publication in the hands of average people and, therefore, has thrust authorship upon all of us. Lunsford et al. say that a student who gave a valedictory speech, one who created a *Facebook* page, and one who contributed to a cooking blog are all authors (xxix-xxx). With this new conception of authorship in mind, I chose to use *WordPress* as a way to help my students see themselves as authors.

*WordPress* is an open source blog program that was created by Matt Mullenweg and Mike Little and first posted to *WordPress.org* in May 2003 (Mullenweg). These programmers adapted the software from Mullenweg’s previous work on *2b cafelog*, a test blog for the 2b web tool. With the *WordPress* software, individuals or organizations design and publish their own websites, using a wide variety of templates and design tools. The creators’ goal is to provide an “an elegant, well-architected personal publishing system” that is easily accessible to people with limited programming skills (“About WordPress”). This goal of accessibility was part of the project from early on, but it

became better realized as the software developed. Despite the ease of access, some users still did not have web space to host their own blogs. To address this issue and make the open source program available to more users, the creators decided to offer their own hosting service for these blog pages and websites through *WordPress.com* in 2005 (“About Us”). *WordPress* has grown to be the most used Content Management System<sup>4</sup> on the internet, accounting for 47.13 % of websites (“CMS Usage Statistics: Statistics for websites using CMS technologies”). Now, *WordPress* has two distinct web presences: *WordPress.com* for more casual users and *WordPress.org* for more technologically adventurous users.

A user interested in *WordPress* first chooses between having her site hosted by *WordPress.com* or arranging external web hosting. To create a page on *WordPress.com*, a user simply signs up for a free account and names her blog page. From there, the user can choose from many different free layouts and color schemes to customize the page before adding content. The creators describe the software as “completely customizable” and say it “can be used for almost anything” (“About WordPress”). However, if the user wants to have her own URL, then she must have a way to host the site on a server other than *WordPress.com*.

To host a *WordPress* installation, the user can purchase space through a site like *GoDaddy.com*<sup>5</sup> or *bluehost.com*, run her own web server, or use her university’s web

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<sup>4</sup> “Content Management Systems,” such as *WordPress*, *Joomla*, and *Drupal*, provide structure and are the way site administrators manage “features such as the ability to store news documents, images, video and any other online content type imaginable” (“CMS Usage Statistics”).

<sup>5</sup> *MultimodalMatters.com* is installed on a web server through *GoDaddy.com*. A detailed description of the process we went through to establish *MultimodalMatters.com* is provided in Appendix A.

server after she is granted access. When managing a *WordPress* installation through a popular, inexpensive web hosting company, the host does much of the work. Many of these hosting services offer to install and set up popular open source Content Management Systems and other software for the user with a few clicks of the mouse. Once the software is installed and set up on the user's web server, she can customize the site in the same way she would on *WordPress.com*, by going to her web address, logging in to *WordPress*, choosing templates, and adding content. This requires little technological savvy. However, if the user is installing *WordPress* on a private web server or a less prescriptive subscription-based web server, then she starts by downloading the *WordPress* software script from *WordPress.org*, and the process gets slightly more complicated. This process does not require coding or computer science knowledge; however, it does require choosing and downloading a file transfer protocol (FTP) program. Some free, open source FTPs, such as *Filezilla*,<sup>6</sup> are well-respected; finding the right one just takes a little research. To make sure that the *WordPress* software itself is easy for beginners to install, the creators and other programmers have created a "Famous 5-Minute Install," which is fully explained on the Codex section of their website ("Installing WordPress"). For a detailed description of this installation process, see Appendix H.

After installation and basic setup are complete, the user becomes site administrator and is ready to add students, instructors, and TAs as users on the site or allow users to register on the site. From here, the administrator assigns permissions to

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<sup>6</sup> *MultimodalMatters.com* uses *Filezilla*.

different levels of users. For example, instructors are given “editor” privileges, so they can “view, edit, publish, and delete any posts/pages, moderate comments, manage categories, manage tags, manage links and upload files/images” (“Adding New Users to Your WordPress Site”). This level of permissions allows instructors the ability to regulate their own students and other users who may be interacting with students. On the other hand, students are assigned “author” privileges, so they can “edit, publish and delete their posts, as well as upload files/images” (“Adding New Users to Your WordPress Site”). For a detailed description of the process to add users on *WordPress*, see Appendix H. Once users are added to the *WordPress* site, the instructors can begin using it in the classroom.

### **Sample Assignment: Blogging<sup>7</sup>**

*WordPress* was originally intended as a blog software but has been adapted to fit many different needs, including acting as the basis for business websites and as the structure for a variety of web resources. However, the first sample assignments that I discuss here are based on *WordPress*'s blog space roots. Having students write in the public sphere is important to reinforce the types of writing that my “Literacy for Life” students learn to produce. By acknowledging that their writing is accessible to both classmates and the internet at large, students are invited to think a little more deeply about the writing they contribute to the web and their own identities as writers. With a less restricted blog assignment, students are challenged to choose topics that complete the assignment and are interesting and engaging for the audience. Hence, individual blogging

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<sup>7</sup> The full assignment descriptions for each sample assignment are available in Appendix J.

with *WordPress* encourages multiple “Facets of Knowledge and Skill Transfer” (Smith and Smith 9-11).

These facets are derived from the list presented in Chapter II (pg. 27). Giving students the space to reflect on their assignments, writing process, and academic goals, in addition to personal concerns, helps them develop a meta-cognitive awareness that can be applied in future communication tasks and encourages greater student engagement [Facets 3, 8, and 9]. Planning and composing weekly blogs allows students to explore new writing strategies and consider what aspects of their writing may need to be improved for future academic or professional communication [Facet 7]. Being aware of a real, tangible audience—their peers—in addition to the more fluid audience of internet users allows students to make deliberate decisions about tailoring their writing to appeal to a certain group or to challenge the expectations of their readers [Facet 6]. The blog space allows students to be more experimental, and those experiments can inform many communication decisions that students make in the future (Smith and Smith 9-11).

In this first *WordPress* assignment, students are afforded a great deal of freedom, giving much room for growth. Assigning a blog seems simple, but instructors must make many decisions before the class ever begins. Beyond decisions about how to best introduce students to the *WordPress* technology, the instructor must choose a structure for the blogs on her site, which might also affect the way she introduces the technology. During the 2013-2014 academic year, I tried two different class blog structures. In fall 2013, each student had his or her own blog,<sup>8</sup> and I encouraged the students to

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<sup>8</sup> *MultimodalMatters.com* has a multisite installation of *WordPress* which allows us to create many individual blog pages within our installation.

individualize their pages with templates and color schemes that best represented them. These individual pages made grading the blog assignment cumbersome and time consuming, so I decided to adjust my blog structure. In spring 2014, my class had a collective blog page that I designed. The students were encouraged to create their own “About Me” pages that showed their personality, but they were not able to change the class page without my approval. Unfortunately, the structure change may have contributed to a disparity in student engagement. The fall 2013 class largely embraced personalizing their blog spaces, and many of those invested students stuck with the assignment throughout the semester. Conversely, many students in the spring 2014 class did not get invested in the blog assignment and failed to submit many of the required blogs. Beyond that formatting variation, nothing changed about the assignment from one semester to the next. Because I had such variation in student engagement, this sample blog assignment that follows is a combination of my previously used structures; however, the requirements of the assignment remain the same.

The Blogging Assignment has prescriptive physical and organizational requirements but allows for nearly complete freedom with regard to content. During the first week of the semester, the instructor divides the class into four to six groups. Each group has its own blog homepage, and the group members customize the page layout and appearance during one of the first class meetings and discuss their interests before introducing each other to the class and sharing their blog page.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the semester, each student posts to their group’s page ten times. Students have the option to write a 300

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<sup>9</sup> The small group members talk to each other and respond to some basic questions about their academic and personal interests. After this, each student chooses someone in their group to introduce to the class.

word blog post or compose and record a 3 minute video blog (vlog) post about a focused topic of their choosing. In addition to the student's own posts, the instructor may have them post several responses to other students over the course of the semester, encouraging community building. Though students are encouraged to post weekly, the blog requirement only needs to be graded before mid-terms and again during the last full week of the semester. The instructor does not have to grade the blogs or vlogs weekly, but she should check them once or twice a week to select sample posts to bring in for class discussion. Students write their blog posts with the understanding that they may share them in class. This practice helps some students learn to choose appropriate topics through considering their audience and builds the class community as the students learn more about each other.

Some students have a difficult time choosing topics to discuss in their posts, and instructors may find it helpful to keep a list of topics or prompts that students can refer to as they write their blogs. These sample topics vary from brainstorming activities that are applicable to the course assignments to general topics that help the student explore his or her major or field of study. Whether the blog is primarily used for social, personal, professional, or academic topics, having students write throughout the semester helps them analyze and hone their skills beyond the Learning to Write Assignments of the course.

### **Sample Assignment: College Student Manual**

Blogging with *WordPress* allows students to write for practice, exploration, and analysis, but the software is also useful as a writing tool to facilitate student assignments.

Similar to wikis, *WordPress* is useful as a collaborative writing space. The College Student Manual Assignment is one way to bring collaborative student composing to *WordPress*. As students prepare to create articles for the manual individually or in small groups, they must analyze both the assignment sheet and sample texts closely by working to recreate their own interpretation of the texts and considering the structures, genre conventions, and rhetorical situations [Facets 1, 2, & 5]. Furthermore, the College Student Manual Assignment includes a real audience—future students in the class—who have a diverse set of interests and perspectives, which prompts the students to critically consider the needs, concerns, and previous knowledge of the audience in order to appropriately address them [Facets 4 & 6]. During the completion of this assignment, students work together to organize and transition between articles in the Manual. The collaborative planning and writing force students to set incremental deadlines, allowing them to develop these collaboration skills as well as descriptive, explanatory, and demonstrative writing strategies [Facet 7]. Finally, the students consider what they would want to tell an incoming freshman and encourage them to reflect on both what they wanted to know as new freshmen and what they know now that they would want to tell their younger selves. This line of reflection will likely stir topics about setting academic goals, taking advantage of academic resources, and learning more about possible career paths [Facet 9]. With this variety of transfer possibilities, the College Student Manual Assignment is beneficial to the students as somewhat of a Writing to Learn assignment in



addition to the benefits it offers for students as they Learn to Write<sup>10</sup> (Smith and Smith 9-11).

The contents of the College Student Manual vary based on the other topics that are covered in a given composition class. During spring 2014, my students created a similar project in which they considered issues within academia that affect future freshman students. These issues included how the tobacco ban affects students on campus, how the policies and safeguards that are in place make sure students are getting adequate mental health care on campus, and how administrators make decisions about improvements on campus. By investigating and discussing these issues that are relevant to students on MTSU's campus, my students became more familiar with the campus community around them and created a resource that students could access in the future. Though the resource was created using a wiki, the assignment can easily be adapted for *WordPress*.

To introduce the College Student Manual Assignment, the instructor selects one or several types of entries for students to choose from. These may include "How To," "History," "Community," and "Academic Disciplines" but could be expanded or adapted in many ways. Students choose which type of article they want to write and split into groups based on article type. For example, the students who choose "Community" may choose to profile several prominent groups within the campus community. Of the four students who select this type, one may choose a campus honor society that performs several service projects each year, two more students may choose two of the most

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<sup>10</sup> See Chapter II, pgs. 29-31 for an explanation of "Writing to Learn" and "Learning to Write."

popular restaurants in town that offer live music, and the final student may choose the local soup kitchen and food pantry. Each student is expected to contribute at least 500 words, but students are asked to organize their work based on similar or related topics. For this example, the two students who are discussing music venues may choose to share one article page and design it together before posting their own work on each of their chosen subjects. Similarly, if the local soup kitchen is a place where the campus honor society volunteers, then the author of the honor society article may want to include a link for readers to learn more about the soup kitchen, and the same would be true in that the author of the soup kitchen article may include a link to the honor society page to recognize their contributions. This interconnectedness is made possible by the use of Web 2.0 technologies like *WordPress*. These Web 2.0 technologies help students recognize themselves as authors, while making audiences more tangible and requiring students to adapt to new, dynamic rhetorical situations.

As is often the case with Web 2.0 technologies, instructors can facilitate this assignment in multiple ways. Using *WordPress*, the first thing the instructor does is create a new blog homepage for the College Student Manual. After the web space exists, the instructor decides how much editorial power she wants to give the students. On this new page, the instructor gives students editor or author privileges. “Editor” privileges allow the students the power to create their article pages, add posts, and upload pictures, also allowing them to edit or delete other students’ posts. “Author” privileges allow students to add posts, upload pictures, and edit or delete their own posts. Ideally, students are able to assume the role of editor for this assignment to make their own rhetorical

choices throughout the composing process. However, if the instructor cannot trust the class to be editors, then she may have to have each group elect one member to act as editor or create pages for each student or small group, only allowing the students to use their author privileges to post their articles to the assigned pages. Unfortunately though, this strategy does not allow the depth of reflection on visual rhetoric that would be possible if students were making all of those decisions themselves. The College Student Manual Assignment is widely applicable and can be adapted for use with wikis, student websites created through a free service like *Weebly.com*, or even discussion boards in the university's Learning Management System, such as *Desire2Learn*, *Canvas*, or *Blackboard*. When instructors give students more freedom to compose their articles, the students can create texts that are alphabetically and visually effective and accessible to real-world audiences, thus encouraging them to become more invested in the project and develop more of the transferrable communication skills that I strive to cultivate in students during my "Literacy for Life" course.

### **Sample Assignment: Review Article**

The final sample assignment for incorporating *WordPress* into a "Literacy for Life" course is a traditional use of the blog format: the review. Many individuals who write personal blogs review things periodically, and numerous blogs exist to share a reviewer's opinions with the rest of the internet. By assigning students to write their own reviews, the instructor challenges them to develop and explain their own criteria and apply those criteria to a subject. First, the students must closely read and interpret the assignment sheet to better understand the instructor's criteria for assessment and her

expectations [Facet 2]. With this information in mind, students analyze various model reviews written for different audiences before focusing on the specific subgenre of review that they have been assigned and thinking about their audience's expectations [Facets 1 & 6]. By comparing model reviews, students identify writing strategies the authors are using, determine which are effective for each subgenre, and strategize how they can compose their review effectively [Facets 3 & 5]. The planning process for this assignment becomes complicated as students consider how reviewers may reach different conclusions about the same subject, even when presented with the same information; moreover, the instructor encourages students to consider how the rhetorical situations and criteria of the conflicting articles may differ and the effect those differences may cause [Facet 4]. By challenging students to analyze a variety of model reviews and create their own, the instructor helps students develop analytical, comparative, descriptive, and argumentative skills that will prove useful in many future communicative contexts (Smith and Smith 9-11).

Like so many of the sample assignments offered in this text, the Review Article has several variations that offer instructors the ability to customize the assignment to suit a given context. Subgenres of the Review Article include reviews of documentaries, restaurants, products, or services, each offering slightly different expectations and conventions. To create a more cohesive review blog, the instructor chooses one subgenre to focus on in each class. For example, if the instructor chooses product reviews, she may have students read *Amazon.com* customer reviews and product reviews from *Consumer Reports* before asking them to choose a generic item to begin planning their reviews. To

help students with this step, the instructor offers a list of items to choose from. Students get into small groups to discuss their choices and brainstorm criteria. If one student chooses a television as her general item, then her group helps her choose criteria such as picture quality, screen size, and types of ports to serve as the basis for her review. After selecting criteria, each student finds a specific product and evaluates it based on the predetermined criteria. Though some instructors may want to take steps to eliminate the possibility of multiple reviews on the same product, showing students that reviewers may value different attributes and assess products differently offers a great learning opportunity for student writers.

On the technical side, unlike the College Student Manual, the Review Article assignment does not require giving students new permissions on *WordPress*. Expanding on the previous example, the instructor first creates a new page on the main class blog site and names it “Product Reviews.” Students have author privileges in order to post to their own blogs and are able to post their reviews of at least 400 words on the “Product Reviews” page. To meet the requirements of the assignment, students also include a picture of their product with proper MLA citation and use a descriptive title that entices readers. After the students have written and revised their reviews, they post them on the live blog page, making them accessible to anyone who may search for reviews of a certain product online.

Using *WordPress* in the classroom allows instructors teaching “Literacy for Life” and other FYC classes the opportunity to make students feel like authors. Having a real audience for the writing encourages students to put more thought into its creation. When

instructors assign texts that will only be read by them, they undermine the idea of asking students to write to real-world audience. Elizabeth Wardle refers to these constructed, contextless assignments as “Mutt Genres.” In “‘Mutt Genres’ and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?,” Wardle argues that some FYC instructors are teaching inauthentic “general academic genres” and offers two expectations that should be met to address this situation (782). She states that the teaching of FYC “must clearly and directly relate to the university genres that follow and it must include activities that will encourage transfer, such as reflection, explicit abstraction of principles about those genres, and mindfulness” (782). By asking students to write and revise in private but publish online in a real-world context, instructors help students become more comfortable with their writerly selves and with a real audience reading their writing. When students move into their major classes and then out into the workplace, instructors and supervisors will expect competent communicators who are not afraid to share their ideas with others, whether that is in writing, face to face, or through a website. Tempering students with Web 2.0 technologies gets them ready for the fires they will face beyond our FYC classrooms.

## CHAPTER V: FYC PEDAGOGY AND MEDIA GALLERIES

Table 5. Media Galleries Sample Assignments<sup>1</sup>

<i>Assignment Description</i>	<i>Type of Assignment<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Facets of Transfer Possible<sup>3</sup></i>
<p><b>Podcast</b> The students record themselves discussing the topic they are researching for an upcoming assignment. The recording includes 1) a discussion of important information they found thus far, 2) what they were surprised to find, and 3) what they had trouble finding.</p>	Writing to Learn	1- Structural Familiarity 2- Writing Assignment as Genre 3- Meta-Cognitive Awareness 5- Assessing/Recreating Genres 6- Audience Awareness 7- Setting Writing Goals 8- Reflection 9- Ownership in Education
<p><b>Magazine Advertisement</b> The students design print advertisements for their individually selected products. Students choose a real print publication that their advertisement would appear in and compose with that audience in mind.</p>	Learning to Write	1- Structural Familiarity 2- Writing Assignment as Genre 4- Multiple Perspectives 5- Assessing/Recreating Genres 6- Audience Awareness 7- Setting Writing Goals
<p><b>Kickstarter Video</b> The students plan, design, and compose a crowd-sourcing video in small groups. The groups come up with a product and present an argument to convince the audience to support their project.</p>	Learning to Write	1- Structural Familiarity 2- Writing Assignment as Genre 3- Meta-Cognitive Awareness 4- Multiple Perspectives 5- Assessing/Recreating Genres 6- Audience Awareness 7- Setting Writing Goals

<sup>1</sup> This table is intended to provide an overview of the sample assignments included in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> For a description of *Learning to Write* and *Writing to Learn*, see Chapter II, pages 29-31.

<sup>3</sup> For full descriptions of the “Facets of Knowledge and Skills Transfer”, see Chapter II, page 27. This list is derived from *Building Bridges through Writing* by Smith and Smith.

Asking students to produce multimodal texts—including images, audio files, and even videos—is not a new idea for English classes. Nevertheless, these assignments often face issues of access and longevity. When a student sends a link to a video that she posted on *YouTube*, the instructor is typically able to access the video to grade it for that semester; however, because students have the rights to their own online accounts, the instructor has no way to guarantee that the student’s work will be there in the future. If students are submitting physical objects such as paintings or photographs, then the instructor has similar concerns. Without a digital copy, instructors risk damaging or losing a model composition before they are able to use it in the classroom. This uncertainty makes it difficult to supply student models to future classes or review student work while revising assignments. To address these issues, my co-creator Dr. Jonathan Bradley<sup>4</sup> and I included Media Galleries on *MultimodalMatters.com*, allowing students to upload their audio files, image files, and video files to the instructor’s Content Management System or class *YouTube* account.

The Content Management System *Joomla* makes these *Galleries* possible on *MultimodalMatters.com*. After considering possible CMSs and consulting reviews, my colleague Dr. Bradley found that *Joomla* had many positive reviews and offered a large variety of professional-looking, free templates that instructors would be able to use for their sites. The Joomla Project Team created *Joomla*, a popular open source CMS, in 2005, and their CMS is currently used for 11.57% of the websites on the internet (“About

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Jonathan Bradley mentioned here is the same Jonathan Bradley discussed in the introduction. During summer 2013, Jonathan earned his doctorate before becoming a lecturer at MTSU in fall 2013. To respect his new position, I will refer to him as Dr. Bradley throughout this chapter.



the Joomla! Project”); “CMS Usage Statistics: Statistics for websites using CMS technologies”). As an open source CMS program, *Joomla* is similar to *WordPress* and has similar goals about access and facilitating communication. The creators of *Joomla* show those goals through their organization’s mission statement: “Our mission is to provide a flexible platform for digital publishing and collaboration” (“Mission, Vision & Values”). We opted for *Joomla* for *MultimodalMatters.com* because it gave us the freedom to include a variety of Web 2.0 technologies while being very customizable to meet our needs. To have a true Enduring Learning Community (ELC), we needed to store past students’ texts to share with current students, and *Joomla* enabled us to create three Media Galleries: “Audio Gallery,” “Image Gallery,” and “*YouTube* Gallery.” Unlike *NotaBene* and *WordPress* discussed in the previous chapters, a site administrator is required to set up these media galleries on the individual instructor’s web space before she can take advantage of them.

The “Audio Gallery” that allows students and instructors to upload or listen to audio files is a straight-forward interface created with the *Simple File Upload v1.3* and *mp3 Browser* plugins on *Joomla*.<sup>5</sup> Instructors use this gallery to post recorded lectures, assignment descriptions, or model assignments, and they have the option to make the page visible to students with or without signing in. Students use the gallery to listen to files the instructor provides and to upload audio-based assignments. To avoid unwanted or inappropriate files, only registered users of *MultimodalMatters.com* can access the upload feature. For a screen capture of my “Audio Gallery,” see Figure 1 in Appendix I.

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<sup>5</sup> I anticipate posting directions on how to set up this “Audio Gallery” at <http://kaylamcnabb.com/adminresources> within the 2014-15 academic year.

The “Image Gallery” is possible through *Phoca Gallery*.<sup>6</sup> *Phoca Gallery* is not considered open source; instead, the software is protected by a GNU General Public License (“Phoca Gallery”). Similar to open source, this kind of license means that the program is free for use and that programmers can work with the original source code, but the GNU license also includes specific restrictions for future use, such as requiring that any future version based on the protected source code also be free<sup>7</sup> (“Frequently Asked Questions about the GNU Licenses”). The “Image Gallery” allows instructors and students to upload image files for a variety of purposes. This feature can be used to submit visual compositions or post class notes. Like the “Audio Gallery,” only registered users can upload files to the gallery, and the page can be hidden from external viewers if the instructor is concerned about others having access to the content. For two screen captures of my “Image Gallery,” see Figures 2 and 3 in Appendix I.

The “YouTube Gallery” on *MultimodalMatters.com* was created using the *AllMedia YouTube Feed Gallery* plugin and two pages coded by Dr. Bradley. The plugin provided the gallery structure for the webpage, and Dr. Bradley coded the pages that allow students to upload videos directly to the instructor’s *YouTube* account without needing access to the instructor’s user name or password. These custom pages are contained within the *Joomla* installation, so the upload page for the “YouTube Gallery” is only accessible to registered users of *MultimodalMatters.com*, and the gallery page is

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<sup>6</sup> I anticipate posting directions on how to set up this “Image Gallery” at <http://kaylamcnabb.com/adminresources> within the 2014-15 academic year.

<sup>7</sup>The difference between “open source” and “free software,” like those covered under the GNU General Public License, is largely philosophical. See the GNU frequently asked questions page for more information. <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl-faq.html#WhatDoesGPLStandFor>

accessible to anyone.<sup>8</sup> Instructors and students can upload a variety of videos to the “*YouTube* Gallery” page, including class lectures, vlogs, and other course assignments. For a screen capture of my *YouTube Gallery*, see Figure 4 in Appendix I.

The various galleries on *MultimodalMatters.com* allow students to share their work with real audiences and each other.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, instructors who use media galleries have the ability to create an ELC that helps current students see their own compositions as being in conversation with the texts that have been shared through the galleries before. Students can draw on what worked well in previous compositions and learn from aspects of the compositions that were done poorly. By encouraging students to consider previous texts, the instructor is showing students their potential as authors and helping them make informed rhetorical decisions for their own compositions. Through the Media Galleries, instructors in a variety of English classes can have students create and display multimodal compositions that demonstrate knowledge of both content and rhetorical principles of composition. The following sample assignments are particularly well-suited for the “Literacy for Life” and “Argumentative Writing” courses at MTSU.

### **Sample Assignment: Podcast<sup>10</sup>**

The “Audio Gallery” may seem like a difficult gallery to fill, but instructors can use many assignments to help students better understand composing aurally. These

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<sup>8</sup> To get a “YouTube Gallery,” instructors at MTSU contact their site administrator. I anticipate posting directions on how to set up this “*YouTube* Gallery” at <http://kaylamcnabb.com/adminresources> within the 2014-15 academic year.

<sup>9</sup> Students in my class sign an informed consent form either allowing me to keep their work for future models or asking me to refrain from using their work in the future. Posting assignments to *MultimodalMatters.com* is a required component of the course, but each student has the right to have their work removed from the site at any time after the course ends.

<sup>10</sup> The full assignment descriptions for each sample assignment are available in Appendix J.

assignments can range from Learning to Write assignments like the formal radio broadcast or professional voicemail to Writing to Learn assignments like podcasts or dramatic readings. Audio composing is often overlooked in the discussion about multimodal assignments, but this does students a disservice. Though students may never be asked to host a radio program, they will need to leave professional voicemails and may be asked to share a progress report verbally or textually in a future class or in the workplace. Many of the transfer benefits that compositionists cite for other types of multimodal assignments are equally applicable to audio compositions.

For example, the Podcast Assignment challenges students to read and interpret the writing assignment as a genre [Facet 2]. After reviewing multiple model podcasts for a variety of purposes and audiences, students deconstruct the expected structure of an informative podcast and recreate a text that follows those genre expectations and is intended for a target audience [Facets 1, 4, & 6]. As students plan their own compositions, they are also challenged to think about their composing process, including previous composing experiences and the purposes and benefits of composing an informative podcast [Facets 3, 7, & 8]. Critically considering the benefits of the assignment invites students to think about ways they could use these skills in future educational and workplace contexts [Facet 9]. With the Podcast Assignment, students practice all of these transferable skills that are needed beyond the FYC classroom (Smith and Smith 9-11).

In the Podcast Assignment, students record a sustained discussion of their chosen research topic. This assignment is more appropriate for the “Argumentative Writing”

course at MTSU but could be used in a “Literacy for Life” course that builds to a project requiring some limited research. The students complete the Podcast Assignment as they prepare to compose their research project, whether that project is a multimodal presentation, a profile of the target consumer group for a marketing pitch, or a variety of other multimodal compositions, including posters, graphic novels, or wiki entries. To prepare for the Podcast Assignment, students watch/listen to several model texts. These examples would include podcasts from both general sites like *NPR.org* and niche sites like *StuffMomNeverToldYou.com*. Furthermore, model videos from general web programs like *DNews*<sup>11</sup> and niche programs like the *Vlogbrothers*<sup>12</sup> provide additional models of brief discussions of research about a narrowly defined topic. Watching the video examples and listening to the podcasts helps students compare the impact of visual compositions—which they are likely more familiar with—and the impact of purely auditory compositions, preparing them to compose in the new medium.

Once the class has been introduced to the new genre and identifies the genre expectations, students are ready to complete and assemble their research and plan their podcasts. In many ways, the Podcast Assignment is similar to more traditional annotated bibliography or literature review assignments: students describe research they have done on a specific topic in preparation for another assignment and orally provide appropriate attribution. The primary differences are in the new modes and the improved conception of audience. Each student plans and records a three to six minute Podcast, telling the class—including the instructor—about her topic and mentioning three to five sources that

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<sup>11</sup> DNews videos can be found at [testtube.com/dnews/](http://testtube.com/dnews/).

<sup>12</sup> Vlogbrothers videos can be found at [www.youtube.com/vlogbrothers](http://www.youtube.com/vlogbrothers)

she plans to use to compose her research project. The Podcast begins with the student presenting and briefly explaining her research question and current thesis and continues as she comments on each piece of evidence she will use to support or refute her thesis. After the Podcasts are posted to the “Audio Gallery,” the instructor listens to each recording and uses a screen capture software like *Jing*<sup>13</sup> (see Chapter II pages 46-48 for more information about digital feedback) to give each student brief feedback on the quality of the research and the assignment itself. The other students in the class also have access to their classmates’ Podcasts and are encouraged to use them as they look for any additional sources to complete the upcoming research project. Though my “Literacy for Life” class has not completed this assignment yet, I plan to assign it in the future to help students become more comfortable articulating and integrating their research before they are asked to write the researched paper or create the multimodal project. This Writing to Learn assignment helps the instructor check in on the students’ research progress and gives the students the opportunity to organize their research and identify any gaps in their argument before they sit down to write the more intimidating Learning to Write assignment.

### **Sample Assignment: Magazine or Web Advertisement**

Because students are often more comfortable creating alphabetic texts than aural or visual texts, MTSU’s FYC courses, specifically “Literacy for Life,” challenge students to expand their multimodal literacies. Students are asked to compose beyond the written

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<sup>13</sup> Using *Jing* to respond to audio files allows instructors to make reference to the assignment sheet for the “Podcast Assignment” as well as the assignment sheet for the upcoming research assignment; however, instructors could use other purely audio or alphabetic feedback methods.

word in their later general education courses, major courses, and in the workplace, so being able to transfer these multimodal literacies is crucial to their future success. One example of these multimodal assignments that improve multimodal literacies is the Magazine or Web Advertisement Assignment, which helps students develop a familiarity with the genre expectations of advertisements as well as various aspects of their structure [Facets 1 & 5]. To compose an advertisement in the context of the course, students must first deconstruct the writing assignment itself and determine the instructor's expectations [Facet 2]. Furthermore, to compose an advertisement that is directed at the appropriate audience, students think critically about the audience of the magazine or web page that the ad would appear on and consider the audience's perspectives [Facets 4 & 6]. Being able to critically analyze various aspects of this assignment and direct their visual argument at a specific audience helps students better understand which aspects of communicating they still need to work on to be successful in future assignments and beyond FYC [Facet 7] (Smith and Smith 9-11).

Composing visual arguments has been part of some composition courses since the 1970s and 1980s, but multimodal assignments are relatively new in FYC at MTSU. "Literacy for Life" courses often include assignments with visual components, but some instructors are hesitant to incorporate assignments that focus on visual composition. To help instructors ease into these multimodal assignments, I offer the Magazine or Web Advertisement Assignment as a way to experiment with a familiar genre and familiar concepts in a new medium. In the Magazine or Web Advertisement Assignment, the instructor first chooses whether or not she will limit the scope to magazines or websites

or if she will accept either. For the purposes of this example and as a way to help instructors acclimate, I have chosen a Magazine Advertisement Assignment. After introducing the assignment, the instructor offers models from magazines. The class analyzes these texts outside class through a group annotation program like *NotaBene* and compares notes during class discussion. The instructor has the students deconstruct the rhetorical situation of each model advertisement—identifying aspects such as author, audience, message, and context—before prompting the students to think specifically about the physical context within the magazine, including looking at what articles and advertisements are nearby. With a firm grasp of the genre, students are ready to create their own advertisements.

If students previously completed a review assignment for a product,<sup>14</sup> then an item related to that product is the ideal subject for their advertisement. However, if they do not have a subject from a previous assignment, students break into small groups to choose products. With their product in mind, students choose a publication that would feature their advertisement. The instructor limits the possible publications to help students make their decision more quickly. Instructors should provide a variety of magazines targeted at different audiences, such as a campus magazine, *Game Informer*, *Good Housekeeping*, *People Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*.<sup>15</sup> Instructors can give students variety; however, they should also choose publications that students have access to through the

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<sup>14</sup> A sample assignment sheet for the Product Review Assignment can be found in Appendix J.

<sup>15</sup> With the exception of “a campus magazine,” this list is ordered based on December 2013 circulation figures (“Top 25 U.S. Consumer Magazines for December 2013”).



campus library. With the product and publication chosen, students are ready to plan their magazine page and begin working on the advertisement.

The Magazine Advertisement Assignment has three components: the magazine page, the advertisement, and the composer's commentary. Based on the models that students reviewed in class and on their own, they design basic one- to two-page layout that includes the advertisement itself. The students do not create other advertisements or write articles, but they write titles for articles that would be appropriate before or after their advertisement, and they also include boxes for other types of advertisements that might be rhetorically effective near their advertisement. For example, if a student chose to advertise diapers in *O Magazine*, then she may include a small box on the following page that would say "Advertisement for All Natural Baby Formula" and incorporate an article block with the title "The Benefits of Being a Working Mom." This contextualization is worth a small percentage in the grading but helps solidify the understanding shown in the other components. The student thoughtfully chooses images, colors, and text to create a compelling argument for the product featured. Finally, the student writes a composer's commentary in which she briefly (250+ words) discusses the rhetorical choices she made in the composition of both the magazine page and the Magazine Advertisement.

The students submit these assignment components through the university's Learning Management System—such as *Canvas*, *Desire2Learn*, or *Blackboard*—for grading, but the instructor also invites students to share their advertisements by uploading them to the "Image Gallery" on *MultimodalMatters.com* and discussing them in class on

the day the assignment is due. By having students submit their work through an LMS for assessment, the instructor has access to the students' texts and can download them for future use as models, but students are not required to put their compositions on the webpage for their classmates and anyone else to see. Though I propose optional publication to instructors using this assignment, I incentivize uploading the advertisement either through daily participation points or by including it as a small part of the assignment rubric. This is the kind of low-stakes assignment that helps students become more comfortable embracing publication and accepting themselves as authors.

### **Sample Assignment: *Kickstarter* Video**

Asking students to compose a video is an intimidating prospect for some instructors. Before an instructor assigns a video project, she should become familiar with the resources that are available on campus or online through the university and develop a basic understanding of the amount of time that goes into video editing. The best way to do this is by making a model video, but reading about the experiences of other instructors also offers a great deal of information. The *Kickstarter* Video is a relatively straightforward argumentative text; however, assigning it to students challenges them to analyze it as a genre, by considering the expected structure, the rhetorical context, and how they may use that knowledge to create an effective argumentative text [Facets 1 & 5]. To start planning their videos, students refer to the writing assignment and compare the aspects that instructor values to the characteristics seen in the models [Facet 2]. Students must also consider how their target audience and the product that they are trying to fund will affect their visual, aural, and linguistic choices and how different viewers—

especially those outside the target audience—may interpret the choices they make [Facets 4 & 6]. After thinking through this process and planning the *Kickstarter* Video, students reflect on their composition process and consider which aspects of their writing might be improved to effectively accomplish future argumentative writing tasks [Facets 3 & 7] (Smith and Smith 9-11).

Like many other projects, the *Kickstarter* Video Assignment is introduced by providing multiple examples of both good and bad crowd-funding videos.

*Kickstarter.com* is a crowd-sourcing website that is full of possible models, but instructors can also find examples on sites like *Indiegogo.com* and *GoFundMe.com*. Instructors show students model videos, juxtaposing examples that are rhetorically effective but simply put together with those that are rhetorically ineffective and too complicated. Students compare these successful videos to several poorly constructed videos and should notice that the funding often follows the better projects and the more effective rhetoric. For example, Zan Barnes, an artisan with an MFA in ceramics, posted a *Kickstarter* campaign to help her build her own kiln to continue her work after leaving the university. Barnes composed a clear, interesting, and informative video about the project and wrote a detailed account of her love for creating pottery and her goals with the new kiln.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Dan Brinkman, a ceramic figure creator, posted a *Kickstarter* campaign to help him experiment with using traditional ceramic gnome molds to make zombie or horror garden gnomes. Brinkman composed a video that consists of one still image of three painted zombie gnomes with his voice-over describing

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<sup>16</sup> To view Zan Barnes's *Kickstarter*, visit [https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1928743480/my-own-soda-kiln?ref=discover\\_rec](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1928743480/my-own-soda-kiln?ref=discover_rec).

the project and wrote a description that restates what was said in the video with some additional information about his collection of ceramic molds.<sup>17</sup> Looking at these examples side-by-side, students see how thoughtful composition plays a role in creating an effective text and how the more rhetorically effective text has been better supported by the *Kickstarter* community. Because making a thoughtfully composed video is a complex and time consuming process, this assignment is best done in groups of four to six people who take on a variety of roles. Each group first brainstorms ideas that they would like to get funded. The topic does not have to be serious or even attainable because the most important part of the assignment is how the group presents their argument. Once the group chooses an idea that they want to get funded, they distribute the work for the project. Further, if the group has something that they would actually want to crowd-fund, then they may be able to adapt part of the project to post on a crowd-sourcing website in the future.

As students see in the models presented in class, there are multiple components to a *Kickstarter* page. Each group creates A) a video (two to three minutes in length) that presents their product or idea, B) a description for their product or idea (at least 800-1000 words and includes at least two graphics), and C) descriptions of at least five rewards (500+ words total) that supporters will get for pledging various amounts of money. The group is responsible for making sure that the work is distributed fairly and that each group member is contributing.<sup>18</sup> Once the students complete the components of the

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<sup>17</sup> To view Dan Brinkman's *Kickstarter*, visit <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1596033408/zombie-gnomes-and-other-unique-figures?ref=discovery>.

<sup>18</sup> In group projects, group members have the option to vote out individuals who consistently refuse to contribute.

project, the group submits the written supplements to the class LMS and posts their *Kickstarter* Video to the class “*YouTube* Gallery.” I suggest having the group members submit the collaboratively written assignment together and revise individually based on instructor feedback. Though students may not request crowd-funding in the future<sup>19</sup>, they may be able to transfer this assignment’s skills to other contexts in the future, such as requesting a job interview, applying for funding for a project, or asking for a raise in the workplace. Completing this project in a group environment is also representative of some composing situations that students will encounter in future classes and the workplace.

Using the Galleries on *MultimodalMatters.com* allows instructors to showcase student work and helps students see themselves as authors. Instructors have the option to use any of these types of galleries to make student work or instructor content available online. Through the “Literacy for Life” course at MTSU, the Lower Division English administration encourages our FYC instructors to think more about the types of writing that students will be expected to complete in the future. Though students may not be asked to record a podcast, design an advertisement, or compose a *Kickstarter* video, they will be asked to recount information they collected, deconstruct visual arguments that are part of the world around them, and compose arguments to convince others to support their position. These skills are transferable throughout daily life.

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<sup>19</sup> If students plan to pursue crowd-funding for an idea or product that they use for the class project, then they should be encouraged to read the terms and conditions of the crowd-funding site closely before making the video and especially before creating the crowd-funding page.

## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

Pedagogical change is often challenging, but the educators in MTSU's English Lower Division are making progress toward a FYC sequence that is more transferable, focusing on skills and knowledge that students will be able to apply in other general education courses, courses in their major, and the workplace. The transition to the transfer-focused "Literacy for Life" starting in 2012 and the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum-based "Argumentative Writing" starting in 2011 has not been easy for instructors at MTSU, but these changes allow students to develop the tools they will need to complete future communicative tasks in a variety of contexts, so English administrators encourage instructors to take small steps forward as they acclimate to the revised courses. When I investigated transfer of skills and knowledge, writing across the curriculum pedagogy, multimodal literacies, and the use of technology in the composition classroom, I found that using Web 2.0 technologies and writing authentic, multimodal texts for real-world audiences were some of the best ways to help students carry their new skills and knowledge from their FYC courses forward. *MultimodalMatters.com* prepares MTSU's English instructors—especially those teaching "Literacy for Life"—to teach students transferable communication skills.

The Web 2.0 technologies mentioned in this text are not the only ones that are beneficial to English instructors, but they provide a place for instructors to start developing a familiarity with Web 2.0 instructional technologies. By reading my literature review (Chapter II), instructors can see the need to transition their pedagogy to meet the changing needs of today's students. Chapters 3-5 provide a practical groundwork for bringing these technologies into the classroom as well as some

assignments that could be adapted for use in many different composition or literature classroom contexts. By considering the pedagogical framework behind *MultimodalMatters.com* and my sample assignments, instructors can consider how their pedagogy supports the choices they make while easing into the technological aspect of multimodality and student publishing. Rushing to implement unfamiliar technologies that are not supported by an instructor's pedagogical beliefs does not benefit student learning. In this rapidly changing technological landscape, instructors should always be looking at upcoming technologies and familiarizing themselves with possibilities that could better suit student needs.

### **Future of “Literacy for Life”**

The “Literacy for Life” course is on track to become the required first-semester composition class, fulfilling one general education requirement for MTSU students. The Lower Division Committee reviewed the course proposal documents at the end of spring 2014 and assessed the proposal, making suggestions to improve it in preparation for its submission to the university's General Education Committee. If the course is approved, then the remaining “Expository Writing” courses would become “Literacy for Life” courses, and the instructors would be expected to use the revised teaching and learning objectives for “Literacy for Life.” (See Appendix C for a complete list of these objectives.)

As the Lower Division English instructors transition to “Literacy for Life,” they will likely have many of the same difficulties that other instructors have already experienced: providing an adequate focus on reading instruction, crafting assignments that challenge students to compose using multiple literacies, grading multimodal

assignments, and scaffolding an assignment sequence that helps students cultivate transferable skills across multiple writing tasks. Ideally, these issues would be addressed through professional development opportunities provided by the English department's Lower Division director, Lower Division Committee, the Graduate Teaching Assistant Coordination Office, and the GTA Digital Media Specialist<sup>1</sup>. However, the English department is in a transitional period during summer 2014 because the department chair, Lower Division director, and GTA coordinator will be stepping down before the 2014-2015 academic year. The future of professional development offered through the department is uncertain, and the new English chair may institute a new organizational structure for the department that would do away with Upper and Lower Division. This restructuring would not necessarily mean the biannual Lower Division Curriculum Meetings would not occur, but they may be called something new, organized by another administrator, and have different foci. The only professional development that is currently being offered for "Literacy for Life" instructors during 2014-2015 academic year is through the GTA Coordination office and the Digital Media Specialist.<sup>2</sup> The GTAs will have workshops throughout the year, and some of these will be focused on aspects of teaching FYC at MTSU—such as creating assignments, scaffolding assignment sequences, grading, crafting project units—whereas others will be focused on preparing for the job market and successfully completing various aspects of the graduate program, such as exams and theses or dissertations. In addition to those GTAC

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<sup>1</sup> The Digital Media Specialist position is an assistantship that is overseen by the GTAC office; however, the resources she creates and the workshops she leads are available to all English department faculty.

<sup>2</sup> The interim Lower Division director plans to have a Lower Division Curriculum Meeting in August 2014, but as of June, the faculty and GTAs have not been given any details about this yet.



workshops, the Digital Media Specialist plans to offer workshops to help all lower division instructors utilize *MultimodalMatters.com* and incorporate more multimodal literacies into their composition and literature courses. Though the support structure for new “Literacy for Life” instructors is not clear at the moment, the new administrators have stated their desire to have well-prepared students leaving our general education English classes, and I anticipate those support structures being established within the coming months.

### **Future of *MultimodalMatters.com***

The future of *MultimodalMatters.com* is being decided right now, in summer 2014. During spring 2014, I worked with Sarah Gray to prepare her to be administrator during the 2014-2015 academic year, but the website is still having some growing pains. Dr. Jonathan Bradley has the technical knowledge to address more complex issues that arise with *MultimodalMatters.com*; however, neither Sarah nor I have the programming skills to address those issues. To help the new administrator (and future administrators) address issues with the site, Dr. Bradley and I plan to leave as much guidance as possible in the form of instructions and demonstrative videos, but the English department or the GTAC Program will need more technical support to keep the website going in the long-term.

Dr. Bradley and I plan to continue developing the idea of the Enduring Learning Community on a new, sister-site to *MultimodalMatters.com*. The new site will enable us to take advantage of many of the same Web 2.0 technologies; however, the site will not be hosted through a hosting site like *GoDaddy.com* or on a university server. Instead, we are renting space on a dedicated server. This approach will provide more flexibility with

respect to installing software and more customization from a programming perspective. Ideally, we would like to maintain a website that supports our pedagogical goals—including facilitating students' development of multiple literacies and improved communication skills through open access technologies and real-world writing situations—and is accessible to interested instructors at multiple universities.

Establishing the new web space is on-going; unfortunately, the growth we would like to see is contingent on obtaining outside funding. Since I am in the process of changing institutions, and Dr. Bradley is on the job market for a tenure-track position, we do not have a stable institutional affiliation to request funding through. Additionally, the two of us agree that these Web 2.0 tools should be available to all instructors, and we want any future website to be available to educators from different universities, K-12 schools, a variety of disciplines, and any nation. We would also be happy to see our ELC concept implemented by other educators on other campuses, and we are taking steps to make information about our structure available to instructors and administrators across the country. This thesis is one of those steps, and we anticipate subsequent publications and conference presentations<sup>3</sup> that will allow us to spread our ideology and encourage others to integrate multiple literacies into their classrooms to encourage skills transfer.

### **Future of My Pedagogy**

In my own classroom practice, I will integrate more technology and multiple literacies. Many of the sample assignments I discussed in the preceding chapters are still untested. As of summer 2014, I have only taught two sections of “Literacy for Life,” so I

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<sup>3</sup> I will be presenting about using Web 2.0 technologies in the context of the writing center at the International Writing Centers Association Conference that is scheduled for October 30-November 1, 2014.

would still like to try many new assignments and approaches in my future classes. As I begin my doctoral degree this fall at Virginia Tech, I do not anticipate teaching FYC during the 2014-2015 academic year. I see this time outside the classroom as an opportunity to learn more about the technologies that I have at my disposal and more about the literacies students at my new university will need to develop to be successful in that collegiate environment and the multitude of communicative situations they will encounter in future classes and beyond the university.

I cite my students' needs as the foundational component of my teaching philosophy. Upon that base, I help students reach the goals they set for themselves through a focus on communication, context, and collaboration. Students must understand the importance of the communication they already partake in daily, adapt to and translate to different contexts, and collaborate with each other to create coherent well-constructed texts. In my classes, I introduce students to these concepts as they compose blog posts, publish their multimodal texts to *MultimodalMatters.com*, and write to real audiences, like future freshman students. In my teaching philosophy, I address the future and the ever changing field of composition pedagogy saying:

As I develop as an instructor, I will keep my students' goals at the center of my teaching. My three major tenets may shift as I embrace new paradigms in the field, but my ultimate test before incorporating something into my teaching will be to ask "Does this benefit the students as they strive to meet their goals?" If the answer is yes, then I must consider it. (See Appendix K for the full text)

Even though through this process I have noticed many instructors may be resistant to change, it is my goal to constantly reevaluate my classroom practice to best serve the students as they pursue their goals for improvement. I recognize that my philosophy is idealistic, but I am pedagogically optimistic and plan to continue improving my assignments and practices as emerging paradigms offer students new opportunities to become literate, successful communicators.

Seeing the transformation that English Department administrators at MTSU have cultivated in only two academic years has only solidified my desire to be a dynamic instructor. “Literacy for Life” seems like such a simple concept, but teachers at MTSU had been educating students for 100 years before English Lower Division Director Dr. Laura Dubek and her task force challenged the dated approaches being used in first-year composition classes and took steps to make the general education writing course more applicable to all students who take it. When the “Literacy for Life” pilot began, I was struck by its practicality. By teaching students to rhetorically analyze and adapt to both traditional and digital composing contexts, “Literacy for Life” instructors are giving students the tools to build their own successful futures. Students are able to see how the skills they cultivate in “Literacy for Life” transfer to their current classes, classes they will take in the future, and the workplace. As I develop as an instructor, I will keep Andrea Lunsford’s argument that *Everyone’s an Author* in mind, letting that outlook create a classroom environment that encourages transfer and helps students appreciate themselves as authors by having them focus on reflection, metacognition, analysis, and writing to real-world contexts for real audiences.

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**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

Creating *MultimodalMatters.com* TimelineTable 6. Creating *MultimodalMatters.com* Timeline

Spring 2013	Jonathan Bradley and Kayla McNabb take the Seminar in Teaching Literature taught by Dr. Allison Smith.
February 2013	The class covers some foundational information: how students transfer skills from an introductory literature course to later classes and the workplace, ways in which the instructor can create classroom communities, and the importance of being transparent with students.
March 2013	Dr. Allison Smith encourages Kayla and Jonathan's Enduring Learning Communities project, collaborating with them to name it <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> . The GTA Program purchases the domain name for five years (\$30.08) and web hosting for three years (\$161.64) to get the project off the ground.
April 2013	<i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> goes live with a basic homepage.
April 2013	Jonathan uses <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> to present his sample "Day in the Life" Assignment for the Seminar in Teaching Literature course.
Summer 2013	Jonathan continues to design and build the site with Kayla's input and is compensated \$300 for the 30+ hours he spends working on the site.
August 2013	Kayla and Jonathan present the possible uses of <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> at GTA Orientation.
August 2013	Jonathan presents strategies for utilizing <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> in both composition and literature courses at the Fall 2013 Lower Division Curriculum Meeting.
Fall 2013	Kayla becomes the GTA Digital Media Specialist.
Fall 2013	Kayla and Jonathan use <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> in their classes. Several other instructors begin using the site early in the semester.
August 2013	Kayla adds new instructors and students to <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> and realizes the process is time-consuming and tedious, having to add one user at a time.
September 2013	Jonathan installs "Batch Create" for <i>WordPress</i> and "ARRA User Migrate" for <i>Joomla!</i> to enable adding users to <i>WordPress</i> and <i>Joomla</i> in bulk.
September 2013	Instructors notice student login difficulties on <i>WordPress</i> . Jonathan diagnoses a problem with the <i>WordPress</i> "Batch Create" program and trouble-shoots a solution.

October 2013	WikkaWiki, one of the original Web 2.0 technologies, is removed from <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> due to external interference and security concerns. Jonathan begins looking for a new wiki software to install on the site.
November 2013	Kayla presents about digital corrective feedback at CompExpo at MTSU and shares information about <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> with the department.
November 2013	Kayla holds two informational workshops about <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> for GTAs and English department faculty.
December 2013	By the end of the fall semester, 25 instructors request pages on <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> .
January 2014	Kayla speaks about <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> at the Spring 2014 Lower Division Curriculum Meeting.
March 2014	Kayla and Jonathan attend Conference on College Composition and Communication in Indianapolis, IN to learn more about other programs' approaches to integrate Web 2.0 technologies and multimodal assignments.
March 2014	Kayla and Sarah Gray hold the "Getting Started with <i>Canvas</i> Workshop" for GTAs and English department faculty.
April 2014	Kayla and Sarah hold the Multimodal Assignments Workshops (2 sessions) for GTAs and English department faculty.
April 2014	Kayla and Sarah hold the "Getting Started with <i>NotaBene</i> Workshop" for GTAs and English department faculty.
Summer 2014	Jonathan experiments with new technologies and new configurations of current Web 2.0 technologies.
January- June 2014	Kayla writes her thesis about the creation and implementation of <i>MultimodalMatters.com</i> in her "Literacy for Life" class.
July 2014	Kayla and Jonathan prepare resources for Sarah to use in her role as GTA Digital Media Specialist.

**APPENDIX B<sup>1</sup>****2011 “Expository Writing” Objectives at MTSU**

1. The ability to generate informed writing objectives for yourself each time you write.
2. The ability to analyze the strengths and weaknesses in your own writing.
3. The ability to follow the process of prewriting, drafting, rewriting, and editing in your writing.
4. The ability to draw content for your writing from your experience, your imagination, and from outside resources (e.g., printed materials, interviews, films).
5. The ability to develop a thesis with a variety of supports in your writing (e.g., definition, illustration, description, comparison and contrast, causal analysis).
6. The ability to distinguish between central and supporting ideas.
7. The ability to adapt to audience in your writing’s content and language.
8. The ability to read, summarize, paraphrase, analyze, quote from, and write critically about assigned readings.
9. The ability to adapt language and the structures of sentences and paragraphs to the purposes of a given piece of writing.
10. The ability to express ideas with clarity and specificity.
11. The ability to vary the structure and length of your sentences.
12. The ability to write with grammatical competence and to use conventional punctuation and spelling in writing that is especially free of the following errors: faulty subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement, faulty use of principal parts of verbs, sentence fragments, faulty predication, comma splices and fused sentences, misuse or omission of apostrophe, and misspellings of commonly used words.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Smith, Allison. “Standards for Composition I and II English 1010 and English 1020.” 2011. *Word file*.

**APPENDIX C<sup>1</sup>****2012 “Literacy for Life” 1010 Objectives at MTSU****Learning Objectives:**

1. Students will understand composition as a field of study that involves research about writing and how it works.
2. Students will define and illustrate key concepts in composition studies: rhetorical situation, exigence, purpose, genre, critical analysis, audience, discourse community, reflection, context, composing, and knowledge.
3. Students will read and analyze various types of text—print, visual, digital, and audio.
4. Students will complete writing tasks that require understanding the rhetorical situation and making appropriate decisions about content, form, and presentation. At least one of these tasks will give students practice distilling a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement.
5. Students will get practice writing in multiple genres and in response to real world writing situations.
6. Students will conduct basic research necessary for completing specific writing tasks, learning to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources and between fact, opinion, and inference.
7. Students will develop the skill of constructive critique, focusing on higher order concerns, including matters of design, during peer workshops.
8. Students will know how to use their handbook as a reference tool.
9. Students will develop their own writing theory (based on the key concepts) that they can transfer to writing situations in other classes and in life.

**Teaching Objectives:**

1. Provide a written rationale for the course. Connect the practice of expository writing to writing students will do in other coursework, the workplace, and their everyday lives.
2. Pace your course so that students read and write throughout the 15 week semester. Get the most out of your textbooks.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Dubek, Laura. “1010LearningandTeachingObjectives2012.16.13.” 2012. *PDF* file.

3. Introduce composition as an academic field of study by presenting a sample of research on writing. (Examples: Andrea Lundsford's "Mistakes are a Fact of Life: A Comparative National Study," Peter Elbow's "Inviting the Mother Tongue," Nancy Sommers's "The Novice as Expert: Writing the Freshman Year," and Deborah Brandt's "Literacy in American Lives.")
4. Teach students the rhetorical triangle—exigence/purpose/audience.
5. Reinforce understanding of key concepts (particularly the rhetorical situation) through reading. Show students how to annotate model/mentor texts, focusing on both content and form. Put emphasis on understanding the writer's purpose, main idea/argument, and rhetorical strategies. Teach students that writing is about making choices that reflect an understanding of audience.
6. Give students writing-to-learn opportunities.
7. Present students with writing tasks/projects that require consideration of the key concepts. These writing tasks should (1) have real world implications and (2) be expository in nature—writing to inform, instruct, clarify, define, describe, assess, or evaluate. A typical sequence of writing assignments: Personal Statement, Profile of a (student) Organization, Op-Ed or Review, Rhetorical/ Analysis or Report.
8. At least one writing task should require that students distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement and order and develop major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose. This task might be an email, a letter, an op-ed, a report, or an essay exam. Acknowledge that thesis statements are often informative and sometimes implied.
9. Give students instruction in basic research, e.g. finding definitions, explanations, facts. Teach them how to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information and between fact, opinion, and inference. Introduce the idea of academic integrity—when and how to document source material. (You might have them compare the "same" information gleaned from several different sources—Wikipedia, a reference volume, and a website.)
10. Introduce basic concepts of design. Do not require strict adherence to MLA formatting unless called for by the rhetorical situation.



11. Use workshops to reinforce the key concepts: What is the student writer's purpose? Who is the audience for this work? What is the relationship between form and content? What is the work this writing is doing? How can it do this work more effectively? Students should analyze and annotate their peers' writing in the same way they analyze and annotate the mode (mentor) texts. Whenever possible, position students as evaluators, e.g. for op-ed drafts, peers are members of the editorial board of the newspaper.
12. Teach students to revise with attention to higher order concerns and to edit for clarity.
13. Grade students on process (no more than 30%) and product (at least 70%).
14. Use Easy Writer for 5 minute mini-lessons. Do not teach grammar or mechanics out of the context of an actual student's writing.
15. Use the final exam period for formal presentations of students' work

## APPENDIX D

## Spring 2014 ENGL 1010-027 Syllabus

Spring 2014

English 1010-027  
**Expository Writing**  
 Instructor: Kayla McNabb  
 TR 2:40pm—4:05pm  
 COE 110

McNabb 1

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Office: Peck Hall 105  
 Office Phone: (615) 904-8262  
 Cell Phone: (615) 900-0625  
 Email: kbm2p@mtmail.mtsu.edu  
 Web: www.kaylamcnabb.com

**OFFICE HOURS:**

TA Office-Peck Hall 105  
 Tuesday 4:30pm to 6pm  
 & Thursday 4:30pm to 6pm  
 I am also available by appointment.  
*Email is the best way to contact me.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

In this English 1010 course, you will be exposed to basic information and practice that will allow you to transition into the realms of academic and “real-world” writing while also informing you about writing as a field. In this course, you will heavily focus on identifying the context of specific genres of writing so that you will be able to apply those skills to new genres in the future, allowing you to adapt your writing to the audience and purpose at hand in any given writing situation. To accomplish this, you will construct clear thesis statements and use your individual writing processes to systematically plan each assignment to address the specific context. To support your assertions, you will collect and analyze both primary and secondary data and read and analyze different types of texts, including print, visual, and digital.

The ultimate goals for this course are for you to develop improved **communication** and **analytical skills** and to become more informed members of the academic community.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**Books:

- Lunsford, Andrea, Lisa Ede, Beverly Moss, Carole Clark Papper, and Keith Walters. *Everyone's an Author*.  
 New York: Norton, 2012. ebook.\*  
 ISBN: 978-0393932119 (This is the edition without extra readings.)  
 Lunsford, Andrea. *Easy Writer*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford, 2010. Print. \*\*  
 ISBN: 978-0312650315

Other:

A Netflix Account (or other means of accessing required texts)

Readings will be posted on the class Canvas page

\*There is an ebook available for our textbook, and you are encouraged to purchase and use that text. If you are uncomfortable or would have difficulty accessing an e-text, feel free to purchase the print version. You will be expected to bring this to class daily.  
 \*\**Easy Writer* will be a useful reference for this and future courses. It is recommended that you keep this text even after completing English 1010 and 1020.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

1. Access to the Internet, [www.multimodalmatters.com](http://www.multimodalmatters.com), and [www.kaylamcnabb.com](http://www.kaylamcnabb.com)
2. Regular access to your MTSU email address

**DISCLAIMER**

The materials in this class are not intended to offend you, but this class is intended for mature adults. If you are not prepared to be challenged and to talk, read, or write about some things that you might deem uncomfortable (i.e. race, religion, sexuality, etc.), you may consider finding a course that better suits your tastes.

## Spring 2014 ENGL 1010-027 Syllabus (Continued)

**Spring 2014**

**English 1010-027**

**McNabb 2**

### EVALUATION AND GRADING

To pass this course and earn three credit hours, you must earn an overall average of C- or above. Although I will use the grade "D" in grading assignments, anyone receiving an overall grade of "D" or below for the course will not pass the class. The only exception is for first time ENGL 1010 students: you may receive an "N" (non-failing or not graded) instead of an "F" for the final grade IF you have met all of the course requirements (including attendance) and completed all assignments but fail to meet the standards for passing the class. The "N" grade does not affect your GPA; however, if received, you will have to retake English 1010.

#### Individual Assignment Grades:

A: 91-100% / B+: 89-90% / B: 83-88% / B-: 81-82% / C+: 79-80% / C: 73-78% / C-: 71-72 / D: 60-70% / F: 59% and below

#### Final Course Grades\*:

A: 91-100% / B+: 89-90% / B: 83-88% / B-: 81-82% / C+: 79-80% / C: 73-78% / C-: 71-72 / F: 70% and below

#### Grade Breakdown: (Total 100pts)

<u>Learning to Write Activities**</u>	
Professional Emails	10
Wiki Profile	15
Proposal with Timeline	15
Group Investigative Project	
Findings Report	15
Multi-modal Presentation	10
Performance Evaluations	5
Portfolio (Modified)	
<u>Composer's Commentary</u>	<u>5</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

<u>Writing to Learn Activities**</u>	
Reading Responses	10
Weekly Vlog or Blog Entries	5
<u>Participation and In-class Writings</u>	<u>10</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

\*I will round up if the final grade calculates to a .5 or higher.

\*\*For a description of each assignment, see the "ASSIGNMENTS" section below.

### CLASS POLICIES

**Attendance Policy:** I will take attendance each day within the first 15 minutes of class. If you miss more than 15 minutes of class, you are counted tardy, and if you miss more than 30 minutes of class, you are counted absent. **Two instances of tardiness (or leaving class early) will equal one absence.** If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to ensure your attendance is updated.

**\*\*Your first three absences are not penalized; however, each subsequent absence will result in a 5 point decrease in your final class average. You will fail this course if you miss more than five classes. \*\***

You are encouraged to let me know ahead of time if you may be late, and you are also encouraged to attend class even if you must arrive late. Attendance is important so that you can participate in class activities and writing assignments.

If you are not participating in class (sleeping, surfing the Internet, carrying on persistent extraneous conversation, etc.), then you will not receive attendance and participation points for the day. Also note, if you are absent from class, you will be unable to make up any in-class writing completed during that class period.

Note: Only university-sanctioned absences (university activities, military obligations, prolonged hospitalization, etc.) are excusable; in such cases, you are responsible for having the appropriate university representative notify me well in advance by providing documentation of the event on official letterhead or stationery. You are responsible for submitting any assignments due during your absence before you miss class.

## Spring 2014 ENGL 1010-027 Syllabus (Continued)

### Spring 2014

### English 1010-027

### McNabb 3

**Civility Policy:** According to university policy, I am responsible for maintaining a productive learning environment, and I anticipate your cooperation and engagement to make this happen. If a student is disruptive in class, then I will ask him or her to leave or have him or her escorted out. Work missed by the student (in the rare case that he or she is removed from the class) will not be allowed to be made up, and the student will be considered absent for the day or days removed from class. I want all of you to feel comfortable in class, so if you feel intimidated or demeaned by another student, please bring this to my attention.

Note: Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following: intentionally antagonizing the instructor or fellow students, receiving phone messages or text-messaging in class, leaving class early or coming to class habitually late, talking out of turn, doing assignments for other classes and engaging in other activities that detract from the classroom learning experience.

**Conferences & Contacting Me:** During the semester, you will be required to meet with me one time concerning your progress in the course. Outside of this required meeting, you are encouraged to contact me if you have a question or concern about an assignment, reading, or the course in general. I will also be available during office hours as listed above. If you cannot meet during those times, you can contact me through email or by telephone to set up a meeting time. If you contact me by email, please be advised that I typically only read and respond to student email two times during the day. Also remember, when emailing me, please include your first and last names and the course number (ENGL 1010) in the subject line. Emails without this information may not receive a prompt reply.

**Electronic Device Policy:** Cell phones should be silenced before class and placed on your desk. We will be taking advantage of your electronic devices during class, so this will allow them to be close at hand. If you have some special circumstance that may require you to get up and answer your cell phone during class, please speak with me before class. Also, laptops may be used in class but only for class-related activities. Surfing the internet, checking Facebook, or doing homework for other classes will cause you to lose your participation points for that class period. If you are a distraction to other students, it will result in a revocation of your laptop privilege.

**Late Work Policy:** I will not accept weekly blog/vlog entries, in-class writing assignments, or reading responses late. If you do not turn in these assignments by the due date, you will receive zero points for that assignment. You will submit an early draft of each major assignment. You may choose to turn **one** of these drafts in up to 48 hours late with no penalty; however, it is your responsibility to inform me before the due date that you will be taking this option. The final portfolio and class presentations will **not** be accepted late.

Note: Other than the one late pass mentioned above, any drafts of major assignments submitted late will result in a maximum final grade of 'B-' when that assignment is submitted as part of the final portfolio. However, late drafts will still receive instructor comments, and you are still encouraged to revise.

**Plagiarism Policy:** In an instance of unintentional plagiarism, the student will submit a new draft that meets the assignment and will receive a maximum of half credit for the assignment. Intentional plagiarism, or "academic dishonesty," will result in a failing grade for the assignment and a report being filed with the Provost's Office. Particularly serious or recurrent cases of intentional plagiarism can result in a failing grade for the entire course. MTSU defines these aspects of Academic Misconduct as follows:

*Plagiarism – The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgement.*

*Cheating – Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.*

*Fabrication – Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.*

*Facilitation – Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.*

Make sure that you cite each text that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize in your assignments. This includes images, video, and audio content as well as text. We will discuss this more in class.

## Spring 2014 ENGL 1010-027 Syllabus (Continued)

**Spring 2014**

**English 1010-027**

**McNabb 4**

**Revision policy:** You will submit a draft of each major project and will receive a phantom grade for your assignment. This grade will be reflective of your work at that point, and you will be encouraged to revise before your final portfolio submission. After you submit your final portfolio, there will not be an opportunity for additional revision.

Note: If you do not submit a draft that meets the minimum draft requirements, then the highest final grade you can receive on that assignment will be a 'B-'. The draft requirements will be explained on each assignment sheet.

**Work Submission Policy:** You will submit your written assignments through our class Canvas page in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats. The format type will be dependent on the assignment. Each assignment sheet will list the specific requirements. You must submit an assignment that meets **at least** the minimum requirements for each task to be able to receive a 'C-' or higher in this course.

### ASSIGNMENTS

You will receive separate assignment sheets for each assignment listed below. This section is intended to be a brief overview of each assignment.

#### Learning to Write Activities

##### **Professional Emails**

You will choose an issue in education that you would like to learn more about. Once you choose an issue, you will find two stakeholders in the conversation about that issue and send each of them a professional email requesting a meeting. You will submit these emails to me before you send them to your contacts.

##### **Wiki Profile**

You will create a wiki page about your educational issue. You will interview the stakeholders that you contacted with your *Professional Emails*, and use their responses as the basis for your *Wiki Profile*. You will put those interviews in conversation with the readings we have done for class.

##### **Investigative Project**

You will work with a group of your peers to create a proposal for your investigation. You are encouraged to allow the research that you have already done inform your proposed topics. Each student will write a **proposal** for his or her preferred topic, and your group will review these proposals and choose one to pursue. After completing the research, your group will write a **formal report** and **plan and create an engaging presentation** to communicate your findings to the rest of the class. After the project is complete, you will write a **performance evaluation** telling me about the work your groupmates contributed and the dynamic of your group.

##### **Portfolio (Modified)**

You will submit a final draft of your *Professional Emails*, *Wiki Profile*, *Proposal*, *Group Report*, and *Performance Evaluation* during the second half of the semester. This will be when these assignments are formally graded. You will also submit a letter of *Composer's Commentary* that will discuss your writing process and the changes that you made from your early drafts to your final draft.

#### Writing to Learn Activities

##### **Reading Responses**

Throughout the semester, you will be asked to respond to assigned readings through our class Canvas page and other digital resources available through multimodalatters.com.

##### **Weekly Vlog or Blog Entries**

Each week you will submit a vlog or blog entry through your blog page on multimodalatters.com. It will be 3 minutes or 300 words and be a structured discussion of a specific topic. Many weeks, you will be choosing your own topics; however, you will be assigned topics for some weeks.

##### **Participation and In-class Writings**

Each day, we will have in-class activities, and many days, we will have some sort of writing assignment that will be completed during class. If you are present, participate in class discussions, and complete with our in-class activities and assignments, then you will receive your participation points for the day. Participation will be graded on a ✓ (full credit), ✓- (half credit), 0 (no credit) system. Students who do not complete in class activities will only be eligible for a maximum of half credit.

## Spring 2014 ENGL 1010-027 Syllabus (Continued)

**Spring 2014**

**English 1010-027**

**McNabb 5**

**MTSU INFORMATION**

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**Academic Progress Reports:** Over the course of the semester, I will be using the university's Academic Progress Report system to update you about grades, attendance, and how you are progressing in the class. Receiving one of these does not necessarily mean there is a problem. (I send these to everyone.) Even so, please check them and see what (if any) action is suggested.

**Class Cancellations (Inclement Weather/Emergency Procedures):** MTSU does not usually close for inclement weather, but you are encouraged to use your own discretion when snowy and icy (or tornadoes) conditions exist. If travel poses a life-threatening hazard, you should contact me about how to proceed. You should regularly check your email during inclement weather to see if class is canceled. You can also check the Public Affairs homepage ([www.mtsu.edu/~proffice](http://www.mtsu.edu/~proffice)) or call the news line at 904-8215 if you are unsure about whether class is cancelled or campus is closed. If I must cancel class for any reason, you will receive an email before our scheduled class time.

**Financial Aid Information:** Concerning your scholarships and student loans, you are responsible for knowing and adhering to the terms and conditions of whatever means of financial support you benefit from. In no instance should an instructor be held responsible for any neglect of your duties. This applies in particular to the Hope scholarships that are lottery funded. You should also be mindful of how dropping or adding a class after the start of the term will affect your financial aid. If you are unsure, you are encouraged to speak with your advisor or a representative from the MT One Stop office (Financial Aid).

Do you have a lottery scholarship? To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, FA, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping or stopping attendance in a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from or stop attending this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until reaching 120 TELS attempted hours or earning a bachelor degree. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding from <http://mtsu.edu/financialaid/forms/Lottery%20Statement%20of%20Understanding%202013-14.pdf> or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

**Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** ADA accommodation requests (temporary or permanent) are determined only by Disabled Student Services. Students are responsible for contacting the Disabled Student Services Office at 615-898-2783 to obtain ADA accommodations and for providing the instructor with the Accommodation Letter from Disabled Student Services. If you have any type of condition, I encourage you to contact DSS to see if there are any services or accommodations that could aid in your success at MTSU.

**Resources for Students:**

<p>You should take advantage of the <b>MTSU Writing Center</b> which is located in the James E. Walker Library, room 362, and on the web at <a href="http://www.mtsu.edu/uwc">www.mtsu.edu/uwc</a>. You can receive valuable one-on-one assistance with your writing. Conferences are available by appointment (904-8237) or for walk-ins (as available); don't wait until the last minute to seek their help! Online writing assistance is also available. For more information, contact the center directly or check their website.</p>	<p>You should also use the <b>Digital Media Studio</b> which is located in James E. Walker Library on the second floor and online at <a href="http://library.mtsu.edu/digitalmediastudio/">http://library.mtsu.edu/digitalmediastudio/</a>. The DMS has many hardware and software resources that you can use for this class and others. They also offer training with can be requested through their website or in person.</p>
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*Note: I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule, if necessary.*

## Spring 2014 ENGL 1010-027 Syllabus (Continued)

Spring 2014 Schedule		English 1010-027		McNabb 6
Week	Date	Class Topic	Readings DUE	Learning to Write Assignments DUE
1	Thurs 1/16	Classes Begin Brief Syllabus/Schedule Review & Technology Inventory		In class: "Writing Philosophy"
2	Tues 1/21	Student Introductions & Introduction to Rhetoric	EAA-Introduction, Chapt. 1 pg. 1-17	In class: Student Blogs and Introductions
	Thurs 1/23	Getting from High School English to First Year Composition	CA- "Am I a Liar? The Angst of a High School English Teacher"	In class: TBA Blog/Vlog Due
3	Tues 1/28	What is it Really Like in Academia?	Netflix- <i>Indoctrinate U</i> CA- "Minding the Gap: Public Genres and Academic Writing"	In class: Reading Response Due
	Wed 1/29		Last Day to Drop Without a Grade	
	Thurs 1/30	Introduce Professional Email Writing and Rhetoric in the Workplace	EAA- Chapt. 6 pg. 41-56; CA- MODEL Emails; CA- Rhetoric Readings	In class: Brainstorming Strategies Blog/Vlog Due
4	Tues 2/4	Peer-Assisted Revision for Professional Emails	CA- Revision forms	In class: Revision and Response to Revision Professional Emails Draft Due
	Thurs 2/6	Rhetorical Situations & Writing and Rhetoric as a Field of Study	EAA- Chapt. 2,3 pg. 18-28; Chapt. 5 pg. 36-40; Chapt. 15 pg. 329-336; EW- pg. 25-29	In class: Meme Activity Blog/Vlog Due
5	Tues 2/11	Introduce Wild Profile: How to Interview and Observe	EAA- Chapt.17 pg. 337-340 & 354-357; Chapt. 21 pg. 381-385 CA- Watch Interview Examples	In class: Interview exercise Reading Response Due
	Thurs 2/13	What is Academic Writing and Why Should I Care?	EAA- Chapt. 28 pg. 538-550, EW- pg. 12-13 & CA- "Clueless in Academia" pg 32-37	In class: Reflecting on your experience with "academic language" Blog/Vlog Due
6	Tues 2/18	The Basics of Conducting Research & MLA Citation and Attribution	EAA- Chapt.17 pg. 337-361 & EW- pg.182-196; 206-214	In class: Attribution Exercise
	Thurs 2/20	Peer Revision Workshop for WikiProfile	CA- Revision forms	In class: Revision and Response to Revision Blog/Vlog Due WikiProfile Draft Due
7	Tues 2/25	Introduce Proposal: How to Pop the (Research) Question	CA- MODEL Proposals	In class: Rhetorical Analysis of Proposals
	Thurs 2/27	Thinking about Your Writing Process	CA- "Shitty First Drafts"	In class: TBA Blog/Vlog Due
8	Tues 3/4	Collaborative Writing	CA- "Collaborative Pedagogy"	In class: Collaborative Exercise Reading Response Due
	Thurs 3/6	Introduce Group Report: How to Write Collaboratively & Groups choose a proposal to pursue	EAA- Chapt. 4 pg. 29-35; EW- pg.25; CA- Collaborative Writing	In class: TBA Blog/Vlog Due Proposal Due

## Spring 2014 ENGL 1010-027 Syllabus (Continued)

Spring 2014	English 1010-027		McNabb 7
Week	Date	Class Topic	Writing to Learn Activities
		Readings DUE	Learning to Write Assignments DUE
9	3/11 & 3/13		Spring Break (No Class)
10	Tues 3/18	Writing Strategies: Small Steps to Make You a Better Writer	EAA- Chapt. 29 pg. 551-569; EW- pg. 2-10; 197-202
	Thurs 3/20	Workshop Day for Portfolio Contents	Blog/Vlog Due
11	Tues 3/25	Conferences	Reading Response Due
	Thurs 3/27	Conferences	Blog/Vlog Due
	Fri 3/28		Blog/Vlog Due
12	Tues 4/1	Introduction to Performance Evaluations	In class: TBA
	Thurs 4/3	Group Work Day (In Class)	Group Report Draft Due
	Thurs 4/3	Introduction to Composer's Commentary Letters and the Portfolio System	Blog/Vlog Due
13	Tues 4/8	Peer Revision Workshop for Evaluations	In class: Ad Analysis Activity
	Thurs 4/10	Introduction to Presentations "Multimodal Writing Workshop" by MTSU Writing Center & Introduction to Visual Rhetoric	Reading Response Due
	Tues 4/15	Visual Rhetoric and Beyond & Discuss presentations	Performance Evaluation Draft Due
	Thurs 4/17	Workshop Day for Portfolio Contents (In Class)	In class: TBA
	Tues 4/22	Presentations	Blog/Vlog Due
	Thurs 4/24	Presentations	In class: TBA
14	Tues 4/15	Introduction to Multimodality: To Visual Rhetoric and Beyond & Discuss presentations	Portfolio Due with Composer's Commentary
	Thurs 4/17	Workshop Day for Portfolio Contents (In Class)	Presentation Outline Due
15	Tues 4/22	Presentations	Reading Response Due
	Thurs 4/24	Presentations	In class: TBA
16	Tues 4/29	Discuss Your Theory of Composition/Rhetoric	Blog/Vlog Due
	Thurs 5/1	Last Day of Classes	In class: TBA
Final Exam	Tues 5/6	Final Grades and Reflections 3:30pm to 5:30pm	In class: Write your "Writing Philosophy"
	Thurs 5/1	Study Day (No Class)	



## APPENDIX E

### Facets of Knowledge and Skills Transfer from *Building Bridges through Writing*

Strategies to Transfer Your Knowledge to New Situations:

1. Become smart about texts (have textual intelligence)
  - a. Learn how texts are structured, how different grammatical structures affect readers, what text format is needed, and how text can be in print, visual, or audio formats.
  - b. Be knowledgeable about point of view, the verb tense that is expected in different disciplines, and how organization can influence your reader.
2. Look for contextual clues in your writing assignments
  - a. Contextualize: When you encounter a new writing assignment, reflect on past assignments and how some of the tools or knowledge you used then can be applied to the current assignment.
  - b. Decontextualize: After you complete a writing assignment, reflect on the tools you used and knowledge about writing you gained. Be prepared to access this information for future writing assignments.
3. Think about thinking (have meta-cognitive awareness)
  - a. After you complete a piece of writing, think about how you thought as you did your prewriting, writing, and postwriting.
  - b. Keep a writer's log or workbook and jot down your reflections about how you discovered your thesis and found your research materials.
4. Investigate all sides
  - a. Look at topics and arguments from multiple sides.
  - b. Practice developing differing or conflicting interpretations and arguments, and then support these divergent ideas with well-structured support.
5. Learn to identify genres (type of writing and format of writing)
  - a. Consider the type of writing that you are doing. Is it persuasive or argumentative? Informative or narrative?

- b. Also consider the form or shape your writing takes. Is there a particular format involved, such as a memo form or research paper form, that is used in the discipline or in the work environment?
6. Consider target audience
  - a. As you write, identify the target audience. Investigate and keep track of the people who make up the discourse community (in-group) of your audience. Look at other writings that have been written for that audience. Are there particular terms or phrases that are used for them? Is writing aimed at them written in active (*The pilot flew the plane.*) or passive (*The plane was flown by the pilot.*)?
  - b. When you write something new, look back at other pieces of writing and reflect on what you learned about the audience. Apply what you learned to the new writing, or if the audience is different, use similar strategies to reflect on who the new audience is.
  - c. Keep track of what type of research or documentation is needed in each piece of writing you do. Return to earlier pieces to refresh your memory about the particular research or documentation necessary.
7. Create writing goals that fit you and your future courses or workplaces
  - a. Figure out the big questions you want to explore through your education, and focus on these questions as you choose writing topics.
  - b. Connect each assignment to where you are going next. Reflect on what you can carry with you from the current writing to the next step in your education.
8. Revise, redo, repeat
  - a. Learn from everything you write. Reflect on the comments given to you about your writing, and use your new knowledge to revise, even if you will not turn in the revision for a grade.
  - b. Collect your papers at the end of the semester. Keep them in a folder or binder, and return to them when you have a new writing assignment that is similar.

9. Be an independent learner
  - a. Whenever you complete a writing assignment or activity, reflect on what you learned and how that may relate to your future educational or work goals.
  - b. Write to learn. Whenever you read or think something new, write about it as well.
  - c. Learn to write. Writing courses will never cover everything you need to know. Read your textbooks, and then independently study what was not covered.
  - d. Take notes, ask questions, and read a range of texts outside of your courses.
10. Know your discipline
  - a. How do members in your discipline find information? Where is the information available online? What research strategies are common?
  - b. Is collaboration common in your area of study? If so, how is that collaboration done, and how is writing credit usually shared?

(Smith and Smith 9-11)

## APPENDIX F

**Writing to Learn and Learning to Write Examples from  
*Building Bridges through Writing*<sup>1</sup>**

Table 7. Writing to Learn Activities

Common Writing-to-Learn Activities	
<p><b>Annotations:</b> Summarize and evaluate readings using the style of the documentation system used in your class.</p> <p><b>Dialogue Journals or Discussion Board Entries:</b> Share your thoughts and questions with another writer or your instructor and receive a response.</p> <p><b>Discourse Analyses:</b> Analyze conventions and formats for assignments and projects.</p> <p><b>Discussion Blogs or Logs:</b> Summarize key discussion points from class.</p> <p><b>Discussion Starters:</b> Respond briefly to a short reading, quotation, or remark at the beginning of a class discussion.</p> <p><b>Freewrites:</b> Choose a topic, put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard for a short time, and do not stop writing. Use the freewriting to brainstorm ideas or narrow topics.</p> <p><b>Graphic Organizers:</b> Brainstorm supporting ideas by using a visual organizer.</p> <p><b>Group Response Sheets:</b> Evaluate presentations or readings with classmates.</p> <p><b>Learning Logs:</b> Record key terms and observations.</p> <p><b>Letters:</b> Use the letter format to share key ideas with a classmate or someone else.</p> <p><b>Micro-Themes:</b> Write short one-page arguments or explanations about a concept or issue being covered in class.</p> <p><b>Oral Drafts:</b> Present a short (two minutes to five minutes) talk to a small group about your paper, giving information about an essay in progress. Sometimes, you will be required to ask your listeners to answer questions, and sometimes your listeners will be required to ask you questions that you must be able to answer extemporaneously.</p>	<p>☆ <b>Outlines:</b> Organize your thoughts or responses to cases, problems, or prompts.</p> <p><b>Peer Review Forms:</b> Use these comment or evaluation forms to review the writing of your classmates. Use their comments on your papers to help you revise and edit.</p> <p>☆ <b>Pre-Test Warm-Ups:</b> Stretch your writing skills by responding to questions similar to those found on a test.</p> <p>☆ <b>Problem Analyses:</b> Evaluate problems or cases that are provided by the instructor or classmates.</p> <p>☆ <b>Problem Statements:</b> Pose problems based on readings or class discussions where the answers may lead to an essay topic.</p> <p>☆ <b>Progress Reports:</b> Give a brief description of where you are in your project and what your next steps will be.</p> <p><b>Project Notebooks:</b> Track the progress of your project by including brainstorming and planning activities in one place.</p> <p><b>Project Warm-Ups:</b> Practice conventions and formats for assignments and projects.</p> <p>☆ <b>Reading Journals:</b> Summarize and respond informally to assigned readings, sometimes as homework or briefly in class prior to a class discussion. Highlight areas of interest or concern.</p> <p>☆ <b>Reading Responses:</b> Focus on one reading or a group of related readings, and respond within given guidelines. Use first person, if instructed.</p> <p>☆ <b>Summaries:</b> Describe key elements of a reading, lecture, or other form of research.</p> <p>☆ <b>Writing Journals:</b> Keep track of your writing process, from brainstorming activities, to outlining, to ideas for revising or editing drafts.</p>

<sup>1</sup> These tables can be found on pages 4 and 6 of *Building Bridges through Writing* by Smith and Smith.

## Writing to Learn and Learning to Write Examples from *Building Bridges through Writing (Continued)*

Table 8. Learning to Write Activities

Common Writing-in-the-Disciplines Activities	
<p><b>Annotated Bibliographies:</b> Prepare a citation list of articles, books, book chapters, essays, websites, and other documents. Depending on the document system for your discipline or the assignment for the course, add a brief paragraph after the citation that describes and evaluates the source.</p> <p><b>Casebooks:</b> Provide a review of cases (in law) or problems that support a response. Requires closely following the vocabulary, format, and layout conventions of the field.</p> <p><b>Grant Proposals:</b> Write a proposal or plan that explains a problem, suggests an answer, and requests funding to apply the answer. Requires closely following the vocabulary, format, and layout conventions of the field or grant agency.</p> <p><b>Interpretative Essays:</b> Write an essay using both fact and opinion as you attempt to understand something, usually a text.</p> <p><b>Jargon Journals:</b> Collect the common terminology of the discipline or field you will be joining.</p> <p><b>Journal or Professional Articles:</b> Write an article that follows the requirements of your discipline or the field you will be joining.</p> <p><b>Lab or Field Reports:</b> Present a description of an experiment or experience. Usually requires following the vocabulary, format, and layout conventions of the discipline or field.</p> <p><b>Literature Reviews:</b> Discuss previously published information (articles, books, essays, websites) on a particular subject. Summarize, synthesize, or do both, per the assignment guidelines.</p>	<p><b>Management Plans:</b> Describe how a project will be managed. Include information about the goals and objectives, participants, timeline, funds, and whatever other information is required by the assignment or expected in the discipline.</p> <p><b>Memos:</b> Communicate your thoughts (informative memo) or requests (persuasive memo) in a brief and to-the-point format, following the format and conventions of your discipline or field.</p> <p><b>Micro-themes:</b> Write a short, one-page argument or explanation about a concept or issue being covered in class.</p> <p>★ <b>Oral Presentations:</b> Present information, possibly with visual aids. Requires a knowledge of the audience, careful planning, and attention to delivery conventions of your discipline or field.</p> <p>★ <b>Popular Articles:</b> Write an article about your discipline or field and present the information in a way that will be understandable to the common reader.</p> <p><b>Position Papers:</b> Discuss your topic and provide objective supporting evidence. Requires a knowledge of the format and conventions of your discipline or field.</p> <p>★ <b>Project Proposals:</b> Write a proposal or plan that explains how you plan to organize and manage your project. Requires closely following the vocabulary, format, and layout conventions of the field or grant agency.</p> <p>★ <b>Rhetorical Analyses:</b> Use your critical reading skills to break down a text into its parts and purposes. Determine what objectives the writer has and what strategies the writer uses to achieve those objectives.</p>

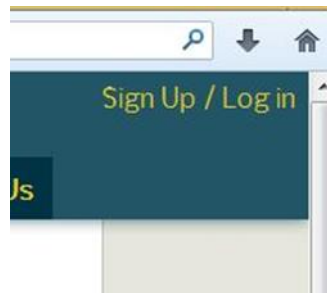
## APPENDIX G

### *NotaBene* Resources

#### How to Create an Account on *NotaBene*

Step 1: Go to <http://nb.mit.edu/welcome>

Step 2: Click “Sign Up / Log in” in the upper right-hand corner.



Step 3: If you are new to Nota-Bene, click “creating a new group” on the right-hand side of the screen.



Step 4: Fill out the form on the following page, and click “Send.”

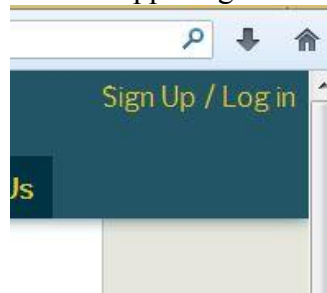
Step 5: You will receive a confirmation email. Click the activation link in the email.

## *NotaBene* Resources (Continued)

### How to Add Documents to *NotaBene*

Step 1: Go to <http://nb.mit.edu/welcome>

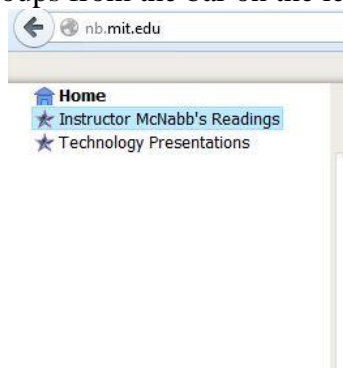
Step 2: Click “Sign Up / Log in” in the upper right-hand corner.



Step 3: Sign in using the login boxes on the left-hand side of the page.

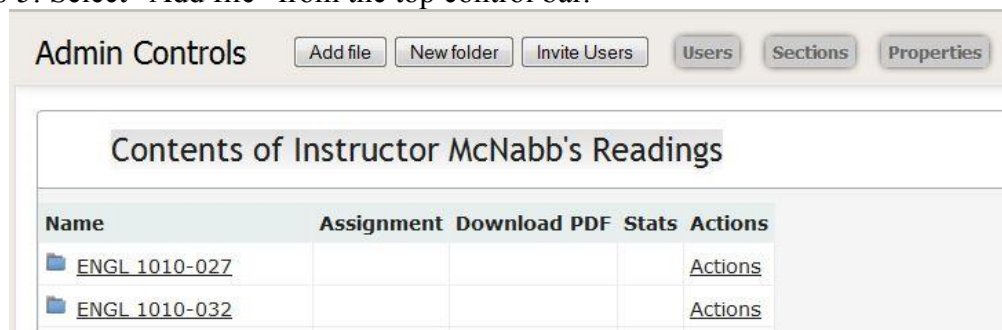


Step 4: Select one of your Groups from the bar on the left-hand side of the screen.



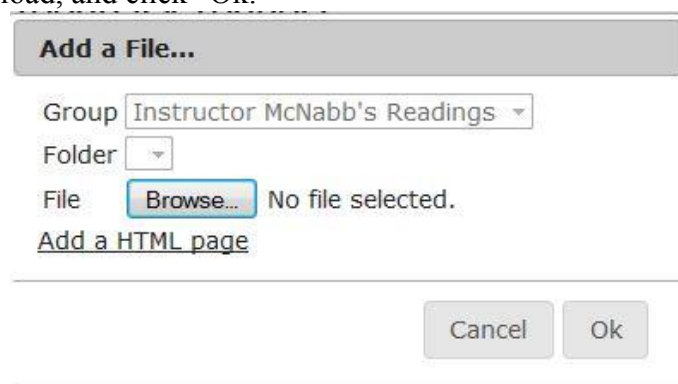
### *NotaBene Resources (Continued)*

Step 5: Select “Add file” from the top control bar.



(From here, you can also add folders to aid in organization.)

Step 6: Select where you would like to add the file. Use “Browse” to find the PDF you would like to upload, and click “Ok.”



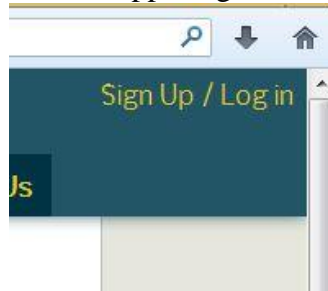


## *NotaBene* Resources (Continued)

### How to Add Students to *NotaBene*

Step 1: Go to <http://nb.mit.edu/welcome>

Step 2: Click “Sign Up / Log in” in the upper right-hand corner.



Step 3: Sign in using the login boxes on the left-hand side of the page.

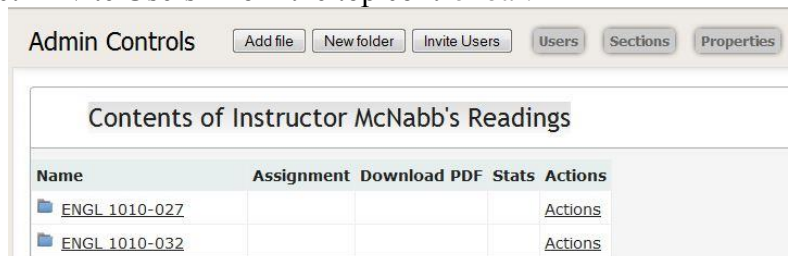


Step 4: Select one of your Groups from the bar on the left-hand side of the screen.



### *NotaBene* Resources (Continued)

Step 5: Select “Invite Users” from the top control bar.



Step 6: Select the appropriate Group and Section. Add the students’ email addresses in a list separated by commas, type any instructions you would like to include, and click “Ok.”

**Send an invitation...**

To access the following group Instructor McNabb's Readings

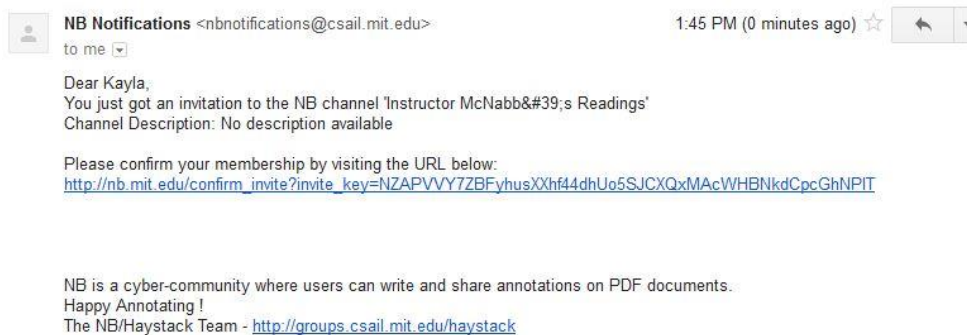
For a particular section None *(Optional)*

Enter the email address(es, separated by commas) of the people to whom you wish to send this invite

Grant administrative rights to these users

*Optional* Add a personal message (will appear on the invitation)

Step 7: Students will receive emails that look like this:



## *NotaBene* Resources (Continued)

### Sample “Instructors and TAs” Only *NotaBene* Post

... it is not our realit  
es of feedback to u  
(Truscott). Recent  
nd ownership of s  
d enthusiasm at be  
naking process of  
students to take an  
es instructors to cre  
u writing and to mo  
ructors to choose a  
ically choosing a C  
lls.

... that they need to a  
o maintain their p

### Welcome to NB !

Use your mouse or the `←` and `→` keys to move from discussion to discussion.

Use your mouse or the `↑` and `↓` keys to scroll up and down the document.

Drag across any region on the pdf to create a new discussion

Right-click on any comment to post a reply

[More help...](#)

New note...

Submit Cancel

Shared with: Instructors and TAs ▼

Reply Requested

## APPENDIX H

### *WordPress Resources*

#### **Famous 5-Minute Install<sup>1</sup>**

Here's the quick version of the instructions for those who are already comfortable with performing such installations. More detailed instructions follow.

If you are not comfortable with renaming files, step 3 is optional and you can skip it as the install program will create the `wp-config.php` file for you.

1. Download and unzip the WordPress package if you haven't already.
2. Create a database for WordPress on your web server, as well as a MySQL user who has all privileges for accessing and modifying it.
3. (Optional) Find and rename `wp-config-sample.php` to `wp-config.php`, then edit the file (see *Editing wp-config.php*) and add your database information.
4. Upload the WordPress files to the desired location on your web server:
  - If you want to integrate WordPress into the root of your domain (e.g. `http://example.com/`), move or upload all contents of the unzipped WordPress directory (excluding the WordPress directory itself) into the root directory of your web server.
  - If you want to have your WordPress installation in its own subdirectory on your website (e.g. `http://example.com/blog/`), create the blog directory on your server and upload the contents of the unzipped WordPress package to the directory via FTP.
  - *Note: If your FTP client has an option to convert file names to lower case, make sure it's disabled.*
5. Run the WordPress installation script by accessing the URL in a web browser. This should be the URL where you uploaded the WordPress files.
  - If you installed WordPress in the root directory, you should visit: `http://example.com/`
  - If you installed WordPress in its own subdirectory called blog, for example, you should visit: `http://example.com/blog/`

That's it! WordPress should now be installed.

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<sup>1</sup> This description came directly from [http://codex.wordpress.org/Installing\\_WordPress#Famous\\_5-Minute\\_Install](http://codex.wordpress.org/Installing_WordPress#Famous_5-Minute_Install)

## WordPress Resources Continued

### Add New Users for WordPress<sup>2</sup>

In this Screen, you may add new Users to your site. If the Anyone can register option is set in the Membership section of Administration > Settings > General, users can register themselves at <http://your wordpress url/wp-register.php>. Regardless of that setting, you can manually create new users here.

The screenshot shows the 'Add New User' interface in WordPress. At the top, it says 'Add New User' and 'Create a brand new user and add them to this site.' Below this are several input fields: 'Username (required)', 'E-mail (required)', 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Website', 'Password (required)', and 'Repeat Password (required)'. A 'Strength indicator' and a 'Hint' are shown below the password fields. The hint reads: 'Hint: The password should be at least seven characters long. To make it stronger, use upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols like ! ^ ? \$ % ^ & .'. There is a checkbox for 'Send Password?' with the label 'Send this password to the new user by email.' and a dropdown menu for 'Role' currently set to 'Subscriber'. A blue button labeled 'Add New User' is at the bottom left. The footer contains the text 'Thank you for creating with WordPress.' and 'Version 3.8'.

**Username (required)** - Enter the username of the new user here. This will also be used as the **Login** name of the new user.

**E-mail (required)** - Enter a valid e-mail address of the new user here. The e-mail address must be unique for each user. If a published post or page is authored by this user, then when approved comments are made to that post or page, a notification e-mail is sent to this e-mail address.

<sup>2</sup> These instructions can be found at [http://codex.wordpress.org/Users\\_Add\\_New\\_Screen](http://codex.wordpress.org/Users_Add_New_Screen).

**First Name** - Enter the first name of the new user here.

**Last Name** - Enter the last name of the new user in this text box (the display name defaults to first and last name).

**Website** - You may enter the new user's website URL in this text box.

**Password (twice)** - Enter a password for the new user twice here, once in each text box.

**Strength Indicator** - This indicates if the password you entered is Very Weak, Weak, Medium, or Strong (displayed in green). The stronger the password the more secure the login. Hint: The password should be at least seven characters long. To make it stronger, use upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols like !"?\$%^&).

**Send Password?** - Check the box to Send this password to the new user by email.

**Role** - Select the desired Role for this User from the drop-down box. Default: Administration > Settings > General - New User Default Role

**Add User** - Click this important button to save the new user's information into WordPress' database. If you don't click this button, the user will not be added. A flash message at the top of the screen will advise you that the new user has been added.

## APPENDIX I

## Media Galleries Resources



Figure 1. Audio Gallery

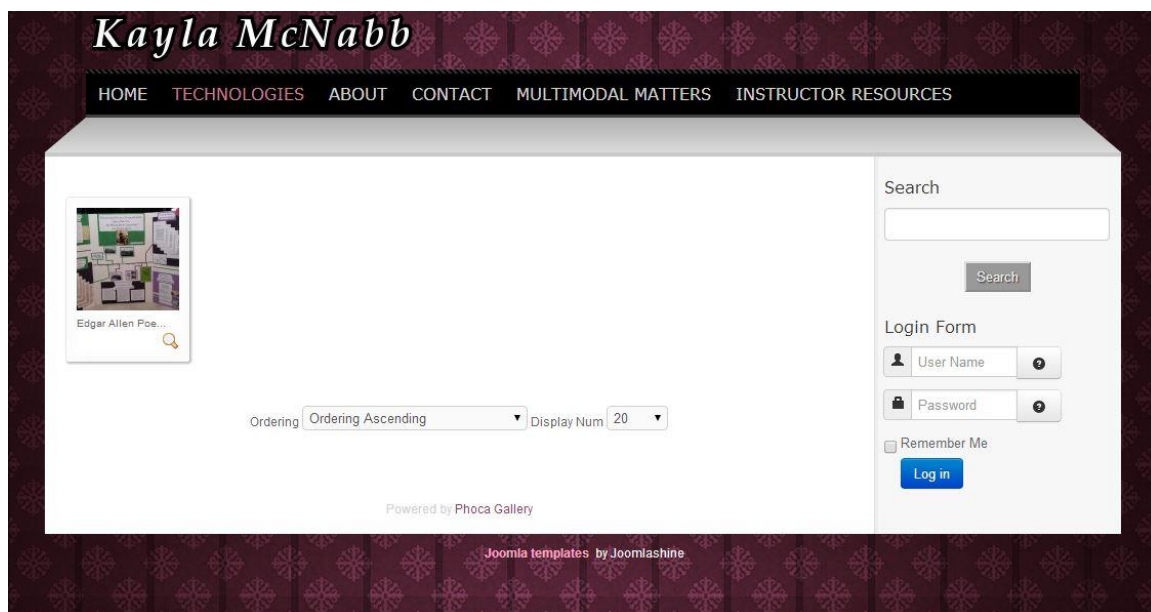


Figure 2. Image Gallery

## Media Gallery Resources (Continued)

**Figure 3. Image Upload Page**

**Figure 4. YouTube Gallery**



## APPENDIX J

## Sample Assignment Sheets

Table 9. Information about Sample Assignments

<b>Assignment Title</b>	<b>Writing to Learn or Learning to Write</b>	<b>Assessment Suggestion</b>
3A: Group Annotations	LTW	5% of Final Grade
3B: Rhetorical Analysis	WTL	Participation
3C: Peer Review Training	WTL	Participation
4A: Blogging	WTL	5% of Final Grade (10 entries)
4B: Student Manual	LTW	15% of Final Grade
4C: Produce Review Article	LTW	10% of Final Grade
5A: Podcast	WTL	Participation
5B: Magazine Advertisement	LTW	15% of Final Grade
5C: <i>Kickstarter</i> Video	LTW	20% of Final Grade

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

ENGL 1010: "Literacy for Life"

2014

### 3A: Group Annotation Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

Throughout this course, you will read and annotate different texts. These may include sample student essays, essays topically related to the course, visual texts that are related to course content, or sections from the required textbooks. For this first assignment, you will develop your ability to "**have a conversation**" with the text. Individually, you will **read your group's assigned document** and **post your comments** (average 2-3 per page) on *NotaBene* with "Share with" set to "Instructors and TAs," as shown below. This setting allows each of you to post your comments without being influenced by one another.



In class, your group will **compare annotations** and **decide which items to share** with the class during class discussion. Each group will **give a brief overview** of their reading and **discuss questions, concerns, and interesting passages** from the text.

Your assignment will largely be graded based on your completion of the requirements (individual comments and group presentation in class) and the depth of your comments. You should also **maintain an appropriate, academic tone** throughout the assignment.

#### Requirements

**Length:** Each individual should have an average of 2-3 annotations per page (e.g. A five page reading would need 10-15 annotations total.) and should participate in the group presentation in class.

**Sources:** You are not asked to include outside sources.

**Formatting:** Your comments should be as close as possible to the target of your comment.

**Audience:** Your audience for this assignment are yourself and your classmates.

**Medium:** You contribute your comments to your assigned document on *NotaBene*.

**Due Dates:** Individual Annotations: Before class on \_\_\_\_\_

Group Presentation: In class on \_\_\_\_\_

#### Tips and suggestions

- ❖ Think about the model text that we annotated in class.
- ❖ Annotations allow you to ask questions as well as make comments on text. This is especially useful when you can ask those questions in class later.
- ❖ You are encouraged to take this assignment to the Writing Center. They have a great deal of experience commenting on essays, so they could help you revise your comments.

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

ENGL 1010: "Literacy for Life"

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### 3B: Rhetorical Analysis Assignment<sup>1</sup>

#### Purpose and Goals

You will encounter many texts during this class and throughout the rest of your life. To better interpret and respond to those texts, you will practice rhetorical analysis for our next class meeting. Individually, you will **read your assigned document** through our class *NotaBene* group and **identify the components** list below. Like with your *Group Annotations Assignment*, you will **post these comments** using the "Instructor and TAs" setting in the comment box. In class, you will **present your comments** to your groupmates, **discuss differences and similarities** in the group's comments, and **share your group's merged analysis** with the rest of the class.

- Identify Types of Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, Logos (pg )<sup>2</sup>
- Identify the Aspects of the Rhetorical Triangle: Author, Audience, Purpose, and Context (pg)
- Identify the Structural Features of the Text: Introduction, Thesis, Transitions, Conclusion, etc. (pg)

#### Requirements

**Length:** 200+ words total across all comments

**Audience:** Your audience for this analysis is your classmates.

**Medium:** You will post your comments to the shared PDF document on *NotaBene*.

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

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### 3C: Peer Review Training Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

During this course, and possibly future courses, you will be asked to give your fellow classmates feedback on their drafts. If you **give specific and clear feedback**, you help the other students improve their draft before submitting it for me to comment on. You should **respond to the sample assignment in two ways**: as a reader and as a knowledgeable author aware of the assignment.

To accommodate both approaches, you will **consider how easy it is to read the text and how clear the writer's language is**, and you will **compare the sample text to the assignment sheet** for the project. You will want to **consider the questions below** as a starting point.

- Is the overall message clear?
- Does the author transition well between ideas?
- What does the author do best in this draft?
- What should the author revise first?
- Does the text meet the requirements of the assignment?

#### Requirements

**Length:** 10+ comments and a brief endnote

**Formatting:** Your comments should be as close as possible to your target passage.

**Audience:** Your audience for these comments is the author of your assigned text.

**Medium:** You will post your comments to *NotaBene* using the "Instructors and TAs" setting.

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

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### 4A: Blogging Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

This class requires many different types of composing. The blogging assignment gives you a chance to **write about whatever you want** as long as you choose one topic for the post and stick with it. You can use these posts to talk about your major area, your personal life, or something that interests you. You could also use these posts to brainstorm topics for your assignments for this class or other classes. Since your classmates will be able to read your posts, you may find that a classmate could help you narrow down a writing topic or help you find a great source that they used for a paper in the past. No matter what you are writing about, writing regularly will help you improve as a writer, so don't wait until the last minute and write all of your posts right before they are due!

Your blog posts will be graded based on completion. So, if you **meet the word count, you stay focused on one main topic, and you submit the post on time**, then you get full credit. Not meeting these criteria will lead to partial credit or no credit.

#### Requirements

**Length:** 300+ Words (3 minutes for Video Blog)

**Sources:** You should provide attribution, as we discussed in class on \_\_\_\_\_, for any information you take from an external source.

**Audience:** Your audience for these posts are your instructor and your classmates, but you can write to a sub-set of that audience by focusing on specific types of music, fashion, or culture or anything else that interests you.

**Medium:** You will post your comments to your *WordPress* blog page. (If you choose to submit vlogs, you will post a link to the video on your blog page and submit the video to our class *YouTube* Gallery.)

**Due Date:** Before Mid-term (5 Due) Before Finals (5 Due)

Due Before Mid-term: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Before Finals: \_\_\_\_\_

 Entry 1- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 6- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 2- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 7- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 3- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 8- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 4- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 9- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 5- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Entry 10- Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

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### 4B: Student Manual Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

Through this project, you will **compose** an article, for our "MTSU Student Manual." (See the model "Choosing a Major.") You will **choose** which type of entry you will write: "How To," "History," "Community," or "Academic Disciplines." Once you choose from these categories, you will **work** with the other students who chose that section to select your topic.

In your article, you will **provide** information about your topic, clearly stating why an incoming student needs to know about it. Before writing, you will **visit** a relevant location to **perform** your own observations and **conduct** a personal interview with at least one stakeholder. You will also **analyze** the information already provided through the organization's website and/or pamphlets, handouts, etc. Your profile will need to **include** at least one visual aid (pictures, drawings, possibly graphs, etc.) in addition to text.

In the completion of this project, you will practice using both textual and visual rhetoric as well as descriptive writing and textual analysis.

#### Requirements

**Length:** You will write an article of at least 500 words (per author).

**Primary Sources:** You will include first-hand research by performing an observation at a relevant location for the article topic you have selected. You will also perform an interview with a stakeholder related to your topic.

**Secondary Sources:** Consult print and web sources for pictures and facts that would be appropriate for your article. This may include a related website or information distributed through pamphlets or brochures.

**Citation:** You will want to choose credible primary and secondary sources and cite them using superscript numbers and endnotes. Any text or image you take from an outside source must be cited. [We will talk about this in class, and you will find a handout on Canvas.]

**Audience:** Your audience is students who will take this course in future semesters.

**Medium:** You will write the text of your profile in a word processor like Microsoft Word, but you will post and format your complete article on our class *WordPress* page at [www.kaylamcnabb.com/wordpress](http://www.kaylamcnabb.com/wordpress).

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Tips and suggestions

- ❖ Remember our discussion about stakeholders; you want to choose someone knowledgeable and accessible.
- ❖ Your final article will be posted to the class *WordPress* page called "MTSU Student Manual."
- ❖ See our *Canvas* page for a tutorial on how to incorporate formatting and images in your *WordPress* post.
- ❖ You can visit the MTSU Writing Center (Walker Library 362) to have a consultant conference with you about this assignment. (You can go in to brainstorm, with a finished draft, or at any point in between.)

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

ENGL 1010: "Literacy for Life"

2014

### 4C: Product Review Article Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

In this project, you will create a product review of your selected item to post on our "Product Reviews" page. First, you will select a general product type and identify 3-4 criteria that you would use to determine the quality or value of that product. Once you have your criteria, you will select a specific product to review. You must have first-hand experience with your product, but you can gain this experience by testing a store model product or by finding a friend who owns the product and analyzing theirs. Remember, you are not required to buy anything to complete this assignment.

After you observe and test your selected product, you will describe the product, discuss how well it met your criteria, give your overall evaluation of the product, and plot your overall review on a 5 star scale. You will also include an appropriately attributed image of your product.

This assignment will allow you to exercise your analytical skills, learn more about the review genre, plan your writing process, and address a specific audience.

#### Requirements

**Length:** You will write a review article of at least 400 words.

**Primary Sources:** You should complete first-hand research by performing an observation and analysis of the product. This activity will not require citation.

**Secondary Sources:** You should only consult secondary sources if you need to compare your product to another while discussing your criteria.

**Citation:** You will want to choose credible secondary sources and cite them using appropriate attribution. [In class, we will discuss various applications of attribution.]

**Audience:** Your classmates and other consumers who may read your review online.

**Medium:** You will post and format your review as an article on our "Product Reviews" *WordPress* page.

**Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Tips and suggestions

- ❖ Keep this example of a general product and criteria in mind as you plan and write. If you chose televisions, then your criteria might be picture quality, screen size, and number/type of connectivity ports.
- ❖ If you take your product picture, you do not need to include any additional citation information for it.
- ❖ See our class *Canvas* page for a tutorial on formatting images and text on *WordPress*.
- ❖ You can visit the MTSU Writing Center (Walker Library 362) to have a consultant conference with you about this assignment. (You can go in to brainstorm, with a finished draft, or at any point in between.)

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

ENGL 1010: "Literacy for Life"

2014

### 5A: Podcast Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

This project will help you **construct and support your argument** before your major project. To prepare for this assignment and your major project, you completed research on a topic of your choosing. From that research, you will **choose three to five (3-5) sources** that you plan to use for your major project. For your podcast, you will briefly **introduce your topic, present your proposed argument,** and **discuss your supporting or dissenting sources.** For each source, you will **state the title and author** as well as where you found the source before you **discuss the aspects of the source** that will be useful to your project.

#### Requirements

**Length:** 3-6 minutes

**Sources:** You will research your chosen topic and include appropriate primary and secondary sources. You will give verbal attribution in your podcast.

**Audience:** You will be your instructor and your classmates

**Medium:** You will record your podcast using an appropriate digital device (cell phone, computer, etc.) and upload it to our "Audio Gallery" on *MultimodalMatters.com*.

**Due Date:**



## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

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### 5B: Magazine Advertisement Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

For this project, you will rhetorically **design** a two page magazine spread and **reflect** on that process. You will begin by **selecting a target magazine** for your advertisement. (See the "Tips and suggestions" section for a list of possible publications.) With the target audience in mind, you will **select a product** to advertise. For your two page spread, **include** 1) a half to full page rhetorically composed advertisement for your product, 2) a structured magazine-appropriate layout, and 3) titles or descriptions of articles, pictures, or advertisements that would appear on the page before or after your advertisement.

After you **compose your magazine spread**, you will **write a composer's commentary** statement to **explain your rhetorical choices** in the advertisement and magazine spread. You should **discuss specific aspects of your composition** and **explain the rhetorical moves** that went into creating your text.

#### Requirements

**Length:** You will create a two page magazine spread, including a half to one page advertisement of your own creation. You will also submit a 250+ word composer's commentary.

**Sources & Citation:** You will cite pictures by including the photographer's name and affiliation under the image. For more information, refer to the citation examples on our class *Canvas* page.

**Audience:** Your audience for the advertisement will be determined by the target magazine you choose. Your instructor is the audience for your composer's commentary statement.

**Medium:** You will create your magazine spread in a software program of your choosing. (See the "Tips and suggestions" section for suggested programs.) Your final product should be saved as an image file and uploaded to our class "Image Gallery" on *MultimodalMatters.com*. Upload your composer's commentary as a *Word* document to our *Canvas* page.

**Due Date (Magazine Spread & Ad):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Due Date (Commentary):** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Tips and suggestions

- ❖ Remember, do not write the magazine articles or create more than one advertisement. Your titles and descriptions in your two page spread will give context for your advertisement. Keep the samples in mind.
- ❖ Possible target publications include *Game Informer*, *Good Housekeeping*, *People Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*. Keep your publication's readership in mind.
- ❖ You can use programs like *Word*, *Publisher*, *InDesign*, or *Scribus* to complete this assignment. See our class *Canvas* page for a tutorial on how to incorporate magazine formatting and images in several programs.
- ❖ You can visit the MTSU Writing Center (Walker Library 362) to have a consultant conference with you about this assignment. (You can go in to brainstorm, with a finished draft, or at any point in between.)

## Sample Assignment Sheets (Continued)

K. McNabb

ENGL 1010: "Literacy for Life"

2014

### 5C: *Kickstarter* Video Assignment

#### Purpose and Goals

Through this project, you will hone the description skills that you have been developing this semester and develop the argumentative skills that you will use more during "Argumentative Writing." Your group is trying to crowd-fund a product or project and will create 1) a video, 2) a description, and 3) rewards for participants which are needed for a *Kickstarter* listing.

1) Through your video, you will show prospective supporters your product, explain why they should donate money to help support your idea, and describe the rewards that supporters will receive. 2) The description section will provide information about the product's origins, design, and production and your goals for the product in the future. 3) Your rewards section will describe at least five levels of rewards that supporters will get for donating different amounts of money. You should make the reward relevant to your product and describe it in a way that appeals to your target audience.

#### Requirements

**Length:** You will create 1) a 2-3 minute video, 2) a 800-1000 word description of the product or idea, and 3) descriptions of at least 5 rewards totaling 500+ words.

**Primary & Secondary Sources:** You will combine static images and moving images with sound to create your video. You can create these yourself (Primary) or use media that is available through reliable sources (Secondary).

**Citation:** You will want to give credit for any information you do not have the rights to, including images, sounds, and videos. You should include a screen with your attributions at the end of your video.

**Audience:** Your audience is the crowd-funding community.

**Medium:** You will submit your video to our class "YouTube Gallery." Your written components will be submitted as *Word* documents or PDFs to our class *Canvas* page.

**Due Date- Video:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Due Date- Description & Rewards:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Tips and suggestions

- ❖ Return to the successful and unfunded model *Kickstarter* pages that we talked about in class throughout your writing process.
- ❖ Your product or project does not have to be something you would actually try to crowd-fund, but it should be something that you feel you can present a rhetorically effective argument for.
- ❖ See our class *Canvas* page for a list of resources to help you compose rhetorically effective videos.
- ❖ You can visit the MTSU Writing Center (Walker Library 362) to have a consultant conference with you about this assignment. (You can go in to brainstorm, with a finished draft, or at any point in between.)

## APPENDIX K

### **Kayla McNabb's Teaching Philosophy**

#### Philosophy of Teaching Composition

On the first day of each semester, I ask the students what they hope to accomplish from taking our class. Some of the answers are rather straight-forward while others are indicative of larger goals that the students have. I want to help prepare them to reach the academic, professional, and personal goals that they set for themselves. To do this, I root my teaching in three tenets: communication, context, and collaboration.

My desire to help people learn to communicate better with one another is what brought me from business management to teaching English composition, and I still hold it as the most important aspect of my class. If I am able to teach students to clearly compose and communicate their ideas, then they will be ahead of many of their peers when they reach upper-division coursework or the workplace. Communicating their own ideas is important, but I also teach them to interpret and critically analyze the messages that are sent by others. As students become more informed participants in the dialogue of communication, they are better able to meet the goals that they set forth at the beginning of the class.

As with successfully engaging in communication, acknowledging and adapting to context can help students become better prepared for the expectations beyond my classroom. I stress the importance of considering the audience, the setting, the message, and the author before analyzing or creating any text. Without properly considering the context, a student could easily suffer a misstep while composing leading to miscommunication.

In my classroom, I use collaboration as a way to help students grapple with the difficulties of communicating within a given context while allowing them to develop personal responsibility in an academic setting. Students work together to complete in-class activities, present information from the assigned readings, and perform collaborative writing projects. The personal importance for this tenet is certainly based in my business background, but I have seen time and again that employers and upper-division instructors are asking students to complete collaborative tasks. If they are going to be expected to write collaboratively, then it seems reasonable that they should learn to do so in a composition class.

To reinforce my student-based approach to teaching, it is important to reinforce the student agency in creating and revising texts. To help students see where they can improve their grasp of communication skills and contextual concerns, I embrace a modified-portfolio system for grading. Students are presented with the assignment sheet

and rubric and are asked to submit a draft that will be given comments and a “phantom grade” that does not count toward their overall course grade but instead gives the student a better understanding of my expectations. By putting the onus on the student to revise and resubmit by the date the portfolio is due, the students get to choose how much my class will be able to help them toward reaching their goals.

As I develop as an instructor, I will keep my students’ goals at the center of my teaching. My three major tenets may shift as I embrace new paradigms in the field, but my ultimate test before incorporating something into my teaching will be to ask “Does this benefit the students as they strive to meet their goals?” If the answer is yes, then I must consider it.

#### Influential Works

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