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COMPOSING THE CLASSROOM, CONSTRUCTING HYBRIDITY: WRITING TECHNOLOGY IN(TO) FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION COURSE DESIGN

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Texts & Technology in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

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Major Professor: Stephanie Vie
ABSTRACT

Online education has received excessive attention in recent decades as its characteristics and potential have undergone intense debate and scrutiny. Similar debate and scrutiny surround the content of first-year composition (FYC) courses. As we continue to define what composition studies entails, we redefine what we study in FYC. Yet discussions of blended delivery mode—using both online and on-ground teaching methods—get lost amid these debates. This dissertation addresses the dearth of research on blended online writing instruction (OWI) by asserting the essential nature of connections between the content and the delivery of FYC courses.

Through case studies of two experienced instructors teaching FYC in a blended environment for the first time, this dissertation evaluates the composition—both as a noun and as a verb—of FYC courses in light of the technology involved. Through an analysis of interviews with instructors, students, and faculty involved with FYC, I highlight the points of contact—the interfaces—that themselves create the experience of a class. This analysis applies interface theory from rhetoric and composition to the pedagogical acts of teaching FYC and reveals how attention to classroom interfaces can benefit our pedagogy.

This project also incorporates student performance data (in the form of portfolio evaluations), student perception data (in the form of surveys), and comparative institutional data (in the form of website analysis) to better understand the varied causes, effects, and implementations of blended learning. By looking outside the classroom environment, I show how schools influence the way blended courses are perceived by those who create them. The differences in student and instructor expectations for this kind of class emerged as particularly influential in determining how successful a blended course can be.

The perspective taken by an instructor in terms of experience and expertise also emerged as a significant determinant of perceived success, particularly for instructors themselves. This dissertation reveals the delicate balance instructors must navigate between relying on expertise in the field and exploring the course delivery as a novice. This balance allows instructors to be responsive, flexible, and dynamic in their classes while also assisting students in their efforts to better understand FYC course content.
Overall, this dissertation defines and advocates for a hybrid approach to FYC instruction as an essential evolution of our pedagogical praxis. Students lead increasingly hybrid lives and learn in increasingly hybrid ways. Instructors must adopt hybridity in their classes to accommodate not only students’ changing learning styles but also the changing nature of composition as a field and writing as its subject matter. And finally, institutions must consistently define and implement principles of hybridity to help reduce confusion and frustration across the disciplines. Suggestions for educators and institutions alike are provided to help meet the needs of today’s students.
For their love & faith:

To Druscilla, Michele, Ron—
sanguine for decades.
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A part of me chuckles to think that my name stands alone as the author of this document. Given the amount of support I have received in myriad forms from a number of people, claiming sole authorship seems facetious at best. I shall with this section endeavor to relieve some of my guilt.

Thanks must first go to all the members of my committee, in each of its iterations. Stephanie Vie provided enthusiasm, direction, suggestion, and correction that have shaped this dissertation into something readable, organized, and effective; it was neither of the three when she first saw it. I owe her an apology for the quality of my earlier drafts as much as I owe her thanks for the later ones. Stephanie somehow always knew whether I needed a stern glare, a snarky comment, or simply the time to think things through. Her wisdom, candor, and humor have proven invaluable during the short time we have worked together. Oh, and let’s not forget her keen eye for APA style. Vie can spot a present-tense verb from 50 paces and still manage to discuss methodological concerns at the same time. I am grateful for her personal-yet-professional candor and her ability to be a compassionate guide.

Elizabeth Wardle helped create and shape this project from its earliest stages. She helped suggest resources, methodologies, and goals that got me started and kept me focused, even when I sometimes didn’t know what I was focused on. Her focus was always on the long game—the applicability of my study, the relevance to other rhet/comp work, and the sustainability of my ideas. She also knew when to pull the plug, seeing that my project was shifting away from one field and into another, ensuring that I had appropriate guidance throughout the process. Elizabeth motivated me to start my project in the first place and inspired me to do something useful. I am grateful to have benefitted from her clarity of thought and her sense of priorities.

J. Blake Scott served invaluable, paradoxical roles as I worked through planning, researching, and writing my dissertation. Blake took my ideas seriously even when I thought they were about as valuable as the Panera napkin on which they were scribbled. He was always able to point out things that were working, though I often made those things terribly difficult to find. Then just as quickly, he could pose a question
that would make my brain hurt trying to understand it, much less provide an answer. If the material on these pages ever seems insightful, it’s likely his doing.

My outside reviewer, Jesse Stommel, served as the best cheerleader I could ask for. He made some of the clearest, most helpful suggestions for revision, making a drastic change seem simple. I’ve benefitted from his encouragement from afar, always feeling like I had to impress someone who saw the stakes as far greater than a single document or degree. Jesse is one of those “How high?” leaders, and he helped me do more with this work than I thought I could.

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The most essential acknowledgement happens to be the most frustrating. I wish to express heartfelt gratitude to the two instructors who served as case studies for my research. They laid bare their classrooms, their teaching, their planning, and their thinking, allowing me to study what they did and how they did it. Many teachers hold a certain protective secrecy around their practice and a resistance to observation, to say nothing of critique. These two instructors welcomed and encouraged my involvement in more ways than I was equipped to manage. Though they deserve public commendations for valor, confidentiality dictates that I here can thank only “Mr. Brown” and “Mr. Grey.” During and after the semester of data collection, Brown offered numerous suggestions for things I could have investigated in my study; I regret not having the time and resources to explore each of his suggestions. Sometimes I thought he should have been doing the research, not me. Mr. Grey offered his thoughts effusively, wanting to be sure I had everything I needed to understand how his classes worked. As a researcher, I benefitted from how forthcoming he was. As an educator, I benefitted from watching his process and thinking grow and adapt over the years we have worked together. Both Mr. Brown and Mr. Grey have served as inspirations—I was beyond fortunate that they agreed to act as case studies.
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I am indebted to Sean Michael Morris, an expert at helping people to become better versions of themselves. He has been the writing teacher I always needed but never had. Sean is the kind of person for whom the “alt-ac” concept was created: He teaches no matter what job he’s doing. The man transcends titles.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDL  the Center for Distributed Learning

DWR  the Department of Writing and Rhetoric

ENC 1101  Composition I

FCAT  Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test

FLVS  Florida Virtual School

FYAE  the Office of First Year Advising and Exploration

FYC  first-year composition

GTA  Graduate Teaching Associate

LMS  learning-management system

MOOC  Massive Open Online Course

OWI  online writing instruction

UCF  the University of Central Florida

WAW  writing about writing

WPA  Council of Writing Program Administrators
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The writing studies field (also referred to as composition, rhetoric and composition, etc.) has a history full of debates over what should be taught in a first-year composition (FYC) course, how instructors should go about teaching those courses, and even the kinds of assignments that should be used in them. However, despite the explosive growth in online education, little attention has been paid to the delivery mode of FYC courses. This study begins to address that gap in the research by evaluating the effects of changing the delivery mode of a FYC course. Through my research, I explore what happens when teachers move a writing about writing (WAW) FYC course from in-person delivery into a delivery mode that incorporates both in-person and online components. I demonstrate how the interfaces among students, instructors, content, and institutions all change as a result, and I show how seemingly minor differences in an instructor’s approach to redesigning a class can have a tremendous influence on how the class runs and how the instructor feels throughout the semester. Additionally, this study examines how delivery mode figures into students’ perception of their FYC courses. These considerations reveal several factors that contribute to the success of FYC courses that incorporate online components. Ultimately, I argue for: 1) a hybrid, rather than a blended, approach to education; 2) the use of technology as an opportunity, rather than a requirement; and 3) consistent terminology and open communication from instructors and institutions sufficient to allow meaningful student self-selection when registering for courses.

Before asserting the importance of consistent terminology, I must first clarify how I use relevant terminology throughout this dissertation. Doing so will help ensure my meaning is clear, but it will also help illustrate significant issues identified in later chapters—namely, that 1) the terminology adopted by an institution affects how blended learning is perceived and implemented at that institution, 2) instructors may not understand the distinctions among various approaches to blended learning that can be indicated by terminology, and 3) students may not necessarily understand these terms the same way institutions and instructors use them, leading to confusion and frustration. In the next section, I state my working
definitions of the terms related to blended learning and highlight the rhetorical importance of how these terms are used in literature and in practice.

1.1 Terminology Used in This Dissertation

The variation of terminology used in the literature about learning, in conversations among educators, and in training materials from institutions seems rather haphazard, with many authors explicitly equating various terms in an assumption that no differences exist among these terms in any conversations about them. Authors use a number of terms to label what, for my purposes, I shall generally call blended courses. Here, I will clarify and distinguish the meanings I ascribe to each of these terms:

- blended
- mixed-mode, web-enhanced, etc.
- hybrid

*Blended learning*, a phrase and a standard frequently used in education texts and departments, holds as its goal a seamless mix of in-person and online course components, creating a consistent learning experience whenever students are asked to transition from one environment to the next. Blended courses are often defined by their environments: institutional scheduling dictates when a course meets and how many of those meetings are online or on-ground. Instruction, and perhaps even the curriculum, adjusts to accommodate the schedule and the technology. No universally accepted meaning of blended exists because the approach is so flexible. John Watson (2008), writing for a North American Council for Online Learning report, remarked on the variations in how the term is defined in education:

definitions of blended learning range from some so broad that practically any learning experience that integrates some use of educational technology might qualify, to others that focus on a specific percentage combination of online curriculum and instruction in a face-to-face setting. (p. 5)
Overall, the emphasis in a blended scenario is on including both types of instruction, with a hope for “best of both worlds” results, in which students can rely on whichever delivery mode best suits their needs to pull them through the course. Otherwise, the course is designed to be a homogenous, and often arbitrary, combination of delivery modes. This sort of blending is similar to the act of blending foods (or certain exotic beverages), resulting in a homogeneous substance retaining none of the characteristics of the original ingredients.

The mixed-mode and web-enhanced labels are used far less often than blended, but they are usually synonymous. They come from institutional systems, particularly those used for registration and enrollment. Specifically, mixed-mode is used by the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) at the University of Central Florida (UCF), the primary research site for this project. The term emphasizes the specific delivery-mode conditions of the course: it mixes the face-to-face and online modes of instruction into one class. The course type is sometimes further clarified with a “reduced seat time” note that tells students they must have a reliable connection to the Internet in order to participate fully in the course. Similarly, a web-enhanced label generally applies to courses where in-class meetings have online extensions. The word “enhanced” puts an explicitly positivist spin on the information, suggesting that the web components of these courses provide nothing but benefits, providing what Gail Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe (1991) called “incomplete stories” that omit “other possible interpretations” (p. 60). Significantly, we are not told who, exactly, benefits from those enhancements, but we see the claim that the use of the web is indeed an enhancement. Hawisher and C. L. Selfe (1991) encouraged us to “take a critical perspective and remain sensitive to the social and political dangers that the use of computers may pose” (p. 56). Institutional use of the terms mixed-mode and web-enhanced label classes from an exclusively resource-management perspective. The terms mean that some in-person meetings are replaced or supplemented by online course content; no claims are made regarding the integration or relevance of those components. More importantly, the terms mixed-mode and web-enhanced do not describe learning, teaching, pedagogy, or instruction. The terms are used exclusively to label a class, thus reinforcing the resource-centric perspective.
I consider *mixed-mode* the term least laden with disciplinary preconceptions. Because the nominative *mixed-mode* does not appear often in the literature, my use of that term does not imply or bring to mind any one field-specific meaning. More importantly, the term mixed-mode describes the course delivery exclusively, rather than any pedagogical approach, so I can discuss the course type without implying that it should be constructed in a particular way. Here, the resource-management approach serves to focus the meaning and eliminate extraneous hidden or embedded meanings. Finally, as *mixed-mode* is the distinguishing label given to the courses in the campus registration system at the site of this study, the term is common among interview subjects and will be used extensively when discussing interactions within participants at UCF, integrating more naturally with the lexicon of the study site.

The term *hybrid*, then, becomes problematized because many other terms are used to discuss course delivery. In many fields, notably including research on teaching, literature discussing course delivery equates the terms *hybrid* and *blended* “with little or no difference in the meaning of the terms among most educators” (Watson, 2008, p. 4). Literature about online learning typically includes an opening statement equating the terms, followed by a move in which the author arbitrarily chooses a preferred term for use in the document. The education and nursing fields are among the most prolific in research on online learning, and in both cases, *blended* is the more common term; I will use that term as my standard here, as well. In rhetoric and composition or in the digital humanities as a whole, however, the extremely limited collection of published work on delivery mode tends to label the courses as *hybrid*. Like authors in education and nursing, those in rhetoric and composition also often equate the terms *blended* and *hybrid* in the opening lines of their work and choose one for seemingly arbitrary reasons. Yet different fields seem to prefer one term over the other, despite claiming their equivalence. I assert that the difference stems from the approaches to, and uses of, online technologies in the the respective fields. Detailing these rhetorical differences reveals the priorities of various fields and the distinctions among how each term is applied.

In education, where research examines the act of teaching, separate from the content taught, blending face-to-face and online components requires consideration of how to make the course delivery, rather than the course content, cohesive. Examining practice alone, blending a course so that online and in-
person delivery lose their distinctiveness becomes sensible. But if the content of a course is more important than how the course is taught (in other words, in content-driven fields), blending the two modes may be counter-productive. With nursing—an inherently physical practice that requires human contact—the online components of courses can be used to review rote learning but not to replace or replicate interaction with patients. Therefore, nursing training that involves in-person and online elements must be strategically implemented so that the online course content to be learned supports the in-person practice to be experienced; blending the two for the sake of balance would not achieve the same goal. Learning to improve one’s bedside manner online seems problematic because the modality differs so strongly from the intended practice. In rhetoric and composition, the issue takes on greater significance because the course content itself changes along with the change in modality: The act of writing changes significantly when done physically versus digitally. While I am by no means suggesting that online/in-person writing courses can only study digital/physical writing, respectively, I do mean to draw attention to the idea that writing courses may have more at stake with a new modality because the field itself expands with the addition of the digital.

Conversations in writing and rhetoric (more specifically, computers and composition) and in the digital humanities take a different approach to courses that combine in-person and online components. These fields look at course delivery as a reaction to, or in service of, the space in which writing is done. In other words, digital writing is best studied in digital spaces, just as physical writing requires physical space. As a result, discussions within rhetoric and composition of face-to-face versus online environments typically emphasize the changing nature of writing, not the changing nature of instruction. Indeed, an edited collection providing critiques of first-year writing instruction (Petraglia, 1995) offers little more than an off-handed reference to delivery mode, focusing instead on the content of the course. Therefore, with a focus on the content over the delivery, the term hybrid appears more commonly in rhetoric and composition research, a situation reflected in Scott Warnock’s (2013) excellent research bibliography of studies that compare modalities among various writing courses.
Courses labeled as *hybrid* use in-person and online components on an as-needed basis, with that need determined by content appropriateness. Unlike with blended courses, seamless integration does not present a concern, as the content of the course, rather than the content’s presentation, guides course-design decisions. The goal of hybridity is to create a course that naturally forms a cohesive whole by virtue of its content focus and the modalities appropriate for working with that content. Hybridity does not require a concerted effort to plan smooth transitions from one modality to another because the tasks involved in working with the course content should make such transitions sensible. In hybrid courses, a single activity or project could require students to use connected or online tools for one task, freestanding digital applications for another task, and various in-person interactions for still another task. While these tasks are discrete and not necessarily similar, they are undertaken for the purpose of achieving a specific goal or completing a project. In a hybrid environment, online course components are chosen because their connected characteristics are essential for the activity, and in-person activities are likewise used when face-to-face interactions provide a necessary tool for the job.

In this dissertation, I will use the term *blended* extensively as an identifier for classes that use both delivery methods, positioning it as the baseline term for such courses. When in this project I refer to a course as “mixed-mode”—the term used for course registration at this study’s research site—I am discussing the practical or logistical considerations of offering a course that operates in two distinct delivery modes at regular intervals. I do not use the term mixed-mode to distinguish a particular pedagogical model. When it becomes necessary to make such distinctions, I will use the terms *blended* and *hybrid* as warranted based on the above connotations. As such, I default to calling a course *blended* until it exhibits characteristics unique to hybrid courses. As Jesse Stommel (2012) noted, “blended learning is tactical, whereas hybrid pedagogy is strategic.” It is those strategies within FYC courses that I wish to explore in my work here. I must point out that, although my intention is to position hybridity as the central focus of this study, I use that term rather infrequently when discussing my findings. This is intentional and a reflection of the point I am making here: that a hybrid class is a different standard than a blended one. The instructors who served as case studies for this project rarely implemented hybrid pedagogies, instead
using blended instruction. This difference becomes essential to my discussion, in which I argue that a truly hybrid approach to FYC education could avoid or resolve several difficulties my study has uncovered. By highlighting the approaches, implications, and complexities of blended FYC courses, my research shows how modality, content, and participants interact to compose a writing course. Continued research into these components can strengthen our field’s understanding of pedagogy as online courses continue to grow in popularity.

1.2 The Opportunity Technology Presents

While I was growing up, my mother worked as a church secretary. I would often accompany her to work on those days when children don’t have school but their parents still have work. As a result, I spent countless hours playing, and sometimes doing homework, around office equipment—a rather unusual developmental experience for a child, to be sure. In kindergarten, I was introduced to a mimeograph machine housed in the church office where my mother then worked. As a student rather new to the world of the classroom, I had only barely begun to understand the implications of duplicated documents. I viewed the machine with a sense of awe and wonder because it had the power to create the documents that dictated the content of my academic life. To my young mind, that machine created authority—in bulk. Anything printed in the mimeograph’s peculiar purple ink possessed an official quality and served as a demand for respect: it was the Thing to which I must attend. These documents, even if they started as handwritten notes from a teacher, became official by virtue of that particular shade of purple.

Early in first or second grade, I decided I wanted to hold a birthday party, and I wanted to invite friends more officially and memorably than a quick verbal exchange would allow. I wanted to make invitations on paper. Many of them. I quickly realized that the new technology I had seen in my mother’s workplace could help. If I created an invitation and duplicated it with the mimeograph, I could quickly produce as many copies as I needed, and as an interesting prestige-boosting side effect, invitations to my birthday party would carry the same official, edict-like importance that my friends and I all recognized from documents that saturated our classroom environments. My familiarity with the situations in which
mimeographed documents were typically used helped me understand the implications of using the machine appropriately. Access to a mimeograph machine provided a new tool that I initially believed I had no use for. But in the right circumstances, that tool inspired a new way of doing things that got me excited about the process. Deciding to create mimeographed birthday party invitations meant I needed to learn how to use the new technology and how to create an invitation that worked within the constraints of that system to allow for easy duplication.

Because I had only received the products of the mimeograph machine, never creating documents myself, I needed training to know how to properly work with the details of the machine. My mother provided the training I needed. She explained how wider, non-erasable, ink-based writing utensils worked better because the machine lacked sufficient resolution to reproduce fine or light lines. The original document had to be created on a special kind of paper that the machine would somehow react with. As I began to draft my invitations—including an exquisite hand-drawn illustration on the front of what would be a two-fold tent card—I recognized not only that any mistakes I made would be permanent and unerasable, but also that those errors would be faithfully duplicated by the machine and distributed along with my intended message. The accuracy of my work suddenly became important, but the challenge and intrigue of using a new system to do this work made it novel and entertaining, rather than frustrating. The technology helped address my situational needs, but it required a novel approach to preparing my work.

Much like that young, impressionable version of me, today’s teachers often think of ways to make new technologies work for them, allowing them to do things in class they were unable to do previously. One approach echoes my experiences with the mimeograph machine: instructors might learn of a new technology and recall its abilities when relevant and necessary for classroom activities. But the excessive media attention paid to technology in education means that many of today’s educators take the opposite approach: when they see a new technology (such as tablet computers), they don’t file away the knowledge for future use. Instead, they think of how the work of conducting their classrooms could change if they were to implement that new technology immediately. In essence, they prioritize the technology above the needs of their course, making the course design change to accommodate the technology that took
precedence. These decisions reflect a warning offered by Hawisher and C. L. Selfe (1991) that “electronic technology, unless it is considered carefully and used critically, can and will support any one of a number of negative pedagogical approaches” (p. 56). These authors also cautioned that computers in writing classes can “come between teachers and students, pre-empting valuable exchanges” and altering the nature of the course (Hawisher & C. L. Selfe, 1991, p. 60). The question of whether a specific technology is educationally relevant or beneficial takes on critical importance but gets short shrift in the popular conversations about educational technology.

Issues of putting the technology before the course content or design may influence how effectively students learn the content. But what if the technology in question is not simply a tool that can be used in the classroom but instead is one that completely redefines the concept of a classroom? With modern learning-management systems (LMSs), the new technology eliminates the classroom walls and allows students to participate from home. The traditional rules (both implicit and explicit) for creating and conducting classes no longer apply. How are these courses composed? Who determines the guidelines for their processes and expectations? Those questions pose challenges in the context of online-only courses. But what if the class involves a combination of in-person and online elements? What if the course breaks away from the standard LMS and uses the Internet at large as its working platform? How do the boundaries of the class(room) get defined? How do the various participants know how to behave and participate as they should? Surely there is as much variety to the answers as there can be variety in the content and teaching style of online courses. By examining a specific implementation of a specific course at a specific institution, I was able to see how differences in instructor planning affected students’ experiences of blended courses. I was also able to see how the interactions among various participants played out within that specific implementation/course/institution combination. The situated nature of this study brought the details of classroom interactions to the forefront, highlighting the way students, teachers, institutions, and course content relate in various environments.

Just as, according to Collin Gifford Brooke (2009), we need a rhetoric of new media, so too must we define our rhetoric of new modalities. In the same way that “the canons have lost much of their explana-
tory power in our discipline” (Brooke, 2009, p. 27), the traditional roles of student and teacher break down when applied to online education (King, 1993). The word “teacher” loses its meaning as more and more course content is developed by instructional design teams or textbook-publishing conglomerates.¹ With essentially limitless information available online, at students’ fingertips, teachers are no longer responsible for ensuring information transfers from their expertise to their students. Instead, today’s teachers must help provide access to relevant materials and provide meaningful opportunities to respond to or make use of them. Similarly, a student’s goal is not to learn information, but to know how to manipulate that information amid ever-changing situations, practices, and purposes. The reconfigured parameters of learning in online environments necessitates a change in the way participants both interact and establish or maintain relationships.

Institution-specific situations make a difference in the way a course is constructed. Even the way instructors become involved in online learning has implications for the way the course gets developed. If an instructor intentionally asks to teach with online tools, that instructor must have a goal or a reason for wanting those technologies. The technology serves a purpose and would be seen as an opportunity, much like the mimeograph machine was to me. When an institution takes the initiative and tells an instructor to teach a course using this new technology, the reaction of the instructor becomes an important matter to investigate. In some cases, the excitement inherent in a new technology motivates an instructor’s approach to the class; in other cases, the excitement is diminished because the decision to adopt the technology was decreed from above. In some cases, new online technologies, like the mimeograph, provide opportunities for new ways of doing things; in other cases, the technology simply become a burden, demanding the teachers abandon a classroom management strategy built over years of experience.

¹The phenomenon of publisher-produced content is not limited to K–12 courses. Many of my students report that their college instructors in their introductory science classes use publisher-provided slides that accompany the textbook as content for their lectures. Indeed, even UCF’s the Department of Writing and Rhetoric (DWR) uses a textbook that includes suggested assignments; many of UCF’s instructors rely on a standard collection of pre-made projects as the basis of their FYC courses. What gets published with a textbook no longer dictates merely what our students learn; it increasingly defines how they learn it, as well.
1.3 Questions Guiding the Research

One primary research question focused my exploration of blended learning in this study: How do instructors and students perceive, construct, and interact with FYC courses taught via face-to-face or blended delivery? This question is intentionally broad, allowing for an array of qualitative data, encompassing the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders, to inform the discussion. In order to present a more comprehensive answer to that question, several sub-questions, each one emphasizing more specific elements of the overall goal, were used to guide data collection and analysis. Those sub-questions are as follows:

1. What factors influence the design of a blended composition course? How are the interfaces of blended course design created and enacted by the participants?

2. How do various stakeholders define blended writing courses? Why do their views of blended courses differ? In what ways do writing pedagogies interact with hybridity? What motivates or constrains those interactions?

3. How could various stakeholders interact to compose a hybrid class? How do their perspectives create tensions in the activities of composition classes?

4. How can the affordances and constraints of online delivery shape the FYC classroom? Does delivery mode affect student performance in, or perception of, their FYC course?

In order to find answers to these questions, I created two case studies of instructors teaching blended FYC courses for the first time. Using interview data, class observations, and collected collateral from classes (such as syllabi, assignment sheets, and online discussion posts), I was able to triangulate my findings and create a complex understanding of how the two instructors approached their course design and implementation. In addition, I interviewed and surveyed students in both instructors’ courses to learn about their perceptions of course modality and content. And finally, I collected data from publicly available websites from a variety of institutions to see how blended learning is handled at other sites. By collecting a variety of data from three types of sources—students, instructors, and institutions—I was able to
connect my findings both vertically across the three stakeholder groups and horizontally across different situations.

1.4 Overview of Results

A review of my findings in terms of the above research questions provides a context for interpreting the data presented in later chapters.

1.4.1 What factors influence the design of a blended FYC course? How are the interfaces of blended course design created and enacted by the participants?

The design of a blended FYC course is a collaborative effort with multiple influences. An instructor's planning efforts may be the most obvious factor, and for good reason: Instructors create the context in which a course's activities transpire. But until the students make use of what the instructors created, it is simply a shell. Student participation determines how useful a particular system becomes. This effect was seen through the difference in online discussions between the two case studies: In Mr. Brown's classes, the course blog became a popular and successful tool because students used it for their own purposes, referring to its content as a resource even during in-class conversations. Had the blog been used only by the instructor, students would not have the same sense of ownership in the process. In Mr. Grey's case, student participation in online course elements was limited to individual tasks that students completed but generally did not refer back to, even in interview conversations. The more students contributed to a part of the course design, the more they used that part.

The effect of active participation shaping the design of a course is not limited to online components of the course. Mr. Brown struggled to get students to contribute to in-class discussions; his students rarely referred to in-class conversations in their interview responses. Mr. Grey's classes produced the opposite effect. He took pride in his students' in-class discussions, and his students saw them as opportunities for learning. It appears that students' creative involvement can predict their views of the value of a course component. Results from this study are unable to identify what prompts student involvement, but my
discussions with the instructors lead me to believe that an instructor’s enthusiasm for a particular course interface can directly influence student buy-in. This enthusiasm is distinctly different from an instructor’s dedication to an interface. Mr. Grey was persistently dedicated to getting the online component of his course to function as well as his in-class components, but those efforts never seemed to be enough.

It is crucial to note that most of today’s online social and LMS interfaces rely on writing as their primary method of communication. With the increasing popularity of online video services like YouTube and private photo-sharing networks like Snapchat, student communication practices are changing more rapidly than research can trace (Grabill & Pigg, 2010; Pigg, 2010). Additional attention to other composition media, such as pre-recorded and distributed video or multi-party synchronous video chats, could further change the composition of composition courses, shifting the focus of a class from one means of production to another. As a result, the interfaces of blended course design may change as technologies develop.

1.4.2 How do various stakeholders define, conceptualize, and operationalize blended writing courses? In what ways do writing pedagogies interact with hybridity?

The differences in how stakeholders define blended courses can be striking. Institutions that offer blended courses often present unclear concepts of what those courses should be, with some (such as UCF) defining the modality by the amount of time students spend in or out of a classroom. In these cases, the nature of a blended course appears to be determined by the institution; department course designs are made to fit within the standard set by the school. In other cases (such as the University of South Florida (USF)), the activities of the classroom are used to categorize a course. As a result, the department would seem to have more control over defining the nature of a blended course. On a different level, the students and instructors interviewed for this project seem to maintain a definition similar to what is commonly used in education literature: a course in which part of the course content is in a classroom and part is on the Internet. The students I spoke with derived their understanding of a blended course from the classes they took at UCF, as they had no prior experience with this particular modality. Essentially, the two instruc-
tors I worked with helped their students compose an understanding of the delivery mode through their construction of the course.

As noted in Chapter 5, students’ lack of previous experience with the modality creates challenges in managing student and teacher expectations for interaction in the course. Instructors with training or experience with the format might assume certain expectations for contributions, content, frequency of postings, or even progression of course content. But the students I spoke with built their expectations for blended courses as a hacked combination of norms from the fully-in-person and fully-online courses they took previously; determining which set of expectations to use potentially caused frustrations. For instance, knowing how best to contact an instructor with different kinds of concerns wasn’t entirely clear for many students. Some expressed discomfort at using email, even though instructors might prefer that contact method. In other words, students occasionally conflated the interfaces they were to use for their classes.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the pedagogies—and even the content—used in FYC courses are diverse and inconsistent from school to school or instructor to instructor. However, a general social move toward digital and online writing makes the incorporation of hybrid pedagogies for writing classes a natural, if not essential, move. The instructors involved in this study asked their students to examine online user groups during their respective units on discourse communities. Both instructors chose to have their students’ research subjects reflect the modality of their courses. However, the actual pedagogical choices made by the instructors varied to accommodate the interfaces they chose to create for their students online. For Mr. Brown, that meant incorporating online posts as a routine feature of weekly assignments; for Mr. Grey, that meant transitioning in-class lecture notes to an online delivery format. It is worth noting that both instructors welcomed the use of connected technology in their classes, allowing or encouraging students to use laptops and cellular phones throughout their face-to-face sessions. Neither instructor remarked that the infusion of technology served as a distraction for students or as a disruption to their courses. Indeed, both instructors made routine use of online technologies in the daily activities of their in-person class sessions, whether the course was billed as face-to-face or mixed-mode by the university. This is likely the
result of both instructors’ perception of mobile technology as a feature of students’ everyday lives and the accepted norm for information access and retrieval. As everyday living and writing become increasingly hybrid, we should expect writing classes to follow suit.

1.4.3 How could various stakeholders interact to compose a hybrid class? How do their perspectives create tensions in the activities of composition classes?

Potential interactions that could lead to effective hybrid course design begin long before the first day of class. Institutional support for hybrid courses should incorporate both technological and pedagogical training, ensuring that instructors understand what tools are available for their specific content area and how that content area functions in both online and in-person spaces. Because each field works with online technologies in its own way, this training would most appropriately come from departments, rather than a centralized, one-size-fits-all course. For instance, the way STEM courses implement lab or fieldwork in online spaces is likely to differ dramatically from the way research in the humanities leverages modern technology; the two kinds of courses should be designed around different principles. Indeed, the students I interviewed repeatedly identified such a division in their perception of subjects and their comfort level with online courses. As a result, departments should work to identify the specific technological needs of their courses and ensure, perhaps through training or mentoring, that their instructors understand how best to implement those technologies in the courses they develop. Conscientious hybrid implementation of technologies takes time to plan, and instructors need to be given sufficient time to experiment with the tools before they are expected to take on the role of an expert.

Once the course begins, instructors should explicitly outline course expectations for interaction and participation, bearing in mind that students may be unfamiliar with online learning, are almost certainly unfamiliar with hybrid course designs, and will need to learn how professionals in whichever field they are studying use online technologies. What may seem normal or traditional to the instructor could be novel to the student, and clarifying expectations early and often throughout the course could lead to more satisfying outcomes for all involved. Both students and instructors interviewed for this project discussed
the importance of clear and predictable lines of communication, and the terms of those interactions can be unclear in a course that occupies multiple delivery modes simultaneously. Instructors should keep in mind that students are often learning implicit course content, like how to communicate professionally in various modalities, just as they are learning the explicit course content of writing studies.

Students help compose a hybrid course with active participation in its various components. As noted above, such participation often marks the difference between technologies that students embrace and those they generally ignore. The more opportunity students have to contribute to a particular course component, the greater value they find in that resource. This need for inclusion and contribution, particularly in an open online space, may create a tension with both the instructor and the institution if those stakeholders expect to maintain traditional levels of control over the course content, resources, or discussions. Enacting a hybrid course involves empowering and enabling students to make use of the available modalities. Composition courses often hold student empowerment as a primary goal; hybridity requires that students be empowered within the course, not as a result of it.

1.4.4 How can the affordances and constraints of online delivery shape the FYC classroom? Does delivery mode affect student performance in, or perception of, their FYC course?

Online delivery affords students an opportunity to perform a meta-analysis of their existing online communication methods. Because online courses are infused with writing, studying writing in an online environment provides many examples of the kinds of material students are examining. Students could either study their own processes and products in the online environment or directly connect their work with other online resources using hyperlinking tools inherent in the modality. And because online text-based interfaces constrain participants to the use of writing as the medium of interaction, an online writing course can potentially draw direct and immediate attention to the uses and effects of writing in the situations that constitute the course.

The data on student performance and perception gathered in this study is, as noted in Chapter 5, notable for what it does not reveal. Like so many studies that precede it, this project finds no discernible
difference between student performance in a blended course and performance in a face-to-face equivalent. Performance differences seem more related to the pedagogical approaches taken by the instructors, which for the participants in this study did not change significantly from one modality to the next. The same is true of student perceptions of course content. When asked about their feelings related to writing and their agreement with the principles espoused by the WAW curriculum, student responses did not significantly differ between delivery modes. Again, the instructor’s approach to the course content seems more an indicator of outcomes than the modality of the course. As explained in Chapter 5, differences in how the two participating instructors defined “rules” led to dramatic differences in student responses to questions about the rigidity or flexibility of rules in various writing scenarios. This finding points to the importance of clarifying departmental expectations for terminology, particularly when those terms become a factor in performance evaluations. Departments need to understand how their instructors interpret the principles on which their courses are constructed. Additional openness around the process and measurement tools used to evaluate performance may also lead to more consistent and accurate evaluations.

Unfortunately, the data-collection methods used for this project do not produce a satisfying answer to the question of how delivery mode affects student performance and perception in a FYC course. These results call for additional research with larger sample sizes, a more precise understanding of the characteristics of successful student performance, and greater agreement on the meaning implicit in statements used to determine student perception of writing and the WAW curriculum. My results point to the importance of clearly articulating the goals and processes used in departmental assessment.

1.5 Overview of Chapters

This chapter has provided a basic statement of the observed problem with current research on writing courses that led to the present study; a brief introduction to hybridity, its application to the classroom, and its features that distinguish it from blended approaches to education; and a short review of the research questions that guided this study. In the next chapter, I present a review of the literature relevant to hybridity in FYC pedagogy. My synthesis of the available literature includes an introduction to interface
theory, which guides the data analysis in later chapters, and a detailed discussion of theories of hybridity, which guide my interpretation of the results. As a result, Chapter 3 serves as the theoretical scaffolding which supports the rest of the dissertation.

In Chapter 2, I explain the methods used for this project, detailing the research setting and the process by which I selected participants and collected data. This chapter provides details on the ways in which my data triangulates to build a thick description of the influences of blended learning on various elements of the research setting, from the FYC instructors who served as case studies to the students who participated in interview sessions.

The next three chapters report on the findings of my data collection. I begin, in Chapter 5, with data from students. In this chapter, I begin with a discussion of interface theory, applying it to students’ classroom experiences and connecting it with theories of hybridity to show how a hybrid approach to pedagogy can help students make sense of—and make use of—the interfaces of their classes. The chapter continues with a report of findings from student interviews, which show how students’ prior experiences help shape their expectations for course delivery modes and how students perceive the effectiveness of their FYC course’s modality. Chapter 5 also includes a discussion of survey data that suggest that the relationship between course modality and student perception of course content is much weaker than initially anticipated. That survey data also introduces a discussion of the interface between instructors and their departments, with consequences for programmatic assessment and instructor training.

After reviewing data from students, I continue with Chapter 6, which explores data collected from instructors. This chapter reveals how instructors’ dispositions toward technology and its implementation in class can have significant influence on their planning, time management, enthusiasm, and feelings of success. Using data from instructor interviews, classroom observations, and collateral collected from classes, I uncover the reasons behind instructors’ differing perceptions of blended courses and make suggestions for instructor training that expand upon the findings of the previous chapter focused on students.

In the final results chapter, Chapter 4, I report on a survey of institutional websites that shows how various schools represent blended learning to the public and to their students. This website survey
allows me to discuss the consistency of information presented about blended courses, the discoverability of delivery mode in course-registration systems, and the training support given to instructors as they prepare for and teach blended courses. This chapter returns to interface theory to argue for the importance of consistency in terminology across multiple interfaces to help instructors manage expectations and help students navigate requirements.

In the conclusion, I discuss how these findings apply to the specific site studied, uncovering important considerations for instructors planning courses and administrators assessing those efforts. I also suggest ways that students could be better prepared for the specific conditions inherent in various modalities. Additionally, I propose policies that institutions should consider to help implement successful hybrid-learning models on their campuses. And finally, I review several avenues of future research made apparent by this study’s progress and findings.
CHAPTER 2: METHODS

In the previous chapter, I discussed how views of online learning in its various forms have changed in education and in writing studies. I also showed how institutional pressures and excitement over technological advancements have drawn considerable academic attention to online education, yet even the terminology used in various disciplines exposes a lack of consensus in the literature. In this chapter, I detail the methods I used to address that research gap. I begin by clarifying my research questions, identifying the types of data collection I performed to address each one. I then explore the setting of my project, explaining the relevance of my work to the situation in which the study developed. Once I identify the setting, I review the participants, identifying how they relate to the setting and how they contributed to this study. Then, I list the various data-collection methods and explain how they triangulate to develop thick descriptions (Geertz, 2005) of my case studies. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research based on my findings and experiences.

Researchers have focused broadly on comparing online and in-person course delivery, or they have focused on a specific feature of online learning—most commonly discussion boards—to show how that feature works in a specific context. The changing perspectives regarding online learning have created a conspicuous gap in the existing research: The implications of blended instruction in established first-year composition (FYC) courses has not been well explored. This dissertation, then, addresses that lack of coverage through the following research question: How do instructors and students perceive, construct, and interact with FYC courses taught via face-to-face or blended delivery? To address that question, I explored the following sub-questions:

1. What factors influence the design of a blended composition course? How are the interfaces of blended course design created and enacted by the participants?
2. How do various stakeholders define, conceptualize, and operationalize blended writing courses? Why do their views of blended courses differ? In what ways do writing pedagogies interact with hybridity? What motivates or constrains those interactions?
3. How could various stakeholders interact to compose a hybrid class? How do their perspectives create tensions in the activities of composition classes?

4. How can the affordances and constraints of online delivery shape the first-year composition classroom? Does delivery mode affect student performance in, or perception of, their FYC course?

The study was situated at a large southeastern research university with a nationally recognized composition program. The choice of study setting grew from an initial set of research questions, and that connection is detailed in the Study Origins & Researcher Agenda section below. I sought an understanding of the composition classroom that was informed from multiple perspectives, so I gathered several types of data in an effort to triangulate findings and develop a more thorough picture of how delivery mode affects composition courses. I review them here in order to “reflect critically on [my] own research approaches” and better understand the issues faced by my participants (Kirsch & Sullivan, 1992, p. 3).

The first of my research questions concerns the influences and interfaces of blended course design. I conducted interviews with the Coordinator of Composition (who had extensive experience teaching FYC in online, in-person, and blended formats) and two instructors new to blended course delivery to see what issues and concerns guided their efforts to design new courses. I also collected syllabi and assignment sheets from both instructors to look at course design in practice following the discussions of design in theory. The instructors gave me access to their online course tools—the Canvas-branded campus learning-management system (LMS) for one instructor and a Blogger-hosted blog for the other—so I could examine the online interfaces they designed; I observed their classrooms on multiple occasions to study their in-person course interfaces.

My instructor interviews included questions about their concept of and experience with blended learning, leading to a discussion of what they expected from the modality and addressing the question of how stakeholders define blended writing courses. I asked students about their experiences with online education and what they look for in their courses, both in terms of delivery mode explicitly and in terms of their interactions with instructors. Asking about expected interactions helped uncover how students perceive their courses, and it allowed me to draw conclusions regarding how well various modalities meet
students’ needs and what those modalities might need to do in order to meet student expectations for instruction. I also examined institutional websites, looking for blended-learning content for instructor training and student enrichment, to determine how institutions define blended classes and express expectations about those definitions to their constituents. The remainder of the second research question discusses how writing pedagogies interact with hybridity, and I addressed that point by asking instructors about how they fared teaching different parts of the course curriculum, which led to conversations about how they chose to approach various content. I asked students similar questions about which content they found most challenging, which led to discussions of the teaching methods they found most helpful as they struggled with difficult material.

The third question begins with a speculative component, looking for what could be done to enact a hybrid composition class. That speculative nature means I could not collect data that specifically addresses this question; however, connections between instructor and student comments from various interview conversations do suggest possibilities for how these stakeholders might interact in such an environment. The rest of the third question, however, points to tensions between stakeholder perceptions, which I address through interviews (asking instructors, students, and institutional staff about surprises, frustrations, and misunderstandings they have experienced), and through evaluations of institutional websites (looking for coordinated or conflicting presentations of information about blended courses).

The fourth and final question focuses on the affordances and constraints of various modalities and the effect those modalities have on student performance. Student and instructor interviews revealed the affordances and constraints used or expected by each of the participants, while a review of information from various institutions revealed what those schools expected out of their online courses. A survey administered to students near the beginning and end of the semester revealed how the class changed student perceptions of composition and their course content. This survey, adapted from assessment tools already in use at the research site, asked students to indicate their views of writing practices and beliefs. Student performance was measured using portfolio assessments adapted from internal department measurement tools. These measurement tools were designed to reveal how well students stated and demonstrated their
understanding of course concepts. The situated nature of this study—exploring a specific program at one institution—makes the use of existing measurement tools a decision based on practicality. By building from these existing tools, the data I collected from my research site can be more easily compared to other data gathered from similar work being done there, making this project useful to the site being studied.

This re-use of internal (and generally unpublished) measurement tools may create concern over issues of validity of the data collected. By using tools that have not been openly critiqued, I am intentionally preserving existing biases within the department. I intended to show how different course modalities work according to the standards of the department. I argue that these standards are the most valid to use, considering the lack of curricular consensus within writing studies (as I detail in Chapter 3). Directly addressing concerns of validity within composition studies, Keith Grant-Davie (1992) argued that coded and interpreted data such as the data collected for this project cannot be positioned in terms of reliability because the situated nature of case-study research is necessarily variable over time. Instead of encouraging a standard reliability-based approach to explaining our methods, Grant-Davie (1992) argued that these “unequivocal accounts of methods” often disguise the “difficult and questionable decisions” that support case-study research (p. 271). Therefore, in this chapter, I avoid such unequivocal accounts of methods and work to foreground the difficult and questionable decisions that shaped and supported my study. I will show that the methods used in this dissertation are valid because of their “ability to measure whatever [they are] intended to assess” (Lauer & Asher, 1988, p. 140). In the next section, I detail my intentions for the project and follow up with an account of adjustments I made in response to initial results. After discussing the redesign of the project, I will detail the study situation, participants, and data-collection methods.

2.1 Study Origins & Researcher Agenda

This study implements several key feminist methodological issues addressed by Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan (1992). They argued that details of research methods should always include:
open discussion of the researcher’s agenda (it is never disinterested), the researcher’s relation to the subject (the researcher’s presence and authority are never neutral), and the purpose of the researcher’s questions (they must be grounded in participants’ experiences and relevant to participants). (Sullivan, 1992, p. 8)

My agenda was to use this dissertation as a means of better understanding and integrating myself within the department which I have studied; my relation to the subjects, that of a familiar co-worker, was leveraged to gain confidence and access throughout the study. I focused on only one course to learn how consciously the curriculum was implemented by instructors and received by students, allowing that one course’s curriculum to surface throughout the conversations I had with research participants. Overall, the conditions and situation of the research site directly informed, influenced, and even provided the exigence for this study.

In this chapter, I explain the kairotic moment and research site in which this study exists, establishing the need for the study and explaining how my methods responded to that situation’s particular exigencies. Only from that perspective will a discussion of the methods used prove meaningful (or the results be relevant). After establishing the rhetorical situation of the study, I will describe the procedures I used for gathering and analyzing data and for obtaining findings. Patricia Sullivan and James E. Porter (1997) said that the methods of any study should be viewed “as rhetorically situated; that is, as part of the rhetorical act and so as subject to kairos” (1997, “Rhetorical Situatedness” para. 1). Because, as they argued, a study’s method is a rhetorical act, and because that act is “a situated and applied art” generating “principles, not rules,” my discussion of methods will attempt to explain the principles used to determine methods appropriate for this study’s situation (Sullivan & J. E. Porter, 1997, “Rhetorical Situatedness” para. 3).

This project stands between the education and composition disciplines, so the methods I used work in a space somewhat between accepted norms. Much of the scholarship that prompted this study come from educational research, where authors often adopt the moves of scientific-experiment articles to add a sense of certainty and credibility to their findings—see Hays (2006). In his explanation of experi-
mental articles in science, Charles Bazerman (1987) suggested that these articles are written to “protect” results “by showing that the experiment was done cleanly and correctly” (p. 138). My research methods contrast with previous studies of course delivery because I approached my questions using qualitative methods more common in composition studies. Unlike education researchers, I make no claims about the cleanliness or correctness of my methods. Indeed, the messiness of the data gathered (and the data-gathering processes) for this study should be viewed among its strengths: The study, its methods, and its data grew organically from the situation in which the study developed. Indeed, this position follows the prediction of Kirsch and Sullivan (1992), who said that “composition studies and rhetoric are likely to be shaped by methodological pluralism” (p. 10). I will present the methods of this study as what Clay Spinuzzi (2005) called “genuine arguments that are adaptable (not invariant)” (p. 439). That is, my arguments about blended course delivery and writing instruction depend upon the situation I studied and benefit more from adaptability to circumstance than they would from adhering to predetermined methods. It is this adaptability that is most evident in this chapter. Invariant methods and arguments would have limited this study to an inconclusive set of data.

Some of my initial findings differed significantly from the expectations of the study’s exigencies, prompting me to “reconfigure [my] research practices at every level” (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 413). Below, I show how the “tinkering and localization” (Spinuzzi, 2005, p. 440) of my methods responded not only to the rhetorical situatedness of the study site but also the project’s kairotic moment as it progressed, making my methods “an integral and appropriate part of the overall research argument and design” (p. 439). During the planning stages of this dissertation, I hoped to find how writing instructors built a blended course for the first time. My background in curriculum and instruction made me curious about the role of a consistent, shared curriculum in the course-design efforts of instructors who were new to the blended model. Before data collection began, I aimed to learn whether the existence of an agreed-upon, outcomes-based curriculum would provide a sort of focal point for instructors converting classes from one delivery mode to another and students aiming for success in those classes. I operated on the assumption that a unified curriculum would be at the heart of those efforts, and that the primary concern for those instructors would be
to adhere to the department’s curriculum. My data collection methods were initially designed to identify what teachers intended for their classes and how students performed in response to those intentions, positioning the course curriculum as the baseline for comparison, as though it would be a constant through each instance of the course. I believed that instructors would redesign their courses around the familiar curriculum, and that their mixed-mode courses would focus explicitly on the department outcomes. I expected that an explicit instructor focus on outcomes would make students aware of those outcomes as the semester progressed.

As data collection continued, I found that the course outcomes took secondary importance in instructor planning. Instead of focusing on outcomes as I expected they would, conversations with instructors emphasized the role of technology in their planning, and conversations with students emphasized access to instructors for support of their learning. Essentially, each group highlighted an interface they relied on to complete their courses, suggesting an avenue for investigation. As explained by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2000), “qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus” (p. 5). Therefore, interview and survey questions designed to address issues of course outcomes cannot stand alone and must be combined with additional narrative to “secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question,” namely an understanding of the differences between delivery modes in first-semester FYC courses (p. 5). I used data triangulation not as a means of validation—see Flick (1998)—but rather as a means of adding “complexity, richness, and depth” (Denzin & Yvonna S Lincoln, 2000, p. 5) to the findings; the “thick descriptions” I have sought to “bring us into touch with the lives” of those who inhabit these courses (Geertz, 1973, p. 156). Therefore, I will, as Clifford Geertz (1973) suggested, “begin with [my] own interpretations of what [my] informants are up to, or think they are up to, and systematize those” (p. 155). My initial informants were the instructors of FYC courses.

In my research, I used the case study as my unit of inquiry and concentration. Even though Robert E. Stake (2000) argued that “a case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 435), a brief explanation of the kinds of cases used in this study helps show how this project serves as a response to the situation in which it was developed. The classes I studied serve as what Stake
called an “instrumental case study” (p. 437). My analysis was designed to reveal the “issues, contexts, and interpretations, [the] thick description” of how FYC courses are affected by changes to their modality (Stake, 2000, p. 439). Because I examine face-to-face and blended classes “mainly to provide insight into an issue,” my investigation into classroom cases “plays a supportive role” and “facilitates our understanding” of the issues, contexts, and interpretations of delivery mode in FYC (Stake, 2000, p. 437).

For initial data collection, I researched two case studies at a large, research-driven university. During the Fall 2012 semester, two experienced, full-time FYC instructors taught the department’s Composition I (ENC 1101) course in the blended format for the first time. These instructors, whom I will call Mr. Brown and Mr. Grey, participated as study subjects, using my dissertation as an opportunity for them to pay more deliberate attention to their pedagogical decision-making. Each instructor had several years of experience with the curriculum and the department, and they had each taught the course primarily face-to-face. Mr. Grey had taught an online-only section of the course, and Mr. Brown had experience teaching online-only writing courses for a local community college. But for the semester in which this first phase took place, these instructors had been asked to teach what the university called a “mixed-mode” course—a class with “reduced seat time” in which one session per week was replaced with online instruction, rather than a physical meeting in a classroom. This study used the instructors’ first experiences with a mixed-mode course as an opportunity to explore how their planning, teaching, and student interactions functioned in the two modalities.

2.2 Redesign Goals

The first phase of this study was notable for what it did not find, and it raised questions about the absence of the expected emphasis on curriculum. I was left with data that told a story that differed greatly from my expectations that were “prefigured from the beginning” of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1999, p. 11). Rather than providing findings that illuminated differences between delivery modes, the data collected in the study’s first phase pointed instead to differences in instructional approach. It showed that the participating instructors did not focus on the curriculum’s course outcomes when adapting their courses.
for blended delivery. Instead, they relied on past experiences and assignments because they felt their existing material adequately included the outcomes, and preserving those would allow them to continue meeting departmental expectations. Because initial results did not align with expectations, a second phase began in the Fall 2014 semester, in which I sought to better define what hybrid education is—particularly within writing studies—from the perspectives of the various stakeholders (students, instructors, and their institutions), to see what kinds of differences exist in those perspectives.

Overall, the initial data collection spoke to the ways students and instructors perceive their courses and what they expect of delivery modes, as well as how they adapt to the course delivery they face, but the connection with the curriculum never surfaced. These unexpected differences required me to “negotiate with the data” in an effort to identify “new schemas to account for the evidence” (Grant-Davie, 1992, p. 274). The results spoke to the ways students and instructors perceive their courses and what they expect of delivery modes, as well as how they adapt to the course delivery they face, but the connection with the curriculum never surfaced through the data. Therefore, I began to look for reasons why instructors would approach course modalities from different perspectives. This project shifted from trying to describe how a specific FYC curriculum would influence course design in multiple modalities into trying to understand differing views on modalities and the motivations behind them. The second phase of this study concerned itself with distinguishing philosophical approaches regarding course delivery modes and with better understanding the interfaces shared among institutions, writing departments, instructors, and students as they work together to create a blended FYC course.

Because qualitative research design is emergent, and because the meaning of its results must be negotiated (Yvonna S. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Creswell, 2003, p. 199), I adjusted the trajectory of the study and began to ask questions about what was actually happening in these classes, rather than what I wanted to have happen. In conversations with staff members across the University of Central Florida (UCF), I heard delivery mode discussed in different terms by each stakeholder, suggesting that diverse views of delivery mode exist within the same institution. These differences were most notable when comparing the views of composition instructors with the staff of UCF’s the Center for Distributed
Learning (CDL). The CDL staff are responsible for promoting and supporting the use of distance-learning tools among UCF’s faculty. As strong advocates of online courses, the CDL staff exude an enthusiasm not typically seen in instructors. Indeed, part of the job of the CDL staff is to get the faculty excited for the services that CDL provides.

Instructors at UCF who wish to teach online courses must earn certification by taking IDL 6543, a course designed to introduce faculty to principles of instructional design specifically targeted to distance learning. According to the CDL website:

IDL6543 models how to teach online using a combination of seminars, labs, consultations, and web-based instruction and is delivered in an M mode [a mixed-mode course]. ... The purpose of this faculty development course is to help you succeed as you develop and deliver your fully online (“W”) or mixed mode (“M”) courses. (University of Central Florida Center for Distributed Learning [CDL], 2009)

I attended a showcase of presentations held at the end of the training course to see what pedagogies were modeled by the participants. Elements of course and online module design trumpeted by other participants go against current trends in composition pedagogy, highlighting the challenges of moving writing classes into online environments, even with the support of an instructional-design staff.

This disparity motivated a rethinking of the approach to this dissertation. I had found that the writing about writing (waw) curriculum was not the central force behind changes in delivery mode. The next phase of this project examined whether the discipline itself provided a conceptual framework that differed from either other fields or other institutional perspectives. I expanded my research by conducting an additional interview with each instructor to learn how they believed delivery mode influenced their teaching, gathering information from UCF’s CDL to see how their perspectives differed from those of the Department of Writing and Rhetoric (DWR) staff, and surveying the websites of other schools to determine how blended learning is typically presented at the institutional level. Expanding the base of data collected allowed me to get a better sense of how the students and instructors involved are situated within the
broader context of their institution and training. Research questions about the interactions, motivations, and constraints of blended-learning environments have more meaningful answers due to this additional triangulation.

2.3 Research Setting

My interests in studying the effects of delivery mode specifically target FYC. Research into online and blended learning spans a breadth of courses and fields; this breadth creates challenges for applying the research to specific circumstances. Likewise, the variety of approaches to FYC curricula make findings difficult to generalize from one program to another. I wanted to determine whether a specific and agreed-upon FYC curriculum might focus the efforts of instructors as they adjust the delivery mode of their courses. To that end, this study is situated in what is perhaps the nation’s largest full-scale adoption of a specific writing studies curriculum. Because the department had a common approach to the curriculum, I expected that curriculum to serve as a common starting point from which changes on account of delivery mode could be traced. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the university, the department, and the curriculum used for the study.

2.3.1 Situation of the Research

Initial data collection for this study occurred during the Fall 2012 semester at UCF, a Carnegie Classification RU/VH school (University of Central Florida Institutional Knowledge Management [UCF IKM], 2014). The university enrolled 59,785 students in Fall 2012. That semester, the overall student population was 59% White, 19% Latino, and 10% African-American; 55% of students were female. Of the overall enrollment, 19.5% were classified as freshmen. As a public university, UCF draws heavily from local communities for its enrollment; in Fall 2012, 94.9% of students were classified as Florida residents. Because the vast majority of students come from Florida’s public-education system, policies enacted by the Department of Education—such as those regarding online learning—can have direct consequences in UCF’s classrooms by determining the past experiences of UCF’s incoming student population. Many stu-
udents transfer to the school with existing credits from Advanced-Placement courses or an associate degree from a Florida state college.

Housed within DWR, itself created in 2010, the FYC program at UCF represents one of the nation’s largest full-scale implementations of the WAW curriculum as envisioned by Douglas Downs, from Montana State University, and Elizabeth Wardle, who serves as chair of DWR at UCF (Downs & Wardle, 2007). This curriculum provides one response to the nationwide conversation about appropriate course content for FYC courses (discussed in Chapter 3). The recent adoption of that curriculum makes UCF’s FYC program a dynamic and robust setting for research into composition pedagogy. The curriculum for ENC 1101 underwent an extensive revision from 2009 to 2011 (Wardle, 2013). As part of these revisions, instructors in DWR have either been a part of, or at least heard about, ongoing revision efforts such as brainstorming sessions, collaborative seminars, new assignment designs, and proposed course sequences. Thanks to this department-wide conversation, the instructors who participated in this study already saw their curriculum as flexible and open to invention and change.

Within the extremely large overall student population at UCF, DWR, established in 2010, enrolled 1,691 students in 72 sections of ENC 1101 in Fall 2012. As a result of initiatives from UCF’s president and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Fall 2012 teaching force for the FYC program consisted of roughly a dozen Graduate Teaching Associates (GTAs), only seven adjunct instructors (down from 33 in 2008), 29 full-time instructors, and 10 tenure-track faculty in rhetoric and composition (Wardle, 2013). With such an emphasis on committing to the employment and benefits of the instructional staff, UCF has created an environment where its teachers are materially able to commit to their teaching. Instructors frequently collaborate to improve their praxis and share resources or best practices, leading to focused attention on pedagogy. Notably, this attention focused exclusively on pedagogy for face-to-face instruction; conversations about delivery mode had not yet begun in the department. As a result, discussing pedagogical concerns with the case study subjects felt conversational, and it continued the departmental conversation into discussions of modality.
Students at UCF can take classes in any of five available delivery modes, which are described as follows:

*World Wide Web (W)* courses conducted via web-based instruction and collaboration. Some courses may require minimal campus attendance or in-person/proctored examinations.

*Video Streaming (V)* courses delivered over the web via streaming digital video which may be supplemented by additional web activity, projects or exams.

*Video Streaming/Reduced Seat Time (RV)* classroom-based content is available over the web via streaming video and classroom attendance is not required. Other required activities that substitute for video instruction may include any of the following elements: web activity, in-person or proctored examinations, and labs. See course notes for details.

*Mixed Mode/Reduced Seat Time (M)* courses include both required classroom attendance and online instruction. Classes have substantial activity conducted over the web, which substitutes for some classroom meetings.

*Face To Face Instruction (P)* courses have required classroom attendance and meet on a regularly scheduled basis. Students may encounter Internet and/or computer requirements in these classes. (University of Central Florida Center for Distributed Learning [UCF CDL], 2011b)

The name and description of the mixed-mode course modality highlight the perspective used to generate the above list. Rather than addressing any degree of instructional design or approach, this description emphasizes resource use, drawing attention to the adjusted attendance requirements (“reduced seat time” and “substitutes for some classroom meetings”). This emphasis on attendance and time might color students’ interpretation of the benefits and consequences of the nontraditional course delivery, highlighting the fact that they will spend less time in class—often seen as a benefit in students’ eyes—rather than highlighting the expectations for online work, which often involves more reading and independence than traditional classroom interactions. As discussed in Chapter 4, highlighting “reduced seat time” in the registration system directly plays to student desires while they are enrolling for courses, despite a commonly held conviction among study participants that limited in-class time with a teacher is not always the
best way to learn new material. By showing “reduced seat time” in the registration system, the institution guides students to choose classes based on logistical factors that can be detrimental to learning. Despite the university’s emphasis on the logistical benefits of reduced-seat-time modalities, ENC 1101 has traditionally been offered primarily as a face-to-face course, with many departmental discussions of pedagogy emphasizing direct, synchronous classroom interactions, including peer discussion groups and instant instructor feedback.

The curriculum for the ENC 1101 course I studied began in 2009 with a move to the WAW model, which argued that:

Composition courses need to directly embrace and enact some of the research and theory about writing by:

1. Teaching students about writing in ways that can enable them to be more successful later, and
2. Explicitly and publicly making the case that composition courses can only serve as entry points to writing in the university and the larger world and cannot serve as inoculations.

(Wardle, 2013, “Claims,” para. 1)

According to the department’s website (University of Central Florida Department of Writing and Rhetoric, n.d.-b), DWR’s FYC curriculum is based on the guiding principles presented in Appendix B. The department describes the first of the two-semester FYC course sequence this way:

In ENC 1101, students read research findings from the field of Writing Studies intended to help them gain both procedural (“how to”) and declarative (“content”) knowledge about writing that they can use in a variety of other writing situations.

Course outcomes for 1101 are:

• Students will demonstrate an understanding of writing processes and how writing processes change depending on writing contexts.
• Students will demonstrate an awareness of rhetorical situations and acquire strategies
for writing in different contexts.
• Students will improve as readers of complex texts.
• Students will demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between discourse conven-
tions, lexis, genres, and their related communities.

In working toward these outcomes, students engage in writing-to-learn activities to help them
understand and apply the various concepts; they also compose and revise extended texts em-
ploying those concepts at the end of each unit. (University of Central Florida Department
of Writing and Rhetoric, n.d.-a)

The ENC 1101 course is a required component of the undergraduate general education program
(University of Central Florida, 2013); as such, all undergraduates must either pass the course or test out
of it. Students who score a 3 or better on either AP English Language and Composition or AP English
Literature and Composition exams, or a 50 or better on either the College Composition or English Com-
position with Essay CLEP exam meets the requirement for Communications Foundations I in their general
education program and are not required to take the course (University of Central Florida, 2013). As such,
most students enrolled in ENC 1101 have little, no, or poor experience with advanced high school English
courses—most did not take, or did not pass, college-preparatory English courses.

2.3.2 Exigence of the Research

In addition to a traditional review of procedures in methods discussions, Sullivan and J. E. Porter
(1997) encouraged researchers in computers and composition to include “matters related to situation and
process—the setting for discourse as well as the means by which it is produced and received” (“Rhetor-
ical Situatedness,” para. 4). In the preceding sections, I introduced the data-collection methods and the
research setting in which they were used; what remains is a review of the situation that led to this study.
After UCF’s DWR completed its transition to the WAW curriculum, three factors combined to create a kairotic moment permitting an investigation of how online instruction worked in this department. Administrative pressure from the college housing DWR caused it to offer more blended-delivery sections of ENC 1101. Yet little attention had been paid to online writing instruction (OWI) within the department due to the tradition of predominantly face-to-face instruction. I was initially curious whether FYC courses were still successful when taught in what UCF calls the “mixed-mode” environment, so I chose to examine how the course could be adapted to a new delivery mode. In Fall 2012, two instructors were asked to teach mixed-mode courses for the first time and thus provided an intriguing opportunity for study: Not only would I see how their courses adapted to the delivery, but I could also see how the instructors handled working with the format for the first time, after the basic training for online instruction offered by UCF’s CDL. This training, in the form of a class known as ADL 5000, is designed to prepare instructors to teach pre-built course shells—a situation in which the course instructor is not the course designer (University of Central Florida Center for Distributed Learning [UCF CDL], 2014).

It is worth noting that the study’s exigence came from a curiosity about how to teach mixed-mode courses, rather than purely online courses. While research into online writing instruction exists, and several instructors at UCF created versions of their courses that replaced all instruction with online modules, the tension between online and in-person components interested me more than the complete conversion of a course. That interest carried over into the design of this study because, as Carol Berkenkotter (1989) argued, “the values of the observer entered into decisions about what was to be studied and what kinds of understanding were significant” (p. 71). I aimed to better understand the interactions among delivery mode, content, and instruction of FYC, making “decisions about what was to be studied” emphasize blended courses, rather than entirely online ones.
2.4 Research Participants

2.4.1 Instructors: Content-Familiar, Modality-Inexperienced

In an effort to minimize variability and focus on delivery mode, only instructors who taught both face-to-face and mixed mode sections of ENC 1101 during the same semester were considered for recruitment. Unfortunately, in Fall 2012, when this study was conducted, only two instructors within the department taught both face-to-face and mixed mode sections of ENC 1101. Fortuitously, both instructors agreed to participate as case studies for this dissertation. Because both instructors taught both delivery modes, examining their planning, decision-making, and teaching allowed comparison of courses where the delivery mode served as a primary variable; other considerations about teaching style, curriculum, and instructor personality remained consistent. Both instructors were familiar with the course curriculum, having taught in the department for several years. However, neither instructor had previously taught a course with mixed mode delivery. As a result, my investigations examined how these instructors chose to adapt to what, to them, was a brand-new delivery mode.

Mr. Brown, a married, white male in his early 30s, began teaching at UCF as a part-time instructor in Spring 2010 as the department formally transitioned to the WAW curriculum. He became a full-time instructor and taught his first ENC 1101 course in Fall 2010. His initial training for teaching ENC 1101 came in the form of a small reading group with other instructors as they studied seminal texts in composition and built their understanding of the WAW approach. While going through that department training in Spring 2010, Mr. Brown simultaneously taught writing courses for a local community college, where the institutional expectations for instructors were quite flexible, so he was “introducing and using the concepts [from WAW at UCF] in real time” in his community-college classes. He said that “just playing with my syllabus on-the-fly and changing things up and doing it ... helped [him] to really internalize what [he] was doing there, to be able to apply and see, well, how are students reacting to it?” This hands-on application of the training helped him “coalesce what was going on in Writing about Writing and, you know, figure out what [he’s] going to do in the classroom with it.” His approach to learning the curriculum—that of jump-
ing in and learning from potential failure—resonates with his approach to teaching writing, emphasizing revision and learning from experience:

I’m still kind of the person who believes in teaching writing from a perspective that students learn from failure. Right? So I’m of the ilk that, you know, writing happens over and over and over again and those little small failures happen, and those small failures are what lead to successful drafts later on in the process.

As I show in Chapter 6, this instinct to dive in and learn from mistakes along the way helped define Mr. Brown’s approach to the new delivery mode, motivating his course development.

Mr. Grey, a married, middle-aged white male, had fifteen years’ teaching experience, starting as a GTA at another university in Florida. Grey had been teaching at UCF for six years, three of which were before the transition to the WAW curriculum. Unlike Mr. Brown, Grey does not teach at other institutions while working for UCF. He volunteered as one of the pilot instructors for the roll-out of the program, so he taught classes with the new curriculum before the course or assignment designs had stabilized. As a result, Grey struggled with the transition because the pilot instructors were given extreme freedom and flexibility to create their own image of what their courses should look like. Wardle (2013) provided details on the pilot process. The freedom to create his own course frustrated Mr. Grey, who prefers to start from a model he knows and make creative adjustments, through experimentation, until he finds what works:

My weak analogy of that is that I love to cook. I’ve been cooking for over twenty years. I’ve cooked professionally, you know. But if I get a new recipe, even if I suspect something is wrong or I can make it better, I’m going to follow it the first time. Because I just want to know what does... what does the textbook look like? What does the textbook recipe taste like? And and then you know I'll say, “Yep. I was right. I could have....” But I want to know what the example is. You know, what the norm is.
As I show in Chapter 6, Grey’s tendency to start with the familiar and make small adjustments frustrated his efforts to adapt his class to the new delivery mode, stifling his creativity and creating unwanted tension for himself and his students.

### 2.4.2 Students: Web-Savvy, Modality-Novice

Whereas the instructors of the classes were used as specific case studies, and I therefore have detailed demographic information about them, the students who enrolled in those classes were not followed in detail. Indeed, their enrollment in the courses could not be statistically randomized, and their participation in interviews was entirely voluntary and anonymous—I only asked which instructor they had and which delivery mode their course used. Instead of detailed individuated information, students who participated in this study's interviews provided supporting evidence, richer detail about the classroom experience, and a different perspective on classroom interactions. In short, student participants added thick description, not statistical validity, to the study. The lack of personal information about interview participants obviously limits the generalizability of conclusions drawn from students. However, the consistency of responses from across multiple interview participants suggests similar in-class experiences and expectations for many students.

Ultimately, I received survey data from 131 students, portfolio scores from 136 students, and had 16 interview participants out of a pool of around 150 enrolled in the classes studied. Student participation was solicited using several approaches. I visited many of the classes I observed, introduced myself, and explained the purpose and goals of this study. I encouraged students to participate and offered both food and a gift card to a local grocery store for their participation, and I suggested it was an opportunity to express their opinions, see what research at UCF looks like, and help improve our writing program. For classes I couldn’t attend, I created a video, in which I introduced myself and the study, that the instructors showed their students. Additionally, the instructors required their students to complete the study's survey,
and the end of the survey collected email addresses for students who wanted additional information for interview participation.¹

A majority of UCF students come from local Florida schools, and changes to the state’s public-school requirements directly influence most students’ experience and skill levels. One such change came in 2011 with Florida House Bill 7197, requiring all public-school students to take at least one fully online course before graduation (The Florida Senate, 2012, §(2)(c)). That legislative requirement complicates university interactions with new-student expectations regarding both the content and the delivery of their courses. The text of that legislation explicitly names Florida Virtual School (FLVS), a private company, as the only suggested content provider. That same law even requires Florida’s public schools to provide free marketing for FLVS unless the public district offers its own online programs. As could be expected from this legislation, most students entering the state’s university system have taken a course with FLVS, and that course is often the students’ only exposure to online learning prior to arrival. Indeed, the students interviewed for this study only reported FLVS courses when asked about prior experience. Because students gain experience with online learning through FLVS, that system sets their expectations for rigor and procedure in an online environment. In general, student expectations were not high. Students often commented on how easy their online courses were, with one participant unapologetically explaining that her mother did some of her assignments for her. FLVS receives money from the Department of Education based on the number of students who earn credit for a course, rather than for students who attend a course (the traditional standard for public schools). This means that, if a student participates in a FLVS course but does not successfully pass that course, FLVS earns no money. Such a financial setup provides tremendous motivation to help students complete courses or, perhaps more cynically, to make courses easy to complete.

Though all Florida-graduated students arriving at first-year writing courses in our university have experience with fully online courses, the concept of a mixed-mode course does not exist in high school.

¹It appears students thought the blank on the survey to collect email addresses was required, rather than optional only if they were interested, because I received fifty-three email addresses from students allegedly interested in joining a focus group, yet only sixteen students ultimately responded to messages to coordinate dates for a meeting.
Because attendance requirements compel students to attend class every day throughout primary and secondary education, they must learn to negotiate flexible and irregular scheduling after college. When searching for courses during registration, students interviewed for this study reported that meeting times and occasionally instructor names were of primary importance in their decision-making process. A couple participating students indicated that they made sure not to sign up for any online classes, but they still agreed time of day was of utmost importance. If students have experience with online courses and attend most to time of day when scheduling courses, mixed-mode classes look the most appealing: they have regular meeting times, suggesting they are an in-person course, but they meet on fewer days than their fully in-person counterparts. Unless students understand how online components contribute to mixed-mode courses, they are likely to form mistaken impressions of the options they have available. When faced with three distinct options for delivery modes (face-to-face, mixed mode, and fully online), students familiar only with online and face-to-face (like those from Florida schools) may not have the experience and understanding to effectively choose the best course section for their needs.

2.5 Data Collection & Analysis

Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (1999) argued that, in qualitative research, conclusions “often have been prefigured from the beginning,” even in cases where researchers believe they are working inductively with their data (p. 11). Prefigured conclusions can influence (or perhaps limit) the way a researcher interprets collected data. Researchers might discard or ignore data that suggest an unexpected conclusion, or they might rationalize or justify an initial conclusion to force those data to fit within prefigured conclusions, rather than applying Occam’s razor to eliminate complicated explanations. In qualitative research, which often leads to researchers getting lost in the data, the simple, obvious conclusion may be lost amid the complexity of a study. The need to interpret data honestly challenges researchers to think critically about their presumptions and allow for possible alternative explanations when unexpected data appears. Grant-Davie (1992) succinctly explained the situation qualitative researchers in composition face:
What researchers find in the data is influenced by what they look for, and if they find only confirmation of what they expected, they may simply assimilate the data with their existing knowledge or assumptions, reinforcing this knowledge without changing it. More often, however, and more interestingly, researchers do not find exactly what they expected.... In these cases, researchers must negotiate with the data, searching their memories for alternative schemas (patterns of relationships into which people organize their knowledge) that might account for the data, revising the schemas they had brought to the analysis, or forming new schemas to account for the evidence. (p. 274)

Such was certainly the case with this study. My initial intention was to determine how course delivery affected teaching and learning with a standardized composition curriculum. I prefigured both that the curriculum of a composition course played a significant role in shaping a course, particularly with experienced instructors, and that the role of the curriculum would remain constant across delivery modes. My initial data-collection efforts were designed to test these hypotheses and see which predictions held up (Miles & Huberman, 1999, p. 10).

2.5.1 Instructor Interviews

Before the semester began, I interviewed the department’s Composition Coordinator about her experiences teaching ENC 1101 courses in a variety of delivery modes. I used these interviews as an opportunity to gather ideas from her experience that would help me anticipate the challenges my case-study instructors would likely be facing during the semester.

The Composition Coordinator, a single, fifty-something white female whom I will call Ms. White, had taught blended composition courses at UCF for about seven years prior to the semester when this study took place. She started with the department by teaching FYC classes through traditional face-to-face delivery, and in 2010, White taught her first online section of ENC 1101. As a result, she has experience teaching these courses in all three available delivery modes, making her perspective particularly informed. White was also in the second group of instructors trained in the WAW curriculum and teaching model.
Early inclusion in the training process gave her experiences that were less refined than those currently in place in the department or those printed in the instructors’ guide for the *Writing About Writing: An Introduction to the Conversation* textbook (Wardle & Downs, 2011). Ms. White developed her own blended and web-based versions of FYC courses at the same time as the department developed its new curriculum. Therefore, she was heavily involved in creating support materials for teachers, both for the eventual textbook and for a project funded by a Next Generation Learning Challenge grant, which provided online training to help instructors as they prepared to teach the *WAW* curriculum in an online environment. Ms. White’s perspective was particularly valuable because she taught courses in various modes, had experience adapting those courses to the new curriculum and new delivery modes, and watched other teachers’ experiences as their coordinator. During our interviews, White addressed issues related to teaching FYC in any delivery mode and those related to training future instructors.

I asked Ms. White a set of questions intended to help inform my question design for the instructors I followed during the semester and to help direct my attention to issues facing instructors in *DWR* as they adapted their courses to new formats. The questions I posed to Ms. White are presented in Appendix D. With the thoughts from Ms. White in mind, I conducted hour-long interviews with both case-study instructors twice each during the semester. The first interview aimed to learn how the instructors planned to adapt their courses and their pedagogies. Questions for these interviews also appear in Appendix D.

The second interview, conducted shortly before the end of the semester, investigated how each instructor implemented the plans from our first interview and explored the instructors’ concerns for the rest of the term. To serve as a follow-up conversation from the first round of interviews, the questions for this second session had to be adapted for each of the two instructors. Through the use of these responsive questions, the effects of each instructor’s approach to developing the mixed-mode curriculum became apparent. Distinct lines of questioning allowed for a sense of conversation at the expense of some consistency between the interviews. Throughout my data-collection procedures, I enacted suggestions from Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan (1992): “Techniques such as open-ended interviews and case studies enable researchers to generate descriptions of [composition instruction] from the point of view and in the
language of the [instructors] they are studying” (p. 58). The unedited text used the terms “composition” and “writers”; I take the same approach to examining the field’s pedagogy as they suggested for studying the field’s subject matter.

Mr. Grey’s initial interview included extended discussion about his efforts to make his class “more dynamic” and to engage his students in meaningful discussions both in person and online. I used the follow-up interview as an opportunity to ask his assessment of his success in each of those areas. As the semester progressed, Grey often confided in me that he was frustrated by his inability to meet some of the ambitious personal goals he had set for the semester. His challenge to create a dynamic class did not seem to be going well. However, the responsive questions I asked in our second interview allowed me to see how Grey’s perception shifted to help explain what had happened in his classes and preserve his self-image. Responsive questioning improved my ability to address the question of how various stakeholders’ perspectives create tensions in the activities of composition classes. Mr. Grey’s experiences were rife with tensions, and his response to those scenarios provide insight into the interactions between pedagogy and hybrid course design. Questions I asked Mr. Grey appear in Appendix D.

In his first interview, Mr. Brown expressed interest in getting his students better engaged with their work through the use of new technologies, like a class blog. His goal was “110% effort” from his students, and I made sure to check in to see how much progress he thought he was making toward that goal. Another concern he held related to students’ senses of voice and authority in their discussion posts. Mr. Brown wanted to encourage more genuine interactions in the online spaces; part of this interview focused on those concerns that built directly from his emphasis on the course blog. Because he had decided to transfer a blended-mode modification to his face-to-face course, I was particularly interested in the interactions between his planning and practice for each delivery mode. Several of my questions address planning and the interactions between delivery modes. Specific questions I prepared for Mr. Brown’s second interview appear in Appendix D.
2.5.2 Class Observations

I conducted class observations near both the beginning and the end of the semester, observing at least one class in each delivery mode from each instructor involved in the study, in order to see how instructors implemented their ideas in the face-to-face portions of their courses. These observations allowed me to see how students and instructors integrated technology within the classroom, how they drew from or used online content while in class, and how students interfaced with one another and with their instructor. While observing both instructors’ classes, I looked for instructional (pedagogical or content-based) differences between their face-to-face and mixed-mode courses. I also noted students’ and instructors’ use of technology in class, counting how many students made use of laptops or other portable devices during class. Additionally, these classroom observations were useful for triangulating data collected through interviews. Observations allowed me to see whether the instructors applied technology to their classes as consistently as they suggested and whether students made use of technology as often as they said they did.

To facilitate more detailed analysis later, I made audio recordings of the courses I observed. My goal was to determine the prevalence of in-class technology (including slide projection, web-based tools, or social media) use across both delivery modes, to see whether the online component of a mixed-mode course corresponded to a greater prevalence of technology in the classroom. I wanted to see whether the instructors gave an indication of expecting more or less technology use from their students based on delivery mode, or whether the students enrolled in a specific section seemed more or less inclined to use technology. But because the instructors attempted to make their classes as similar as possible, such a comparison could shed light on whether a connection exists between course delivery mode and students’ comfort with or reliance on technology. These similarities somewhat limited the usefulness of the observations because rather than showing how instructors implement delivery modes differently, they showed how instructors worked to make their courses more consistent.
2.5.3 Assignment Sheet/Syllabus Analysis

I collected assignment sheets for all major papers (four for each of the instructors) as well as course syllabi for all sections taught, in an effort to better understand how the participating instructors aligned their course designs and practices with their goals and expectations as they set out in the pre-semester interviews. Collecting syllabi for all sections allowed me to look for design differences that arose when courses were moved to mixed-mode delivery. By collecting assignment sheets, I gathered information on the details of instructor expectations, to see how the course outcomes were reflected in the text they gave their students. I examined the mentions of technology and modality in the assignments, to see how instructors incorporated either into their plans and how students were expected to accommodate those expectations. I also looked for evidence of how the instructors expected to use technology in each of their courses, with a particular interest in what they asked students to use to complete assignments. This helped answer my first research question, exploring which factors influence the design of a blended FYC course and how the interfaces of blended course design are created and enacted by the participants.

I obtained additional data about the interfaces of blended course design by using assignment sheets to identify teacher expectations for student technology use. I was able to compare those expectations with what students reported during interviews, showing tensions among the perspectives of participants who worked together to compose the classes I studied, thereby addressing the third research question. Students responded to interview questions about technology used in class as well as their perceived level of comfort with technology. Comparisons between instructor interviews and assignment sheets could point to (in)consistencies between the instructors’ intentions and stated expectations for student work. The assignment sheets also illustrated the organizational philosophy each instructor used in his courses, allowing comparisons of overall course planning and design, addressing the first question of what factors influence the design of a blended FYC course.

Basic analysis of these documents followed a coding strategy similar to that used for interview analysis. Grant-Davie (1992) said that “division and classification are part of the process of interpreting
data” (p. 282), and my goals for interpretation initially emphasized classification of assignments much like the courses that implemented them: by mode of activity. I initially expected to classify assignments by the amount of technological integration the instructors desired, thinking assignments in a face-to-face environment might exhibit less reliance on technology on account of their meeting mode. However, that expectation had to be adjusted during the collection phase: Both instructors told me they only had one version of each of their assignment sheets. Identical assignments for both delivery modes precluded the opportunity to compare the courses along the lines of instructor intentions. Assignment and syllabus information, originally expected to differentiate delivery modes, served instead to differentiate the instructors’ approaches to teaching. This disparity between what I expected and what the data revealed became problematic during portfolio evaluations, so I will detail the difficulty in that section, below, leading to an explanation of my project’s redirection.

2.5.4 Student Interviews

I intended to have conversations with multiple students from each delivery mode of each instructor’s courses, to see how students perceived and reacted to each instructor’s approach to course design and implementation. What began as a plan to conduct student focus groups quickly turned into a series of student interviews due to low turnout. Most of the “focus groups” consisted of only one or two students; only one group consisted of five students. Total student turnout counts appear in Table 2.1. For whatever reason, students who participated in the first round of interviews did not return at the end of the semester for the second round. Irene L. Clark (2014), in her 2014 CCCC presentation, discussed the difficulty of ensuring student participation in surveys, suggesting that a $25 gift card is the minimum effective lure for student interest; I offered students only $5 for their time; perhaps those who participated early on did not feel it worth the trouble to return. Regardless, because students only participated in one interview session, I was unable to connect results across interviews. Additionally, questions used in the later interview sessions often repeated those used early in the semester, in an effort to acquaint myself with the new par-
participants. This limited the richness of the information I collected from each participant, but the additional variety contributed to the breadth of perspectives I was able to hear.

Table 2.1: Student Interview Participants by Instructor and Mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Semester Start</th>
<th>Semester End</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Mixed-mode</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Brown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Grey</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first round of interviews were held near the beginning of the semester and investigated students' rationales for choosing their delivery mode, their experiences with online education, and their impression of their instructor's approach to the class. Because Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey (2009) recommended a specific pattern of gradual question development through the course of a focus group, questions for this session progressed through opening, transition, key, and ending questions. These questions appear in Appendix D.

The second round of interviews repeated many of the original questions because students did not participate in both rounds of interviews, and their responses might have been different. However, the second round of questions also addressed issues of effectiveness, questioning whether students believed the course outcomes were met, the assignments were clear, and the delivery mode was effective. The questions added for the second interview sessions also appear in Appendix D. Despite the low turnout for these interviews, enough similarities and trends emerged from the collected data that all interviews appear to be telling a similar story—one that often goes unheard in the classroom.

I transcribed all interviews and coded them with NVivo 10 using “a coding system ... developed for the data in question” (Grant-Davie, 1992, p. 273). By reading each transcript multiple times, I created
a collection of codes (see Appendix E) highlighting themes common among participant responses that emerged within the general structure of the codes following the research questions.

By embedding ad-hoc codes within a framework developed from research questions, I formed a coding system that accommodated both the original research questions and the natural flow of the interview conversations. Thus, by highlighting the topics that surfaced in the participants’ contributions, I allowed for what Kvale (1996) called “ad hoc meaning generation,” which employs a “free interplay of techniques during the analysis” (p. 203). My coding derived primarily from what Johnny Saldaña (2012) called topical or descriptive coding (p. 70–73). Because this study serves to better define various approaches to blended learning implementation, descriptive coding helps address the “What’s going on here?” questions (Saldaña, 2012, p. 70) that are of primary concern in this dissertation. Also, by generating codes based on interview contents, rather than on pre-defined data sets, I was able to set the interviews in conversation with one another, seeing, for instance, how students reacted to assertions their instructors made about course design and organization. These interviews provided rich data with which I can better understand how instructors and students approach FYC courses and different delivery modes.

2.5.5 Portfolio Assessments

4.5 Portfolio Assessment

Since Fall 2009, DWR has used portfolio evaluations (Elbow & Belanoff, 1986; Huot & Williamson, 1997; Reynolds & Rice, 2006; White, 2005; K. B. Yancey & Weiser, 1997) for its program assessments each semester, following the FYC trend that portfolios “have achieved standing as the writing-assessment method of choice” (White, 2005, p. 582). After the conclusion of the Fall 2012 semester, I collected all paper-based portfolios submitted by Mr. Grey’s students and obtained URLs for all electronic portfolios submitted by Mr. Brown’s students, including all sections of the instructors’ ENC 1101 courses. A team of five volunteer instructors, three of whom were GTAs, and all of whom had experience teaching ENC 1101 for DWR, served as raters for the student portfolios. Because the FYC program used for this study already engages in routine program assessment, evaluating student portfolios at the end of the semester was nei-
ther unusual nor particularly disruptive for the instructors, and the actual assessment process was familiar for many of the raters.

Each instructor used the same portfolio format for all of his classes, regardless of delivery mode. Unfortunately, because one instructor’s portfolios were on paper and the other’s were read on a computer and because of significant differences in the instructors’ assignments and portfolio expectations, the raters quickly learned that portfolios in different formats came from different instructors. Additionally, because instructors in this department frequently share ideas regarding assignments and course expectations, some readers were able to determine the identities of the instructors despite the technically anonymized source material. As a result, I can make no claims of impartiality in portfolio assessments, and portfolio readings were not as blind as initially anticipated.

For the paper-based student work, all but three portfolios were included in the assessment; the missing documents were re-collected by students who wanted their work returned before my assessment was complete. The online portfolios were more problematic, with several students restricting access to their portfolios, preventing the assessment team from read the documents. Additionally, other documents had been taken offline or renamed, and one student used the same online space to host the portfolio from his next composition course, eliminating the documents from ENC 1101 we aimed to review. These access restrictions compounded the limitation of my small initial population, preventing the portfolio assessment team from reviewing a statistically significant sample. In other words, data obtained from my portfolio assessments may be informative, but they are neither predictive nor representative.

The evaluation tool used for portfolio assessment was derived from the routine assessment done every semester in DWR. The department’s existing scoring tool, shown in Appendix F, consisted of three pages of content and allowed for rater comments on nearly every measurement, capturing detailed qualitative responses amid the collected scoring data. The tool also accommodates electronic or paper-based portfolios and highlights a reviewer’s holistic impression of the portfolio—after all other data is provided, a reviewer labels the portfolio’s overall grade. The standard A-through-F grading scale is used throughout the document to provide familiarity to raters.
A norming session preceded the actual assessment process, following best practices for portfolio assessment (White, 2005). During the norming session, all participating evaluators reviewed the same portfolio that I selected in advance because it did not exhibit exceptional characteristics—either awful or excellent—in any of the categories we were assessing. This portfolio led to difficult and nuanced discussions of exactly how the raters should evaluate each document, rather than one that would clearly be categorized as a success or failure. Starting with the department’s assessment rubric, I made minor revisions—mostly cosmetic—for readability and economy, producing the rubric used during the norming phase of our first assessment session, shown in Appendix F. The rubric used terminology and course outcomes with which the raters were familiar, so I anticipated finding common ground and score alignment among raters, after a fashion. However, differences were more common than anticipated, and raters found those differences often hinged on the value a rater placed on declarative expressions or procedural demonstrations. Raters could agree on the quality of student performance and students’ ability to express their knowledge, but raters often disagreed on which was more important or which should determine the student’s overall score for a specific course outcome. It became clear that additional specificity on the assessment tool—separating procedural and declarative skills—would reduce disagreements and provide richer data. After the norming session, all remaining portfolios were read by two readers. If reader evaluations differed by more than a single letter grade for declarative or procedural evidence of any course outcome), those readers would review the portfolio and discuss their evaluations until they reached consensus on revised scoring.

Results from the portfolio assessments, discussed further in Chapter 5, supported the “no significant difference” trend noted by Thomas L. Russell (1999). The limited sample of student portfolios reviewed for this study suggested that in-person versus blended models were not a significant factor in predictably affecting student performance. More interesting findings came from the assessment process itself, which showed that distinguishing procedural from declarative knowledge on an assessment tool led to anecdotally greater agreement among raters. Because I did not set out to measure such differences, I do not have specific data to measure the effect. Additional research is needed to better understand the
relationship between measurement-tool specificity and inter-rater reliability when assessing composition portfolios.

2.5.6 Institutional Investigations

During the Spring 2014 semester, I examined the way several universities presented blended learning to their various stakeholders, including students (as part of their registration system) and the public (as part of their informational/media web pages). Ultimately, I hoped to learn how consistently UCF’s comparison and aspirational peer institutions (University of Central Florida Institutional Knowledge Management [UCF IKM], 2008) present or brand their blended-learning initiatives. Institutions build a reputation with blended learning by engaging in active research/discussion on the issue, implementing cutting-edge programs, and ensuring students and instructors hold the same understanding of what the delivery mode entails. To find information on institutional branding for blended-learning courses, I examined the information publicly available regarding their online education initiatives, looking for indications of how they define and approach hybrid courses. This investigation was designed to address many of my research questions from the institutional perspective. When trying to determine what factors influence the design of a blended FYC course, knowledge of institutional policy helps identify the context in which students and instructors are asked to operate. Indeed, as I detail in Chapter 4, institutions participate in the creation and design of blended course design. Examining those institutions’ web presences provides opportunity to critique the way they promote and market their course delivery modes. Additionally, with the question of how the interfaces of blended course design are created and enacted by the participants, this analysis reveals the language-related contexts in which these courses are created—the language used by the institutions to establish a culture of blended learning and to allow or encourage students to enroll in those courses.

Examining the terminology used by institutions directly addresses how various stakeholders define blended writing courses. Institutional websites that discuss blended learning adopt specific vocabulary to label their courses, and the way each institution uses its chosen terms provides material for rhetorical
analysis that illustrates how institutions position their own roles with instruction and technology. But perhaps the two most relevant research questions for this look into institutional language or identity are these: How could various stakeholders interact to compose a hybrid class? How do their perspectives create tensions in the activities of composition classes? The case of institutional registration systems provides an interesting case of asynchronous interaction among all three stakeholder groups I am considering: students, teachers, and institutions. Schools create a system that students use to register for classes instructors teach. These interactions provide opportunities for misunderstanding, and examples of those opportunities are presented in Chapter 4.

2.5.7 Student Surveys

The DWR conducts continuing program assessment employing surveys of all students enrolled in the first-semester FYC course each fall and the second-semester FYC course each spring. Questions for this survey were based off the program’s design following the Writing About Writing approach (Downs & Wardle, 2007) and the explicit, declarative knowledge students were asked to gain. Routine portfolio assessment targeted the procedural knowledge associated with this curriculum; I discuss my implementation of portfolio evaluation for this study in a later section.

At the beginning and end of the semester, I administered surveys designed to measure student perception of their courses and the ENC 1101 curriculum. These surveys were based on a similar tool used by the department for a 2011 study of whether students enrolled in ENC 1101 changed their writing-related skills or knowledge through their experiences in the course. Since this study seeks to determine the effectiveness of both delivery modes within the context of the department’s expectations, starting from the department’s internal measures to determine program effectiveness allows comparison with previously gathered departmental data. Questions in the original department survey can be found in Appendix C. That appendix also includes the questions used in both the semester-start and semester-end surveys, as adapted from the department’s survey tool. The questions used in each survey were kept identical to allow comparisons between the two administrations, to see whether students reported changes in their responses.
Because the survey included questions about perceptions of writing and questions about writing activities, student responses targeted both thoughts and actions related to writing, with a specific emphasis on content central to the ENC 1101 curriculum.

Both instructors made the surveys an expected part of their courses—offering credit or extra credit for completed surveys—and I therefore received high response rates, presented in Table 2.2. The survey data reflect student perceptions about writing and declarative course content. By administering the survey twice, I was able to track the change in student perceptions over the course of the semester, to see changes in student perceptions while enrolled in the course. By comparing results between delivery modes, I hoped to see evidence of a difference in how the two delivery modes could work to influence student perceptions.

Table 2.2: Student Survey Participants by Instructor and Mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Survey</th>
<th></th>
<th>Second Survey</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RESPONSES</td>
<td>RATE</td>
<td>RESPONSES</td>
<td>RATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Brown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Mode</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Grey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Mode</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I performed comparative analyses on collected survey data to determine trends in student responses. In many cases, the data show greater student agreement with the assertions made in the course (such as, “Writing involves collaboration”) and less agreement with preconceptions that run counter to positions common among writing studies scholars (such as, “Rules dictate if writing is good”). Students were asked to provide information about which course section they enrolled in so responses could be tracked by instructor and by delivery mode. The first survey also asked for contact information to recruit student interview participants.
2.6 Limitations

Sullivan and J. E. Porter (1997) discussed the significance of adopting a feminist vantage point when positioning the participants of a study, who they argued “are not fixed or stable or determinant of a rhetorical situation,” instead in a way being constructed by “each individual study that addresses their lives and activities” (“Participants,” para. 2). In this document, I address my participants’ activities in an effort to better understand how they combine to construct and enact writing courses in multiple delivery modes. Here, I attempt to position the participants in “recognition of personal identity” so that readers can view the participants as distinctive contributors, knowing they were selected based on their relation to the study situation and not “chosen for group representation” (“Participants,” para. 2). In short, the instructors who participated were not random representatives of the group being studied; rather, they were the instructors who were involved most directly with the move to online course offerings. Likewise, the students who participated in this study were not random representatives of any group; rather, they were the students who were willing to comment on their participation in their respective course formats. The decision to allow students to self-select necessarily limited my participant pool; indeed, that limitation became prohibitive as I tried to administer focus groups. While relatively few student voices contributed to this project, those students who did had something to say. They were particularly determined to share their experiences.

I must also acknowledge “the critical difference it makes, from a feminist perspective, whether a writer, or a researcher for that matter, is a man or a woman” (Sullivan, 1992, p. 39). The gender exclusivity of this study serves as a significant limitation to the ways in which this study’s results can be interpreted or applied. The researcher and both participating instructors are male. The absence of a female voice in the results is the result not of intention—quite the contrary—but of practicality: No instructors of an underrepresented gender, class, ethnicity, or sexuality taught both course modes the semester this study was conducted. Although Sullivan (1992) said qualitative research asks us how “assumptions about gender, race, and class inform the observations of the researcher and the perceptions of participants in the study”
(p. 3), limitations of the available participants at the research site make these issues nearly impossible to explore. The methods used (and the results obtained) should not be viewed through “composition’s humane disregard for difference under an egalitarian ethic” (Sullivan, 1992, p. 39). To be sure, I actively sought to highlight the “critical difference” of gender, but the study situation provided no such opportunity to do so. In this case, Sullivan stated the problem directly: “considerations of gender might have led the researcher to different results or different conclusions” (p. 42).

While discussing the issues and contexts of this study, I want to address what Paul V. Anderson (1998) called “the ‘local’ ethical questions that are peculiar to specific research designs” (p. 72) and embedded within the rhetorical situation I inhabit. An examination of classroom learning, such as this one, inevitably evaluates the effectiveness of the teachers being studied. First, I wish to acknowledge the simple gifts my case-study teachers have provided to make this dissertation possible. But to ensure I “treat these gifts—and their givers—justly, respectfully, and gratefully,” my position within the rhetorical situation should be made more clear (P. V. Anderson, 1998, p. 83). When compiling data for this project, I served as a GTA for the DWR, a member of the community I have studied. As such, I was a lower-ranking peer of the instructors I studied, which makes findings of efficacy challenging to report. Throughout my result reporting, I have attempted to not only anonymize my descriptions of the instructors involved but moreover to leave unclear which instructor I reference in the times I make statements critical of pedagogical decisions made by the participants. My participating instructors and I agreed that this study provided them an opportunity to critically examine teaching practices, yet as my analysis progressed, I began to see how this examination can too easily lead to comparisons between the participants. To that end, I want to plainly state that my intention is to discuss the methods and approaches that these instructors used in their teaching, not to judge my participants. As I review the characteristics of my participants, I do so while valuing the important contributions they made while working with me.

Other issues served as limitations for this study, most notably the limited number of participants. Changes to department scheduling reduced the available case-study instructors, thereby also reducing the pool of students from which I could gather participants. Additionally, what I intended to be focus groups
became interviews in all but one instance because so few students chose to participate. As a result of these limited numbers, conclusions drawn in this study may not present a complete picture of the range of possible approaches to teaching ENC 1101 in various delivery modes.

Both instructors who participated in this study used considerable effort to align their classes with one another as much as possible. In effect, they deliberately and actively worked to eliminate the situation I was expecting to see: the difference in teacher approaches and student responses to different delivery modes. By actively working to make their classes similar, the differences I expected would surface as a result of delivery mode were instead being counteracted or resisted at every turn. Assignments were identical, material distribution was identical, and class content was virtually identical. Despite my initial concern that studying more teachers would reduce observable pedagogical consistency, I now believe a larger pool of participating instructors would allow more meaningful conclusions about teaching in various modes. Being limited to two examples of how teachers adapt does not provide much opportunity for identifying trends.

I initially set out to use the standard curriculum as a baseline from which adjustments due to delivery mode could be measured. This proved an untenable approach because the instructors explicitly said they didn’t design around the curriculum, and other data I gathered supports that claim. However, each of the instructors has several years’ experience with the curriculum, over which time they have crafted and refined their assignments to help guide students toward the expected outcomes. The instructors worked to preserve their assignments as their courses transitioned from one mode to another; they assumed the curriculum followed as a result. Knowing this, I would have targeted interview questions more specifically toward their assignment design and implementation, asking how their course delivery mode helped or hindered their ability to make their assignments work.

Because I designed the study to determine how instructors used an outcomes-based curriculum to adapt their courses to different delivery modes, my research questions emphasized instructor intentions and assumed the centrality of the curriculum in design decisions. However, the data consistently revealed that instructors used their prior experiences with the curriculum to simplify their design decisions, and
students used their prior experiences with online learning to guide their enrollment decisions. I was not prepared to collect much data about students’ prior experiences, registration practices, and perceptions of instruction, each of which surfaced as significant contributors to the perceived success of a specific delivery mode. Future research could better address differences between delivery modes by assessing instructors’ helpfulness in their student interactions, seeking to confirm student concerns about the benefits of instruction online versus in-person. Similarly, future conversations with students about their processes when completing class assignments may point to the kinds of instruction that prove most beneficial or relevant in different classroom environments.

2.7 Suggestions for Further Research

The situated nature of this study, plus its limited duration, clearly limit the generalizability of the findings; however, that situated nature also makes similar, repeated studies in other contexts a natural suggestion for continued research. By conducting qualitative studies of other instructors, other students, and other institutions, researchers could determine how the theories of interface uncovered in this study apply in other situations. Additionally, limitations noted in Chapter 2 could be addressed with further study. For instance, case studies of faculty from more diverse scholarly backgrounds, with more diverse levels of teaching experience, or even of more diverse demographics could potentially produce different results and add to the nuance of the patterns that emerged from this study’s collected data.

Even repeating this same study at the same research site would be revealing. Different instructors at the same institution would allow for a more complex understanding of the relationships among the instructors, the administration, and the faculty support at UCF. In particular, greater focus on the training and support provided by CDL would provide additional information about how the expectations of instructors are shaped by the resources they receive in their training before creating their blended courses. Similarly, collecting more data from UCF’s comparative peer institutions could build a greater understanding of trends in blended-learning training for faculty in general and for writing scholars in particular. Current data on student- and public-facing websites would benefit if augmented with material from internal
or faculty-facing websites and/or training materials offered at each institution. Though such information goes beyond the FYC focus of this present study, extra data about instructor training would be helpful for understanding how instructors apply their training to creating interfaces with their students.

2.8 Conclusion

This project was designed to investigate the connection between FYC curriculum and course design as instructors extend their courses into online environments. While the data collected repeatedly showed that the curriculum itself has no direct, explicit connection with the ways instructors design their courses, several other significant considerations were uncovered, which led to additional data collection and analysis. Ultimately, my qualitative study included interview data from instructors teaching blended courses for the first time; interviews of those instructors’ students in both face-to-face and blended courses; and website data from the university where these classes were held, as well as those of its comparative peer institutions. In later chapters, I will review those findings in greater detail, reporting on what the data did and did not reveal.

The next chapter establishes the theoretical framework I will use to interpret the data collection I discussed above. In it, I also review the literature relevant to a study of hybrid pedagogy, blended learning, and FYC instruction. By positioning this study within a theoretical framework, I establish this study as a response to a current need in computers and composition and argue for its overall applicability to FYC instruction.
CHAPTER 3: THEORIES OF HYBRIDITY

This dissertation examines blended learning in composition studies, focusing on an aspect of pedagogy that has received little attention in the literature. Due to the diversity inherent in blended education (spanning disciplines, institutions, and age groups) and the diversity inherent in writing studies (spanning media, goals, curricula, and institutional mandates), much of my effort in this chapter serves to introduce, and then narrow my focus within, the composition and education fields. In the pages that follow, I present an overview of research on blended composition courses. To do so, I begin by situating the discussion within a generalized sense of hybridity writ large, exploring how it can serve as lens for examining educational practice. Then I will examine the components of blended education, discussing the benefits, drawbacks, and influences of the modality as commonly reported in the literature. After distinguishing the role of hybridity in education from the standard of blended learning, I will apply the distinction to composition studies, arguing that a hybrid approach to composition instruction has become essential, and that a traditional blended approach may actually work against the assertions of several central conversations in the field.

3.1 Hybridity as a Framework

Negotiations between the physical and the virtual are common in our modern, always-on, digitally enhanced society. Our lives exist in a borderland between embodied existence and networked representation—a borderland sometimes referred to as “augmented reality” (nathanjurgenson, 2011). Major news events get reported on via Twitter, with updates from those involved spreading more rapidly than the filtered and highly produced content of major news networks. The attack on Osama bin Laden (O’Dell, 2011), the Boston Marathon bombing (Cassa, Chunara, Mandl, & Brownstein, 2013), and the LAX TSA attack (Yahoo News, 2013) each had primary reports coming from eyewitnesses on Twitter, rather than journalists. Events on the ground played out on the Internet. Indeed, the Boston community—both the press and law enforcement—turned to Twitter as a “crucial part of [their] toolkit” when attempt-
ing to report on events and find the bombing suspects (Rogers, 2013). The lines between face-to-face and online may be blurring, but when those boundaries are consciously navigated, not simply removed, the strengths of one environment can benefit the other. The events in Boston show hybridity in action, allowing the connections of online activity to inform, enhance, and at times direct the face-to-face activities which then became the subject of future online posts. The two worlds fed off one another. Online reports were enhanced by face-to-face witnesses; face-to-face activities were informed by online data. While either could exist alone, the competent navigation of the two spaces allowed the Boston Globe and Boston Police Department to do their jobs better.

My work sets hybridity as a vantage point from which I can use “relationships with technology to reflect on the human” (Turkle, 1995, p. 24). By examining the hybrid intersections in our culture, our classrooms, and our writing, we can better understand our relation to technology and, ultimately, better understand ourselves. Like our modern lives, hybrid classrooms exist in a borderland, a manufactured space of political tension that Cynthia L. Selfe and Richard J. Selfe (1994) called “linguistic contact zones” (p. 482). Mary Louise M. L. Pratt (1991) defined these zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (p. 34). Hybrid classrooms present a social space where two distinct approaches to course delivery, each complete and viable on its own, clash. Because each of the two elements—online and face-to-face education—is self-sustaining and independent, combining the two is like trying to fit twice as much mass into the same volume. Attending to one necessarily suggests abandoning the other or compressing both. Balance (the goal of blended models) is therefore fleeting or impossible, being an inappropriate goal given the circumstances. Integration (the goal of hybrid models) is challenging and must be constructed deliberately. Hybridity requires conscious attention to negotiating the modalities as required by the course goals.

**Hybridity is a mindset.** It requires that we keep in mind both the goals of a course and the strengths of the components we are combining. Hybridity requires deliberative planning to make rational and beneficial choices about how to implement the combination. **Hybridity is a perspective.** It asks us to view disparate things as inherently related, to find connection and partnership out of use-driven rela-
tions. Hybridity views the middle ground as more valuable, more fertile, more appropriate, than the edges. **Hybridity values negotiation over compromise.** By adopting a perspective of hybridity, we examine options in terms of need, not opportunity. **Hybridity is a challenge.** It calls us to re-examine our practices, question our assumptions, and look for sensible solutions. It is not an easy standard to achieve. Chapter 6 highlights these difficulties by discussing how instructors respond to the challenge of designing a course for a new modality.

As modern life becomes increasingly infused with technology, with the digital, connected world accessible through always-on and always-available mobile devices, we learn to work with both the physical and the virtual simultaneously. The virtual has even started encouraging integration with the real. Natural-language software assistants manage online data and local software applications to present digital layers of information about the world around us and facilitate in-person interactions. We live hybrid lives in what Sherry Turkle (2011) called our modern “life mix ... the mash-up of what you have on-and off-line” (“The New State of the Self,” para. 10). The challenge then becomes to find how best to understand and manage hybridity in teaching composition.

### 3.2 Hybridity in Education

Our students leave the classroom, resuming their daily lives. Before they have even crossed the threshold, they take out their cell phones to send quick updates to friends, catch up on conversations they’ve missed in the hour they’ve spent in class, and see what’s happening among their social circles. They check Facebook to catch the latest updates from the people they’re interested in and to see if their posts have garnered any new interest or comments—quite literally, they look to the service for news on how many times they have been liked since their last visit. Once in their dorms, our students flip on their televisions, perhaps catching up on missed episodes recorded on their DVRs, watching Netflix, or maybe simply keeping them on for background noise. Through all this, text messages come and go, Facebook chats begin and end, and an occasional phone call might come through. Outside our classrooms, our students’ lives have become saturated by digital media, what Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000) called
“hypermediation” (p. 31). Such hypermediated experiences allow students a sense of immediacy—they are immersed in the here-and-now of a potentially large and geographically distributed network of social connections. Yet despite this distribution, new media realism and interactivity provide an expectation of the feeling of “being there”—what Lev Manovich (2001) called “telepresence” (p. 164). Telepresence essentially gives us the ability to be two places at one time, creating a kind of spatial hybridity. It can refer either to being present in a computer-generated environment, such as a game or simulation, or to being present, through computer mediation, in a different real environment. In both cases, the user’s body remains in one physical location while selected senses are connected with the distant/manufactured space. Manufactured spaces can serve a specific function of education: to provide students with opportunities to rehearse and develop their skills. Manufactured spaces used for teleaction (Manovich, 2001, p. 164) are by default hybrid, including both the physical space where the user sits and the virtual space where the user interacts.

Like the virtual spaces discussed by Manovich, classrooms are also manufactured spaces, hybrid environments. Jeffrey R. Young (2002), senior editor for technology coverage with The Chronicle of Higher Education, reported on instructors’ and institutions’ views on blended education, citing numerous potential advantages of the course format. Young (2002) concluded by quoting Walter Cummins, Emeritus Professor of English at Fairleigh Dickinson University: “I think we’re in a transition in trying to redefine the delivery of courses” (p. A33). Despite Cummins’ assertion over a decade ago, the effort to redefine course delivery continues to this day. Scott Warnock (2013) created an annotated bibliography for the Council of Writing Program Administrators (wpa) in which he reviewed the current state of affairs for our understanding of hybrid courses, particularly in composition studies. Warnock (2013) himself admitted to a dearth of literature on hybrid course delivery in composition, which he attributed to the current attention to issues of course content, knowledge transfer, and assessment (pp. 1–2). Discussing delivery mode—an element of how to teach—for composition courses can be challenging since the field has little consensus on what to teach. As Warnock (2013) stated, “there is no foundational, widely-accepted criteria as to what clearly constitutes success in writing courses” (p. 2). In the next section, I will return specifically
to the issue of hybridity in writing; for now, I will keep the focus on hybridity in education much broader in scope than addressing only one field.

Before focusing exclusively on (re)mediated spaces, I should note that the physical classroom itself allows students to assume hybrid roles in their interactions among their peers. Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa Ede have written extensively on the roles involved when composing collaboratively (Ede & Lunsford, 1990; Lunsford & Ede, 1992; Ede & Lunsford, 2001), drawing our attention to the challenges and interactions students face with the collaborative writing process. In “A Single Good Mind: Collaboration, Cooperation, and the Writing Self,” Kathleen Blake Yancey and Michael Spooner (1998) presented a patchworked, arguably hypermediated, look at the effect of collaborative writing on the sense of a writer’s self-identity. The authors worked to build a conversation about the process of creating a document with two minds but a single voice; their solution was a hybrid of the traditional journal article and a postmodern assemblage of commentary. Focusing specifically on the effects of collaborative writing in students, Candace Spigelman (2000) also explored issues of authorship. In Across Property Lines: Textual Ownership in Writing Groups, Spigelman (2000) presented case studies of students working in peer-revision groups, highlighting issues of identity and cooperation. In her study, she found that authors were defensive in peer-revision conferences, possessively holding on to their sense of authorial ownership of the text, claiming that peers did little more than make suggestions. Yet when these same students functioned as peer reviewers for the work of other students, they remarked that they made major changes to both the text and the author’s thinking. In a sense, these students performed hybrid identities within the traditional classroom, navigating between the role of assistant/editor and sole author within the same group and scenario. When considering student interactions, we should bear in mind the roles we are asking our students to play: They may already involve a degree of hybridity.

People write together to construct stories, to process events, and to create meaning from the things they read. In cases when authors create online content in the hopes that it can go viral, the distributed audience gains value and authority. The collective online audience holds the ability to change, reuse, and reshape the published content to suit their needs, creating what Lawrence Lessig (2008) called a remix-
based “hybrid economy” (p. 177). In this economy, technology and information are both ubiquitous and plentiful; ownership is temporary (and often valueless). Traditional education systems emphasize learning for oneself, becoming a solitary author, and writing for a distributed (and disconnected) final reader. When our classes exist in hybrid spaces, the roles our students play become more flexible and less predictable. Modern classrooms that transition into hybrid spaces do so as a reflection of the hybridity of modern daily life; with that modern hybridity has come the “parallel creation ... of a writing public made plural” and a constantly reading public (K. Yancey, 2004, p. 300). This transition is “taking place largely outside of school—and this in an age of universal education” (K. Yancey, 2004, p. 300). Navigating role identification in a traditional classroom is more troublesome when the class itself exists in multiple spaces; the hybrid economy demands that we learn along with our audience, create with that audience, and allow the audience to take ownership of the content to further modify it.

Moves between spaces in a hybrid environment happen more easily and more regularly since the rise of mobile technology. Just as Americans became more mobile in the middle of the twentieth century when the car gained traction as this country’s “love affair with the automobile,” our current love affair with our cell phones has made hybridity an integral part of everyday—or perhaps more accurately, every moment—life. The transition from real to virtual happens more regularly, frequently, and easily than ever. As Sherry Turkle (2011) explained,

> Until recently, one had to sit in front of a computer screen to enter virtual space. This meant that the passage through the looking glass was deliberate and bounded by the time you could spend in front of a computer. Now, with a mobile device as portal, one moves into the virtual with fluidity and on the go. (“The New State of the Self,” para. 10)

This fluidity between physical and virtual has become commonplace outside of our classrooms, but many schools and teachers still forbid students to use their mobile devices during classes, essentially distancing the classroom from day-to-day communication methods. This approach ignores technology as though it is unimportant or perhaps impermanent, or inapplicable to the classroom without considering the ways
ubiquitous technology has woven itself into the fabric of daily life. Later chapters in this dissertation will discuss how this technology can be woven into the fabric of writing instruction, as well.

Richard Lanham (1997) explained that, with modern technologies, we often look through them, oblivious to their existence or their ability to affect our view of the world. He urged us to instead look at our technology in an effort to be aware of technology’s influence on our thinking. Lanham’s (1997) call is similar to Cynthia L. Selfe’s (1999) admonition to pay better attention to the technologies we implement or require in our classes. In effect, she wanted us to look at our technology and the effects that technology has on our cultural assumptions and situations. In his move toward a rhetoric of new media, Collin Gifford Brooke (2009) invoked Lanham’s (1997) at/through dualism and added the preposition from to emphasize the value of considering perspective in our understanding of technology’s influence (p. 140). Brooke (2009) acknowledged that “we have begun to think of our classrooms, whether face-to-face or online, as interfaces” (p. 200). As such, our classrooms become worthy of the kind of scrutiny these authors espoused. I view hybrid classrooms as a form of new media—what Mirca Madianou and Daniel Miller (2013) called “an integrated environment of affordances and propensities” (p. 180)—and assert that we must actively look at the interfaces we use when teaching and learning in these environments.

3.2.1 Claims Made About Blended Learning

Discussions about educational technology frequently emphasize hype, novelty, and excitement over critical reflection and caution. After major announcements of new technologies, bloggers race to discuss how that advancement either can be used in the classroom or will totally reform education. The emphasis placed on new features makes such articles and claims sound like marketing campaigns, as though they were taken directly from a press release for the product ... which is often the case, considering the articles get published the day the product is announced, not after it is available. This causes ed-tech pundits to infuse their writing with excitement and optimism, and the attention is placed on the promise of newness rather than on the experience of application. When seen through this perspective, technology is an
opportunity that needs to be explored, and skepticism plays a marginal role, if any, in the conversation. That conversation needs a balance between the optimism of opportunity and the caution of criticism.

The literature in education includes less-drastic overtones of excitement. In these texts, scholars have emphasized several key benefits of blended courses. Specifically, authors highlight customized learning; scheduling flexibility; resource management; individualized attention; and a slower, more democratic discussion format. These components are often touted as advantages of online courses without direct comparison to the possibilities of face-to-face implementation. Such comparisons avoid “paying critical attention” to the implications, complications, and precedents of technology use (C. L. Selfe, 1999, p. 419). C. L. Selfe (1999) argued that the breathless support of technology adoption perpetuates social inequities and the myth that technology cannot lead to harm. Though not all authors writing in support of blended learning take an uncritical stance, they do often write in response to the availability of new technology rather than evaluate its implementation, focusing on the gadget or program or feature without considering the context of teaching and learning it is meant to support.

This leads to discussions of instructional technology that read more like advertisements for the revolutionary tools than like critical evaluations of teaching implementation and effective learning. Such enthusiasm is certainly not unique to the use of computers; it has been a consistent characteristic of distance-learning discussions since the first correspondence course (for learning shorthand) was advertised in the Boston Gazette in 1728 and the University of London began offering distance-learning degrees in 1858. The advent of film, radio, CD-ROM, and online technologies each brought about another wave of enthusiasm. Modern readers may find familiar strains of optimistic claims about the power of technology in the words of Thomas Edison, writing in 1913:

Books will soon be obsolete in the public schools. ... It is possible to teach every branch of human knowledge with the motion picture. Our school system will be completely changed inside of ten years. (qtd. in Keegan, 1986, p. 183)
Edison’s predictions never became reality, and similar claims made about television and radio have likewise faded into obscurity. Yet authors consistently proclaim the revolutionary potential of online learning. Much like the school system’s ability to resist change brought about by motion pictures, today’s educational approaches show little influence from online technologies beyond isolated cases.

Some of the most enthusiastic reports of the benefits of blended courses come from media reports, which are often fueled by the companies developing new technologies. In the case of blended courses, the newsmakers are those who create or lead distance-learning programs—people who have an interest in being excited by the “potential” of blended courses. When academics discuss blended learning in effusive tones, they may do so to push a particular theoretical framework which they developed to highlight specific elements of blended learning or its related interactions. D. Randy Garrison (2001; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2008; 2010) built a substantial library of publications around his community of inquiry framework, which he said can uncover “the transformative potential” of blended learning in higher education (2004, p. 96). Linda M. Harasim (1990; 1993; 1995; 2000; 2010) touted her “online collaborative learning” framework as a “new paradigm in learning” that “has the potential not only to enhance conventional classroom and distance education but to enable entirely new and better learning options” (2010, p. 81). Such overstated claims are commonplace in both the research literature and in the accommodated texts designed for larger audiences.

Examples of effusive claims about the potential of blended learning range in scope from affecting a single classroom to reforming the whole of education. An edited collection from SLOAN-C included the modest claim that blended learning can “help instructors re-conceptualize the teaching and learning relationship and transform their teaching practices away from a transmission model to a more active learning centered model” (Graham & Robison, 2007, p. 85)—something quite possible without changing a course’s delivery mode. In the same collection, other authors were much more broadly supportive, suggesting a blended approach can “make possible novel and productive instructional methods that may be difficult or impossible to implement in the absence of blending,” arguing that blended learning offers new options for instruction that have not previously been available and that teachers need only tap into the
possibilities to see results (Shea, 2007, p. 43). Similarly, the 2014 *NMC Horizon Report* included claims that blended courses “have the potential to leverage the online skills learners have already developed independent of academia” and that blended learning “has amplified the potential for collaboration because it incorporates outlets that students can access outside of the classroom to meet and exchange ideas about a subject or project” (L. Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2014, p. 10). Another common perspective on educational technology involves comparing delivery modes in quantitative terms appealing to decision-makers. A research brief from *educease* (Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal, 2004) positioned blended learning as having the ability “to increase student learning outcomes, while reducing direct instructional costs by 25 to 50 percent” (p. 4) or “to increase student learning outcomes while lowering attrition rates in comparison with equivalent fully online courses” (p. 5). That same research brief makes an even larger claim about blended learning’s potential “for genuine transformation within the academy” (Dziuban et al., 2004, p. 8). A brochure from the Lexington Institute similarly claimed that “new blended learning instructional models are demonstrating transformative potential in various settings around the country” (Soifer & Kennedy, 2013, p. 1). In short, there is no dearth of glowing support for blended learning in broad-audience academic literature.

When media reports discuss developments in online learning, they commonly adopt a tone that suggests blended courses can do no wrong. Even articles from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* have emphasized the potential of blended learning, suggesting they “hold the promise of expanding, improving, and deepening learning for our students” (Milliron, 2010, para. 1). Academic bloggers have claimed that “a blended learning program can make better use of instructional resources and facilities and increase class availability thus speeding up the pathway to graduation for students” (Morrison, 2013, para. 3). *The Huffington Post* has taken a consistently enthusiastic approach to blended learning, as well, with various authors saying that it “takes better advantage of the face-to-face time that [teachers] have” (Uloop, 2013, para. 5), “recognizes the power of technology to transform teaching and learning with the imperative of facilitating meaningful student-teacher relationships” (Bernstein, 2013, para. 4), or will lead to “quality affordable high schools with tuition of less than $10 per month” (Ark, 2011, para. 8).
Courtney Gilmartin (2011) published a report on *UCF Today*, an online institutional marketing and outreach publication, reporting on the school’s efforts to “develop a national model for blended learning.” The sources for her report included only the assistant vice president for the University of Central Florida (UCF)’s the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) and the Vice Provost for Information Technologies and Resources—two people whose employment rests on the success of online and blended learning environments. Gilmartin’s (2011) review of the support for blended courses had much to say about the priorities of these supportive viewpoints:

The benefits of blended learning are many. For universities, blended courses encourage collaboration and compensate for limited classroom space. For faculty, they can be a method to infuse new opportunities for engagement into established courses. For students, the courses offer convenience combined with instructional interaction. (para. 6)

Consider first the order in which she listed the benefits. Institutional concerns came first, with resource-management issues appearing after only the classes’ ability to “encourage collaboration,” which hardly sounds distinctive. Institutions appear to benefit primarily from the seats left vacant by the move to online delivery. Gilmartin (2011) next discussed benefits for faculty, including only the ability to add on to existing courses—notably, not to re-think, re-imagine, or re-create them. Moving a course to blended delivery, according to this view, is an exercise in attaching appendages, grafting new components onto an existing system. Most telling, however, is that students were the last beneficiaries mentioned. Their interests are the last considered, and even still, their convenience was given more prominence than their ability to interact with instructors or to learn.

The study reported in this dissertation was conducted at UCF, the nation’s second-largest public university. With nearly 60,000 enrolled students, administrators become understandably eager to make as much classroom space available as they can; efficient resource management becomes imperative. To meet this need, classroom space can be allocated to more courses if each course meets less frequently. Establishing “reduced seat time” classes allows the university to schedule multiple classes during the same time
slot in a given week. For the administrative needs of the campus, this scheduling solution works effectively and simply. From the student perspective during registration, the promise of reduced seat time can distract students into prioritizing time in class over their desire for instructor contact time; this will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Priorities that emphasize convenience for the institution over benefits for the student can be found outside marketing media as well. In an oft-cited *EDUCAUSE Review* article, Carol A. Twigg (2003) presented five models of online courses, which she called *supplemental, replacement, emporium, fully online,* and *buffet.* These simple distinctions let Twigg’s (2003) article serve as an effective summary of current thinking about various forms of online education. Twigg (2003) placed the course models along what she refers to as a “continuum” between fully face-to-face and fully online presentations of course content (p. 30). According to these models, mixed-mode courses are seen as traditional classes with “supplemental,” or more likely “replacement,” content from a derivative online version of the course. Writing from an institutional, administrative perspective, Twigg (2003) asserted that online courses developed using any of the five models require “the collective commitment of all faculty teaching the course” and an appropriate balance with “the capabilities provided by information technology” that must first be understood by the institution calling for the course’s creation (p. 38). Such a balance is inherent in—and essential to—the creation of blended courses, and it often must be re-assessed and re-negotiated as the course forms, develops, and progresses. Continuing the emphasis on resource balancing, Twigg (2003) bluntly referred to each of these course types as “a set of products and services that can be continuously worked on and improved” (p. 38). In other words, this administrative perspective commodifies the online course and applies a transactional model to the educational process. If a class is nothing more than a set of products and services we offer to our students for a set cost, where is the value inherent in the classroom experience? These models suggested that a class can—and indeed should—exist apart from the instructor. Twigg (2003) encouraged institutions to “standardize faculty practice” by developing “greater consistency in academic practice that builds on accumulated knowledge about improving quality and reducing costs” (p. 38). Perhaps such goals appeal to administrators, but they raise significant questions about the instructional priorities inherent in
our course design. If we integrate online components into our courses, should we do so out of an interest in cost reduction, or should we focus more on student learning?

3.2.2 Problems with Blended Courses

Teaching online requires a complex set of skills that are quite different from those used in a face-to-face classroom. While appropriate training for effective online instruction may be lacking in many fields, the situation with online education is often much worse. Online education training is typically treated as an add-on, a one-time supplement to existing training in teaching strategies and methods, often provided uniformly to faculty across diverse disciplines, as though the same kind of online instruction can apply equally well to all fields. Additional detail about institutional approaches to teacher training can be found in Chapter 4. The one-size-fits-all approach to training relates to the prevalence of the learning-management system (LMS) as an institutional solution to the demands of online learning. Having a standardized framework for online courses helps make training more predictable, support more reliable, and courses more consistent. But it also makes instructors less creative and instruction less dynamic. To expand online courses beyond the basic structures provided by the LMS (modules, quizzes, discussion boards, assignment uploads) requires significantly more adaptability and resources. As Michael Derntl and Renate Motschnig-Pitrik (2005) explained, “many instructors lack time, didactical know-how, technical expertise, incentives, and flexibility to use e-learning platforms for more than convenient repositories of slides” (p. 113). Because the use of online technologies can vary from one field to another, the relevant didactical know-how and technical expertise may require a more elaborate or customized training program than a campus-wide initiative to prepare faculty for online courses.

To teach a blended course, instructors need to leverage teaching methods for both environments and prepare materials that transfer from one to the other. Even a plan that initially sounds like it reduces preparation time for instructors—transferring existing face-to-face materials to the online space—requires a significant investment, especially when instructors realize how different the interactions among class participants can be, how much overhead is involved in simple collaborations, and how in-class lectures
and class discussions may not transfer well to the online format. These difficulties lead many instructors to, as Derntl and Motschnig-Pitrik (2005) suggested, use the online component of their course for little more than a repository of slides, effectively eliminating instruction and using the online environment as a resource, not a space in which the course operates.

Just as instructors must consider both their course content and the pedagogy driving student interaction with that content, the students have to distinguish course processes from course content. Distinguishing the two should be relatively straightforward, but the instructor’s focus can at times make the online procedures eclipse the content that should be at the center of the students’ focus. Derntl and Motschnig-Pitrik (2005) said that, for e-learning research and practice, the “focus is currently on e-content issues, while the process and setting of learning are too often neglected, despite findings from various learning theories” (p. 113). By removing students from the situation of learning, we remove the realness of the learning itself (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Dreyfus, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The only way online learning can effectively bring students into the community of practice (Johns, 1997a) or give them experience with legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is to have students join in the online elements of work in the field. Students who are asked to learn through online modules, discussions, quizzes, and assignment submissions will end up learning how to become an online order follower, discussion poster, quiz taker, and assignment submitter—undoubtedly a far cry from the content these students are expected to learn.

Even critical thinking skills, a common go-to learning objective for virtually any course, can be difficult to develop in students through online courses. Several authors tout the ability of discussion boards to generate meaningful student interactions, but as William A. Sugar and Curtis Jay Bonk (1998) explained, “there is no guarantee that peer collaboration and interaction will trigger critical reflection on one’s ideas or enhance interpersonal understanding” (p. 133). An online discussion board can easily lead to little more than the chatter heard after (or, frustratingly, sometimes during) classes. To be sure, well-crafted discussion questions can increase the likelihood that students will engage in meaningful thinking while crafting their responses, but with students often complaining that discussion-board posts feel like busy work, and
with Markus Weimer, Iryna Gurevych, and Max Mühlhäuser (2007) having proposed automated processes for systematically scoring the quality of discussion posts, this staple of online education is a less-effective learning experience than the volume of literature surrounding it suggests.

I have suggested above that training instructors for effective blended instruction requires training that differs from discipline to discipline. In a similar fashion, existing research on blended learning “resembles rather a phase of experimentation” because they are “often lacking cues on how to generalize the employed scenarios to enable transfer to other domains and contexts” (Derntl & Motschnig-Pitrik, 2005, p. 112). This current study risks perpetuating that problem by virtue of being situated within a specific context of one institution’s writing program, but I do intend to emphasize the applicability of hybridity as an approach to composition education more generally.

W. R. Klemm (2005) encouraged the use of discussion boards to engage students. He followed how instructors used discussion boards in their classes and later concluded that “threaded-topic discussion boards support only a trivial form of collaborative learning,” mostly encouraging “the expression of mere opinions” because “it is difficult for a group to do anything” on discussion boards (p. 181). In other words, discussions may create the impression that students are working together, but the work being accomplished may in actuality more closely resemble chatter than productivity. Such observations call into question claims that discussion boards create the kinds of social learning experiences that have been at the heart of education theory since Albert Bandura (1971), Lev Vygotsky (1978) and John Dewey (1997) emphasized social and collaborative learning. Social learning requires that students get a sense of community from their course (Levine, 2007; Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Swan, Shea, Fredericksen, Pickett, Pelz, & Maher, 2001). This sense of community is rather affective in nature, emphasizing a student’s perception that the class is “in it together,” with each member working toward the same goal. Alfred P. Rovai (2002b; 2002a; 2004) has long argued for using asynchronous discussion boards to develop this sense of camaraderie in distance education. However, despite the apparent widespread enthusiasm for discussions in online classes, Susan May (1993) advocated restraint, saying that “increased learner interaction is not an inherently or self-evidently positive educational goal or strategy. In essence, more interaction is not necessarily better”
David Cormier (2008) supported this view by arguing that “there is an assumption in [social-learning] theories that the learning process should happen organically but that knowledge, or what is to be learned, is still something independently verifiable with a definitive beginning and end goal determined by curriculum.” According to him, learning should be guided more by community-building than by a pre-planned curriculum.

The sense of community sought by many distance-learning researchers differs significantly from Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger’s (1991) communities of practice, in which the learner-apprentice works to adopt the mindset and working habits of the community, using a teacher-master as a guide or model. The communities of practice model emphasizes functional groups and legitimate peripheral participation while learning to become a member of those groups. Such participatory, apprenticed learning structures are rarely discussed in the literature about online discussion boards; that literature generally emphasizes group identity developed solely by learners given assignments, detached from the practice of master community members. This difference exists for a significant reason: No functional community of practice for which schools prepare students relies on an online discussion board as its primary form of discourse. In essence, asking students to use online discussion boards forces them to use an arbitrary, artificial means of communication that has little relevance outside the online course environment. Studies that compare the characteristics of online discussions and in-person conversations incorrectly assume that both environments are equally valuable, or that there is a one-to-one correlation between what happens in one environment and what happens in the other.

3.2.3 Hybrid Course Activities

Most of the literature referenced thus far has come from education studies, with emphasis placed on the design of an overall course, with the goal of a smoothly executed experience. Composition studies has not explicitly attended to the discussion of delivery mode, in large part because the field does not yet agree on what should be taught in its most popular and ubiquitous courses (Petraglia, 1995; Fulkerson, 2005). That said, composition researchers have had conversations about hybrid assignments and activities,
under the guise of *multimodality*. A brief review here of the multimodal discussion in composition will begin to connect the composition and education fields in terms of course delivery. In a hybrid classroom, the flexibility of moving class activities from one space to another extends as well to assignment design. Projects constituting multimodal student work can be delivered, processed, reviewed, submitted, graded, and returned either online or in person, and the modality of one element in this process does not necessarily determine the modality of any other element; each step in the process of composing, completing, and assessing an assignment operates independently of the others in terms of modality. Such variability can become overwhelming for instructors to manage and students to grasp, and establishing a degree of predictability can help students navigate a hybrid course with greater confidence, as I will show in Chapter 5. Familiarity with the assignment types used in a class can create one type of beneficial predictability (consistent due dates being a related beneficial practice). In composition courses that exist solely online, assignments within an LMS often include discussion posts; discussions intended for public consumption often exist in blogs or wikis. In both cases, the assignment design is intended to emphasize and encourage interaction with the text after it is published, whether that interaction comes from the authors’ peers or external readers:

A teacher who sets up a classroom discussion online is not giving or sharing power with students, but rather is performing an action that sets up a range of possibilities for action by students that is in some ways different from the range of possibilities set up by a face-to-face classroom discussion; and the actions that students take in electronic conversations—and the actions that teachers take in the resulting conversation—constitute relations of power. (Cooper, 1999, p. 146)

The accessible, connected nature of such assignments employs Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) *hypermediation*. Assignments that rely on blogs and discussion posts are hypermediated “because they are hypertextual: they connect users in a web of interrelated textual elements and compel users to acknowledge the medium as they communicate” (p. 257–258). Significantly, such assignments allow students to con-
nect their content with the ideas of others, situating themselves in a distributed, networked conversation. These networks expand both the reach and the risk involved in student writing, enhancing accountability and, in many cases, quality. When students know their writing can be read by other people beyond just their instructor, the stakes for effective writing are higher, and students are more likely to take the assignment seriously, as it represents real-world learning (Spinuzzi, 1996). Morgan Read-Davidson (2013) provided an example of an open-access hybrid assignment in which he asked students to write blog posts that could be read by the general public. He said his students were determined to ensure that their work was as good as possible before it was made available online; he noticed a definite improvement in their attention to detail, clarity, and effectiveness. However, the biggest difference Read-Davidson noticed in his students related not to their attention, but to the attention provided by external readers—the networked conversation into which they are writing could be extended. One student, concerned with the 2012–2013 NHL lockout, posted an open letter to Gary Bettman, commissioner of the NHL (Kirchick, 2012). When that post was extensively quoted in an article on Yahoo! Sports, Kirchick “made it big” and saw the effects of publishing work into an interconnected environment of shared texts (Wyshynski, 2012).

The opportunity for virality in student-created connected content appeals to the networked identities our students bring with them to the classroom, stimulating what N. Katherine Hayles (2007) called the “hyper attention” of today’s youth (p. 187). According to her, that stimulation works best “when it is associated with feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness” (Hayles, 2007, p. 195). Public, accessible content like blog posts provide access to those feelings by granting students the authority to compose for a larger audience—an audience they are somewhat accustomed to considering, but only outside the traditional work of schooling, thanks to their various public online personae. Students already understand the visibility offered by online publication, as evidenced by efforts to accumulate “likes” and retweets. Students are likely far less accustomed to designing text for an unfamiliar (yet still real) audience of potential critics in addition to the assessing review of the instructor. With an audience outside the classroom, students no longer have the protection of anonymity and intimacy to shield them from the consequences of their words. Hubert L. Dreyfus (2009) argued that such risk is essential for skill development:
Only in a classroom where the teacher and learner sense that they are taking risks in each other’s presence, and each can count on criticism from the other, are the conditions present that promote acquiring proficiency, and only by acting in the real world can one acquire expertise. (p. 90)

Admittedly, Dreyfus (2009) was arguing for a kind of risk-taking that can happen in the safety of a classroom. But if the risks are taken on a public stage, within the contexts of a class assignment, the writing takes on an element of hybridity, existing as both a rehearsal within the safety of a classroom and a public risk-taking—exactly the kind of “acting in the real world” that Dreyfus (2009) called for.

Responding to that call for authenticity in school assignments, Susan M. Katz and Lee Odell (2012) edited a special issue of Technical Communication Quarterly designed to address multimodal composition. Contributors to that issue explicitly identified the ways in which student writing in online environments made the act of writing more genuine and purposeful and allowed students greater authority over their work (Ball, 2012; Barton & Heiman, 2012; Manion & R. J. Selfe, 2012). In addition to student authority, each author also highlighted student and teacher presence. The authors discussed the work their students did for a wider audience and emphasized the formative interactions they had with their students, providing guidance as students progressed through the composition processes. The authors also examined ways multimodal compositions can help assess student performance through demonstration of applied skills, rather than through arbitrary responses to writing prompts. These projects, through wikis, blogs, and online journal publications, allowed students to explore the writing process and its consequences in real and meaningful ways. By using hybrid assignments, these educators were able to balance the skill-development demands of the course with the learning needs of their students. Hybrid assignments provided a means for students to engage their online personae in mediated activities with in-person presence to support their efforts. As Dreyfus (2009) argued, “without involvement and presence we cannot acquire skills” (p. 7). Hybrid assignments provide both the presence students need for skill development and the authenticity they need for the practice and risk that eventually lead to mastery.
Yet despite the benefits of authentic hybrid assignments, these activities are frequently subject to additional scrutiny on account of their distinctiveness. Cheryl E. Ball (2012) quoted Virginia Kuhn, DJ Johnson, and Dave Lopez (2010), who commented on the challenges faced by computer-based, rather than print-based, assignments. They found that “digital work is subject to the charge of lack of academic rigor” (Kuhn, Johnson, & Lopez, 2010, qtd. in Ball, 2012, p. 65). Ball (2012) called on educators to critically examine their own pedagogies in terms of the rigor expected in their digital assignments. Despite attention given to the theory of digital work (Johnson-Eilola, 2005; Spinuzzi, 2008), the pedagogies of its implementation have not been thoroughly explored, substantiated, or legitimized. The excitement of new technologies and new possibilities can distract us from the work we—or our students—need to do, and only by emphasizing rigor in new assignment designs can we ensure classwork in digital spaces meets the needs of our academic programs. We need to create theories of hybrid course activities that go beyond example assignments for specific use cases (C. L. Selfe, 2007) if we are to allow digital work to stand up to the challenges posed by Ball (2012) and Kuhn et al. (2010).

3.3 Hybridity in Composition

Despite the extensive conversation about multimodal assignments, which I argue are hybrid in nature, composition studies has remarkably limited literature about hybridity as an approach to classroom teaching. Two authors stand out, but they lack a supporting ecosystem of continued discussion. Beth Hewett (2000; 2001; 2004; 2006; 2010; 2010) and Scott Warnock (2009; 2013) are responsible for the bulk of online writing instruction (OWI) publications. Hewett’s work, particularly Preparing Educators for Online Writing Instruction: Principles and Processes (B. L. Hewett & Ehmann, 2004), focused on preparing departments and training instructors to support online one-on-one writing conferences. Warnock directed much of his work, especially Teaching Writing Online: How and Why (2009), toward helping individual instructors prepare and navigate their own OWI courses. Patricia Webb Boyd (2008) studied
student perception of online and blended first-year composition (FYC) courses.¹ She found that we seem to be in a “transitional point” where students “wanted more direct instruction but they did not want traditional lecture,” concluding that “it is crucial for us to carefully analyze how our uses of those technologies limit/enhance students’ engagement with the course material, with us, and, perhaps most importantly, with their peers” (Boyd, 2008, p. 241). Yet despite her clear call for increased attention, hybrid writing courses continue to garner little attention from the field. In this section, I review the characteristics of learning in writing classes that relate to issues of delivery mode and connect rather disparate perspectives into a single conversation about hybridity in composition.

3.3.1 Dynamics of the Writing Classroom

Patricia Webb Peterson (2001) noted that “most of the books and articles written about distance learning come from fields other than composition” (p. 360). Not only does this put composition studies at a disadvantage by allowing development of distance education without consideration for the needs of our field, it also hints at the differences in perspectives between the two areas of study. Peterson (2001) noted discussions in education and computer programming; the literature from nursing education is equally rich in distance learning discussions. Notably missing from Peterson’s (2001) brief comment on the scarcity of composition comments on distance learning is commentary on the differences among the disciplines’ approaches to these conversations. In education, emphasis is placed on showing the online space as essentially a new frontier for education research to continue with the same work it has done in face-to-face settings. Within the education field, there is a benefit to showing that online learning is equally effective to face-to-face learning—such similarities would validate education research in the new environment. Similarly, if education theorists create frameworks for understanding how learning works online, those theorists move closer to asserting ownership over the environment.

¹Boyd (2008) used the term hybrid in her article, but she was defining them as “courses that met one day in a face-to-face traditional or mediated classroom and one day in an online, Blackboard-supported environment” (p. 225), rather than in terms of using the modality appropriate for a given activity or outcome.
Peterson (2001) also observed that “the primary interface of a distance-learning course is the written word” (p. 359), an observation common throughout early literature in OWI. Many theorists argued that, since online instruction moved every course into the textual realm, our role in helping students increase their skills with the written word should become more valuable and central in students’ lives. Yet composition instructors continue to struggle with their reactions to these new opportunities in online learning. We debate how composition instruction differs from writing instruction and what we can do to help students navigate the changing field of communication. We include distribution methods, issues of accessibility, and interactivity as concepts worth considering. Additionally, in the years that have passed since Peterson’s (2001) article, media enhancements in online courses have become far more common, even expected. For instance, the current success of the Khan Academy (with its expanding collection of recorded lectures as content) and the attention given to so-called flipped classrooms (with content delivery by video instead of textbook) speak to the influence of new media in the distribution of educational materials.

Most communications in distance-learning courses may be the written word, but changes in the delivery mode lead some to question classroom roles. Steven Crow (1999) argued that online courses make insignificant changes to the traditional roles held by teachers and students. Indeed, he suggested that “nothing inherent in an online institution demands radical redefinition of those traditional roles” (p. B6, qtd. in Peterson 361). Crow’s (1999) most dangerous assumption was to say that, so long as an instructor is still in control, the course will remain unchanged. In that way, he made a faulty assumption of analogous teaching environments. When a person qualifies for a driver’s license, that person does not automatically qualify to be a boat pilot. Although both machines are in the hands of a single navigator, the means of reaching a destination with the two transportation modes differ so significantly that competence with one method has no bearing on legally recognized competence with the other. Arguing, as Crow (1999) did, that the learning environment doesn’t change because the teacher still controls it assumes universal competence and unquestioned teacher control. Peterson (2001) agreed:
Online education appears to be very similar to traditional, face-to-face teaching except students and professors meet in virtual spaces instead of in the same physical space. Students and content experts...are still very much in contact with one another, and the quality of the course is not lessened. (p. 361, emphasis added)

The last assertion of that text points to the greatest unresolved debate in the distance-learning literature. Hundreds of studies have attempted to convincingly determine whether online learning can be better than traditional, in-person instruction; many of these studies conclude that there is “no significant difference” between the delivery modes (Russell, 1999). Yet such studies continue to be produced, perhaps because different disciplines or settings warrant different conditions for online learning to work successfully. Though they are familiar components of course design and implementation, these three elements are “made strange by the new electronic environments” in which online writing courses exist (Peterson, 2001, p. 360).

Warning educators to take responsibility for instruction, Crow (1999) reminded us that “technology alone cannot cause changes; it is the teacher’s use of technology and the designers’ construction of the technology that shapes its impact” (p. 362). If design and use are at the heart of technology’s impact, we should then focus on design and use, rather than the technology itself, when exploring how online learning works. By critically analyzing design and use, we would, as Crow (1999) hoped, “transcend the seemingly two-sided approach (pro or con)” to the issue of OWI (p. 362). In effect, this is a call for descriptive research to help us better understand why we teach writing online, to discover what it is that we do when we teach writing online, and to take the opportunity to “question our usual standards of teaching” (Peterson, 2001, p. 362). Rather than attempt to measure the effects of one form or the other, we first need to know what those forms involve, offer, and afford to students and instructors. This project has been designed to explore those issues, to better understand different forms of writing courses. A better understanding of the OWI would address a concern highlighted by Lorraine Sherry (1995): “Even if a teacher is well-practiced and at ease with the equipment in the classroom, she still requires training in order to integrate new teaching strategies with the technology” (p. 9). We must work to understand what teaching strategies integrate
best with available technologies and the kinds of training instructors need to effectively manage both class
types.

### 3.3.2 Writing Classrooms as Learning Communities

Instructors need to embrace a “willingness to experiment” if they are to adapt their teaching styles
to be successful in new hybrid environments and to help students become members of learning commu-
nities within those hybrid environments (Sommers & Saltz, 2004, p. 134). Instructors face an additional
challenge in adapting to hybridity: They have no immediately apparent communities of which they can
work to become members. In traditional course design, the instructor defines the terms by which all class
participants must adhere. Given the pervasive desire for academic autonomy in higher education, what
serves as the instructor’s community of practice (Johns, 1997b)? When an instructor is new to a modal-
ity, what group exists to help the instructor gain membership and competence? If such an organization
does not exist, then the instructor must create the course along with the students, as discussed further in
Chapter 5. This co-creation of a course requires a degree of negotiated, shared control that many instruc-
tors have never experienced and may well openly resist or reject—Chapter 6 explores this resistance in
greater detail. Online modalities often involve greater isolation than their face-to-face counterparts, and
the instructors might face greater challenges when attempting to connect with students. Unless their in-
stitutions provide community-building infrastructures for instructors teaching online, those instructors
not only fail to benefit from collaboration, but they also lack the sense of accomplishment and acceptance
that come with a new community membership.

Lave and Wenger (1991) differentiated the roles of the newcomer, or apprentice, and the old-
timer, or master, in what they called *communities of practice*. They emphasized the role of participa-
tion in learning new skills, arguing that genuine learning happens as an effort to become a member of
a given community. Their texts emphasized the efforts of students gaining membership in the communi-
ties guarded/protected/gate-kept by instructors. Similarly, Sommers and Saltz (2004) discussed FYC stu-
dents as novices hoping to gain skills and understanding, thereby moving on from apprenticeship through
their experiences. For both Lave and Wenger (1991) and Sommers and Saltz (2004), teachers play the traditional role of content expert that a student hopes to become, rather than a thought-provoking peer a student should work to engage. Though their work challenges our understanding of the value of apprenticeship, it misses an opportunity to challenge the assumed authority of the instructor. When an instructor faces a new situation, loses the automatic authority assumed behind a podium, and works to adapt a course to an unfamiliar modality, the instructor becomes a novice in the modality while the students remain novices in the subject matter. What Sommers and Saltz (2004) said about students applies directly to instructors teaching in new environments:

Being a novice, though, doesn’t mean waiting meekly for the future, nor does it mean breaking with the past. Rather, it involves adopting an open attitude to instruction and feedback, a willingness to experiment, ... and a faith that, with practice and guidance, the new expectations of college can be met. (p. 134)

Marcy Bauman (1997) and Lave and Wenger (1991) focused on the development of communities of practice, either those developing in the classroom or those into which we hope our students will grow. Yet developing a sense of community online can pose a significant challenge for educators (Rovai, 2002b). These challenges reflect the composition-studies emphasis on teaching about discourse communities (Harris, 1989; Johns, 1997a; J. Porter, 1986; Swales, 1990). In this regard, online teaching strategies align with the content of writing instruction. If writing instructors want to teach students about communities using language to achieve goals, our online courses must themselves create communities in which students can effectively and meaningfully interact to achieve their goals. Bauman (1997) called for more investigation into “the sort of social climate online that will contribute to student success” because “we tend to forget that [those] factors are important” (p. 2, qtd. in Peterson, p. 364). I may not be able to argue that community formation is more important than teaching course content, but with OWI, it actually is the course content.
Thus far, I have neglected to directly discuss the issue of physical space, quite a significant consideration for traditional classroom teachers planning classes and institutional planners allocating resources. Bolter and Grusin (2000) presented shopping malls and movie theaters as places that exist on account of their hypermediated component, rather than simply on account of their physical characteristics or contents. It is the connection to the other—the places, ideas, brands, and other media—that focus in these spaces and give them their significance. They act as gathering places, but primarily of media, not people. The people arrive primarily because the media collection has gathered first. In the traditional classroom, the situation is quite the reverse. There, students and a teacher gather in a space designated for their physical meeting. Media, if used, are brought into the classroom by the instructor and critiqued by the class, essentially conforming to “fair-use” copyright exemptions: Teachers present small specimens of media for analysis. Thus students are exposed to media, but not immersed in it, as they are in the brand-owned environments of movies and malls.

To be sure, I am not advocating that we commercialize the classroom or bombard students with marketing and media messages at the intensity they experience outside our classroom spaces. But I do mean to highlight the difference: student lives are hypermediated; traditional classrooms are virtually unmediated. A modern, strategic approach to pedagogy (Stommel, 2012) demands hybridity: we must, as Perkins and Salomon (1989) argued, provide a situated context for learning both the domain-specific knowledge of the applied writing process and the heuristics that facilitate the implementation of that knowledge. Hybrid pedagogy approaches education as an opportunity to connect. By drawing on students’ hybrid identities and allowing students to work on assignments that involve both physical and digitized components within their mediated spaces, we engage the whole student with the whole activity rather than accepting only the part of the student we see in the room. Ultimately, the strategies of the hybrid classroom belong in the traditional one as well. Hybrid teaching makes demands on educators, forcing them to develop or adapt new skills for (re)mediated classrooms. As Pete Rorabaugh (2013) argued, we should be “willing
to drag those skills back into the classroom for the benefit of our students” and bring hybridity into the traditional classroom as well. The forms of hybridity discussed here are not exclusive to one course delivery mode or another. Indeed, such distinctions enforce a rigid view of learning that cannot accommodate the flexibility of hypermediated activities. Rather than think of hybridity as the alternative to traditional classes, we must instead think of hybridity as the alternative to disconnected learning.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature in various fields to establish the boundaries and tenor of the current conversations around blended learning. I have shown how those conversations differ in significant ways, and that those differences are revealed through the rhetorical choices made within each field. This project connects the conversations in education, in rhetoric and composition, and in computers and writing, with interface theory, multimodality, and hybridity serving as connecting threads among them. As a result, the three results chapters that follow present data gathered for this study in light of those concepts. Those chapters each work to create an understanding of how hybridity addresses many of the current challenges facing FYC instructors and writing scholars.

Each of the subsequent chapters focuses on a different perspective for my findings; I will start with a broad look at how institutions directly influence perceptions of blended courses through their registration, online, and training interfaces. By looking at the role of institutions, I begin making my argument for the necessity of intentional hybridity in blended environments, enacted through the various interfaces inherent in the classroom.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS FROM INSTITUTIONS

In a blended course, students are asked to balance the traditional, directed-attention experience of an in-class environment with a more open and self-directed online environment that requires them to determine how to allocate their limited attention. Adjusting to those time-management demands can prove challenging for students, as discussed in Chapter 5. Few K–12 blended-learning models exist, and those that do generally use fully online courses for content with in-person tutoring for assistance. The public-education system in America has been built around compulsory attendance, a concept rather challenging to apply to online environments that often allow students to participate from anywhere, on any device, at any time, and perhaps even on any schedule. Students can divide their attention into smaller segments than a traditional schedule (based on roughly hour-long classes) easily supports. Richard Lanham (2012) highlighted this need in his CCC presentation, in which he argued that the overwhelming volume of information available in modern society has made attention the most valuable commodity of our day. Yet we do not train students in the effective management of their attention. Traditional education does not allow for flexible attention, expecting through regular bell schedules that all subjects on all days will receive the same duration of attention. As a result, students do not gain experience managing and negotiating variable demands on their attention. Moving from such directed environments into situations where time is more open to flexible management—such as online courses, directed independent study, or dissertation research, for example—presents students with attention-management challenges in addition to the increased difficulty of the material they are studying. Students often learn to make the necessary adjustments to the flexibility of their attention only after registering for an online or blended course, and in the case of a blended course, students often have no experience with that format until starting college.

As noted by Mr. Grey in Chapter 6, 48 of the 50 students enrolled in his blended Composition I (ENC 1101) courses did not understand what the university’s “mixed mode” course modality was when signing up for when they enrolled. How does this happen? What do institutions do to inform students about the available course delivery modes, and what resources do students have to help them
understand and prepare for the expectations of course delivery? What kinds of support do institutions provide for instructors before they teach blended courses, to help ensure the smooth execution of classes in non-traditional delivery modes? What training requirements are mandated before instructors are assigned a new modality? In this chapter, I will discuss findings from interviews with various stakeholders at the University of Central Florida (UCF) and reviews of the public websites and registration systems of UCF’s fourteen comparative peer institutions (UCF IKM, 2008). The included information will illustrate how UCF institutionally positions blended learning and explore variations in how comparable institutions work with blended learning on their campuses. These comparisons offer perspectives from which we can re-evaluate policies and information systems to alleviate challenges identified in subsequent chapters from student and instructor interviews.

This chapter is divided into three main sections corresponding to a student’s experience with a blended course. I will discuss the consistency of information presented about blended courses, the discoverability of delivery mode in course-registration systems, and the training support given to instructors as they prepare for and teach blended courses. Throughout this discussion, I will show how technology serves as the backbone and significant determining factor in each of these situations, rather than a tool used to support activities that would otherwise be human-centric. I argue that paying greater attention to the interfaces among both the people involved in blended courses and the technologies they use provides the first step to creating a hybrid environment that, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, employs various technologies appropriately in a class’s varying situations.

I should note that the discussion below of institutional systems strays from an exclusive focus on composition courses that I have otherwise maintained throughout this document. I broaden the focus here in response to the situation: Institutions tend to adopt one approach to blended learning, rather than developing an approach specifically for one content area. By examining various aspects of blended learning from a broad institutional level, I will show the context surrounding composition courses, drawing attention to the circumstances that bring students and instructors together in various modalities. The
details provided below can help inform overall institutional approaches to systems design that can benefit not merely composition but any subject taught in various modalities.

4.1 Consistency

Blended courses present an environment that, by definition, involves the interaction of students and technology. Despite the growing prominence of fully online courses, blended environments remain uncommon in primary and secondary education, leading to a degree of novelty for students new to higher education. Without earlier experience with blended courses, students develop their understanding of the format based on material presented by their institutions. The institution’s messages, through marketing, training, and orientation materials, can define student preconceptions of blended learning. Schools teach students about classroom environments, learning styles, and the integration of online technologies with traditional education before students ever enter a blended course. As a result, institutions have a responsibility to their students to set appropriate expectations for various delivery modes. But because no consensus yet exists about what constitutes a blended class or how one should best be designed, each school creates its own approach to course delivery and establishes its own marketing image to set student expectations for how these courses work. By looking at how a variety of schools present their blended course deliveries to students, it is easy to see how these messages can lead to student confusion and exacerbate the novelty problem involved in the transition to a new institution. Consistency in an institution’s message is necessary to ensure student understanding of that institution’s delivery-mode expectations.

Establishing a clear precedent and a uniform approach to blended courses requires consistent marketing messages that prevent confusion and facilitate conversation about blended-learning issues. To demonstrate factors that contribute to that conversation, whether clear or confusing, I conducted a review of school websites for UCF and each of its fourteen comparative peer institutions (UCF IKM, 2008). I looked for general commentary on or discussion about blended learning at each campus to see what terms are used in those discussions and how prominent blended learning is in the school’s self-image. I then explored each school’s course registration system to see how those systems present course offerings in the
available delivery modes. My review uncovered remarkable diversity across institutions, which I detail in Table 4.1. I also found significant inconsistency in the terminology used by individual institutions. Several schools use one term to discuss blended learning concepts and another to identify such courses when students enroll, which could easily lead to confusion when students register. (As I detail in Chapter 6, Mr. Grey identified just such confusion from the overwhelming majority of his students, who enrolled in his class before they knew what they signed up for.) Inconsistent terminology was seen in the websites from seven of the 15 schools included in my review:

- UCF
- Florida Atlantic University (FAU)
- the University of North Carolina—Charlotte (UNC Charlotte)
- Kent State University (KSU)
- the University of Akron (UA)
- the University of South Florida (USF)
- Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

Table 4.1 provides specific details regarding the terms used in various scenarios for each school. Perhaps the terminology difference reflects an effort to be more explicit in registration systems, ensuring students know what to expect in their courses, and keeping general discussions more accessible. For instance, content on Florida International University (FIU)’s website refers to hybrid courses when discussing the course type, but the FIU registration system refers to the “Mode of Instruction” for such courses as “Half in Person, Half Online”—a much more specific and precise label that makes obvious how the course in question differs from a traditional class, yet one that becomes unwieldy in conversations about the modality. At the other extreme, in cases that seem particularly unhelpful for clearly establishing expectations, several of these registration systems employ one term when students search for courses and a different term when returning the results of that search. The most jarring of these is the system in place at USF, where students must select “Distance Learning” in their search parameters to find blended courses, but the returned results list such classes as “Workshop’ model” courses.
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<td>hybrid</td>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
<td>“Workshop” Model</td>
<td>Course Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Commonwealth University</td>
<td>blended</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Central Florida</td>
<td>blended</td>
<td>Mode of Instruction</td>
<td>mixed-mode/reduced seat time</td>
<td>mixed-mode/reduced seat time</td>
<td>Field &amp; Note in Class Detail Screen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Perhaps the most potentially confusing scenario is the registration process at USF. There, the only option on the search form is for students to select whether they are searching for distance learning. By contrast, that school’s writing program offers three different delivery modes for its ENC 1101 courses: regular (with no modality name attached), online, and workshop. In search results, regular ENC 1101 courses display a note that students must bring a laptop to class, whereas listings for the workshop model make no mention of required technology, despite this model incorporating significant online content. In defense of the approach USF takes to displaying its ENC 1101 options in the registration system, all courses delivered as workshops display an extensive title with easy access to further clarification: “Composition I ‘Workshop’ Model / To view a description click here”—the link points to a thorough, descriptive page on the school’s writing program website (University of South Florida, 2013). That website’s sidebar provides clear labels for pages about other delivery options. Despite using unfamiliar terminology (“must bring laptop,” “online,” and “workshop” from the department; “distance learning” from the registration screen; “traditional” or “hybrid” elsewhere on the USF site), students are given clear guidance for making informed decisions about the kind of course they choose.

By contrast, the University of Houston (U of H) uses the term hybrid to discuss blended courses throughout its website, gives students the option to select hybrid as an Instructional Mode when searching for courses, and shows “Hybrid” in the Instruction Mode column in search results. This consistency allows faculty and students to use the same set of terminology to discuss course modalities no matter the context of those discussions. If the university advertises hybrid courses on its website or encourages instructors to get trained in hybrid teaching methods, and students register for hybrid courses, it is clear that the institution, the instructors, and the students are all working with the same material. By using the same term every time delivery mode is relevant, U of H allows students to develop an understanding of the instruction mode and confidently navigate the registration system, knowing what to expect from their classes. Of note, U of H’s registration system displays the most thorough results of any of UCF’s comparative peers, including clearly labeled instruction modes, links to course syllabi for most courses, and even links to instructors’
curriculum vitae when available. The use of consistent terminology across the university’s systems is one aspect of a coordinated effort to deliberately and clearly keep students informed.

The situation at UCF falls between the extremes of USF and U of H. The school has cultivated a reputation for its work on blended learning, yet students do not know the school’s blended offerings by that term. It is as though two distinct conversations coexist on the campus, despite the conversations being about the same thing. At UCF, the Center for Distributed Learning (CDL) is responsible for blended courses across campus, from providing instructional designers and initial instructor training for creating new blended classes to providing support of existing courses, including ongoing development for instructors. Additionally, CDL leadership has worked extensively to position UCF’s program as a flagship program with a national reputation for excellence. Tom Cavanaugh, UCF’s Assistant Vice President of Distributed Learning, and Kelvin Thompson, UCF’s Associate Director for the Center for Distributed Learning, consistently publish scholarship outlining their institution’s plans and providing updates on developments. They also frequently present at national conferences like Sloan-C on blended learning models and their implementation at UCF, establishing a model by virtue of being the nation’s second-largest campus by student population. Efforts to establish UCF as a leader in blended learning led to the creation of its Blended Learning Toolkit, “a free, open resource for educational institutions interested in developing or expanding their blended learning initiatives” (University of Central Florida Center for Distributed Learning [UCF CDL], 2011a). This toolkit has gained significant recognition as a resource for institutions looking to build or improve their blended-learning offerings.

Despite the prominence of UCF’s CDL and national leadership in blended learning, the university does not use the word blended anywhere in its registration system. Students and instructors on that campus refer to blended-delivery classes as mixed-mode or mediated courses, echoing the term used in the registration system and official documents as one of the university’s course delivery modalities (UCF CDL, 2011b). This difference in terminology creates an interesting separation on campus: initiatives to institutionally improve and support blended learning seem to speak a language different from that used by the people who take and teach those same courses. Discussions on campus of ways to improve blended
learning may not resonate with students, and they may not connect those conversations with the correct course types during registration. The meaning of “mixed-mode/reduced seat time” may not be clear when students search for classes because those terms are not used in general campus communication.

Two schools, the University of Texas—Arlington (UTA) and San Diego State University (SDSU), provide interesting examples that reflect the ambiguous terminology used in the majority of literature on course modalities: Both of these schools present information about modality consistently, but they use the terms hybrid and blended completely interchangeably. For instance, SDSU’s Office of the Registrar provides exam-schedule information for “students taking online/distance education classes, and/or hybrid/blended classes” (SDSU Enrollment Services, 2014). An article from UTA’s publicity magazine prominently quoted George Siemens, who explained how UTA is “taking a blended or hybrid approach to online education” (University Communications, 2014). And at both these schools, students select “hybrid/blended” when searching for those courses in the registration system—see Table 4.1 for details. The interchangeability of terms eliminates the differentiation that could exist between the terms or the courses that reflect one set of values over the other. By conflating those terms, an institution risks limiting its course-remediation efforts to focus on standardization and integration (blending) rather than a purposeful use of available methods and tools to suit the specific needs of each class and situation. Distinguishing the terms hybrid and blended can help institutions draw attention to the characteristics of hybrid courses that set them apart from the more common blended model.

Terminology distinctions also affect staff responsible for new-student orientation, as they introduce students to the campus, its classes, and the registration system all students use. These orientations must also introduce students to the differences between high-school registration experiences and those at the new institution. Of particular note, students new to college need to learn about credit hours and course modalities so students understand what they are registering for. I interviewed Stephen O’Connell, the Director of First Year Advising and Exploration at UCF, to learn how the Office of First Year Advising and Exploration (FYAE) addresses course modalities in orientation and initial registration, providing an additional kind of data to triangulate results from students and instructors. According to O’Connell,
students are given the opportunity to enroll during the second day of freshman orientation, after overview sessions are presented to students grouped according to their majors. In these sessions, students are given basic information about courses, scheduling, and other information. He said that students are told what mixed-mode courses are and that they are generally advised to avoid mixed-mode or online courses their first semester, on the grounds that most students are not sufficiently academically prepared for success in a collegiate online or blended environment. The FYAE office recommends using the first year to adapt to campus life and college courses, and they try to guide students through initial registration. However, O’Connell indicated that many students change their registrations after orientation (typically between midnight and 3:00 a.m.), making it difficult for their staff to provide effective advice or validate student enrollment choices. Their advice applies to the course selections made initially but no longer applies once students make changes.

Students face a significant learning curve when attempting to register for college courses for the first time, something FYAE regularly sees evidence of. O’Connell provided examples of confusion students commonly experience during registration. He said students occasionally think that a course listed as MWF (meeting on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) means they can choose from among those three days which they will attend. “They don’t understand the credit hour,” he explained. Some students register for consecutive courses, separated by only ten minutes, that meet on different campuses, separated by dozens of miles, without realizing the infeasibility of such an arrangement. Others register for an online course and wonder how its meeting time can remain “TBA” through the first day of classes (see Figure 4.1), not realizing that is how the registration system reports times for courses that have no on-campus component. O’Connell said that students attend mostly to the date, time, and instructor name when choosing their classes. From his experience, “the perfect schedule for an 18-year-old is Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 10 to 2.” He sees most student effort working toward that gold standard. Student interview responses detailed in Chapter 5 confirm his suggestion; students said they care most about the time, then about the instructor. Beyond the default student concerns, the FYAE staff identified several potential trouble spots for registration, and they pay particular attention to course modalities. When students initially enroll in a mixed-
mode or online course, FYAE sends those students an email asking whether the student feels prepared for the online environment and directing the student to an online self-check readiness survey offered by CDL. However, this follow-up is not provided to students who switch their enrollments after their initial orientation appointment. O’Connell expressed a desire for a systematic solution, putting students’ schedules on administrative hold after completing their orientation session. From my conversation with O’Connell, it seems the FYAE office attempts to help students make informed decisions, but the unpredictability of student actions after their orientation makes targeted follow-up difficult.

Figure 4.1: “TBA” Meeting times for web-based courses. Note that nothing in this listing indicates the course is web-based.

Changes to the interface between the registration system and its student users could alleviate some of O’Connell’s concerns. For instance, the confirmation email about online courses generated by FYAE could instead be an automated process performed by the registration system, thereby expanding its applicability beyond orientation. That way, any student enrolling in a non-traditional course would be notified that their selection warrants attention. Students at UCF do receive a brief confirmation screen when they select their courses, but those screens simply list the selected courses and do not highlight critical information like campus and modality to make those topics stand out from within the substantial amounts of data provided (such as section number, instructor name, and other details). O’Connell suggested that a confirmation screen grouping courses by modality and campus would alleviate much of the confusion he sees in students as they register for classes. In essence, he wanted the system interface to foreground the course-selection information students need most. This conversation reveals that user-testing of a registration system should include stakeholders other than the end-user, such as those who advise the end users
and help them learn to use the system. At UCF, the FYAE office could offer valuable insights for improving the functionality of the registration system. Greater involvement of more stakeholders could help build a more robust and effective system.

As I illustrate in Chapter 5, student involvement in the creation of an in-class interface contributes to that interface’s success. In much the same way, those affected by an institution’s registration interface—namely, instructors and advisors—perceive the interface as less useful the less they are involved in creating it. Yet UCF made national headlines in August 2012 by sanctioning a student who created a website to offer registering students a “waitlist” tool to automatically check for available seats in previously filled classes (Chen, 2012; Cushing, 2012). The student, Tim Arnold, developed the site to extend the functionality of the UCF system and resolve a frustration common among students. The school’s response was punitive, citing abuse of network services and increased system load. In 2013, UCF released its own waitlist feature as an addition to the registration system itself (University of Central Florida Registrar’s Office, n.d.), raising speculation among students that the idea had been taken from Arnold’s creation and dissent over the punishment Arnold had received—punishment for apparently creating a tool prematurely. These actions spotlight the disconnect between the administration of the UCF registration system and the involvement of its users. The resulting tensions alienated the student-users and, from the students’ perspective, delayed the availability of a useful feature. C. L. Selfe and R. J. Selfe (1994) argued that “humanist scholars and researchers...who are familiar with language and learning theory” should be involved in “the design of primary interfaces,” adding valuable perspectives beyond those from computer scientists (p. 498). Asking stakeholders—students, advisors, and faculty—to work as co-creators of the interface could have enhanced the site’s functionality and improved the working relationship between the system and its various users.

4.2 Discoverability Through Constraints: The Institutional Interface

In addition to including useful tools that benefit various involved stakeholders, the institutional interface of a registration system and its features needs to be discoverable. As suggested in the section above, many of the challenges students face with courses can be addressed as problems with design. When
students choose the courses they wish to take for a given term, they interface with their schools through an institutionally designed system to help them locate and select their desired classes. The interface through which students interact with this system strongly determines how successful students will be at achieving their goals. In this section, I will use Donald Norman’s (2002) concept of design constraints to examine the registration systems introduced above and identify the ways the design-constraint framework could help improve those systems. According to Norman (2002), a thing that is designed to be used by people has its use constrained in four ways: physically, semantically, culturally, and logically (p. 84). Examining registration systems in light of these four constraints will reveal ways these systems can be improved to help students achieve their intended goals—to sign up for the classes they want in the formats they expect. I argue that effective registration-system interface design should manage the physical, semantic, cultural, and logical constraints inherent in the registration process to ensure students’ expectations align with the institution’s offerings. The system interfaces used to get students into their classes can create the first interaction students have with the idea of blended courses. Difficulties with this interface may set the stage for future interface challenges, as I discuss in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.2.1 Physical

The physical characteristics of a web interface may be an unusual consideration, but the ubiquity of such interfaces makes it easier for us to look through them rather than at them (Bolter & Grusin, 2000; Lanham, 1995; C. L. Selfe & R. J. Selfe, 1994). An examination of these characteristics shows that using a web interface for course registration relies on a set of assumptions that users are expected to employ. Teachers’ designs of course interfaces, further discussed in Chapter 6, also exhibit these challenges. Norman (2002) discussed using physical constraints of a design to direct actions because “with the proper use of physical constraints there should be only a limited number of possible actions” or that “desired actions can be made obvious, usually by being especially salient” (p. 84). For a registration system, beneficial physical constraints should help direct user actions to complete tasks as expected. In other words, students visiting a web-based registration system should find familiar interface elements (such as disclosure widgets,
drop-down selectors, and submission buttons) that direct their actions through a process of discovery and selection. In addition, these controls should, like their systems, be discoverable. The interactive tools on a website “are made more effective and useful if they are easy to see and interpret” because “the set of actions is restricted before anything has been done” (Norman, 2002, p. 84). In other words, students should be limited to performing only the actions appropriate to their current task at each point in the process.

The physical constraints of course registration are generally addressed by whatever system the university purchased for database management and are rarely developed by the institution itself. The consistent interfaces across examples in Appendix G shows that only a few providers are used by UCF’s comparative peer institutions. Knowing how to use one system might help make other such systems seem familiar and simpler to navigate (Norman, 2002). However, because students at an institution use only one such system, they must rely on common interface elements to direct student actions. The universality of web-based user-interface elements means that students already know how to click certain buttons to submit forms, scroll through long lists of data, and narrow searches using various selection tools. In a sense, the devices students use on these pages are familiar, but the organizational method each institution chooses to use determines how effective those tools can be. In such cases, semantic constraints determine the success or failure of a specific interface.

4.2.2 Semantic

According to Norman (2002), “semantic constraints rely upon the meaning of the situation”—rather than the interface design itself—“to control the set of possible actions” (p. 85). In these cases, a shared understanding between the interface designer and its users determines whether the interface works appropriately. If the designer and the users share a common understanding of a situation—if they use the same terminology, for instance—the elements of the interface can seem more natural and sensible, creating what usability studies refers to as user-centered design (R. R. Johnson, 1998, p. 30). According to Norman (2002), the semantic constraints of a design “rely upon [stakeholders’] knowledge of the situation and of the world. Such knowledge can be a powerful and important clue” to how to use the system (p. 85). For
As discussed above, FYAE attempts to enculturate new students into the campus norms, creating a shared knowledge. However, these efforts are limited, most notably due to time constraints. This sort of time constraint is a common theme across those I interviewed for this study. Students use time as the major determining factor for registration and see time (especially deadlines) as particularly troublesome in a blended environment. Instructors struggle to find enough time to prepare online materials or cover material during in-person courses. Time serves as a significant influence on each of the interfaces of blended classes, yet it seems only to be a limitation. Additional sensitivity to how students and instructors perceive the time demands of a blended course could help institutions provide accommodations and support for all participants, smoothing tensions common with the modality.

The terminology discussion from the first section of this chapter becomes particularly relevant here. Familiar words help guide users through familiar choices and lead to expected results. Because UCF’s discussion of blended learning across its own website and its myriad faculty publications refer to the modality as “blended,” the familiarity brought about by that repeated use could generate semantic resonance for students if it appeared on the registration site. However, because the school uses the relatively unfamiliar term “mixed-mode,” the semantic dissonance fails to aid site usability. The new term creates semantic dissonance that does not necessarily trigger recognition until after a student has taken a mixed-mode course. The institutions listed in Table 4.1 that use a variety of terms for blended courses risk this sort of semantic dissonance. Institutions should work to create shared “knowledge of the situation and of the world” to ensure that their systems are familiar to students, relying on semantic resonance to help guide students efficiently through their options.

4.2.3 Cultural

The existence of multiple options can itself become a limiting constraint in the design of an institution’s registration system. Norman (2002) cautioned that some of the constraints of a design “rely upon
accepted cultural conventions” and may not even “affect the physical or semantic operation” of the system (p. 85). C. L. Selfe and R. J. Selfe (1994) highlighted these cultural conventions, pointing out the “preponderance of white people and icons of middle- and upper-class white culture and professional, office-oriented computer use” throughout the standard interface of a computer operating system. The norms of a culture may be expected within an interface used in that culture; a disparity between the system and its surrounding culture may create confusion for users. For example, the existence of choice, a common cultural convention in a capitalist society, can be problematic if present in too great a quantity or jarring if unexpectedly absent (Iyengar, 2010). A middle ground, with enough choice to suggest autonomy but enough guidance to suggest support, makes for a more comfortable decision-making process.

Students are accustomed to having choices in the registration process. They get to choose their courses (though notably not the days and times of those courses) in high school. The flexibility inherent in college-level scheduling, with varying days, times, instructors, and modalities, can be overwhelming. Students may get lost among the options if not given sufficient support to inform their choices. Indeed, Stephen O’Connell, UCF’s Director of FYAE, said that most incoming students have trouble making decisions without “having someone tell them what to do.” However, he also observed that students resist pre-set schedules, finding them inflexible. He said that students “aren’t in a hurry” to complete their required courses, especially if their classes are paid for by scholarships or state-funded awards like Florida’s Bright Futures program. Scheduling systems need to mitigate the extremes of too much or too little choice by providing guidance to help students find appropriate courses. No registration system in the fourteen schools I reviewed provided any sort of suggestions to help narrow down the options available; any such assistance is limited to human intervention, through advising offices for instance, rather than being built into the system itself. Students could filter and sort the displayed results, but they were given no insights into how best to search for results in the first place. As Oulasvirta, Hukkinen, and Schwartz (2009) explained, “providing more options…will lead to poorer choice and degrade satisfaction” (p. 516). The abundance of choice becomes an unhelpful design characteristic rather than a beneficial cultural constraint.
4.2.4 Logical

In the absence of clear cultural constraints, an interface can instead provide logical constraints, employing a “relationship between the spatial or functional layout of components and the things that they affect or are affected by” (Norman, 2002, p. 86). Such relationships are “natural mappings” that show how various elements of the design interact (Norman, 2002, p. 86). C. L. Selfe and R. J. Selfe (1994) pointed out that heavy reliance on what they call “logocentric privilege” can become “essentially limiting or exclusive” because establishing logic and reason “as foundational ways of knowing” can exclude other ways, “such as association, intuition, or bricolage” (p. 491). School registration systems stand to impose a limiting or exclusive logocentric privilege on their data by presenting data only one way. A lack of logic is equally troublesome. In registration system interfaces like USF’s, where the terms students search for do not match the results returned, a lack of logical constraint can make a system’s interface far more complicated to interpret and employ effectively. Similarly, the prominence or significance of a student concern should be logically reflected in the results a system displays. A review of the registration results displays in Appendix G shows that registration information rarely foregrounds the information students most want to see or the information that most significantly affects the nature of a course. The significance of modality is not generally reflected in registration systems. One notable exception is U of H (Figure 4.2), where modality is a prominent field in a separate column of the results table, easy to both locate and parse. If modality is important to a school or important to how a student chooses a class, then it should be given appropriate prominence in the results. Intentional use of clear logical constraints helps U of H provide students with useful information in a format that is easy to process.
A survey of training required of instructors at UCF’s peer institutions before they teach blended courses reveals a widespread and significant lack of enforced professional development at these institutions, an absence of support for improving instruction that could affect instructors’ effectiveness in blended environments. Among UCF and its 14 peer institutions, only three schools—FIU, UCF, and the University of Delaware (UD)—offer a training course designed to teach instructors how to work with blended courses.

These courses (as well as many of the instructional-technology support departments that do not offer such classes) aim to teach “best practices in blended learning,” as though a consistent, universally applicable standard can apply in all cases for all courses in all disciplines and with all pedagogies. Janine DeBaise (2014), an instructor at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Writing Program, feared that, under the guise of best practices, “faculty design pedagogy around the worst-case scenario and then apply that pedagogy to every student,” allowing little variation and flexibility to meet individual needs. The same concerns should apply to course design, and the best-practices approach should defer instead to context-appropriate course designs.
Several institutions’ design teams prominently assert their desire to meet one-on-one with instructors to customize a course, but such sessions are at the instructor’s request, rather than required before the class is taught, thereby virtually guaranteeing the opportunity for a collaborative session will instead be viewed as an unnecessary inconvenience or forgotten altogether. Instead, institutions should develop content-relevant training to help instructors navigate online technologies that are appropriate for their field. Expecting one training course to adequately prepare instructors from various disciplines for the diverse needs of online courses and students suggests a consistency of implementation that is inappropriate. Online-instruction techniques that work well in the humanities are likely to be inappropriate or irrelevant in the sciences. By creating discipline- or department-specific training, institutions could help instructors design courses that use technology appropriately for the specific needs of their classes.

At their core, blended courses require negotiation: They involve a balance between in-person and online, between digital and physical, between traditional and novel. Because instructors implement these balances in myriad ways, the previous experiences students have with education provide little referent to aid their navigation of blended courses. Instructors and institutions should recognize the variability inherent in blended course delivery and work to establish a common conception of the modality among all participants, helping to overcome potential barriers of semantic constraints. By establishing consistent semantic protocols across an institution, incoming students could learn one set of behaviors and use it to guide their expectations throughout the institution—from registration to participation to completion. Instructors tasked with teaching blended courses could use those same protocols to build a consistent institutional perspective on blended courses and better understand how the expectations they set for their students compare with those from others at the same institution.

This dissertation opened with a review of terminology, highlighting the differences among terms which are often considered synonymous. Indeed, as in the cases of UCF, FAU, UNC Charlotte, KSU, UA, USF, and VCU, the terms used in institutional discussions of blended learning sometimes differ from the terms students are expected to employ when choosing their courses, creating the potential for confusion and a separation where one need not exist. And in the cases of UTA and SDSU, while the terms used remain
constant across their various discussions and applications, these schools explicitly equate the terms blended and hybrid, without distinguishing the characteristics of the two approaches, missing an opportunity to differentiate among various approaches to the modality and thereby craft these courses consistently across the campus.

4.4 Conclusion

Though an analysis of course-registration systems and instructor training requirements may seem far removed from the inner workings of a first-year composition (FYC) course, these systems and requirements provide the institutional support for teaching and learning within blended courses. They also establish expectations for the design and completion of online courses for a variety of stakeholders, both internal and external. Institutional systems and the choices made regarding their design can determine how a campus views blended learning and, therefore, how those courses are enacted. Other chapters focusing on students and instructors reveal that these participants routinely felt ill-prepared for the blended environments they found themselves in. The systems and expectations discussed in this chapter suggest a connection between the institutional structures outside the classroom and the course-modality familiarity of participants in that class. To successfully construct a beneficial hybrid learning environment, institutional systems of registration and training need to be designed with a functional goal in mind: A consistent message about blended learning, discoverable interfaces with effective constraints, and adequate instructor training can each support the negotiated composition of a dynamic hybrid FYC course.

Institutions need to consider the particular circumstances facing first-year students as they attempt to enter higher education. Overlooking their circumstances risks creating a “technological underclass” of students who do not have access to the interfaces of the university because they do not understand them (Pillar, 1992, p. 218). As C. L. Selfe and R. J. Selfe (1994) pointed out, students relegated to this underclass are “least likely to gain skills” in school that “will serve them well in a world increasingly dependent on technology” (p. 484). And like the “monocultural” views valued by computer interfaces, institutions create systems that can privilege one view or pedagogical approach over another (C. L. Selfe & R. J. Selfe,
1994, p. 486). This is most clearly seen when a school adopts a new learning-management system (LMS): Entire courses must be re-worked to conform to the constraints of the new system, and the only ways courses can legitimately improve are defined in advance by the software developers—if the LMS does not contain a given feature, it cannot be implemented. Institutions must understand the ways of knowing that they privilege and redesign their systems or training mechanisms to ensure all students have similar understanding of, and access to, their systems. In doing so, they establish a common ground from which students and instructors can build a shared system of expectations. In the next chapter, I explore how students’ expectations of blended learning can be shaped and how they directly influence the perception students have of their FYC courses.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS FROM STUDENTS

To frame the results I gathered by interviewing and surveying students, this chapter begins with a discussion of the concept of interfaces. After briefly reviewing literature on the topic, I will apply interface theory to my view of hybrid course design, showing how successful negotiation of students’ interfaces in class requires hybrid approaches to perceiving and creating classes and their assignments. From there, I will review the effect modality has on how students view their interface with the institution, how they view their interface with the writing about writing (waw) curriculum, and how they view their interface with their instructors. Throughout this chapter, I make an argument for the importance of interfaces as critical focal points for developing and evaluating quality instruction. Additionally, I view the classroom environment as the result of a distributed process of co-creation involving both the instructor and the students, rather than a top-down approach where the instructor leads and the students follow. With such a distributed process, the interfaces among the participants become the development site for various course characteristics. This distribution also causes classes to be decentered, losing their identity as self-contained, themselves distributed to operate in multiple places and at various, unpredictable times. By conceiving of classes as hybrid environments, rather than rule-driven spaces, we create responsive, adaptive spaces for exploration and inquiry. Learning in these classes happens as a fluid, organic result of student activity, rather than some predictable march toward specific learning goals.

The issue of stability in a writing classroom, particularly a hybrid one, presents specific challenges of rhetoric and perspective. Collin G. Brooke (2009) argued that the future of rhetoric “requires us to come to terms with interfaces and to recast our understanding of texts in such a way that sees them as particularly stable interfaces” (p. 198). By using familiar terms, he made his point with deceptive subtlety. Brooke (2009) wanted us to view texts, whether alphabetic or media-rich, as stable interfaces, not stable content. He considered texts to be lenses which shape our understanding of the material that lies behind them, where the texts serve as stable interfaces between the dynamic author and the audience. By contrast—of perspective, not of position—Manovich (2001) viewed old media as stable and new media as variable:
Old media involved a human creator who manually assembled textual, visual and/or audio elements into a particular composition or a sequence. This sequence was stored in some material, its order determined once and for all. Numerous copies could be run off from the master, and, in perfect correspondence with the the logic of an industrial society, they were all identical. New media, in contrast, is characterized by variability. Instead of identical copies a new media object typically gives rise to many different versions. (p. 36)

Expressing a concern over the marginalized position of technological conversations within the larger rhetoric and composition field, Brooke (2009) warned that

our tendency has been to treat discursive technologies as if they were simply another specialty among many in our discipline, the province of a handful of experts. ... This attitude...has left us underprepared for the shift from page to screen; technology is transdisciplinary, cutting across the full range of activities we engage in as professionals. ... The longer we wait to realize this, the harder we will have to struggle for respect and relevance as experts in writing. (p. 5)

New media, or multimodal, texts have problematized the field’s identity, including our understanding of the terms *writing* and *composition* (Goggin, 1995; Johnson-Eilola, 1997; Shipka, 2011; K. Yancey, 2004). Similarly, a multimodal approach to course design necessitates a new analytical position for understanding how we teach.

Instructors create the interface of their courses, whether online or in person, by balancing the demands of their institutions, the needs of their students, and the constraints of their technology. Instructors building their own courses determine the ways in which students will encounter course materials and often the ways in which students will create, manipulate, and submit work. Below, I use interface theory to discuss how students experience their courses, through interfaces with their instructors, their technologies, and their course content. Such a position creates a significant issue related to terminology: Human-computer interface theorists prefer the term “user” when discussing the person for whom an inter-
face is designed. However, referring to students as users creates certain limitations in perception. Johanna Drucker (2011) clarified the nature of the issue:

If we base our theory of interface on the “user experience” approach, it would be reductively mechanistic, based on a concept of interface as an environment to maximize efficient accomplishment of tasks—whether these are instrumental, analytic, or research oriented—by individuals who are imagined as autonomous agents whose behaviors can be constrained in a mechanical feedback loop. (p. 12)

Viewing classes through the lens of user experience subjugates students (and, incidentally, instructors) to the system, which is seen as ultimately central in the equation. Drucker’s (2011) “feedback loop” can be seen in the increasing integration of technology into education through a commingling of terminology. Authors in education prefer the term “learner”—rather than “user”—when discussing the person for whom a course is designed, despite the shared tendency of educational and systems theorists to seek maximally efficient task achievement. When introducing systems theory as a theoretical basis of educational research, Hays (2006) described a learner as a system that

receives inputs (information to be learned), transforms and stores that information (using a variety of central processes), and produces some output (e.g., demonstrated knowledge or skill). Instruction can be characterized as various interactions with the learner during each process phase. (p. 56)

Indeed, the processing/machine imagery is so pervasive in educational literature that graphical representations of learners often resemble computational diagrams, complete with digital-age terms like “input” and “output” which treat learners like machines, rather than humans. (See Figure 5.1 for an example of one such model.) To reflect the variability of multiple objects involved in an intricate and dynamic system, we should not view individual students as processors of input. We should instead consider the situation in which they find themselves—the ways that students perceive their courses, not the ways students process
data to produce output. By examining student perception of the various interactions that constitute a class, we see how those interactions form the essence of the course.

In this chapter, I assert the role of students as “participants” in a classroom, reflecting Drucker’s (2011) idea of “situated persons” and analyzing them as situated within a classroom environment. In Chapter 6, I argue that the classroom environment is created by the instructor, who also functions as a participant in that manufactured space. I use the word participant rather than subject to emphasize the active role students and instructors take in creating their classes—a passive student does little to contribute to the space of the classroom, and a passive instructor risks bringing the classroom to a halt. The words user, subject, learner, and participant each name a different aspect of a student’s classroom identity, and no one term best applies in all cases. Therefore, I move among these terms somewhat fluidly, as the role of a student may differ from one direction of analysis to another. Drucker (2011) resisted an education-based approach
interface theory by arguing that “a theory of interface can’t be constructed around expectations of performance or tasks or even behaviors” (p. 12). Instead, she theorized the interface as “an environment in which varied behaviors of embodied and situated persons will be enabled differently according to its many affordances” (Drucker, 2011, p. 12). She acknowledged the trouble with such a definition: “That kind of statement is so maddeningly vague and abstract that it seems almost useless” (Drucker, 2011, p. 12).

However, unpacking the abstract definition highlights significant characteristics of classrooms that support their treatment as interfaces. By creating a model of the environment, indicating how those “situated persons” interact differently within a class based on “its many affordances,” a sort of usefulness begins to emerge. In Figure 5.2, I present the base of my model of student perception of class. Where the model from Hays (2006) in Figure 5.1 positions the student’s mind as the center of a linear flow of information, this model positions a student’s perception at the center of an encompassing environment of influences and interactions.

![Figure 5.2: A Perception Model of the Class](image)

This simple perception-based model differs significantly from the industrial-era model above by eliminating the input/output paradigm in favor of a balance of interactions, each represented by an edge of the central triangle: Students’ perceptions form from direct interactions with the instructor, with the
assignments/activities in class, and with the learning-management system (LMS) hosting the online components of the course. Rather than viewing students as a machine, ready to be fed inputs, this model clearly places the student at the center of the factors contributing to course design, pushed against from three sides by multiple forces that attempt to shape (or perhaps control) students’ experiences. Notably absent from this model is any consideration of the internal processes students use to learn within the class environment. Learning takes place inside the minds of our students—a place we are unable to go, to inspect, to penetrate, despite the existence of numerous models suggesting the contrary. Rather than attempting to map out an invisible process, I choose to examine the space in which the learning exists. This is a space in a not-quite-literal sense, akin to the nebulous and dynamic space where modern knowledge work takes place, which Johndan Johnson-Eilola (2005) called a “datacloud.” In such a space, the tools and physical arrangement of materials change flexibly, adapting to the needs of the worker. Applying this perspective to a classroom evokes hybridity: Students use materials at hand (both physically and virtually) to access the tools needed to do the work of the moment. The space reconfigures itself, adapting to the situation. The traditional classroom cannot keep up. This dynamic, hybrid learning space reflects Spinuzzi’s (2008) assertion that learning is “ discontinuous and spread across multiple activities and domains” (p. 173). Instructional design has for decades emphasized the need for varied activities to meet the needs of diverse learners. We now need to consider varied domains of learning as equally vital to creating a productive classroom environment.

Composing a classroom environment requires support from multiple participants, of course. Most directly, support for that composition comes from students, instructors, and institutions, but not equally at all times. Students have varying degrees of control over their environment, having to work deliberately in some cases (such as in-class interactions with the instructor) while feeling relatively powerless in others (such as controlling the course content or assignments they are given to complete). I propose a balance of supporting factors reflected in Figure 5.3. Each of the participating groups supports the composition of a class by influencing two of the forces shaping student perception. Students interact directly with the LMS and the instructor, and their efforts shape those features to some degree. Students generally do not
have direct influence over the course content and assignments, even though these forces directly shape their experiences. Instructors, then, directly control the interactions they have with students, as well as the content and assignments used in a course. Those direct interactions with students can be a point of tension, an issue I explore in greater detail elsewhere. Instructors’ efforts to compose the course content and assignments may lead to tensions with the institution, which likely dictates one or both of those elements at a departmental level. While the institution directly controls the LMS and the course content (and in cases of foundation or survey courses, often the assignments), its influence does not extend to the level of in-class conversations between students and instructors. This model shows both the balance and the tensions inherent in composing the classroom environment in which students work.

In this chapter, I use the above model to explore the composition of a hybrid course and make two arguments regarding its nature: First, classes are actively composed through remediation and therefore, such composition should be done critically and deliberately. In cases where an institution provides a standardized “course shell” that instructors “manage” rather than create and teach, that generative act of
composing the class is limited to the freedom given to the instructor by the terms of the institution. My second argument here is that, because students occupy a central role in the classroom, such a role should be intentionally acknowledged and integrated into the course-composition process. Regardless of course delivery mode or instructor intention, students participate in the co-creation of their classes, choosing whether or how much to contribute to the conversation, the liveliness, the dynamic exchange of a class. Instructors should acknowledge that participation (and its inherent risks) and be ready to openly invite students into that inevitable process, listening to their students to understand what they as instructors can provide and what the students need (Friend & Morris, 2013). Through what Sean Michael Morris called “conscientious listening,” a collaborative effort out of which the nature of the class emerges:

the class becomes a space ... wherein attention is all. Artists have often talked about the canvas communicating what it wanted, or the stone revealing what should be sculpted. If a class is a medium in that way, then the class must be listened to—deeply, not just with our ears—and pedagogy becomes interpretive. (personal communication, 06 Apr 2014)

A class attempts to create its own version of “the real” by refashioning—or remediating—whatever other media happens to be at its disposal. The resulting medium serves as the heart of the course, containing all the interactions shared among participants (which can include people not enrolled in the course). In short, the class-as-medium becomes a borderless space where ideas from without get discussed and ideas from within get proliferated. As a medium, a class exists as an organic construct that ingests and digests ideas from inside and out, adapting to situations as the participants and environment change and grow. The shape and size of a class-as-medium must remain as indefinable as the location of learning itself. The dynamic process of creating an organic class requires flexibility and dynamism (a concept I discuss further in Chapter 6), which do not fit well into prescribed, standardized course designs commonly used in asynchronous, “self-paced” online courses in a sort of mass-produced, systematized approach to education.

This approach takes advantage of the ability to reproduce, distribute, and store information outside the minds of the people in a society. With the development of technologies of mass (re)production
came the idea that knowledge can be standardized. Material to be studied or learned can now be duplicated, ensuring all students learn the same material. The prospect of a standardized education worked well throughout the industrial age, where standardization equated to efficiency and productivity. However, it also equates to what John Seely Brown and Paul DuGuid (2002) referred to as the “delivery view” of teaching, which “leads people to think of educational technology as a sort of intellectual forklift” (p. 219).

Because books can be loaded with data identical to the contents of the original, just as machines can produce duplicated identical copies of objects in a factory, so too (the literacy-derived educational thinking goes) can a human mind be loaded with the information it should contain. The creation of this education system established children as the raw material and educated citizens as the finished product. As Ken Robinson (2010) pointed out, ages categorize students like model years on automotives and the “intellectual forklift” loads the commodities (knowledge) into our nation’s youth for a standardized amount of time, at which point we issue the student an “intellectual bill of lading, a receipt for knowledge-on-board much like any other receipt for freight-on-board” (Brown & Duguid, 2002, p. 219).

This materialistic, non-social approach to education is possible because literacy allows for the separation between two participants in a conversation. Once information, which had once been stored only in human memory, became commodified, we separated the knowledge from the people who possessed it (Ong, 1988, pp. 96–98). Since industrialization, standardized education has resembled a manufacturing process, with social learning (Bandura, 1971; Vygotsky, 1978) eclipsed by accountability as the driving force behind educational design. This shift away from social learning coincided with a separation between participants in the education process. Traditionally, textual learning in an era of literacy required a separation between teacher and learner, with a learning process mediated through writing and reading. Such an arrangement lends itself well to pre-designed “course shells” (notably not called “classes”) that can be proctored by anyone because the course is designed as a universal solution to education. On the other hand, connectivist learning in a networked society relies on direct sharing among people. These courses are built around interfaces among people or interfaces between people and content. As I discussed above,
a “class” is a collection of interfaces among various participants. We can accurately view the interfaces between students and instructors as contact zones, which Mary Louise M. L. Pratt (1991) defined as social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as ... the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing. (p. 34)

That “model of community” we “rely on in teaching” warrants additional scrutiny, as the “asymmetrical relations of power” inherent in a teacher-led classroom with teacher-graded assignments easily become unquestioned assumptions. By examining classroom interactions from the student perspective, we can better understand how they work with the discourses they are being asked to understand and adopt.

While all classes are a combination of these interacting and overlapping interfaces, blended classes become an order of magnitude more complex, since each component of a blended course—the in-person and online elements—themselves consist of a set of complex interactions. Indeed, the growing popularity of corporate-sponsored Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) challenges the importance of individual or personal human interactions—a challenge I directly oppose using data I gathered from students. M. L. Pratt (1991) warned that, if we examine class only from the teacher’s point of view, “whatever students do other than what the teacher specifies is invisible or anomalous to the analysis” (p. 38). I choose to examine classroom interfaces primarily from the students’ perspective in an effort to give voice to a highly valuable (yet often minimally authoritative) voice in the classroom. In the next section, I report what emerged when I listened, through surveys and multiple interviews, to what students brought to their writing courses: their expectations and their prior experiences. These students provided information that addresses several of my research questions, including those about how participants create and enact the interfaces of the classroom, how stakeholders define blended courses, how pedagogy interacts with those courses, how various perspectives create tensions in the activities of composition classes, and how the affordances and constraints of various delivery modes shape the classroom and affect students’ perception...
of their courses. Examining the student viewpoint informs our understanding of how a blended course works.

5.1 Interfacing with the Institution—Prior Expectations

Students shape their expectations for new courses based on their prior classroom experiences. Since 94.7% of the University of Central Florida (UCF)’s students hold in-state residency status (UCF 1km, 2014), Florida’s public schools set the standard for what incoming students know and expect. Students consistently referred to their previous online-only courses when discussing their expectations for the online components of their mixed-mode writing courses, and they referred to previous English courses when discussing their expectations for composition courses; many students refer to Composition I (ENC 1101) as their “English class.” Primary and secondary English curricula in Florida place literature at the center of the course design; students read classic texts as a means of accessing thematic studies, presentation skills, and writing activities. Students accustomed to the Florida public school system are frequently surprised to learn that the composition classes at UCF do not include the same content that they have typically associated with English courses. Essentially, students do not recognize the difference between the ENC (English composition) and ENG (English literature) course prefixes in the registration system (or the distinction between the two disciplines), since no such distinction had existed previously in their education. Other novel details of registration coding become problematic: before coming to college, the vast majority of students take only fully-online or fully-in-person courses; extremely few blended models exist for public education.¹ Essentially, incoming freshmen arrive to UCF’s course-registration process knowing only online and in-person delivery modes. If they are given options beyond these two, students have little previous experience with blended learning from which to draw, and their expectations may not be able to accommodate the delivery mode. Student responses to, and further expectations of, mixed-mode courses are

¹Some Florida Virtual School franchises, such as Seminole County Virtual School, offer occasional lab days during which students can get in-person assistance from their otherwise exclusively online instructors, but these optional sessions often serve the role of a teacher meet-and-greet or an extra tutoring session.
constructed through college-level experiences and what they learn through the various interfaces they employ, including registration scenarios/terminology/options, the variety of online course systems/designs, and continued involvement with in-person courses.

5.1.1 Online Environments

When students walk into a traditional face-to-face class, they generally know what to expect. The teacher stands up front; the students sit toward the back. Some newer classroom designs include tables to facilitate group work, but the instructor podium often persists. Students still have visual cues to guide their choices when entering the room. They know where the instructor will be (and can decide how far away they want to be). They see the layout of the desks and can guess the general methods used in the class. They can see the presence or absence of computers and projectors to guess how much technology will be incorporated into the class activities.

But none of those cues are available in an online class. Without the traces embedded within the physical space, an online class betrays none of its contents. The layout, design, style, and organization of the course is embedded within the text of the course. Students must use the unfamiliar course structure while they are attempting to learn that same structure. While learning by doing certainly has its place, such a setup can create two distinct barriers to student involvement. First, it means students must engage in the course through its interface before they can learn how the content is organized. Students in this situation work to learn two things simultaneously: the design of whatever LMS is used and the course design created by the instructor. Ongoing experience with a particular LMS (for instance, for multiple classes on the same campus) helps alleviate frustrations that accompany the disorientation inherent in exposure to new environments. The second barrier to student involvement relates to the organization of course content, which is usually determined by the instructor. When students enter a new online course, they must determine the structure and organization of course components (such as assignments, quizzes, and reading content) as well as the interface of the LMS.
Instructors need to be aware of this orientation phase and work to help students navigate the course. As I will show through interview comments below, even in blended courses where students have regular face-to-face contact with their instructor, disorientation can (and does) occur. Instructors have the dual challenge of establishing a sense of presence and helping to orient students to their new course environment. While some instructors address the issue of presence by creating introductory videos, recent research on the “flipped” classroom model has revealed that students don’t often watch the content they are assigned (Grimsley, 2013). Another potential solution involves having online courses meet in person at least once, so the instructor can introduce course organization and familiarize students with the LMS interface. Yet requiring distance-learning students to attend a physical, in-person meeting immediately introduces a prohibitive limitation for some students and negates one of the potential benefits of online classes (namely, geographic flexibility). Students, especially those who are non-traditional, may not be able to attend class in a physical space. Indeed, many distance-learning programs cater specifically to transient or out-of-state students.

One of Mr. Grey’s students shared with him a specific frustration related to scheduling of blended courses. Grey operated on the assumption that the weekday when his blended class would normally meet (in this case, a Friday) was replaced by a regular online work day. His student said a different day of the week may have led to greater productivity:

I did have one student come to my office hours, and we talked about it and he said... I kind of helped him come to this, too. ... I don’t think is a rule that if it meets twice a week, it’s always Monday and Wednesday. If it was [a mixed-mode] class that met Wednesday and Friday face-to-face, and online component was on Monday, where you have the weekend but then also Monday and Tuesday, he thought he would be succeeding a lot better. It was just really hard on Friday morning, you sign up for a class you didn’t even realize would have to meet, to get yourself to sign onto web courses. And the longer you put it off, the harder it is going to be to get to it. Which I kind of see.
The presumed predictability of an online environment can also lead to detrimental results in other circumstances. The students who participate in this study reflected the demographics of the university at large: the majority of them attended Florida high schools, which currently require all students to take at least one fully online class before graduation. Because of the complexities of developing content, infrastructure, and support for online courses on a large scale, few Florida school districts create their own. Instead, most rely on Florida Virtual School (FLVS) to provide the courses students need for their graduation requirement. Because of its prominent placement in the high school experience for most students, the typical design of an FLVS course quite literally becomes students’ standard expectation for the way online courses are done. The traditional FLVS course design divides a year-long class into a number of modules, typically eight, each of which consists of several pages of reading material, an assignment at the end of each page, and a quiz at the end of each module. The routine established by such predictable designs allow students to grow accustomed to that course style without having to re-learn the arrangement each time. However, when faced with their first course that doesn’t meet those expectations, students may be somewhat disoriented when learning the new course.

5.1.2 Online Course Content

The intellectual challenge (or perceived lack thereof) provided by FLVS courses might also be cause for concern, particularly if it establishes trends and expectations for students entering college. Several students I interviewed quickly commented on how easy FLVS courses are and that they took the classes specifically to earn an easy grade for a class they struggled with but needed to complete for graduation requirements. One student from Mr. Brown’s face-to-face class, Coral, was particularly forthcoming with her approach to an FLVS health course, confessing that she had her mother complete assignments for her:

It was pretty easy. It was just health. It was basic. I don’t know. I didn’t really learn much.

It was basically just kind of getting my mom who has her medical degree to take my stuff, honestly. It was not very... I don’t think it’s helpful, but it helped me get my high school diploma.
Coral’s goal for her course experience wasn’t to learn anything, to prepare for anything, or to gain any additional skills; she took the course merely to qualify for graduation. She was so uninvested in the course that she systematically had her mother do the work for her. One of Coral’s classmates, Rusty, discussed his experiences with a similar online health class. Rusty said, “It was all stuff I had already known. And then the teacher would call me every month or something and we would definitely review. But the review was so easy, I honestly didn’t feel like I learned anything.” Rusty’s account shows both how unremarkable the learning experience was and how little contact he had with the instructor. Violet, a student in Mr. Brown’s mixed-mode course, explained similar experiences with online courses this way:

I’ve taken a few online classes before. Not mixed mode, but fully online courses. I think, I mean, it was a lot. I don’t think you learn as much because of all the tests and the book, and you don’t really study for it, which probably isn’t good.

These students’ comments on the lack of challenging content or high expectations in online courses reflect common responses from most of the students I interviewed. They said online (which in almost all cases meant FLVS) courses were easier than their face-to-face counterparts, that they viewed these courses as something that had to be completed (rather than mastered), and that the courses provided little, if any, personal or intellectual reward. Coral put it most succinctly: “you always have to be face-to-face to fully understand what someone wants.” One student held a different opinion of her online courses, expressing satisfaction with her experiences taking AP-level courses, saying they challenged her and prepared her for college-level work. The rest of the students I interviewed generally found online courses lacking. These student reactions echo one of Michael G. Moore’s (2000) findings that students will accept “frequently mediocre quality as the price of the liberation” that comes with online courses (p. 4).

Several students’ interview comments reveal that unchallenging online material focused more on completion than learning reinforces expectations the students brought to mixed-mode courses based on their high-school online courses. Albin, from Mr. Grey’s mixed-mode course, expressed this point through his commentary on the trouble he had with his online course in high school:
You didn’t really do much. I mean, it was an elective course. It was fairly easy, but I feel as if—if it [were] an academic course, where you actually had to work and learn stuff, it probably wouldn’t have worked for me because it’s…. I’m just a person where I need someone to explain it to me, and then I can fully learn it. I can’t...just read something and then completely understand. So I need someone to actually explain it to me.

One interesting aspect of students’ comments about their FLVS online courses is the separation they perceive between the course’s content and the course’s instructor. Prior to their arrival in college, most Florida students experienced online courses created by a team of instructional designers and managed by a teacher whose job was primarily to motivate and to grade, but not to design the course. Such a separation between the teacher and the content plays out in interesting ways because the senses of ownership and control that are common in a traditional classroom, in which the teacher determines what students will do every day, cease to exist. In the FLVS system, students quickly learn that they are being told what to do by one party (instructional designers they never meet) and having their progress monitored by another (teachers they interact with on the phone once a month). Students work at a pace of their choosing, and the instructor attempts to motivate progress through whatever contact points are available. During periods of peak demand (most commonly over the summer), teachers may be assigned three to four hundred students in a course, when the typical in-person teacher workload is 150 students at a time. In these summer overload cases, teachers cannot keep up with the volume of assignments being submitted by students, so grading assistants help ensure student work is scored in a timely manner, further separating students from their instructors.

The teacher in these online courses is expected to serve primarily as a vehicle for second-hand information, largely absent from the learning process, working only to ensure that students know where they stand with their progress through the assignments. The teacher is responsible for maintaining contact with the students by placing monthly phone calls to students and parents that last around ten to fifteen minutes apiece but may not even be responsible for assessing student performance. For the instructor, these
calls are a crucial component of their interface with the student—contact is otherwise through grading feedback or email. But for students, these calls are a task to complete, rather than an essential interaction. During my time teaching FLVS courses, I had several students who would neglect making their phone calls, sometimes creating a situation where all the work for the course was complete, and the calls, which they wished to combine into one for convenience, were all that remained. Students in FLVS courses come to see teachers as progress monitors and graders as accuracy checkers. The work they do is done by themselves; the learning involved happens through reading the course material that was created by a team of instructional designers. In the prior experience of most new UCF students, the online content that forms the students’ “learning experience” is created by an instructional designer, rather than the student’s actual instructor. To be sure, online content at most higher-education institutions is created by the instructor, but students new to college might expect an extra degree of separation than actually exists. This may create a situation in which instructors have to more deliberately establish credibility and expertise in an online environment because students are accustomed to their online instructors following from pre-set material, rather than creating their own.

5.1.3 Course Registration

Students’ prior expectations for their classes weigh heavily on the course-registration process, since students decide which classes to take based on what they think they will encounter in those classes. The same holds true for delivery mode: Students enroll in a given delivery mode based on their previous experiences and the expectations those create. Blended courses pose a particular challenge, as most students have no prior experience with the modality and therefore may not understand what a course may entail. In a curious display of misalignment between student and institutional expectations, Mr. Grey reported that the vast majority of students in his mixed-mode courses did not intentionally sign up for a mixed-mode course. These students, he told me, believed they were enrolling in a fully in-person course that simply happened to meet two hours a week, rather than the normal three. According to Mr. Grey, he conducted an informal survey in those classes that revealed 48 out of the 50 students enrolled in his mixed-mode course
were surprised during the first week of the course when they learned the class had an online component. According to him, these students thought the shorter meeting times were an unexpected perk, rather than an indication of some other difference in course design. Amber explained her case this way:

I signed up because it was the only English class that met twice a week instead of three times a week. So that was the reason why I signed up. So then I got to class and the professor said, “So you know this meets three times a week?” We all stared blankly and didn’t know why. It wasn’t intentional.

A few students shared with me that they did note a different delivery mode in the registration system, but that the official description of “Reduced Seat Time” (see Figure 5.4) reinforced exactly what they were hoping to find. These students expected their course to meet entirely in-person, just less often. Many students were surprised when, during the first week of the semester, they were told their class had a significant online component that constituted one-third (in Mr. Grey’s classes) or one-half (in Mr. Brown’s) of the course commitment. It seems students focus on the meeting time and pay less attention to the rest of the information presented by the registration system. For instance, the “What’s this?” link takes students to the official university description of course modalities, yet this puts the onus of discovery on the student, rather than on the system. When questioned about the visibility of modalities in that system, Tom Cavanagh, Assistant Vice President of Distributed Learning, suggested that “it’s probably likely that if students don’t know what they are registering for it’s because they’re just not bothering to click that link” (personal communication, 14 Jan 2013). The only information displayed on the registration record that explicitly refers to the Web is in the Class Notes section, which indicates that a mixed-mode course “substitutes www for some class time; requires Internet access, browser, and E-mail skills.” Such phrasing ends up being understated: “some” class time does not suggest how essential the online components actually are, and the requirement for Internet access and email skills, while perhaps significant decades ago, are easily overlooked as mundane today.
In his discussion of the flexibility of computer interfaces, Lev Manovich (2001) explained the versatility of the now-ubiquitous cut and paste operations, pointing out how they span media, spatial/temporal modes, and scales. Virtually any computer application supports the acts of cutting and pasting content, even though the physical metaphor on which those commands are based may not apply. (How does one, exactly, cut a pixel out of an image or paste formatting onto text?) Manovich (2001) argued that the remediated processes we associate with cutting and pasting have become more "real" to computer users than the “real” processes of working with scissors and glue. What once was a sensible metaphor with a direct analog in physical space—using tools to reassemble text piecemeal on paper—became a generalized construct representing the movement of data from one virtual container to another. If the changing interfaces of computer software have rendered our concept of cutting and pasting more flexible, what happens when we apply that same conceptual flexibility to a traditional physical process in education? The act of “attending class” has a specific meaning in traditional schools, requiring students to be in a room by the time the bell rings and be in a desk until dismissed. The physical, visible interfaces of an on-ground classroom make obvious the acts of teaching and learning that take place within it. But those physical actions, and the tools they require, cannot translate into the interface of an online course. Without a classroom, without desks, without a physical space, and without clearly defined meeting times, the act of attending class loses its meaning. The new interface of an online class forces us to expand our definition of attendance so that it, like our image of cutting and pasting, spans media, spatial/temporal modes, and scales. In an online class, the concept of attendance returns out of necessity to its etymological origins in the process of attending to something. The online interface of classes require a new approach to what had for decades been a stable concept.
That same level of unawareness/surprise appeared during my conversation with Sable, a student in one of Mr. Grey’s face-to-face courses. When, near the end of our conversation, I asked what kind of advice she would give future students planning to register for ENC 1101, she quickly discussed the accessibility of instructors, but with a distressing lack of awareness of how mixed-mode courses operate, unsure whether students in such courses would even meet their instructors:

If you are in a mixed mode class and you have a question about something, then you might have an instructor, but would you feel comfortable going to see them if you’ve never met them, or if you… I’m not even sure how mixed mode works, if you even meet them.

Sable essentially interrupted herself when she realized she had no idea how a mixed-mode course was delivered. Her conversation illustrates how foreign a blended course can be to a first-year student. When I explained that those courses meet in person part of the week, Sable expressed how my clarification assuaged her concern, saying, “Gotcha. So you do have that interaction with online, too.” Until they experience a mixed-mode course, students reflect on only their history with online classes or the mental images conjured by the concept. Because they often have no prior experience with mixed-mode classes, students
may assume this delivery mode means they don’t meet in person at all or, more severely, that they never even meet their instructor. One wonders at the educational experience these students must expect upon entering a large university.

In order to better understand their expectations for new classes, I asked students what factors they used to decide which class sections to take, and they listed two primary considerations. Their first priority is the meeting days and times, making sure that the schedule fit their needs. Once they find options that fit their desired schedule, students then want to know which instructor is the best choice. With around 2,000 students enrolled in first-year composition (FYC) every semester, the odds that a student will know someone who had a professor teaching at a specific time become rather slim. Larger, anonymized resources become an effective means of learning about unfamiliar instructors. Therefore, UCF students generally use RateMyProfessor.com (see Figure 5.5) as a resource to determine which instructor’s sections to choose. This site has become so ubiquitous at UCF that every discussion I remember having with students about registration, whether formally for this dissertation or casually in class, have included references to Rate-MyProfessor. That means student schedules are determined primarily by time and then by crowdsourced ratings of “helpfulness,” “clarity,” and “easiness” (and, of course, the awkwardly inappropriate “hotness” element)—factors determined by the nationwide, corporate-run website, rather than any situated or local concerns, to be the most important to students. None of the students I interviewed indicated that delivery mode was a significant consideration for enrolling in courses unless I explicitly asked about their preferences.
When I specifically asked about delivery modes, students responded with surprising consistency, commonly identifying a difference between courses in math and hard sciences versus the humanities and soft sciences, which they often labeled with terms like “fact-based” and “writing-based,” respectively. Students said they would be comfortable taking an online course in whichever kind of course they felt most capable. Students predictably said they would not be comfortable taking an online course in a subject in which they struggled, preferring instead to rely on in-person instruction. The unspoken assumption on which these decisions were based was that true instruction did not occur in an online course. Generally speaking, students view online courses as places where work is done, rather than places where learning happens. If a student feels competent in the subject, that student likely feels prepared to do the work expected in an online course.

The difference between the sciences and the humanities, especially for first-year undergraduates, may be most noticeable in terms of the kinds of knowledge expected of them in each type of course. In science classes—natural or social—beginning college students are asked to learn new terms, solve routine problems, and memorize new concepts. Tanner, a student in Mr. Brown’s face-to-face course, described
his experience with online learning based on the content of the course, phrasing it in reductive, almost
dismissive terms:

I took an online class over the summer. It was psychology. And it was basically just read
and take quizzes, tests, and there was also the in-depth research where you had to write an
executive two-page single-spaced summary on certain researches, based on these articles.

But in the humanities, students are asked to work with the ideas from a class and integrate them into
their own thinking, applying new knowledge to their work. In a \textit{FAW} course, that work is building their
skills about writing with writing; students are asked to apply new declarative knowledge to the procedural
knowledge used in the field. Because they ask students to apply new learning about writing to their writing,
practice and activities in these courses do not adapt well to basic models of online learning that feature
readings, quizzes, discussion posts, and exams. Instead, students often need time to discuss new ideas
and practice incorporating new skills into their writing. That means these courses do \textit{not} fit students’
expectations for how an online course runs or what content they should expect to find. The content and
style of \textit{FYC} courses are both novel to incoming students, making them a difficult adjustment even without
a novel delivery mode adding an extra layer of complexity.

One student in Mr. Brown’s face-to-face classes put it this way: “Math is better [online] because
math is numbers and stuff and you can kind of follow it, so that works.” However, if students feel un-
prepared, they often believe online courses would be too demanding, with too little support—struggling
students rely on face-to-face instruction to help them learn. The same student who said he could “follow”
math online said that more “abstract” courses (like composition) pose challenges that he would not want
to face online. This student categorized his classes based on a specific element of their content: He was
comfortable with the \textit{numbers} used in math classes but not the \textit{vocabulary} used in chemistry. The language
component, even in a science class, was the barrier that made him resistant to the prospect of an online
course.
If I’m learning words, I can’t.... Someone has to explain to me what the words mean, what I’m reading. That’s why it took [face-to-face chemistry]; that’s what was so hard about chemistry. They were talking about things like titration and...I had no idea what that was. And you just get lost with what you’re reading. So I can’t take chemistry [online], but I can take math [online] because it’s numbers.

The idea of getting lost came up a number of times in my conversations with students, particularly when discussing deadlines. Students value clear organization, reliable routines (Handy, 2000), and predictable due dates. These results echo previous findings about consistent course design. Karen Swan and her colleagues (2001) found that “the greater the consistency among course modules, the more satisfied students were, the more they thought they learned, and the more interaction they thought they had with their instructors” (p. 377). Several students told me they intentionally registered for a face-to-face course because they wanted the in-class reminder of upcoming deadlines, trusting the teacher and classroom environment over their own calendar systems.

Students I spoke with perceived in-person courses as instructional, whereas they viewed online courses as procedural. What I thought was a startling trend in student perceptions of online courses also appears in UCF’s official explanation of their course-delivery options. On its official webpage explaining these options, UCF lists five choices (UCF CDL, 2011b):

1. World Wide Web,
2. Video Streaming,
3. Video Streaming / Reduced Seat Time,
4. Mixed Mode / Reduced Seat Time, and
5. Face To Face Instruction.

Of note, only one of those delivery modes includes the word “instruction”; all others mention only the technology used and the amount of time students spend occupying a chair. Such language only serves to indicate the priorities of the institution (resource allocation/availability) and reinforce student perceptions
of the instructional quality of various delivery modes (favoring face-to-face). And finally, that list was
implemented in the Summer 2010 semester, a significant time ago in the context of developmental pace
in educational technology. (As a point of reference, the list was put in practice just two months after the
iPad was first made publicly available.) Despite the pace of change in education technology and practice,
the delivery modes offered by UCF fall short of providing students with appropriate classroom interfaces.

5.2 Interfacing With the Instructor—Maintaining Connections

Within the classroom, students face multiple interfaces as well. The most prominent and obvious
may be their interface with the instructor, which forms the quintessential interaction of traditional
classroom environments. With blended learning, more diverse opportunities for interaction come from
a wider array of interfaces, which I will examine here. One of my research questions asked how various
stakeholders define blended writing courses; another asked how those stakeholders interact to compose
a hybrid class. By asking students about their experiences interacting with their instructors, I found that
the interface with the instructor became a defining element to students as they considered their needs for
different delivery modes. Interviews conducted for this project revealed strong student opinions about the
nature and effectiveness of online instruction, particularly in terms of their interactions with instructors.
It appears that students define blended courses by the types of interactions that compose the course. Stu-
dents expressed the responsibility they felt to engage their instructors in communication beyond regular
class sessions, an effort to contribute to the composition of the course. Students are aware of their role in
co-creating a writing course, no matter which modality it employs. Jade, a student in one of Mr. Brown's
mixed-mode courses, explained student priorities can lead to a breakdown in the interface between student
and instructor, changing the nature of the course:

You can still go to class every day and still be distant from the teacher. Because it just de-
pends on how you interact with them, you know. Because, like, sometimes even if you’re in a
small class like this, some kids, they go to class and they’re gone, they’re done. And there’s no
communication with the teacher. They just go to get the grade.

Expressing a stronger, more succinct version of the same sentiment, Sable, a student in Mr. Grey’s
face-to-face classes, explained one of the reasons she avoids online classes: “You don’t know what the pro-
fessor is looking for if you’re not meeting with them face-to-face.” Overall, students used in-person time,
via class meetings and office hours, as their primary means of contact with the instructor and help for the
class. Violet, a student in Mr. Brown’s mixed-mode course, explained the benefits of in-person meetings:
“I guess I kind of feel that, I mean, the in class portion and going to office hours, it helped. And once you
go enough [to office hours], he gets to know your name, which is cool.”

Students I spoke with frequently referred to interaction as the defining characteristic of a course
modality, going hand in hand with the perception noted earlier that in-person classes are places where
learning happens, while online classes are places where tasks get performed. To these students, interaction
with a teacher is the valuable component of class that encourages and enables their learning. Sienna used
the online component of Mr. Brown’s classes to see how she fit in with the thinking of her peers. She used
what other students wrote to check her own progress—she would do her thinking elsewhere, then use the
online component as a resource to verify what she had done:

I just go on our blog website and I might take a peek at other people’s work…. So I want to
see what other people are writing just to see if I’m similar, if I’m different, and figure out if
I’m different, if that is a bad thing necessarily if I’m being off task.

Beyond the use of the online content as a reference, students generally expressed their preference for the in-
teractive character of in-person courses. Tanner saw the “reductively mechanistic” interface that Drucker
(2011) warned about in the online elements of his courses and feels those problems are absent in person:
“Face-to-face, the benefits are ... that human aspect so you don’t feel like systematic and robotic. I mean,
because even me in my math/science mind prefers some human interaction.” Hunter agreed, also acknowl-
edging how an online course feels more like work than interaction:
I enjoy... I prefer teacher interaction, and with online courses, there is a significant lack of that. And I am also very lazy when it comes to homework, so I figured that I probably wouldn’t get around to doing the real load, like full school work at home anyway.

The question of how the interfaces of blended course design are created and enacted by the participants shows through these student responses. These students believe that in-person course interfaces are co-created through the interactions they have with their instructors, but that the online course interfaces separate them from their instructors. Students do not expect to enact an interface online; they expect simply to complete the work that’s there. If we expand the discussion from in-class interactions to those dealing more with extra help, office hours, and after-class questions, the communications tools used in the online components of classes become relevant. Beyond classroom activities, blended course designs are created through communication interfaces, such as email. At UCF, students’ university-provided email accounts are the primary means of communication for most administrative needs on campus. Instructors also commonly emphasize the need to check and use those accounts because of the popularity of email communication on campus and in the business world. Yet students don’t hold the same views of email’s importance, or even appropriateness. Hunter, in Mr. Grey’s face-to-face classes, begrudges the necessity of email: “I think that email works best. Because even as a communication system for individuals, email seems sort of outdated. But you still have to have email for just about everything.” Sienna agreed:

It’s not as easy to contact the instructor through email. You know, you can’t see an email and then follow up with him in class the next day or on campus the next day and discuss what you sent in email. It’s just an email.

Violet’s comments quoted above continued with a discussion of her lack of online interactions in her writing class:

But the online aspect... I didn’t speak to him at all online, even through emails. Because I felt it was kind of inappropriate because he’s my professor. I mean, this is just me personally, but
it’s kind of like the professor/student relationship. That’s why we have office hours. I mean, he probably doesn’t want to hear about me and I don’t want to hear about him.

It seems Violet specifically wants a distance online between her and her teacher. Despite an appreciation for the closeness of having the instructor know her name from office hours, she doesn’t want to be close electronically, avoiding email because she finds it too personal. Indeed, the kind of intimacy Violet craves came up time and again as the most notably absent element in online courses. Tanner discussed an instructor’s efforts to establish connection:

My instructor put up a video showing himself talking and then how to find articles for your papers, so I kind of got a face to a name, so it kind of felt close, but that was the extent of that. I mean, there was no personal, like human connection between the two. So it still felt as if I was going on my computer to complete a task.

By highlighting his task-completion view of online courses, Tanner explicitly mentions the practical/conceptual binary mentioned above, in which students believe online courses exist for doing things, not for learning things. Students expect an in-person interface to establish a connection with their instructor that can promote learning. Students see an online interface (even with email-based support) as possibly efficient but essentially task-focused and separated from learning.

Overall, Jett, from Mr. Grey’s face-to-face classes, made the most extensive argument for the benefits of face-to-face classes (which he here calls “lecture” courses):

If I had the opportunity to, I wouldn’t choose mixed mode. I would choose a lecture...because I believe you get a more of an expression from the teacher; they give you a response right then and there when you have a personal question or you have a question that other students can benefit from. And vice versa, I can benefit from someone else asking the question, and you can’t get [that] from a mixed mode because it’s just you and the teacher, and when you do have something, like, other students don’t see your responses. And I don’t think there’s many
examples in a mixed mode. When you come across a concept and you need help besides office hours, and you need help in class, to avoid office hours, I don’t think you can get as much help during mixed mode as you could during a lecture class.

From this we see that the question of how the interfaces of blended course design are created and enacted by the participants is quite complex for students, since they have clear expectations for those interfaces and may not be prepared to enact them as the instructor or institution would expect. A blended course offers a wider array of potential interfaces than a traditional in-person course, but with additional interfaces come additional challenges for working with students effectively and helping them see value in the various interactions.

5.3 Interfacing With the Curriculum—WAW Course Content

The previous section discussed the interface students experience with their instructor. Many of those interactions deal directly with the course content, as the instructor works to help make that content accessible to students and to help students put the course content into practice, becoming more skilled in their field. In this section, I will examine the interface students experience with the curriculum itself, worrying not so much about the personal, social interactions that make up the everyday happenings of class, but rather looking at how students perceive the content of a first-year writing course. In this section, I will rely primarily on quantitative survey-result data to address these three research questions:

1. In what ways do writing pedagogies interact with hybridity?

2. How do the perspectives of various stakeholders create tensions in the activities of composition classes?

3. Does delivery mode affect student performance in, or perception of, their FYC course?

Answers to these questions will emerge from students’ self-reported responses to statements that reflect key principles in the WAW curriculum, revealing how ENC 1101 works with students across multiple modalities of instruction.
The student surveys used for this study were designed to identify how well the students interfaced with, and learned about, key concepts in the WAW curriculum. Most survey questions came directly from the Department of Writing and Rhetoric (DWR)’s internal program assessment tools so that data collected for this dissertation could be compared with data typically collected at the research site. Several of these questions address specific student learning outcomes for ENC 1101, and many such questions were designed to see whether student opinions shift as a result of their work in an FYC course. In this section, I will briefly review survey questions whose responses aligned with or exposed program expectations. I will then examine one scenario in which a participating instructor’s specific approach to terms used in a survey prompt caused his students’ responses to differ from department expectations. This scenario exposes the complexity of site-specific performance assessment by revealing how assessment tools can produce erroneous measures even when the department’s curriculum selection is clearly understood by instructors.

5.3.1 Revealing Standard: Rhetoric and Purpose

When asked early in the semester whether their “previous writing classes taught [them] about rhetoric and writing purposes,” students responded moderately, with responses spread rather evenly among agreeing, disagreeing, or expressing neutral perceptions of the statement. (25% agreed; 27% disagreed; 36% were neutral.) When students were asked their perceptions of the same issue again at the end of the semester, opinions shifted notably toward disagreement (making up 68% of the responses), as shown in Figure 5.6. Few students (8%) reported a neutral perception regarding experience with rhetoric and purpose, and many more students (+20.5%) reported strong disagreement with the claim that they were taught such issues in prior classes. Because the prompt asked students about previous classes, the material in question clearly did not change between survey administrations. It appears that students’ opinions of those previous classes changed instead. This prompt specifically discussed rhetoric and purpose, two concepts that students may understand in passing at first but then gain familiarity and competence over time. When first surveyed, students reported middle-of-the-road perceptions, reflecting little conviction, perhaps uncertainty over the terms. By the second administration, after students gained additional in-
struction in rhetoric and writing purposes from their ENC 1101 instructors, they better understood the question and, thus, what they did not learn in previous writing classes. Student responses to this prompt show that instructors in UCF’s DWR were effective in giving students a better understanding of rhetoric, to the point that they believe their previous courses were insufficient.

Figure 5.6: “My previous writing classes taught me about rhetoric and writing purposes.” Note the shift from neutral responses to strong disagreement.

When asked in interviews which unit from their courses were most troublesome, students often named the unit on rhetorical situations. This suggests that the content was new to them, and they had to work harder to feel comfortable with the concept. One student in Mr. Grey’s mixed-mode classes, Amber, clearly identified “rhetorical analysis” as the “concept or idea or thing [that] has been the hardest to grasp.” When she elaborated on why it was challenging, Amber told me,

I didn’t know how to analyze that. I could tell you about it, but I didn’t know what it did. So that took me several classes to understand. I just had a hard time with it. I could tell you the definition of it but I wasn’t grasping the concept.

Amber’s expression of struggle triangulates well with the unusual results shown in Figure 5.6—she recognizes that working effectively with rhetorical analysis is challenging, and she knows she improved her understanding after struggling with the material for some time. Such awareness would likely lead her to feel
better equipped to understand rhetoric and writing purposes after her ENC 1101 course, and her opinion of her prior training would be less positive, given her frustrations trying to perform well in ENC 1101.

Despite her ability to recognize a rhetorical situation and to identify its denotation, Amber struggled to make sense of that meaning and apply it to her own work. Her struggle to understand came through again when I asked about the in-class versus online work on the topic. According to her, the online work emphasized identification, whereas the in-person work emphasized application (which she found harder). As she put it,

Online it was more, “What is it?” [and] “What are you doing?” And I could tell you what to do. I just didn’t know how to apply it. So, online it was easy because I was saying, here is analysis. I know what it is. I can give you the definition. But in class, I was having a difficult time. So I feel like in class it was harder. Because I couldn’t tell you, I couldn’t speak to you and say, this is how, this is the analysis of my situation. So in that aspect, in those classes when we talked about it, I was one of the quiet ones because I was trying to listen to everyone else and understand, apply that to my situation.

To try and clarify her meaning, I offered an interpretation of her thinking that employs the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge (J. R. Anderson, 1980; Woltz, 1988), asking whether “knowing about [rhetorical analysis] was easy, but doing it or working with it was hard.” Amber immediately agreed. It seems the online content helped her develop a declarative understanding of rhetorical analysis, but that she needed additional conversation and review in class before she was comfortable with her procedural knowledge.

Overall, the survey results and interviews show that students come to better understand the concepts of rhetoric and purpose in their FYC courses, and that these courses can change student views of the effectiveness of their previous classes. Instructors should be aware of students’ changing perspectives as they progress through their FYC courses.
5.3.2 Successful Standards: Collaboration and Revision

Other student perspectives that shift during a WAW course involve their views of collaboration and revision as part of the writing process. The opportunities that online environments provide for collaboration warrant examination, and this section uncovers student perspectives on the views they hold, showing how writing pedagogy can potentially intersect with hybridity.

Secondary-education students in Florida are trained to write for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), a state-mandated standardized test that includes a writing component in grades 4, 8, and 10. The test in grade 4 determines whether a student can move on to the next grade; the test in grade 10 determines whether a student qualifies for graduation from high school. Since the stakes for these tests are so high, students and teachers invest considerable time and energy to test prep. Many students enter college knowing how to write traditional five-paragraph essays and how to write for the FCAT, with few other more flexible weapons in their writing arsenal. Successful FCAT writing possesses two characteristics that apply to few writing situations students will face after leaving school: the test demands that students write completely independently, without drawing on other sources or other texts and that they write in a single draft, without the time, space, or permission to review and revise their work. What they create the first time is all they are able to submit.

Student learning outcomes for UCF’s WAW courses include awareness of revision as a writing strategy, and many instructors include discussions of intertextuality and implement peer review as two ways to help students better understand how writing is not an isolated practice. As a result of these efforts, DWR expects student perceptions of writing to incorporate stronger senses of collaboration and revision (see Figure 5.7). In both cases, student responses reflected department expectations.
Figure 5.7: “There is little benefit in revising my writing; my first draft is usually good enough.” Note the shift toward strong disagreement.

In Figure 5.8, student responses, using a Likert scale, show that at the beginning of the semester, participating students were generally either neutral to (36%), or in agreement with (45%), the statement that “writing involves collaboration.” By the end of the semester, most of the student responses were in agreement (36%) or strong agreement (47%), with neutral responses (12%) being far less common than before. In this case, the ENC 1101 course seemed to have the desired effect on student perceptions of writing.

Figure 5.8: “Writing involves collaboration.” Note the shift from neutral responses toward strong agreement.

Similarly, when asked how much they agree with the statement, “There is little benefit in revising my writing; my first draft is usually good enough” (see Figure 5.7), student responses should be predictable,
based on department-designed student learning outcomes. For this statement, again reported based on a Likert scale, participating students at the beginning of the semester generally indicated disagreement, with a notable collection of neutral responses. The lack of strong disagreement with this statement could be indicative of persistent FCAT-trained perceptions of writing. But by the end of the semester, most students indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement, and few students indicated a neutral response. Overall, each class in both modalities influenced student perception of the benefit of revision. This supports Russell’s (1999) “no significant difference” phenomenon because both modalities achieved the goals of the curriculum. The differences in interfaces had negligible impact on student perception.

5.3.3 Surprising Standard: Writing as Rule-Directed

Not all outcomes-derived statements elicited student responses as expected. In the case of rule-directed writing, the survey results show how the interface between students and instructors can outweigh or override the planned interface between the students and the department expectations.

Students were asked their response, on a Likert scale, to this statement: “There are rules that determine if writing is good or if it has errors.” Many students are taught traditional prescriptive (if not formulaic) writing procedures in their secondary courses. In their ENC 1101 courses at UCF, these students are taught that writing is context-sensitive, judged by values that are set by the community for which the writing is intended. The differences between the two approaches are striking to students and can be challenging for instructors to bridge. In many cases, instructors use Mike Rose’s (1980) “Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer’s Block” and/or Joseph Williams’s (1981) “The Phenomenology of Error” to introduce students to heuristic-driven writing approaches that rely less on a rule-bound sense of “correctness” and more on a situational sense of rhetorical appropriateness. From these readings and various class activities, students in DWR’s FYC courses are expected to disagree with the aforementioned statement by the end of the semester, despite most entering ENC 1101 believing that rules do indeed determine whether writing is good.
Students in Mr. Grey’s classes (see Figure 5.9) responded as expected, with the majority of students agreeing with the statement at the beginning of the semester and far more of them disagreeing by the end. However, students in Mr. Brown’s classes (see Figure 5.10) provided unexpected responses that, at first glance, suggest they did not change their perception of writing-related rules over the semester. Student responses did not vary from one modality to another as I thought they would. However, they did vary significantly from one instructor to the next. This unexpected result drew my attention to the question of how the perspectives of various stakeholders in a FYC course can create tensions in the activities of those classes. That question cannot be answered by the quantitative data that brought it to mind, so I asked the instructors for more information.

Figure 5.9: Mr. Grey’s students’ responses to “There are rules that determine if writing is good or if it has errors.” Note the shift from moderate agreement to disagreement, as anticipated.
Figure 5.10: Mr. Brown’s students’ responses to “There are rules that determine if writing is good or if it has errors.” Note the near-identical responses, counter to department expectations.

In an effort to employ more responsive qualitative techniques that seek to understand the standpoint of each participant, I asked Mr. Brown to help me interpret the results that initially seemed to suggest his classes did not meet one of DWR’s objectives. In his initial response, Mr. Brown pointed out that the types of rules and errors in question are not clear in the way the survey prompt is phrased, which he said could lead to student confusion. He argued that, if students indicate agreement with the statement, it doesn’t necessarily demonstrate evidence that students DON’T have a conception of writing constructs. It just means that the student interpreted the statement in a particular way. With so many ways to interpret that statement, it is really hard to make an argument about constructs using said data. (Brown, personal communication, 03 Apr 2014)

Thinking the concepts of “rules” and “errors” should be fairly clear in this context, I continued the investigation by again interviewing Mr. Brown, attempting to identify the difference in our perspectives. In this follow-up conversation, I asked how he approached the concepts of rule and error in his ENC 1101 courses. At the risk of asking him a leading question, I suggested that the difference might be in the way we present the meaning of the word “rule”—specifically, that he might use that word to include flexible or generally arbitrary guidelines for constructing writing, as opposed to limiting the use of “rules” to the sorts of absolute statements found in grammar texts and English primers. Brown responded by explaining...
that he teaches students to see the rules themselves as flexible, given the needs of the rhetorical situations in which they apply. He teaches his students to recognize rules as flexible but still applicable in a variety of writing situations. Therefore, he and I concluded, while his students appear to hold nearly identical views of rule-based writing after a semester of study, the results reported in Figure 5.10 more likely indicate that his students hold an entirely different perception of the nature of “rules” than they did at the beginning of the semester. This new view of rules allows students to simultaneously agree with the statement that rules dictate when writing contains errors and understand that writing is flexible and situation-dependent. In this case, the measurement instrument lacked the refinement necessary to accurately discern what students think about writing; however, the striking results led to a productive and revealing conversation.

Overall, these data related to course curriculum show how student responses to composition curriculum is deeply situational, rather than modality-dependent. Much like Russell’s (1999) findings, course delivery mode bore no significant difference in student perception of the course content. However, I have shown that the WAW curriculum can influence student perception of their previous writing courses (as was the case with students’ understanding of rhetoric and purpose) and that the instructor’s presentation of concepts can influence student perception of course outcomes (as was the case with students’ understanding of “rule”-based writing). In the next section, I continue to examine the ways an instructor can influence students’ learning experiences.

5.4 Conclusion: Online Writing Instruction Creates Inherent Tensions for Students

The traditional view of classes as localized, self-contained entities is a fiction that is no longer viable in a technology-infused society. We need to redefine the class. Schools don’t build classes; teachers don’t present a class; students don’t fill a class. Instead, a class is a construct built dynamically from the various interfaces among the students, the teachers, and the institution. Until these components interact and cooperate, we can see a room waiting to be filled, a list of policies waiting to be followed, a collection of students waiting to learn, or a stack of papers waiting to be graded...but no class. It is only when these various components come together in space and time that an actual class forms. When the relevant participants—
and the tools they use—come together, they begin negotiations along interfaces both familiar and novel. Such negotiations involve authority, determination, content, rules, and expected results. The meeting, clashing, and grappling that occur at these interfaces on a daily basis constitute the essence of a class; by examining those interactions, we can better understand the creation and dynamics of classes.

When students enroll in a blended course that they expect is merely a face-to-face course that meets less frequently than normal, what seems to be an isolated issue of confusion actually serves as the catalyst to a series of tensions within the learning environment, often putting the behavior and efforts of student and instructor at odds, distracting attention onto procedure and away from learning. One such tension occurs between the participants (students and the instructor) and the conventions of a classroom. Students enroll in what they believe is a traditional face-to-face course with less meeting time than normal. Based on over a decade of previous experience with classroom environments, these students expect consistency in the conventions of this environment. For instance, they would be prepared for expectations in attendance, possibly participation, assignment submission, and in-class activities like lectures or group work. However, the instructor operates from the demands of a mixed-mode course environment, complete with its unique conventions. Attendance and participation are measured differently in online classes. Assignments might be submitted electronically instead of on paper, making it easier for students to miss deadlines since there is no physical reminder of collection and perhaps no class meeting at the time the assignment is due. While in-class activities may take familiar forms, the components of the course that exist in online spaces may not conform to previous experiences of either students or instructor.

Simply put, the students enter the course believing they can apply their experience with in-person courses, when instead they will be asked to interact with the material in unusual ways. For the instructor, any assumption that students would be comfortable with, or even prepared for, extensive online immersion may meet with student resistance. This contradiction will be discussed further in the next chapter, where I will examine the perspective of instructors as they adapt, create, and execute their courses, focusing on the technologies used in their instruction. The dynamic interplay among the forces of students, instructor, and institution—creates a medium through which conversation, learning, and growth can occur. The class
also, as Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000) put it, “participates in a network of technical, social, and economic contexts,” thereby relating it to other media (p. 65). By bringing together these contexts, a hybrid composition course both incorporates them for examination and also adjusts them to suit the class’s needs at the time.
CHAPTER 6: RESULTS FROM TEACHERS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I argue that classes are collections of interfaces among a variety of participants, rather than something tangible. These interfaces need to be constructed, and in Chapter 5, I address the role that students play in the construction of these interfaces. This chapter takes up that concern from the perspective of the instructors and argues for the importance of interface in our understanding of how instructors construct their classes. To that end, I will use interface theory as a lens for analyzing the experiences of the instructors who participated as this project’s case studies. Additionally, I will rely heavily on Sommers and Saltz’s (2004) framework of experts and novices, building to an understanding of teachers’ class-building efforts as implementing various forms of hybridity. By examining the experiences of these instructors, I will show how the prior expectations of instructors directly influence the way they work with blended courses and potentially conflict with the expectations of their students. Ultimately, I will argue that instructors must take a hybrid approach to their role in class.

Teaching with hybridity requires a conscious and constant negotiation of the tools and methods available, balancing the flexibility students seek with the expectations of a department and the standards of the institution. Similarly, hybridity requires constant negotiation between the position of an expert and that of a novice, balancing experience with course content and novelty with course delivery. Instructors who teach a familiar course in a new format face myriad decisions about the role, use, and integration of technology into their normal routine. These decisions become significantly more pronounced when instructors teach blended courses. The technology-related decisions they make help shape the nature of the course in terms of expectations for performance and interaction. Because blended courses require an instructor to consciously balance two course formats (both online and face-to-face), decisions regarding how those formats interact become increasingly pressing as the semester unfolds. Each of the two instructors who participated as case studies in this project were new to teaching blended courses when I collected
data, though each had many years of experience teaching the department’s writing about writing (WAW) curriculum. Additional details about the instructors and their histories can be found in Chapter 2. These two instructors took different approaches to adapting their courses to the new format, and it would be difficult to overstate the significance of those approaches on their planning, time management, enthusiasm, and feelings of success.

In this chapter, I will address the instructor side of this project’s main research question—to better understand what determines how instructors perceive, construct, and interact with blended first-year composition (FYC) courses as the instructors learn to work with a modality they have not previously taught. This perspective will complement the student experience detailed in Chapter 5. I will discuss how technology influences instructors’ design and implementation process, based on interviews conducted with the two instructors, observations of their course (both in person and online), and analysis of their assignment sheets and course syllabi. I will show how the teachers’ expectations shaped the interfaces of their courses—from the physical interface with students in person to the virtual interfaces created for online components. I will also show how time served as a persistent constraint over implementations of those interfaces. Each of these case studies provides a sort of cautionary tale that exposes the potential difficulties involved in transitioning courses from one delivery mode to another and suggests ways that instructors can successfully negotiate the transition.

The case studies presented below were drawn from a series of interviews during and after the Fall 2012 semester at the University of Central Florida (UCF). I interviewed each instructor once before the beginning of the semester, asking about his plans for how to adopt his course. These interviews revealed the instructors’ priorities for planning a course and expectations for interactions with their students. I conducted a second round of interviews with each instructor toward the end of the term, asking about their perceived success with plans to implement their course designs. In these second interviews, I asked how successful they thought their initial design plans were and how satisfied they were with their classes in both face-to-face and blended modalities. In the Spring 2014 semester, as I found unexpected results in my data analysis, I asked each instructor for a follow-up interview to clarify the details of their experiences
and resolve questions I had about the meaning I interpreted from the data. Additionally, in keeping with
the feminist principles first mentioned in Chapter 2, I asked each instructor to review this chapter in an
effort to portray them, their words, and their approaches to teaching as honestly and accurately as possible.
I had worked with both of the participating instructors before collecting data for this project. The results
provided below draw on my experience with these two instructors as their colleague, their interviewer, and
their co-author. Because of my personal connections with the participating instructors, and in keeping
with a feminist research perspective, I make no assertion whatsoever of objectivity. Instead, I attempt to
present each instructor honestly. I do not intend to compare the instructors’ ability or suggest that one was
more or less effective than the other. Instead, I aim to represent their own conclusions about their work:
When an instructor expressed frustration with his process or results, I present that frustration here and
offer suggestions for the cause of the problems the instructor experienced. When I say that an instructor
struggled with some aspect of a course, it is not a move to evaluate; it is instead an expression of that
instructor’s voiced concerns. The sections below present these instructors’ experiences in an effort to learn
from them, not to judge them, “to analyze rather than to condemn” (Lanham, 2006, p. 159).

6.2 Levels of Experience With Course Interfaces

The two instructors in the study were accustomed to teaching face-to-face, so incorporating online
instruction did not align with their experiences connecting to their students in their familiar modality.
When faced with the challenge of adapting their course to the online environment, the two instructors
chose different solutions to resolve the tensions between their familiar approach to class and the novelty
of teaching in the blended modality. To put it succinctly, one instructor pushed existing in-person activ-
ities into the online environment, preserving fidelity with the original as much as possible. He designed
activities for his face-to-face classes, put the instructions on slides for use on the projector in class, then
worked tirelessly to make those instructions sensible in online spaces, working to ensure students working
online completed the same steps as their in-person counterparts. The other instructor pulled techniques
he developed for the online component of his blended courses into his face-to-face course design, viewing
those techniques as enhancements that would benefit his classes in both modalities. He developed conversation prompts for his students working online, then decided those same prompts would work for his students in face-to-face classes. The fundamental decision whether to preserve existing teaching methods or whether to create new methods for the new modality provided a backdrop for nearly every conversation I had with each instructor. Each of them asserted that this decision shaped his experiences with his courses, his level of satisfaction or frustration with his work, and the perceived effectiveness of his courses. Because each instructor taught both face-to-face and blended versions of the same course the semester this study was conducted, their comments incorporated comparisons of both their prior experiences and their current face-to-face classes.

Changing the course modality inherently changes the interfaces instructors use to teach, even the in-person interfaces we often take for granted. Blended classes draw explicit attention to the interfaces used for a course. Where a face-to-face course has class sessions, a blended course requires labeling like “face-to-face days” or “online components” for each portion of the course. As a result, participants in a blended course are likely to be more aware of the modality in use, perhaps valuing one modality over another. Moving a familiar course into an unfamiliar modality means instructors can draw on extensive experience with one while being completely new to the other. In both of these case studies, the instructors were subject-area experts yet novices to the blended delivery mode. As explained in Chapter 2, each instructor had experience teaching in person and online, but not blended. Incorporating both these positions into an instructor’s identity requires a hybrid persona: skilled in the course, but perhaps not in how the course is being presented. This persona adds considerable complexity to the interfaces between students and instructor because the balance of expertise can vary from one situation to the next. This inconsistent interaction is only possible if instructors abandon the “sage on the stage” identity commonly adopted by instructors teaching in traditional classroom settings (King, 1993). Using a hybrid persona to create a hybrid environment moves online resources to the forefront and privileges the instructor’s experiential familiarity with the field. Instructors learning to work with the new interfaces of blended courses must be more than just “guides on the side” (King, 1993); they must be willing to become learners them-
selves, particularly when their students may have more experience with certain characteristics of online interfaces than they do. Vic (2008) noted a “deepening digital divide between...students and their instructors” and asserted the need for composition scholars to “pay attention to online social networking sites,” using the combination of new attention and existing expertise to “effectively teach technological literacy in the writing classroom” (p 11). In other words, instructors must adopt a hybrid persona, both teaching and learning from their students, in order to be successful in blended environments.

Instructors’ decisions to preserve or re-invent their courses stem from their self-perceptions as either experts in teaching the course or novices with the modality. As these instructors worked to learn how to teach blended courses, their approaches followed what Nancy Sommers and Laura Saltz (2004) wrote about the experiences of first-year writing students. Sommers and Saltz (2004) examined how FYC students’ demeanors affected their outlook on, and ultimately their success in, their course; the instructors’ demeanors affected them in similar ways. The analysis from the two authors focused on the liminality of students’ experiences in FYC, viewing that precarious positioning as an opportunity or a hindrance: “The first year of college offers students the double perspective of the threshold, a liminal state from which they might leap forward—or linger at the door” (Sommers & Saltz, 2004, p. 125). This choice between leaping and lingering is not unique to the experiences of first-year writers. I assert that anyone engaging in unfamiliar activities for the first time faces a similar “double perspective”; instructors asked to teach a blended course for the first time have myriad opportunities to leap into new experiences or linger in familiar ones, with each student interaction necessitating such a choice. The conclusion Sommers and Saltz (2004) drew based on the freshmen they studied can apply just as well to the instructors I studied and the challenges they faced as delivery-mode novices.

Being a novice...doesn’t mean waiting meekly for the future, nor does it mean breaking with the past. Rather, it involves adopting an open attitude..., a willingness to experiment..., and a faith that, with practice and guidance, the new expectations...can be met. Being a novice
allows [people] to be changed by what they learn [and] to have new ideas. (Sommers & Saltz, 2004, p. 134)

When the instructors I studied adopted an “open attitude” about their instructional methods, or when they showed a “willingness to experiment” with their design goals, these instructors did indeed have new ideas and were indeed changed by what they learned, but only when they approached the challenge of blended learning as a novice. Just as Sommers and Saltz (2004) concluded that “freshmen build authority not by writing from a position of [authorial] expertise but by writing into expertise,” those who teach freshmen build their instructional authority in new modalities not by composing a classroom from a position of instructional expertise but by designing their way into that expertise, using their inventiveness to create instructional solutions that integrate technology into their classrooms. Instructors need to be comfortable negotiating the hybrid persona, acting as a novice or an expert in response to the needs of a given situation. Before I review the collected data in detail, I will provide a brief overview of the consequences of the instructors’ pedagogical decisions and create a basic framework for the examples and analysis that follow.

Mr. Grey tried to replicate the experience of his face-to-face courses when developing the blended version, translating content from a familiar synchronous format into an unfamiliar online environment, which aligns with Scott Warnock’s (2009) advice to “think migration, not transformation, when teaching online” (p. xvii). Warnock (2009) encouraged instructors new to online writing instruction (OWI) to “think about what [they] do well, and then think about how [they] can use various resources to translate those skills” to the online environment (p. xvii). Mr. Grey’s solution to adapting content to a new modality was an effort to translate his existing skills—what Grey himself called “replication” (personal communication, 1 July 2014). Ultimately, Grey resisted the online environment, viewing it as a challenge to his established method, and tried to maintain consistency despite the new modality. This decision to replicate a traditionally face-to-face course into a mixed-mode environment created unwanted stress and frustration for himself with little to no perceivable benefit to instructor or students, and Mr. Grey
repeatedly commented on the difficulties and time requirements of this approach. Efforts to replicate face-to-face practices in a mixed-mode course appeared to be detrimental to the mixed-mode course but had no noticeable effect on the original face-to-face course. For his part, Mr. Brown created a new online component for his blended course, then made it the centerpiece of his course design, even using the online component as an enhancement to his face-to-face classes. This instructor predicted that the online component of his courses would create a physical distance among his students, and he used online technologies as a way to try and bridge that expected gap. His decision to enhance a face-to-face course with online components created enthusiasm, intrigue, and motivation for his own teaching; his efforts to create a mixed-mode course by enhancing his original face-to-face design led to perceived benefits that he then extended back to the face-to-face version.¹ When faced with the need to design for the new modality, Mr. Grey chose to “linger at the door” staying with his familiar abilities while Mr. Brown “leapt forward” into new approaches to his classes (Sommers & Saltz, 2004, p. 125). The sections below illustrate the complex consequences of that fundamental decision.

6.3 Mr. Grey: Replicating Existing In-Person Content in Online Modalities

At the time this study was conducted, Mr. Grey had been teaching at UCF for six years, with a total of fifteen years’ experience teaching at the college level. He was a regular participant in department discussions about curriculum design and in routine program assessment involving portfolio reading at the end of each semester. He was a member of the group of instructors who piloted UCF’s new WAW curriculum three years before this study began. More recently, he served on a task force charged with re-envisioning a key component of standard assignments used in second-semester FYC. As a result, Grey was aware of the importance of, and conversations around, curriculum design within the department. His involvement

¹As discussed in the introduction, I use the term “mixed-mode” to label courses according to the nomenclature used at the research site. While it may be more accurate for me to discuss “how writing instructors built a blended course for the first time,” I choose to use the language of the study site and participants. Adopting that terminology helps clarify meaning, more naturally integrate quoted conversations, and reflect the complications resulting from the tension between terms used in the literature and terms used in practice.
in such matters would qualify him as what Sommers and Saltz (2004) would call an “expert” in terms of teaching FYC course content. Experts, they cautioned, too often face the challenge of inflexible thinking when they “refuse to be novices”: These students “continue to rely on their high school methods” and “often end up writing versions of the same paper again and again, no matter how different their assignments” (Sommers & Saltz, 2004, p. 140). In much the same way, Mr. Grey viewed himself as an expert in terms of the FYC curriculum and continued to rely on his face-to-face methods, composing versions of the same course again and again, no matter how different the modality. The clearest indication of this practice came from his course syllabi, presented in Appendix H. Mr. Grey created a satisfactory syllabus for his face-to-face course, then changed only the information about meeting days when adapting the syllabus for his mixed-mode class. The activities on Fridays (the day he said class “met online”) were the same in both classes, and he even listed laptop computers as optional resources for both sections. His major course assignments, presented in Appendix J, were also the same across delivery modes. Grey expected his methods to persist despite the conversion from one modality to another. Mr. Grey used his existing course as a guide and attempted to create a reasonable replica of the in-class experience within the online component. He set out to “to take face-to-face content and activities and transpose them into an online environment” (personal communication, 1 July 2014). His efforts focused on fidelity, trying to find ways to convert what he did in the classroom to a familiar experience online, relying on the success of his in-class style. He recognized that the online environment afforded more opportunities than the classroom environment, repeatedly referring to Marshall McLuhan’s (1994) ideas about the importance of the medium for understanding communication. Mr. Grey saw course modalities as the medium of exchange, with the course content constituting the message he attempted to convey. Within that theoretical framework, Grey attempted not to copy, but to adapt, his message to fit the new medium. However, he had limited resources to devote to those efforts, choosing to focus his attention on the modality he was comfortable with and certain he would teach in again.

²The instructor’s name and email address have been changed on the sample documents to maintain his pseudonym; all other content is unedited.
Mr. Grey’s years of experience with the FYC curriculum in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric (DWR) meant he was familiar with the course content—he said he “hit a new comfort stride with the material,” feeling “a lot more comfortable with having the variety of assignments” that he had experimented with over the years. Based on our conversations throughout the semester (and his affirming response to an earlier draft of this chapter), Grey perceived himself as an established expert in the curriculum with plenty of experience in teaching and designing the Composition I (ENC 1101) course. But his inexperience with the blended modality meant he was unfamiliar with the delivery mode. Despite Grey’s desire for an example to build from—his “recipe book” discussed in Chapter 3—he had no pre-built model to follow, only his training that ensured he knew how to operate the campus learning-management system (LMS). Essentially, the example he had hoped to modify and riff off of was not available. Rather than approaching the new format as an opportunity to improvise, which he feels comfortable with, he saw the new modality as a scenario that required him to start from scratch, which he was not as confident doing. Grey also struggled with the need to plan an entire course from a high level, feeling “like I am experienced enough that I should be able to visualize fifteen week components...at least better than I have.” Indeed, Grey’s expertise with face-to-face FYC courses had been built on “a lot of innovation and changes over a 3-4 year period leading up to” his first attempt at a blended course (personal communication, 1 July 2014).

Before the term began, he expressed concern that he was “relying too much on adjustments during the semester.” These planning challenges limited Grey’s self-confidence and creative drive. He expressed his discomfort about the development, without a model, of the mixed-mode course, saying it was a familiar predicament. He experienced similar frustrations when UCF transitioned to a new FYC curriculum about three years after he started teaching in the department.

Because it’s a new curriculum, I felt...as though I wanted to be more restricted in how to teach it. I wanted to kind of have a, you know, “so here’s what your assignments should look like. Here’s the readings.” What that should look like. ... I wanted some kind of a... a clear template to give myself an experience with so I could understand it better to then figure out
why it works, what doesn’t, and then how to make that my own. ... We were encouraged to make it our own right from the start, but...I don’t think I work best that way.

In these conversations, Grey explained his frustrations by expressing a dislike of having too much freedom to explore. His reliance on established experiences showed he was not comfortable adopting the role of a novice. Whereas a novice looks for “an open attitude” and “a willingness to experiment” that “allows [them] to be changed by what they learn [and] to have new ideas” (Sommers & Saltz, 2004, p. 134), Grey wanted to be “more restricted,” given the readings and assignments and an overall template for the course. He specifically said that he does not work best when given the freedom and flexibility that a novice needs to experiment. Mr. Grey perceived himself as a subject-matter expert and actively resisted a self-image of a delivery-mode novice.

Mr. Grey manifested his creativity through the process of adaptation, not creation. In both transitions—to a new curriculum and to a new delivery mode—the department worked to give its instructors freedom to develop their courses as they want, intending it as an opportunity for creativity. Instead, this freedom served as a hindrance for Mr. Grey, pushing him past his comfort zone and making the entire semester a struggle. Without the experience of a model course to experiment with, Grey did not know what to expect (or what was expected of him) for his blended course. Because he struggled to adopt a hybrid persona, his self-image as an expert made him resist the idea of experimenting with the delivery mode. In the next section, I explore Mr. Grey’s approach to course design—an approach that drew exclusively on his strengths as a subject-matter expert—in light of his struggles with the hybrid persona.

6.3.1 Grey’s Preparations: Modify Prior Successes

Because Grey was not given a pre-built model to start from, he used the most familiar and well-tested model he knew of: his own face-to-face courses. He used his existing course content as the model and looked for ways to preserve that model while moving it to a new modality. Grey’s adaptation efforts went into moving familiar content to a new environment, rather than taking a different approach to the content and assignments themselves. As a result, Mr. Grey used the collection of assignments and ap-
proaches he had collected over the years—his recipe book, in essence—as a starting point from which he adapted his courses and to which he applied the technologies he used.

When planning these courses, 90% of my effort, if not more than that, is really about the content...and taking what I’ve learned over the last three years of I have spent teaching first-year writing and trying to do it better. So I have a lot of brainpower that I wanted or needed to spend just on the course, regardless of the mode.

Even his decisions regarding which technologies to use were guided by the desire to start with what he knew: He chose to use the institution-provided LMS, which he had been trained to use, as the sole interface for the online component of the course, rather than branching out to incorporate digital tools beyond the LMS or communities outside the university. Indeed, Grey even adapted the way he presented course material to suit the interface of the LMS, rather than taking the opposite approach, finding technology that suited his pedagogical needs:

What I’ve done with the home page every week, it always looks the same. There is a folder that says “Homework due Friday.” ... And then next to it, a folder that says “Class Session for Friday.” ... You open up that folder, and I’ve learned to use the single file layout [a function of the LMS], so that’s kind of got this sort of linear start here and here. And the first thing is always a Word document that they can open which is kind of like a checklist: here’s what you need to do for our class session.

Grey started with the content he had developed for his face-to-face classes, formed it to fit within the structure of the LMS, and thereby created a routine for himself and his students. This reliance on established approaches to the class created tensions within his course development and his teaching—tensions both he and his students were explicitly aware of throughout the semester, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Mr. Grey had not anticipated these challenges at the beginning of the semester; they were an adaptation he made as the course unfolded. He initially planned to use the online environment as an opportunity to infuse his teaching with more creativity and to give students more opportunities with their learning.
In our first interview, Grey argued against moving content from the face-to-face environment to online spaces—the exact process he ended up following throughout the semester:

I think it’s incorrect or missing an opportunity as a teacher to think, well what do I do in the classroom? How would I take that and move it online? You know, that’s actually missing a lot of opportunity for being dynamic. For having students contribute to their learning. For learning by exploring.

He was, however, concerned with his ability to create new, meaningful content for students to work with online.

I’m worried about... just creating filler. ... And I’m worried about just coming up with the task just because... you’re supposed to have done three days worth of work and... two of my classes are doing three days worth of work. You’re only doing two if I don’t have something else. ... If I do this correctly... I’ll have a sense of what we can do differently on those online days. You know, the days that are reserved for the online in mixed-mode shouldn’t be..., “Okay well on Friday we’re going to spend class reading, so here’s what you’re going to do online. Go ahead and click on the link. It’ll tell you what reading to do, and answer the question.”

The scenario he created as an example of what not to do when creating material for the online component actually became the model for how he built his courses. Despite seeing benefit in dynamically re-creating the course, Grey went against what he saw as an opportunity. He continually struggled to preserve his tried-and-true face-to-face teaching style online, at the expense of his creativity and the “opportunity for being dynamic” he discussed before the term began. Grey believed constraints on his time and attention played a significant role in limiting his efforts to essentially listen to his own advice. He asserted that having to teach two different delivery modes simultaneously had a detrimental affect on his planning:

I’m fairly certain my approach to be more flexible as a novice of the M course would be different in a semester where teaching the M course for the first time was not paired with the face-to-face version of the same course. (personal communication, 1 July 2014)
As a result, Mr. Grey felt overwhelmed, perpetually behind, and frustrated by the process of running what he saw as two separate courses that he kept trying to force into alignment.

In effect, Grey tried to implement in-person and online interfaces identically, preserving the strategies that had proven effective in his face-to-face classes despite the change in delivery mode. As a result, he fell into a routine of creating course content the precise way he initially said he wanted to avoid. When asked about his progress toward successfully adapting to the new modality, Grey was pessimistic, returning to the same benchmark he had used before:

I know I’m not maximizing the potential. One of the keywords that we were using at the beginning of the semester was ‘dynamic.’ You know, some kind of dynamism that could be active in these kinds of classes, which I’m kind of reconsidering a little bit.

At the start of the semester, Grey was looking at the new delivery mode as an opportunity for the dynamism he desired in his courses, and he often spoke at length about his plans for the course and how he would implement his goals. However, when I pressed him about his feelings of success and asked specifically how his plans for creating blended classes that were dynamic, interested, and invested were working, Grey responded with uncharacteristic brevity: “I don’t think they are.” It appears that Mr. Grey’s reliance on his expertise as an instructor was insufficient to carry him through successful implementation in a new modality. This suggests that paying attention to delivery mode may be just as important as emphasizing content-area training for instructors: At least for Mr. Grey, expertise in the latter was insufficient to overcome challenges in the former.

However, Grey’s resilience and self-image as an expert instructor allowed him to re-cast his analysis of the situation. Rather than only focusing on the challenges and frustrations he faced trying to migrate course content into the online space, Grey eventually examined his in-person teaching and found a sense of confidence based on the self-image he originally held: he reaffirmed his position as an expert teacher.

Maybe I didn’t give myself enough credit that what I do in a face-to-face class is very dynamic.

That the way we move from one activity to another within a ten or fifteen minute period, the
way on one day I’ll have group discussion, the next day will be looking at comic strips and videos, the next one will be kind of like reflective writing, and then bring it to a whole class discussion.

By viewing himself as an expert teacher, by relying on his experiences as an in-person teacher to guide his work for the semester, and by using his expert status as a measure of self-worth, Grey emphasized what he saw as strengths in his in-person teaching style. Although he remained dissatisfied with the way he approached the blended course, he believed that the characteristics he had tried (perhaps unsuccessfully) to integrate into his blended courses had been already present in his in-person courses.

Unfortunately, the questions I asked during student interviews did not directly address whether Grey’s students believed he was meeting his own goals for dynamism in class. However, several of his students expressed appreciation for his flexibility as an instructor, if not the variety of course activities. Amber provided a representative summary of how Grey’s students perceived his diverse interactions:

He is also very open...with questions. And sometimes it’s—you don’t ask the question online, so you can say, “Well, can you clarify that in the classroom?” And that also helps, I think, having the mixed-mode. It’s not all in class, and it’s not all online. You have both. So you have the flexibility...for somebody who’s quieter and doesn’t want to...clarify an expectation in class, then they just shoot an email. Or if people are like me, and you’re like, “Please tell me in person.”

Students in Grey’s mixed-mode courses appreciated the flexible contact methods inherent in the modality, though they did not directly comment on class activities.

Online, Grey focused on what he saw as constraints: ways that the online environment demanded he do certain things and prepare certain content. He trusted the content he had already prepared for his in-person courses, and moving it online, rather than creating new content, seemed sensible and reliable. Transferring existing content helped him avoid the struggle of trying to find ways to create material for the third of the class that was to take place online. Grey found that “there wasn’t a lot of...time this first time
through...to address things that came up over the course of the year, rather than having any time to try and predict all sorts of things.” However, he came to see that the strategies he relied on—those that proved successful for him over the years in a face-to-face environment—did not work the same way online. He said that, in trying to help students learn, “the techniques that I use to do that are being compromised by the online session.” Just as the content of writing studies changes with the technologies we use for writing, the instructional strategies must adapt, as well. The frustration Grey felt about teaching online was a reaction to the need to create a new course for a new modality. Traditional face-to-face processes and activities did not translate well into the online space, but mid-semester, Grey found himself unable to re-invent his already-in-progress course, primarily due to a perceived lack of time.

6.3.2 Grey’s Expectations: Dynamism Versus Timeliness

One of Grey’s most common complaints throughout the semester was a lack of time to do everything he was trying to do.³ At the end of the semester, he lamented, “I don’t know how to make time right now” to provide as much feedback as he wanted. He also wanted to give students more opportunity to make discussion comments: “they’re not given enough time” or that “they are either not making enough time and/or waiting until the last minute for some of it.” He often expressed surprise over the time required to prepare for his blended course—time he didn’t seem to expect, perhaps due to his self-perception as an expert instructor and his extensive experience with face-to-face courses. The first time an instructor teaches a new class, that class will likely demand a substantial investment of time for preparation. In Mr. Grey’s case, he had taught the ENC 1101 course many times before, but never in the blended modality. This difference is deceptive. What initially appeared to be four sections of the same course quickly became, to Grey, a matter of two sections each of two different courses. Additionally, several studies have found that online courses demand more time of instructors than their in-person counterparts (Bender, Wood, & Vre-

³It should be noted anecdotally that Mr. Grey has an informal reputation within the department of being the kind of instructor who errs on the side of “working too hard.” Other members of the faculty regularly acknowledge his near-obsessive devotion to his work and his students. That in mind, “everything he was trying to do” might be an unfair standard to set, as Grey is often perceived as trying to do more than is commonly expected of one in an instructor position.
devoogd, 2004; Abacus Associates, 2000; Visser, 2000; Worley & Tesdell, 2009). The 2000 NEA study found that “even those who have taught their distance learning course eight times or more spend more hours...on their distance learning course” (Abacus Associates, 2000, p. 50).

Grey had not created the online content for his course in advance, likely in an effort to preserve his ability to be “dynamic,” allowing flexibility in his plans and content as the course progressed. He said, “I wasn’t willing to make a lot of time this first time through ... to try and predict all sorts of things.” He didn’t want to guess what would happen as the course unfolded. However, this approach meant that he had to create the online content each week, right when it was needed, adding stress and a sense of critical urgency each week. At one point, he explained the frustrations of preparing weekly activities online:

> I’ve already got my PowerPoint [file]. I’ve already got my whole assignment written out. I’ve already got whatever documents or handouts they are going to use for the Friday face-to-face class session. So I’ve got all the stuff built and created, now I’ve got to make it online and the online shell for it. And it can take two hours. Never less than an hour. They can take from an hour to two hours to take what’s already created and just to put it online. You’re not just uploading stuff. Because you would explain the stuff face-to-face, so you need to type out your explanations, you need to make a note to make sure that I don’t forget something. I have notes to make sure I don’t forget something in a face-to-face class session, but they don’t have that online.

Despite feeling confident in his approach to teaching and his knowledge of the curriculum, a hint of despair started creeping into Grey’s common refrain: “I thought I would have more time.”

Grey adjusted his plan, relying on his self-perception as an expert instructor to carry him through planning his in-person courses, then adapting his plans for online delivery as he went. He found this was an unobtainable goal due to the weekly last-minute constraints. By mid-semester, he had all but declared defeat:
I’ve been hoping that by the end of the Wednesday class session that they could go into [the LMS] and already have the Friday class session there and work on it and get it done before the weekend if they wanted to. And that has not happened at all this semester.

Instead, he struggled to get caught up at the end of each week, posting content online near, or at times even after, the deadline he created in order to “hold class” online on Friday at the same time as the in-person sessions earlier in the week.

Ultimately, Grey came to see the differences between the modalities in terms of the types of preparation they demanded. He would plan for his week based on his usual routine of face-to-face courses, then adapt the last day’s content for his classes that, in his eyes, met online.⁴ Having one class meet in person all the time and one meet in the blended format led Grey to feel like he had two classes to prepare, creating a much larger burden than he had initially anticipated.

I don’t have the time or mental energy to teach two different classes. And so if all I had was this [blended] course, four online courses, or had a year to experience it, let me take what I’m already doing face-to-face and, put it online, and think about what I could do to change it. Then maybe there would be an opportunity to see what I can do to change it, new activities and new assignments and things like that.

I should note here how UCF administrative policy views modalities as a factor in recognizing instructor labor. The school credits instructors in annual reviews the first time they teach in a new modality, recognizing the work that goes into creating the new material. However, UCF deems teaching a course in two modalities a single course prep, not two. This difference can lead to instructors feeling their adaptation efforts are undervalued, and it creates a disparity between institutional expectation and instructor perception. Unfortunately, such disparities are common. A 2000 NEA survey found that, “in spite of spending

⁴As discussed in Chapter 5, while Mr. Grey viewed his blended courses as having two in-person meetings (Monday and Wednesday) and one online meeting (Friday) per week, his students did not share that expectation when enrolling in the course.
more hours on their distance learning course, most (84%) of faculty get no course reduction” (Abacus Associates, 2000, p. 50).

In this section, I have shown how Mr. Grey approached the planning of his blended courses and the effects on course planning of his self-image as an expert. I also showed that his desire for dynamism in his online courses came at the expense of planning, which created cascading effects, resulting in his frustration and dissatisfaction. However, we have also seen that Grey’s resilience and strong self-image as an expert instructor allowed him to re-evaluate his view of dynamic instruction and assure himself that, despite his frustrations, he was still running a successful class. In the next section, I take one final look at Grey’s approach to instruction, looking at student participation and how both he and his students viewed their performance throughout the semester.

6.3.3 Participation and Performance

For Mr. Grey, one of his greatest and most unexpected challenges for the semester was accommodating the delivery-mode expectations of the students, which reinforced an approach to class that was based on digital dualism (nathanjurgenson, 2011; davidbanks, 2012). As explained in Chapter 5, students often view online classes as places where tasks are performed, not places where learning happens. This view perpetuates a distinction between online and offline spaces that Carr (2013) argued no longer applies. He said that in a digitally dualistic view, going online was “an event with clear demarcations” that “usually comprised a limited and fairly routinized set of activities” (Carr, 2013). Grey’s students started the semester with the expectation that in-person parts of a course were separate from the online components. That is, if the students knew those online components even existed in the first place. After speaking with his students in the first few weeks, Grey discovered that most (48 out of 50, according to him) students in his two mixed-mode sections were not aware when they registered that the course had an online component and instead believed it met only two days a week. Grey’s report corroborates comments from Stephen O’Connell (in Chapter 4) about student unfamiliarity with the meeting requirements of college courses. These differences in views of scheduling created formidable tension within Grey’s classes, as he operated
on the assumption that the course had an “online session” on Fridays in lieu of an in-person meeting. His students, however, operated on the assumption that the course met for two-thirds the normal duration of a three-credit-hour class. (While the phrasing I use may make the situation seem obvious to my readers, I should point out that these students are freshmen with little prior experience of the norms of college-level course scheduling or credit hours.) The 48 students who were surprised to learn the course was mixed-mode signed up for the course expecting to have Fridays off, yet Grey expected his students to be available online that day. Such a fundamental and widespread difference between the students’ and the instructor’s perception of classroom conventions fueled challenges, frustrations, and confusion throughout the semester.

Differences between student and instructor expectations can be manifest through assignment submission. Amber, in Mr. Grey’s mixed-mode course, discussed how submitting work at the beginning of the semester presented challenges:

At first, [submitting work online] was weird. And part of that was because none of us...we weren’t prepared for that. And so then it was, well I did it, but you were supposed to submit it online. I think that he works very well with us. He gave us a couple of weeks to get...used to that. I’m sure there’s some people every now and then have slipped up on it.

Grey recognized this challenge and worked to overcome the obstacle. His solution was to create yet another interface through which he interacted with his students: a mass email, distributed weekly, that told students what they should work on for the rest of the week. These emails helped ensure that students knew what was expected of them, and several students said they appreciated the messages. Amber explained the value of this routine:

One of the things that I have found that he has done that I feel works well for an online class is that he sends out a direction sheet. So, you know, on Wednesday, he will email us, “Here’s Wednesday’s homework. Here’s where it goes. Be prepared for this on Friday, which will all be online.” So it kind of gives you kind of like a schedule for the week.
However, a discussion of email would be incomplete without acknowledgement of a view expressed by multiple students. They believe email is an older, less effective, less immediate, and less convenient communication tool when compared to other more familiar technologies, such as Facebook messaging, Twitter, Snapchat, or WhatsApp. Official communication to students occurs over email, and most internal university communication relies on the technology, yet students are often reluctant to use their school email accounts. This creates a tension between instructors and students and makes the interface problematic—one party relies on its use while the other resists.

Students also expressed frustrations over deadlines that, though consistent from week to week, didn’t align with their initial expectations for their commitment to the course. A student in Grey’s mixed-mode course explained how modality affected his view of deadlines:

If someone were to tell me...this class meets three times...a week, face-to-face, in this classroom, I’d be like, okay I’ll be there every Monday, Wednesday, [and] Friday. But the fact that it was kind of online I kind of just brushed it off a little. ... I felt as if deadlines were a little lenient...the fact that it kind of just wasn’t face-to-face with the professor, I felt as if...I didn’t really have to put as much effort in..., so I would definitely trade the [online] part.

Some students expected the class to be entirely offline, whereas Mr. Grey presented it as blending the two modalities, moving back and forth each week almost like a pendulum. Grey said some of his students expected to have Fridays “free” with no class-related obligations, yet he assigned work that he expected students to do that day. Ultimately, both the students and the instructor viewed the two modalities as a sort of distracting dualism, rather than a beneficial augmentation of one another. Treating these course modalities as separate sessions and an arbitrary difference evokes Sherry Turkle (1995), who argued that such separations between in-person and online interfaces are “contributing to a general reconsideration of traditional, unitary notions of identity” (1995, p. 260). Grey’s dualistic approach to delivery mode could potentially lead to a fractured view of the course, making it difficult for students to view the class as a cohesive whole.

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Viewing online and in-person portions of the class as distinct entities created trouble for Grey’s classes. Much of the trouble relates to differing expectations for participation or engagement. According to Mr. Grey, students in his face-to-face class sessions are nearly guaranteed a more involved experience because Grey assures students in attendance participate:

You don't have the option to show up in my class face-to-face and not participate. That doesn't happen. That hasn't happened in years. And a lot of that is because of the dynamics and the engagement, not because you're forced to.

However, Grey had trouble getting students to participate online. (This is a stark contrast to Mr. Brown's experiences, detailed below, where he had more trouble with face-to-face participation than he did with online discussions.) Grey did not see the online space helping students come together or find a voice online they didn't have in class. Instead, he thought his students were better able to resist participation and fall silent while online:

Online if you don't show up, I'm moving forward as though you know the information. So students maybe who would be missing out are falling further and further behind. And a lot of what's happening in class discussion is building upon the bonding of the class, the relationships that are developing in class.

Grey felt the connections in online spaces aren't as strong as those in person. He believed his students in blended classes weren't any more shy than those in his face-to-face classes. Grey attributed diminished participation in blended courses to a lack of familiarity among the participants, perhaps the result of the dualist approach—students interacted in person but did most of their online work independently.

Seeing them twice and not seeing them again for five days? It's kind of like becoming an obstacle. And to see, you know what, the [blended] classes are not really any more shy. They just don't know each other either. They see each other twice and then not for five days. And then heaven forbid they should miss one class or, you know, one class is off because of Labor Day. So by week three, they were meeting just one time that week.
Despite his conviction that the course “met” online on Fridays, Grey’s concerns about student familiarity are expressed in terms that clearly prioritize in-person interactions, to the exclusion of any online connections. Grey’s desire to have a mixed-mode course that met three times a week may not have been successful, even to himself.

Mr. Grey lamented that conversations did not seem beneficial or encouraging for students in his mixed-mode classes, though in-class conversations were motivating and rewarding for his face-to-face classes.

Whereas the face-to-face classes see the value of having class discussion and how it culminates in, well, “Here’s the take-away points. Well isn’t it interesting that where you guys took the discussion kind of overlapped with where I wanted you to go with it. So that’s why we had this conversation.” And they are kind of seeing the value of it. The online discussions are a “jumping through hoops” exercise. And I don’t want to be. It’s the last thing I want to do with any of my teaching. And I’m not sure how to avoid that or construct it differently so it doesn’t happen.

The online environment became a source of frustration because Grey couldn’t determine how best to make use of traditional online tools and still maintain his pedagogical standards. Ultimately, he came to dislike online discussions, finding them inferior to those held in person. However, student comments in Chapter 5 revealed that they expected online course content to consist of activities, rather than productive interactions or learning opportunities. Grey’s frustration stems from a tension between expectations: He expects students to learn online, whereas his students came to the online portion of class expecting only to do things.

Additionally, Mr. Grey felt like he would be violating student expectations of, or institutional mandates for, delivery modes if he integrated online components into a face-to-face course. He chose to maintain a restriction he held (and the university supports) that students should not be expected to have access to mobile technology in classes that meet entirely face-to-face, even though students in such classes
routinely use the Internet for their homework assignments. He felt constrained by the limitations he saw in the available delivery modes, at one point asking, “How do you create a really great online assignment and then not also require that work for the other class, you know, that's supposed to be entirely face-to-face?” Grey struggled with the tension he felt between his obligations to students—to create and implement “really great assignments”—and his obligations to the university—to adhere to defined delivery modes. He wanted to be fair in two incompatible ways at once.

I feel like a parent a little bit in teaching [two different modalities]. Because you don’t want to give anybody the advantage that some of your other students don’t have. But this is where mixed-mode might have an advantage.

Grey’s perceptions of student performance supported his dualistic stance. As the semester progressed, he identified distinct differences between the modalities in terms of how well the students understand the material from the various readings in the course.

My face-to-face classes have surprised me with how much they can engage and embrace the material now and what they’re doing with it. And kind of going along with the writing assignments and how they are finding meaning in the assignments themselves and what they’re discovering about themselves with the assignments. ... Whereas the mixed mode course needs a bit more patience, a bit more understanding, a bit more kind of like, how do I want to strip down some of the material a little bit so that what I’m trying to emphasize from it is in the spotlight more?

Here, Mr. Grey seems to mirror his students’ expectation that learning happens more in person than online. My data were unable to show whether students did indeed learn less in mixed-mode courses, or whether this expectation was simply present but unwarranted. In any case, students who believe they are asked only to do things online, combined with an instructor concerned that the course material needs to be simplified for the online modality, may create a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the students achieve less because all participants expected it to happen all along.
The same class that Grey devoted more time to also, he believed, needed more time with the material, further exacerbating his frustrations with the time required by, and available to, the course. He continued his thinking into a discussion of the sophistication of the students in his classes:

It seems the face-to-face classes can handle a bit more nuance of the material we are reading. If there are four or five or six claims going on in the piece, that we can kind of see how those are woven together and talk about the different directions the different claims are taking us. Whereas the [mixed-mode] classes are kind of more of “Let’s focus on this main claim.” You know, why this matters to us and we can kind of connect with some of the other readings we’ve done. So it’s kind of... “dumbing down” is not the right word to use. It’s not dumbing down. But it is kind of a streamlining.

That he struggled with the term “dumbing down” suggests a concern for the rigor and intensity of the material, and a fear that the students may not be keeping up. This concern echoes a comment quoted above, where he said if a student doesn’t “show up” for online content, he will move on without them. Grey’s concern for maintaining the rigor of his courses and for keeping students in tune with the content combined when I asked him which outcome was most difficult to teach online. He explained,

My job is not teaching the outcomes but helping students learn the outcomes. And the techniques that I use to do that are being compromised by the online sessions...by lack of participation.

Once again, this shows the interface directly influencing the efficacy of Grey’s teaching methods. Students’ expectations for the delivery mode essentially prevented them from conceiving of participation of the sort Grey desired, leading to frustration for all participants. Grey was unable to get his students to use the online space as an opportunity for knowledge construction, and his students struggled to find meaning in the tasks he assigned because they did not fit their model for online coursework.

Grey’s experiences show how instructors can fall back on creating a blended course by replication, becoming frustrated in the process. He initially intended to make the online component more original and
“dynamic”—to employ the hybrid principle of using the online environment to do things that couldn’t be done face-to-face. Yet when this proved a daunting task of re-creating his course, he resorted a routine of doing exactly what he at first wanted to avoid: copying content from one modality to the next in an effort to rely on his subject-matter expertise, rather than creatively making use of the affordances of the new environment. As the semester progressed, Grey maintained his self-perception as an expert instructor by re-evaluating his face-to-face instructional methods, emphasizing the dynamism he saw in his existing pedagogy and reassuring himself that transferring that material online was not as egregious as he initially feared. Ultimately, though, Grey felt he devoted too much of his time to an online environment that elicited too little engagement from students. Grey’s experiences show the frustrations and questionable benefits of moving content directly into an online space. His decision to operate in that way suggests he viewed it as a necessary fall-back position when the prospects of creating new course content seemed too daunting.

The challenges Grey faced highlight three factors that determine the success of a blended course:
1. aligning student and instructor expectations for each modality so all participants agree on the purpose served by each part of a course,
2. adopting a hybrid self-image as an instructor, balancing the roles of both expert and novice as needed to provide confidence and flexibility, and
3. resisting a dualistic approach to combining modalities, which fragments the identity of a class and prevents effective hybridization of delivery.

In the next section, I will review Mr. Brown’s case, with nearly opposite experiences from Mr. Grey’s frustrations, providing additional insights into how instructors can plan for and implement differences in course modalities.

6.4 Mr. Brown: Developing New Blended Methods; Applying in Face-to-Face

At the time this study was conducted, Mr. Brown had been teaching at UCF for about three and a half years. In addition, he had diverse experience teaching writing courses at various post-secondary
institutions, routinely teaching courses for nearby state colleges and private online universities. Brown’s diverse experience as an FYC instructor justifies labeling him with Sommers and Saltz’s (2004) “expert” title in terms of teaching strategies and his familiarity with the curriculum. He had experience teaching FYC in both online and face-to-face modalities, but he had yet to teach a blended course. When planning his blended WAW course, Brown adopted a “novice” persona that allowed him the flexibility to experiment with his approach and branch out with his methods. He decided to try a new approach to the class to see where it would lead him. He created the course blog, then applied the new interface back into his traditional courses. This blended-into-traditional influence can be seen in the course syllabi for each modality (shown in Appendix I), which are nearly identical except for different required levels of participation. He also made a small change to one of his assignments for the semester. Previously, he had asked students to choose a discourse community to evaluate and report on. In the Fall 2012 semester, Brown asked his students to choose specifically online communities to study. (The assignment sheet can be found on page 327.) Brown recognized that even this small change might move him into an area where he had less experience. Viewing himself as a novice in this environment, he said he wanted to get advice from others who he saw more as experts:

For online and face-to-face communities, and how my system might change, I’m not sure exactly how it’s going to change. ... I think [that’s] one thing that I...want to talk with [a colleague] a little bit about because...he did his dissertation on...Facebook [and other digital tools]. I kind of want to talk to him before I go into this thing, so I’m going to shoot him an e-mail and find out, you know, this is what I’m going for. What kind of things do you think would help me...get to some kind of a product that students are going to turn in that’s going to teach them something about communication and digital communities and going to reveal something new that they didn’t see or give them a new angle...? Because I want them to discover something new, and I want them to be able to teach me something new about digital communities in some way.
With this one small planned change, Brown saw himself as a novice with regard to the assignment (seeking input from a more-experienced peer) and the content (seeking to learn about the communities from his students). Approaching the course design as a novice, as I will show below, motivated Brown’s planning and carried his enthusiasm throughout the semester.

The flexibility Brown showed when planning his first blended course is similar to the way he first learned to teach with the waw curriculum. While completing his initial new-hire training for DWR at UCF, Brown was simultaneously teaching an FYC course at a local state college. Though that course used a different curriculum, Brown used the class as a testing ground to experiment with what he was learning in UCF’s training program. That semester, he

was actually introducing and using the concepts [of waw] in real time, so...things I was picking up [at UCF], I was just playing with my syllabus on-the-fly and changing things up and doing it. So, it helped me to really internalize what I was doing there, to be able to apply and see, well, how are students reacting to it? Which I think made the training much better because otherwise, it would have been, you know, wait until the fall and, okay, try and apply the stuff.

This playful, learn-by-doing approach inspired his enthusiasm for understanding the material, a scenario that appeared again when he worked to adapt his course to blended delivery. Brown decided to use a blog as the primary online component of his blended courses after spending some time (a month and a half, according to him) experimenting with the platform and deciding it would work well for his classes. The benefits he saw in that tool served as the inspiration for broader changes he made to his pedagogy. It is worth noting that Brown took the basic ADL 5000 training required of all instructors at UCF who will be teaching online. This online course is designed “to help familiarize [faculty] with the design elements” of pre-built, LMS-contained courses they are “inheriting” (UCF CDL, 2014) However, he said in our follow-up interview that he doesn’t remember anything from that training; instead, he made technology-related decisions based on personal experimentation: “I’m comfortable in online settings. I’m comfortable with
digital kinds of teaching settings, as well. But I think part of it is going to be a little bit of trial and error, too.” Relying on trial and error kept Brown focused on finding the serendipitous benefits in the tools he considered. He applied the same rationale when planning how he would build rapport with students through online interfaces:

I don’t think that it can be only established face-to-face. I think it can be established online. It’s just that the way to establish it online is a little bit different. I think that it’s going to be a little bit of a learning process.

Brown consistently exhibited “a willingness to experiment” that Sommers and Saltz (2004) said is essential for students learning to navigate an FYC course (p. 134). In the next section, I will show how this perspective is just as essential for FYC instructors, helping Mr. Brown successfully build his class around the experimentation made possible by his self-image as a novice.

6.4.1 Brown’s Expectations: Do Something New, Good

Mr. Brown had initially planned to fully build his face-to-face course, then transfer or extend it online. Before the semester started, he indicated that his face-to-face classes took precedence in his planning. Essentially, Brown initially thought he would do what Mr. Grey, above, ultimately did:

When I plan my face-to-face courses first...I’m going to plan those syllabi out, and then I’m going to use those to kind of like work that into the mixed-mode course. So, essentially, what readings do I want to have class-time discussion with versus what readings do I want to have online discussion with? And I think that there’s different benefits from doing each one. You know, depending on what the reading is, that one reading may be more beneficial in an online setting versus a face-to-face setting. So that, I think, is going to be a good bit of trial and error.

He initially viewed his face-to-face plans as the standard and the online medium as an opportunity for flexibility. Brown started by questioning what he was able to do with the new format. Brown decided to
create a class blog—a single, continuously scrolling content feed in which he posted assignment details, discussion prompts, and class announcements. His course blog became the single source for information and the single destination for homework and discussion, presented in a consistent format in a consistent place. All work done in his courses filtered through the blog. Each week, he posted a new discussion topic for students to reply to. Students were required to post responses to a majority of the topics (such as 12 out of 14), and Brown created each of the prompts before the semester began. For major papers, the assignment was posted as an entry on the course blog, and students occasionally posted questions in the blog comments. Even though he collected major assignments on paper, those assignments began life as online blog posts. Using online content even for assignments that ended up on paper is a manifestation of augmented reality (nathanjurgenson, 2011), viewing the online space as a continuation of the offline world, rather than as a distinct element. In a sense, Brown used the course blog as a different interface onto the same conversation he was having in his classes. When I observed his classes, students enacted this continuity by reading their blog posts out loud in class as contributions to in-class discussions.

Even though Brown set out to design his face-to-face courses first, then move them online, the way he implemented the transition to the new delivery mode changed his view of teaching (regardless of modality) and the affordances of technology in the classroom. Brown initially planned to transition his face-to-face course into online delivery, but after he chose a new technology to use in the course, he imagined the technology as a boon for his students and for class communication. He ultimately decided to implement the web component in his exclusively face-to-face courses, as well.

I’ve created my syllabus and I parsed it for my mixed-mode class, and I just use the same syllabus and then I created my blog. And once I created the blog of all of the different assignments that students would do for each week’s blog, ... I started realizing, you know, I’m gonna use this for both. Because it just makes sense. There’s an advantage to this.
Copies of Mr. Brown’s syllabi are provided in Appendix I. The document is nearly identical for both classes, with the addition of an extra paragraph of detail about the blog in the syllabus for his mixed-mode class. In both cases, Brown refers to the Blogger site as “our electronic home base.” Giving the course blog central importance in each of his classes proved a critical decision, creating a consistent interface for students to return to throughout the course.

Brown’s excitement showed near the middle of the semester when he recalled his initial planning process: “I created everything that was gonna be for mixed mode, and then I said, ‘Holy crap! Man, I’m gonna use this for face-to-face.’” This arrangement—applying plans from the online component to his face-to-face sections—allowed him to experiment with the affordances of the online interface. By the middle of the semester, Brown acknowledged that his teaching had changed as a result of this experiment with blended learning:

Yeah, it’s definitely different as a result of my mixed mode.... When I started developing the mixed-mode course, I knew I had to do something that gave students access to something online. My students in my face-to-face classroom are blogging this term because when I started setting up blogs and I started setting up the course for the mixed-mode class, I just thought, “Boy this is awesome. An awesome tool.” Like, even if they’re not going to blog as much as my online class [because they were required to do fewer posts], they really are going to benefit from blogging in the face-to-face class.

Whereas Brown initially planned to make his blended course mirror his face-to-face classes, he quickly changed his approach and let the creativity he found when planning for the blended modality influence the way he taught in person. Additionally, Brown felt that he “had to” give his students “access to something online,” as though designing a course without an online component would be restricting his students in some way. This comment reflects a presumption of access that I return to later—a presumption that goes against the cautions of C. L. Selfe and R. J. Selfe (1994) to use the classroom as an egalitarian space in

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5The instructor’s name and email address have been changed on the sample documents to maintain his pseudonym; all other content is unedited.
which the politics of access do not create an imbalance. In Brown’s experience, each of his students had not only access but also an expectation that the access would be used.

6.4.2 Communication in the Classroom

Well before the semester began, Brown was debating how to structure student communications in the online components of his courses. By creating a class blog, Brown’s intention was to extend the sense of community in his classroom into the online space without having to rely on the complexities of the school-supported LMS (which at the time was Blackboard). He wanted to build a consistent interface for communication about the class, both teacher-to-student and student-to-student. Because the blog was designed to be the centerpiece of information exchange—reinforcing the claim on his syllabus that the blog was an “electronic home base”—it often came up in conversations about how the course was working. During our initial interview, Brown wondered about the potential success of moving conversations from the classroom to the online space: “How is the discussion going to translate from, you know, the classroom to the online space? And are they going to get out of it as much as I want them to?” The word translate suggests a concern drawn from a perception of digital dualism; however, the blog become more of an extension of his courses than a translation.

Brown frequently mentioned the blog in his classroom discussions, and his students often mentioned it in our interview conversations as a common go-to resource for information. His students also referred regularly to (or even read directly from) their own posts in class, to reiterate a point they had made online or to continue a conversation that began digitally. Although the students knew they were continuing the same conversation in both spaces, the participants and the environment were still different, changing the dynamic of the discussion and perhaps justifying the repetition. All content on the class blog, including student posts, was open to all students in all of Mr. Brown’s courses, whereas the conversations held in person only included one section at a time. Online, students were free to comment on posts from any of their peers (broadly defined) and were not limited only to interacting only with those in their course section. The slightly different dynamics between online and in-person conversations based on the
same blog content created a situation that employed principles of augmented reality. Students used the classroom as a space to continue comments they initiated online. The instructor used the online environment as a space to put content (such as assignments or discussion prompts) that was more permanent or substantial than questions posed in class. In effect, the web-based blog became the main point of connection among the participants in Brown’s classes.

When preparing for class discussion, Brown was able to read all his students’ posts together in one place, not just the classes he was about to attend. The broader context gave him a different view of his students’ thinking: “I did read the blogs from other students. They’re all in one area. I have them all set up in one massive area. So it’s kind of interesting to see them kind of interacting there.” That interaction was not, of course, guaranteed. Generally speaking, when a student speaks in class, all peers in attendance hear the comment. Online, a student’s posts are far more easily ignored. To that point, during an observation of one of Mr. Brown’s classes, I heard several students read a blog post they had written, directly from a laptop screen in class, to ensure all students heard the comment. This again was reminiscent of the learning-versus-doing dichotomy that students discussed: The students made their posts because they had to, but they read their posts aloud because they wanted to discuss them.

Brown said he got a “better understanding” of his students’ thinking by reading his student posts as preparation for discussion. For instance, at one of our interviews, he discussed the preparation he had done for that day’s classes, noting that he had “read their blogs before I got to class…. I specifically read mixed-mode blogs.” Brown said he was “getting a little more insight earlier on with the mixed-mode classes because… I’m reading their blog before the class starts usually. … I’m trying most of the time to do that, depending on other factors.” Note that, like Mr. Grey, Mr. Brown identified a lack of available time as a serious constraint to effective online instruction. The “better understanding” Brown enjoyed came at a cost: Regardless of the interface they created or used for their classes, both instructors found that the online components of their classes took more time than they expected, which is in line with previous research findings (Wang & Woo, 2007; Meyer, 2003; Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010; Worley & Tesdell, 2009; Bender et al., 2004).
Despite the extra time required to create and manage these online interfaces, Mr. Brown relied on students’ Internet connectivity throughout the semester, asking them to access online resources during in-person class sessions, regardless of the official delivery mode of a given course. This approach challenged institutional policy, which directs instructors to only presume online access in classes that meet online. It also challenged C. L. Selfe and R. J. Selfe’s (1994) warnings against a tendency to “legitimize the status quo of computer use” in our classes (p. 483). Perhaps as a result of the socio-economic status of the populations served by Brown’s institutions, or perhaps the effect of widespread technological development in the twenty years since C. L. Selfe and R. J. Selfe sounded their warning, the status quo now seems to include access:

At the beginning of the semester, I do a check to see how many people have a mobile device that is able to access the web. In these classes that I’ve had, everybody has had that. Even a community college course I teach at [the local state college], everybody has them. I’m not running into that situation where it becomes problematic.

Brown used connectivity as a means of encouraging student engagement and autonomy, where they used the network as a resource, rather than relying on the instructor for information. By having students connect with other resources during class, Brown downplayed his own role as a content-area expert and engaged students with a variety of interfaces to do their work, blurring the distinction between face-to-face and online course components.

The use of technology in Brown’s classes, both face-to-face and blended, became an augmentation of typical classroom activities. Brown was comfortable adapting and incorporating online technologies into the physical spaces of his classes. To Brown, this adaptation was a natural extension of a trend in modern life:

I’m seeing firsthand how the digital world and the physical world are merging. So there’s new technologies that are coming out every year. People at MIT are working on technologies that allow there to be a bridge between the digital world and the physical world.
This blurring can also be seen across delivery modes, as Mr. Brown used technology in the face-to-face components of both of his courses:

I do occasionally have them [use their devices to look up content online]. I may do that a little bit more in the mixed-mode class then in the face-to-face, but ... I like doing it because you know that they like using their mobile device...they enjoy doing something on those and it gives them a little license to use it in class most of the time it’s supposed to be kept out of sight. So I do do that.

This integration of technology in a face-to-face course was evident in my observations of his class. In a late-November in-person session of his mixed-mode class, Brown had the front page of his blog projected on the screen as students entered the room. Only eight students were present that day. This could be a consequence of the course’s 7:30 a.m. meeting time (considering Stephen O’Connell’s comments in Chapter 4 about the perfect schedule for students) or the value Brown’s students placed on the in-person interfaces of their blended class. Of those eight students, four were using their laptops before Brown started class; two other students were on their phones. That day’s group work required the use of a laptop, and the students distributed themselves according to device access. I also observed his face-to-face class which met later that same day. Of the 20 students present, two used tablets, three used their phones, and the remaining fifteen used laptops for their group work. This suggests Brown’s expectation of student technology access may well be justified. To an extent, Mr. Brown used in-class Internet access as an opportunity for students to either “get away with” using something that is “supposed to be kept out of sight” or to work with tools that “they like using.” In this way, Brown saw delivery mode as more flexible than institutional standards, reflecting what he saw as a natural integration of technology and face-to-face instruction.

Brown even saw the effects of this bridging between physical and digital in his own teaching practice, with the changes he made for his online components coming back to influence the way he taught in person. At the beginning of the semester, he suspected some of what he did online might have transferred back to his in-person instruction:
I think the mixed-mode course is an identifying point of that. ... There’s going to be transference that goes back and forth from both sides, where, you know, the things that I’m learning about and teaching about in the mixed-mode course are certainly going to...are going to bridge and affect the way that I approach the other course, too.

Looking back on the semester, he commented on how significant that transference had been, influencing his self-image as a teacher:

“I’m doing another face-to-face course that I teach in [the local state college] and it only meets Monday nights. But I’m having the blog the same as I’ve been doing here, so it’s kind of, it’s changed the way I’ve looked at teaching, and it’s helped me to, I think, evolve and make my class more current.”

Brown changed his view of the classroom to incorporate online components as a de facto standard interface in each of his classes. In effect, adopting a novice persona in the classroom allowed him more flexibility in his technology implementation, which then reformed his pedagogy.

6.4.3 Brown’s Challenges: Software Interface, Student Engagement, and Time

Brown’s enthusiasm for using the blog did have its limits. He initially assumed he would grade papers electronically with his blended courses, adopting assessment to the modality, but he changed his mind after he adopted a blogging platform, rather than a traditional LMS, as his online course interface.

“I think one of the things that maybe has kept [grading expectations] consistent is that I’ve gone with Blogger as my main online course ... interface for students. And there’s not a way to turn papers in electronically there. So I’ve been collecting the papers from my mixed-mode students as hard copies and grading them as hard copies. So... I had thought that I was going to be using another interface, and I decided not to.

Instead of collecting papers online for his blended course and on paper for his face-to-face classes, he chose to use traditional paper-based grading for all of his classes. In effect, Brown expected to change his assess-
ment methods given the new modality, but that expectation changed to accommodate his technology decision.

Brown also saw benefits and challenges in using the blog as a practice, not just a technology. He used it as an outlet for students, giving them a place to write more than usual, and to do so in a low-stakes environment that allowed practice without judgement. Brown said that the blog helped
give my students more writing spaces. It’s given me that opportunity to give them a lot more writing spaces to do more. I think this semester the students are going to really outpace the amount of writing in any previous terms that had them do just because of how much they’re blogging.

Essentially, Brown used the requirement of a new modality as an opportunity to implement a new approach to his classes. He used the blog as the centerpiece of his courses, changing how he interfaces with his students and changing how his students engage with the content.

I’m pretty impressed. They are engaging with the prompts and things that I’m asking them to do. The harder part for me is getting them to talk during the face-to-face time. So, it’s not panning out in that way. I think they are probably more engaged in the online portion. In the face-to-face portion, I have to, like, call people out to get them to participate.

The issue of quiet students speaking up in the online environment has been noted repeatedly in the literature (Betty Cox & Becky Cox, 2008; Davidson-Shivers, Muilenburg, & Tanner, 2001; Hew & Cheung, 2008; McConnell, 1997; Pena-Shaff & Nicholls, 2004; Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 1999; Swan & Richardson, 2003; Tiene, 2000; Wojahn, 1994; Wolfe, 1999). Brown himself noted quiet students, but said they were more comfortable speaking up in their blog:

They’re quiet, but they are engaged in the blogs. ... I have been talking about in that first class ... the framing mechanism we’ve used. In the blogs, they came up with a really interesting framework. When it came time to discuss it with the groups, they were really standoffish.
and kind of shy about sharing their ideas. I think that it’s kind of a generally shy group. Just most of the people there are not a lot of extroverts. There are people that are more, you know, and close to their chest. They’re not really showing all that much. When it’s time to share something, there’s reluctance to share in the class. But on the blog, it seems like either they are more comfortable sharing on the blog. I mean, they have to share on the blog.

And therein lies a significant difference between the interface of in-class conversation and online conversations: the requirement to contribute. Mr. Brown shared with me that his teaching style does not often lead him to call on students during conversation, preferring instead to let them contribute when they choose. But for the blog, his students were required to contribute a certain number of times. What serves in person as a voluntary enrichment online becomes a mandated assignment, thereby changing the tone and expectation.

Brown’s experiences show how a mindset of experimentation can lead to changes in pedagogy. By setting out to find an online interface that met his expectations for his classes, Mr. Brown found a solution that served to augment the reality of all his classes. Brown not only changed his course design for mixed-mode instruction—something he initially did not intend to do—but he also revised his approach to all the courses he teaches at a variety of institutions. By maintaining a self-image of a novice in the modality and relying on his expertise with online environments, Brown was able to adopt a teaching tool that he felt comfortable implementing. This tool, then, became so central as to help him mitigate trouble that arose mid-semester: He relied on the course blog to help bolster student participation when shyness became a factor. Overall, Brown’s experiences reinforce the importance of flexibility as an instructor and the benefits of approaching instruction as a novice.

Brown’s perceived successes implementing a new modality highlight three factors that help instructors compose blended courses:

1. integrating the interfaces of online and in-person instruction can provide a sense of consistency and cohesion for a course,
2. adopting a hybrid self-image as an instructor, balancing the roles of both expert and novice, as needed to provide confidence and flexibility (also seen from Mr. Grey, above), and
3. viewing technology in a classroom as an augmentation, rather than a distinct entity, allows students to rely on the tools they have available and connect course content both online and off.

6.5 Conclusion: The Importance of Interface and Connection

The flexible thinking each instructor demonstrated helped one choose a new technology for interfacing between students and the instructor; it helped the other instructor re-evaluate his self-image as an effective, dynamic educator. Neither instructor directly applied this flexible mindset to a re-evaluation of the course content. Instead, they adapted the interfaces of the course and created new ways for students to construct knowledge or compose their roles within the class. I initially expected that the instructors would change their course assignments to reflect or accommodate online technologies or content, making their blended courses work with different content than the face-to-face equivalents. However, neither instructor saw a need to make any adaptations to their course assignments; they used the same assignment sheets for all sections of their course (see Appendices J and K). Mr. Grey anticipated these similarities early on in his planning process: “I’m anticipating the assignments are going to be the same, but as we know, we...really scaffold those assignments with smaller projects.” He concerned himself more with the scaffolding—the day-to-day classroom activities—than with the larger assignments they led to, because he viewed the assignments as sufficient and appropriate for both modalities. The expectation that assignments would be static while instruction changed can lead to different perceptions of course delivery between instructors and institutions. The nearly identical syllabi across modalities (see Appendices H and I) and the use of the same assignments for both course types show that these instructors viewed the two delivery modes as merely different sections of the same course with essentially the same design. However, the instructors consistently explained that they deliberately worked to adapt their teaching to accommodate the new modality; this process of adaptation frequently took up much of their time for course preparation. In line with previous research (Abacus Associates, 2000), this shows a need for additional instructor support and
training to help them plan their courses and balance the demands multiple modalities can place on their time.

During my interviews, the instructors routinely discussed the assignments they were working on, but they made no direct mention of the curriculum those assignments were designed to support. When I asked them why this was, they revealed that, because the curriculum was so familiar to them, they treated it essentially as second nature, without addressing it explicitly when they adapted their courses. Because the instructors paid little direct attention to the curriculum in their course design, their new courses centered on familiar assignments and may have removed curricular goals from their direct attention while adapting the course. Instructors may have concerned themselves with having students practice the concepts through assignments, rather than talking about the course’s student learning outcomes in the terms used by the department. This finding is important for departments to understand because it shows how departmental expectations for curriculum implementation may play out differently than expected. It also emphasizes the importance of well-crafted assignments that adhere to or support those departmental expectations: Instructors place a great deal of faith in assignments they have come to trust through experience. At the same time, balancing that experience with a need to view oneself as a novice in their environment becomes critical for success.

Beyond the connections among participants, instructors also have to negotiate the connections between students and their technology. The two instructors I followed had significantly different approaches to technology integration, leading to different outcomes in class. In Chapter 3, I introduce Nathan Jurgenson’s (2011) distinction between what he calls “digital dualism” and “augmented reality.” Digital dualism views in-person and online identities as separate entities that nevertheless intersect with and influence one another. By contrast, augmented reality views modern life as a fluid combination of the virtual and the physical, in which each element extends into and merges with the other. The experiences of the participating instructors, as well as their comments during our interviews, strongly suggest that instructors who design a blended course around digital dualism face a more difficult process of negotiating interactions with students and coordinating elements of their classes. By viewing a blended course as an implementa-
tion of augmented reality, instructors can adopt a more flexible, purpose-driven view of modalities that allows for creativity and relevance.

The efforts of students and instructors to balance their expectations of mixed-mode courses shows the difficulties inherent in “blending” course delivery and the complexity of aligning perceptions. Instructors need to ensure they preserve effective instruction in each delivery mode, and to do that best, they need familiarity with available tools and an understanding of their strengths as educators. To complicate matters, students, instructors, and departments each have different ways of conceptualizing and operating within blended courses. Finding common ground among these disparate groups takes conscious and nontrivial effort. By changing the format of course interactions, we set students and instructors at cross-purposes, creating tensions among their goals, intentions, and expectations for the course. Rather than creating an environment in which two kinds of course delivery smoothly interact, the process of blending a course creates a persistent tension in which students and the instructor must work together to understand mutual expectations, engage in meaningful interactions, and establish an accepted rule set governing their behavior since the norms of online or in-person courses alone do not directly translate to the blended environment.

In this chapter, I have shown how differences in instructor self-perception can influence the way a blended course is implemented, emphasizing the importance of a hybrid self-image that continually negotiates between being an expert in the subject and a novice in the implementation. We have also seen the complex role of interfaces in an instructor’s composition of a blended course. Traditional interfaces both in and outside the classroom are influenced by the prior expectations of all participants, and that influence can take the form of constraints or misunderstandings that lead to frustration. And finally, I have shown how a view of technology as integrated with, not distinct from, in-person interactions can promote smooth transitions between the components of a blended course. Overall, this chapter underscores the importance of flexibility in an instructor’s perspective on technology when adapting a course for blended delivery.
Blended courses have gathered little attention in the popular media and research literature, despite the growing popularity of educational technology in general and online courses in particular. Part of this relative obscurity may come from a terminology problem: Classes that incorporate both online and in-person components are referred to by several names, and no consistency has yet emerged in the literature. The intentions behind blended courses are similarly fragmented: administrators see these courses as a means of getting more use out of limited physical resources, students see them as a way to have a more flexible schedule, and instructors are left to figure out their own responses to the circumstances. Institutional training often addresses the use of a campus-provided learning-management system (LMS) without additional training in the pedagogies and possibilities afforded by a blended modality. As a result, implementation of blended courses is inconsistent, and as illustrated in Chapter 5, students may not know what to expect when they enroll in a blended course. Many students remain unfamiliar with the format until they experience it first-hand, perhaps by accident. Instructors, too, have inconsistent perceptions of the modality, with their impressions forming from sources such as campus discussions, articles providing opinions on the emerging format, and the occasional research report discussing its effectiveness.

In this final chapter, I review the findings that came from my analysis of the data. I begin with a discussion of the role of expectations when composing a writing course, addressing the need for aligned expectations among students and instructors if a course is to operate smoothly. Next, I return to interface theory and assert first that classes are composed primarily of interfaces and second that what seems obvious or natural in our interactions must become the subject of scrutiny. And finally, I address the importance of hybrid spaces within blended course design, showing how student perception and expectation intersect with both writing pedagogy and the technologies of writing. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

Without a conscientious effort to understand blended courses and the implications of implementing them, departments and institutions face students and instructors with little common ground available
to inform or motivate cooperative action. Similarly, without the guidance and support of institutions, the time to adapt, and the freedom to experiment, instructors may see a new course modality as an obstacle rather than an opportunity. And caught in the midst of these scenarios, students taking blended courses face the formidable challenge of discovering how best to act, interact, and learn in a foreign environment with few precedents from which they can draw insights. Overall, the disparate blended-learning conversations coming from various fields and sources have prevented a consistent understanding of the phenomenon. By examining how students, instructors, and institutions work with blended learning, this project identifies critical components of the modality and establishes priorities for its conscientious implementation.

7.1 Central Claims

Throughout this project, I have been arguing for a specific pedagogical stance that foregrounds student expectations, emphasizes the role of interfaces, distinguishes between blended courses and hybrid education, and positions the application of technology as a means of re-composing first-year composition (FYC) courses. Because writing is inseparable from the technologies involved (Haas, 1996), changing the technologies students use for writing studies changes the nature of the writing they are studying—and the writing that they do in the process. Attending to the technologies of writing courses can help instructors and students alike better understand the work they each do in class. Cynthia L. Selfe (1999) told writing teachers that we need to pay more attention to our technologies. N. Kathryn Hayles (2007) showed us that our students pay attention to texts differently than we do. Richard A. Lanham (2006) argued that we a “new scarcity” in our society: “the human attention needed to make sense of information” (p. 7). The need for attention in pedagogy is clear, and this project serves to call attention to issues of interface that otherwise go overlooked, particularly as the draw of new technologies entice us with the opportunities they promise.

Conversations in computers and writing have faithfully followed these trends, with Cynthia L. Selfe and Gail Hawisher often being the first to explore them. These two authors have embraced word
processing (Hawisher, 1988), online courses (Hawisher & C. L. Selfe, 1991), email (Hawisher & Moran, 1993), digital portfolios (Hawisher & C. L. Selfe, 1997), online identities (Hawisher & C. L. Selfe, 2000), and digital literacy narratives (C. L. Selfe & Hawisher, 2004). I confess to my own enthusiasm for new technology, having written about the ill-fated Google Wave as a pedagogical tool even as it was in its death throes (Friend, 2013). But we cannot allow the increasing availability of new technologies to render us blind to the effects of using them. As Cynthia L. Selfe and Richard J. Selfe (1994) said, the use of technology in a writing class is a political act, and we must carefully examine our expectations when we implement technology in our courses. As Lanham (1995) asserted, we must look at, rather than through, our classroom technologies to see the effects of their use.

Collin Gifford Brooke (2009) positioned rhetoric and composition as predisposed to study new media, explaining the gap “between the local particularity of the individual text and the global generality of media structures” is a familiar space that we “already occupy as writers and writing scholars” (p. 5). Brooke (2009) urged us to apply our knowledge to new media as “the next logical step in the growth of our discipline” (p. 5). I argue that, beyond consideration of media, rhetoric and composition must grow into consideration of course modality as well. Such a consideration begins with these claims, which are central to my argument:

1. Modality is underemphasized within rhetoric and composition.
2. Classes consist of collections of interfaces.
3. Modality expectations differ among stakeholders; these differences create unexpected tensions in the operation of a class.
4. Hybridity is critical, both as a pedagogical skill and as a design element in FYC courses.

These claims are properly placed within writing studies because our field is so intertwined with pedagogical concerns. To rephrase Brooke’s (2009) argument, rhetoricians must examine the gap “between the local particularity of the individual [classroom] and the global generality of [teaching], … a space that we already occupy as [pedagogues]; bringing what we know to bear on [multimodal courses] is the next logical step in the growth of our discipline” (p. 5). With this project, I have begun the process of bringing what
we know—about the significance of interface design, the components of blended instruction, and the implications of technology—to bear on our pedagogy. In the next section, I review those implications at the classroom, department, and institutional levels, showing how the claims listed above apply in a practical sense to FYC course design and implementation.

7.2 Suggestions for Implementation

The discussions throughout this project has been intended as an endorsement for a hybrid approach to education, as distinct from a blended one. Many of the issues identified through my data have been highlighted trouble spots, pointing toward a need, rather than a solution. In this section, I propose practical applications of the findings of my research to better clarify how best to implement the imperatives offered by the situation I studied. After introducing classroom-level pedagogical suggestions, I will increasingly broaden the scope to include suggestions for departments and institutions, in effect creating a roadmap for creating effective hybrid online writing instruction (OWI). Following these suggestions for implementation, I will broaden my scope once again to review the principles that guide the overall design of hybrid OWI.

7.2.1 Pedagogical Implications

In Chapter 5, I uncovered how student interactions with the institution, the instructor, and the curriculum determine how a student perceives a blended course. When instructors create FYC courses in this format, they often have little control over the department-controlled curriculum or the institution-controlled LMS. What actions can instructors take at the classroom level to sufficiently implement hybridity? The pedagogical choices instructors make determine how students interact with their teacher, the curriculum, and often their peers. If classes exist as a network of interfaces among the participants, these pedagogical choices afford significant influence, rather than constraining instructors to the whims of the structures in which they work.
Blended courses are commonly mandated to meet in person on some days and online on others—a situation determined by the scheduling needs of today’s universities with more enrollments than resources. In these cases, an instructor may be tempted, like Mr. Grey was, to move familiar content and activities online as a direct correspondence with their on-ground equivalents. However, this creates a tension between the design of the activity and its implementation. In-person interactions rely on the availability of immediate feedback from peers and the instructor, permitting conversation and quick review of progress. Online, the availability from the instructor and peers is greatly restricted by the asynchronous nature of most digital communications. However, the availability of an audience, beyond the enrollment of the course, is greatly enhanced. Instructors could take advantage of that opportunity by creating assignments or activities that draw on vast online networks of people, making the other users of the Internet both the audience and the source of feedback. Mr. Grey and Mr. Brown each partially attempted this effort by asking students to study an online discourse community for one of their assignments. However, their assignment design relied on the Internet as source, not as a destination. Effectively hybridizing the assignment would involve the Internet as a resource, drawing on it for feedback. Students could submit their work to an appropriate online forum and measure their success by how well that forum responds to their contributions—Jenkins (2006) provided an excellent analysis of how online networks can self-regulate and provide users with valuable, critical feedback.

Furthermore, instructors adopting a hybrid identity (discussed in Chapter 6) understand the limits of their expertise and turn to online resources to supplement their own contributions to the class. Students can gain valuable information-management experience if they are asked to provide the content used in class, rather than relying solely on teacher-provided materials such as a textbook or course pack. By giving students the authority and responsibility for finding course content to discuss—a process I call “e-verting the classroom” (Friend, 2012a)—instructors can help students learn not just the content of the field but also how that content is found and valued by its practitioners. A corpus handed to students by a member of the field allows those students to see what is valued; a corpus created by the students requires students to create the standards used to determine what documents are included. By ceding responsibility for resource
development to students, the instructor uses online resources in a way that in-person resources simply could not duplicate. Conversations in which students developed the criteria for document inclusion would work best in an in-person session, with the research component completed as an in-person course element.

Students can also help design more of the course itself. Departments of course dictate what kinds of content should be incorporated in an FYC course, but there may be flexibility in the documents used, the order in which the content is covered, the types of assignments used to assess learning, and even the guidelines for those assessments. Students are able to create evaluation standards, but they are rarely asked to do so. Creating those standards requires distinguishing subtlety and refined observation skills from students—skills that are more valuable than simply completing an assignment to satisfy an instructor. Instructor-driven grading establishes an externally derived scale that students may find arbitrary, particularly given their experiences with state-wide standardized tests and the meaningless scores they produce. Much like I advocate above for instructors to adopt a novice attitude toward course modality, I assert that students must adopt a novice attitude toward assessment: They are experts at doing what they are told, but they have little experience understanding how standards for success are established. Understanding that process can be a valuable and transferrable teaching tool. As Cathy Davidson (2009) said, “assigning a grade based on a pre-existing scale is very different than real-world negotiations which lead to a successful final product.” If successful final products are our goal, we should allow students to participate in the assessment process, creating class discussions around the standards used for measuring success and essentially out-sourcing our grading practices (Davidson, 2009; Friend, 2012b).

The point of hybrid design in the classroom is to use each modality for the strengths that modality affords. By implementing assignments, activities, and assessments that empower students and use each modality appropriate to its affordances, our students will better understand why each is mode is being used, thereby reducing one source of tension strongly indicated by the data reviewed in Chapter 5. More importantly, using online environments to do the work of compositionists would show students how to be a practitioner of the field in that environment. In other words, rather than teaching students how to think about composition and then apply those concepts online, we should be showing students how composition
researchers apply the work of composition in an online environment, using that environment as a site for field work, not “learning management.” Hybrid approaches to OWI ensure realistic, practical applications of course content to both online and in-person environments.

7.2.2 Departmental Implications

Much like instructors have a responsibility to give students authority in their work, writing departments have an obligation to give instructors authority in designing their courses. But that authority needs to be managed, not limitless. Instructors should be given guidelines and examples for how they can implement hybrid pedagogies in their course designs. For instance, departments could develop a variety of assignments to meet a specific departmental goal (such as a student learning outcome in the curriculum), and instructors would be free to adopt or adapt those assignments as they saw fit. Instructors who rely on examples they can try before experimenting, like Mr. Grey, would be able to find a “recipe” that suits their interests and needs, while instructors who like to create new approaches, like Mr. Brown, would be free to develop their own equivalent assignment or content. Creating a balance between prescriptive course content and the freedom to individually create material can be difficult, but it is essential for accommodating various instructors’ needs for planning assistance. On a slightly broader scale, departments need to set clear, negotiated expectations for three factors shown in Chapter 6 to significantly affect teachers’ perceptions of their courses: performance, time, and connections. In each case, the principle is the same: Instructors need a balance between guidance and freedom.

This study shows that measuring student performance can be complicated by issues of delivery mode. Though my portfolio results support Russell’s (1999) “no significant difference phenomenon” by indicating consistent performance measures regardless of the delivery mode of a course, they also showed the importance of instructor expectations for defining portfolio assignments and the challenge of consistent evaluations from raters. Overall, departments need to negotiate a discussion with instructors that helps define how such performance will be measured. This includes an understanding of how declarative and procedural knowledge will be measured, as well as any other measures used, such as indicators of stu-
dent beliefs or perception. For example, the portfolio assessments briefly discussed in Chapters 2 revealed that instructors of the same course may not ask students to produce the same evidence of their learning, and raters who measure student learning in portfolios may not agree on how that learning should be expressed. Though difficulty in aligning portfolio raters’ scores is a documented challenge inherent in the process (Broad, 1994; Elbow & Belanoff, 1986; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 1993; Huot & Williamson, 1997; White, 2005), the portfolio-scoring process used for this project revealed the importance of open discussions of assessment and the value of specificity in the measurement tools. I found that separating declarative and procedural measures on the scoring tool led to increased inter-rater reliability and a sense (through raters’ conversation) that the tool became more straightforward with the additional detail.

Measurement tools like student surveys, when used to determine how student perception changes over time, should be carefully discussed with faculty to ensure their effectiveness. This situation was exemplified in Chapter 5, wherein I reviewed results of student surveys that produced results that were opposite departmental expectations due to differences in how Mr. Brown defined a term within his classes. Department-wide conversations about the tool used to collect data from students would have drawn attention to this potential discrepancy. If all instructors knew what tool would be used for assessing student perception, they would understand in precisely what terms students were expected to understand their course content. My goal here is surely not to encourage the phenomenon of “teaching to the test,” but rather to encourage a thorough understanding of the measurement tool and transparency of the methods used for departmental assessment.

Time frequently appeared as an impediment to instructor effectiveness. Mr. Grey wanted more time to develop materials for the online component of his course, and Mr. Brown wanted more time for the in-person component to draw out more conversation from his shy students. In both cases, a lack of time to manage the demands of both online and in-person course components frustrated their instructional efforts. Departments need to be aware of the demands placed on their instructors’ time, provide sufficient time for planning and implementation, and recognize the time instructors devote to blended course designs. Instructors often comment that blended courses take more time than expected (Abacus
Associates, 2000), and differences between departmental assumptions and instructor perceptions can lead to frustrations that affect job satisfaction. Mr. Grey and Mr. Brown would have felt more successful with their efforts had they been more comfortable with the demands their blended courses placed on their time.

And finally, departments need to help instructors develop means of connecting with students in ways that alleviate, rather than create, tensions due to differing expectations. While institutional policies play significant roles in these matters, the de facto use of LMS-provided discussion boards is one of the most questionable decisions an instructor can make. Data from Chapters 5 and 6 show that students generally view discussion boards as tasks to perform, rather than spaces in which to think; instructors often struggle to get students to participate sufficiently in the platform. I argue this is because the discussion board is an artificial genre, created only after the advent of the LMS. Because discussion boards have no correlate in work outside the LMS, students view them as mundane tasks with little relevance to their learning. Instead of defaulting to the LMS as a means of communication, departments should train instructors to communicate with students using online technologies the way students already do. This would ensure meaningful, regular two-way communication. While students can be expected to use new technologies for regular communications—like Mr. Grey’s use of weekly emails—students may still be reluctant to adopt those technologies for their own use, as Grey’s students repeatedly indicated. To those students, email was a tool used by their instructor, not by them. Such differences in communication methods creates a tension of expectations between students and instructors, where the teacher expects different behavior from students than they are willing to exhibit. Departments can help alleviate these potential tensions by setting appropriate expectations for communications between students and instructors.

7.2.3 Institutional Implications

Institutions, like departments, bear responsibility for directing instructors’ interactions with students, though their involvement is more at the policy level. For instance, institutions might mandate a communication method to be used in a blended class, or they might determine which LMS is to be used by all instructors (or even which features are and are not available in their classes). However, as explored
in Chapter 4, institutions have extensive influence over students’ perceptions of—and access to—blended courses. In order to support effective hybrid practices on campus, institutions must recognize the distinction between typical blended courses and those that exhibit hybrid characteristics. Schools can best do this by implementing three principles discussed in Chapter 4: consistency, discoverability, and training.

Because institutional policy sets the tone for departmental actions and campus-wide initiatives, a simple change at the institutional level can have substantial effects. The terminology used for a school’s blended courses determines the way students and faculty name, and therefore conceptualize, those courses. As explained in Chapter 4, schools use a variety of terms to describe similar concepts. I argue that these institutions need to acknowledge the differences between blended and hybrid courses, setting expectations for their programs accordingly and refraining from treating the terms as synonymous. By adopting a single term for all campus discussions of courses that use both in-person and online modalities, institutions can address the characteristics of the chosen terminology and increase the likelihood of consistent implementation across campus. This, in turn, would help students understand what to expect when enrolling in such a course. With a single agreed-upon term, instructors would also set their expectations appropriately for the needs of the institution.

Once a single term is chosen, that term should be implemented across the board, in all cases where course modalities are discussed. Significantly, this includes course registration systems, any pre-registration orientation offered to incoming students, and any advising offered to students from colleges or departments. Students need to understand the term used for blended courses in the same way the institution understands it. Too often, schools (or even academic disciplines) assume a common understanding of terminology, when no such commonality exists. By coordinating advising and orientation efforts, students can be better prepared to understand the instructional model in use at their institution, they can make more informed decisions about the courses they choose to take, and they can prepare better for the demands that will be placed on them in those courses. While seemingly simple, consistent terminology builds the campus-wide image of delivery mode used by all stakeholders and is therefore markedly important.
Institutions should also support discoverability in their course-registration systems. Many of the systems surveyed in Chapter 4 made it difficult for students to understand which modality was available for a given course, as though such matters are trivial. As I have discussed previously, since a course is defined by the interactions of its participants, changing the modality of a course changes the nature and constitution of that course. Schools must understand that significance and reflect it appropriately in their registration systems to allow students to make informed decisions about their course selections. To do otherwise is to risk being deceptive and setting students up for frustration or failure, depending on their preparedness for online or blended environments.

And finally, institutions need to provide training to their faculty that goes beyond mere use of the official LMS and into pedagogical issues. Though issues of pedagogy often vary by discipline, institutions that expect quality instruction should train their faculty how to make use of online environments to support the work of their classes or their fields. Schools could adopt guidelines for effective hybrid instruction to ensure quality in all departments, rather than assuming that technological tools alone provide the necessary support. In effect, schools that wish to implement hybrid course design could train teachers in “Practices Worth Considering” (DeBaise, 2014) that lead to appropriate uses of available modes of instruction.

As I have demonstrated, responsibility for implementing effective hybrid course design is shared among instructors, departments, and institutions, and each of those stakeholders directly influences students’ experiences. Only by ensuring that all levels work with the same concept of modality can online education be successfully implemented and effectively merged with traditional course designs. The paragraphs above explored possibilities for practical application of hybrid approaches to education. In the next section, I will explain the primary objectives of hybrid writing courses that can guide programmatic design decisions, leading to effective hybrid practices.
7.3 Primary Objectives of Hybrid Writing Courses

Data in the preceding chapters have revealed several components of hybridity that stand out as significant to course design and pedagogy. In this section, I will review those components and discuss how they apply to the situated requirements of OWI. These principles—expectations, interfaces, and spaces—provide a framework for hybridity at scale, guiding the choices made by instructors and their supporting institutions. While discussing the principles of hybridity, I will review the results of this study and lead to my final thoughts on composing the hybrid writing classroom.

7.3.1 Aligned Expectations Among Participants

My results chapters have shown that managing expectations is of utmost importance in ensuring successful implementation of blended learning. When instructors or students experience a blended course for the first time, they attempt to draw on previous experiences by combining what they know from in-person and online versions of their classroom interactions. Unfortunately, rather than being a simple combination of two familiar situations, blended learning presents a distinct environment that requires distinct norms for interaction and performance. Without direct attention to establishing those norms, students may not understand how best to negotiate the elements of a blended course, and instructors may not understand how best to create or manage the implementation of such a course. It falls to the institution to either establish those sets of expectations or to facilitate their conscientious creation within each department or course. Yet, as shown in Chapter 4, institutions themselves often fail to have a consistent approach to defining—or even marketing—blended learning. These inconsistencies can lead to frustration for other stakeholders.

The students involved in the two case studies from this project shared common opinions of online learning when they began their semester in FYC. With the exception of one student who took AP classes online, those I interviewed saw online courses as easy, task-oriented, and generally unremarkable. These students held an expectation of online course content that involved disconnected (non-social) learning
and little interaction with an instructor. These students of course brought those expectations to bear on their first blended courses, which did not align with their expectations of either traditional or online learning. Though it may appear to be simply a combination of two familiar course modalities, blended learning is necessarily distinct, creating its own expectations and norms. Later, when discussing online interactions with the instructors from this study, I heard the other side of the importance of expectations. Mr. Grey expressed frustration over his students’ failure to interact in online discussion boards. He found that students often used the LMS’s discussion boards as assignments to complete and subsequently ignore. When Grey included discussion posts in his list of tasks to be completed for a specific day, his students often treated them as isolated activities that did not require thorough conversation or follow-up. By contrast, Mr. Brown’s emphasis on his course blog as the common source of information and discussion online drew constant student attention to it, and they learned to value the blog as a resource for conversation and interaction. From this we can see the importance of developing interfaces (regardless of platform) that value interaction and encourage students to take part in the construction of the content of that course interface.

Connecting the online and in-person interfaces of these blended courses appeared to be more difficult for the instructors than for the students involved. Students referred to the online course content as just another component of the class, much like a homework assignment. They viewed online content as almost inconvenient, an annoyance to be dealt with as a means of completing a required task. Students rarely saw online coursework as an opportunity to better understand course materials. Instructors, though, referred to their online content as a separate element requiring special attention. To Mr. Brown, the blog became his sole focus, ultimately eclipsing his concern for any other component of his classes and spreading into his design of his face-to-face courses, even at other institutions. To Mr. Grey, moving his content online was a significant drain on his time, becoming his biggest and most regular source of frustration throughout the semester. He worked hard to get the online portion of his course up to his standards in line with his own deadlines, yet he never found a way to overcome that frustration and make the online content a natural part of his approach to the class.
These challenges show the difficulty of integrating course interfaces and the importance of setting expectations from the start—both for student participation and for instructor preparation. Because online and in-person course interactions are perceived differently, efforts to integrate them necessitate understanding the function and benefit of each of the environments. These integrations are at the heart of the distinction I am making between blended and hybrid pedagogies. A blended model integrates online and in-person components by virtue of their being about the same topic, whereas a hybrid model integrates the two by virtue of their being fundamentally different and each suited to a different kind of work or content. Each of the instructors in this study was aware of various differences between in-person and online instruction, and each attempted to make appropriate use of their different features.

When one of the instructors attempted to use a modality because of its specific strengths—like Mr. Grey’s in-class discussions or Mr. Brown’s print-centric grading process—they reported satisfaction or even excitement for their work. But when they used a modality purely out of a sense of obligation—like Mr. Grey’s adaptation of prepared slideshows for online distribution or Mr. Brown’s challenges bringing conversations back into the classroom—they were often dissatisfied with their own approaches, feeling as though they were missing opportunities to reach their students or engage in meaningful instruction. Mr. Grey went so far as to say he felt his pedagogical strategies were “being compromised” by the distraction of maintaining a blended course. To mitigate these frustrations, instructors need to be prepared with technical knowledge sufficient to make them comfortable with the tools they use, but they also need to be given the flexibility and authority to create an appropriate online learning environment in the absence of precedents from which they can draw insights. Overall, the disparate blended-learning conversations coming from various fields and sources have prevented a consistent understanding of the phenomenon. By examining the implementation of blended learning in one situation, this project has identified several components of blended learning that warrant continued exploration as we work to understand how learning happens in multiple modalities.
7.3.2 Purposeful Implementation of Interfaces

In a blended environment, the choice of technology shapes the course and defines the interactions within it. The blended environment also draws our attention to the person-to-person interface implemented in every on-ground class. That interface between students and teacher is often taken for granted because it is so common, yet within a blended environment, it becomes an opportunity for negotiation and the subject of scrutiny and adjustment. Infusing hybridity (not just blended delivery) into a FYC course makes the need for consistent guidance regarding interactions even more acute. If students in a hybrid course use technologies on an as-needed basis, rather than on an as-scheduled basis, they would need to have sufficient information to make an informed decision about when to use which modality and the flexibility to move among them as appropriate. The purpose and benefit of each course component would need to be made clear, allowing students to employ available tools or formats based on what they can provide.

Effectively applying hybridity to a classroom demands an amount of meta-awareness from students. They need to be able to navigate technologies based on their knowledge of what those technologies afford. Students do this routinely in their everyday efforts to socialize, deciding which platform to use share their ideas or get information from others. Students choose platforms based on their previous experiences with the technologies and the social norms for each. In a FYC classroom setting, previous experiences can vary greatly and may not include the modalities available at the college level. In Chapter 4, I discussed training that institutions could provide students to help them make more informed decisions about course registration, as well as ways that institutional systems could employ design constraints to make registration systems more helpful. In both cases, the goal was to ensure students were aware of their choices and the consequences those created. Likewise, instructors creating a hybrid learning environment can help students by making sure students are aware of the options available and their implications.

By choosing the Blogger platform, Mr. Brown created a course with a single location at which students could find course content and peer discussion. His students referred to the course blog as their primary class resource and the first place they would look for information. Mr. Grey implemented the
campus LMS and used various tools within that system to give his students a variety of activities for the online component of his classes. To make the weekly variations more manageable, he sent out a routine email with details about the assignment and step-by-step instructions for what students were asked to do for their online class day. Both instructors recognized the potential problem with having a course that incorporates two modes of interaction. They responded to their concerns by developing some predictable means by which students could reliably figure out what they needed to do for class or where they could go to find that information. The interfaces available in a blended environment are diverse and can become a distraction if students cannot find what they need when completing class activities. Students need to have a common point of reference if they are to successfully navigate their course content, and instructors can help their efforts by providing a predictable place to find that content.

Students also need to understand the social situations in which various tools are positioned. Take, for instance, the use of Twitter as a means of communicating in class. Students need to understand the basic functionality of the service, but they also need to understand the implications of publicity/privacy that are involved. Just as Twitter can be used for rhetorical purposes in a class, the use of Twitter as a classroom tool is a rhetorical move that deserves examination in class so the students understand the purposes and goals of its implementation. If instructors explain the rhetorical choices they make so students can more conscientiously implement classroom technologies, a hybrid class necessarily becomes more open and more student-directed. For instructors who prefer to determine in advance which technology will be used, they have an obligation to explain to students why a particular technology was selected so that students understand the reasons behind the decision. Otherwise, the tool becomes just that: a tool implemented to accomplish a task for the course, rather than the subject of critical scrutiny and an integral element of the course itself. Hybrid pedagogy demands openness and understanding.

7.3.3  Meaningful Spaces in the Class

The openness demanded by hybrid pedagogy align well with the pedagogies of writing instruction, and adopting a hybrid approach to teaching supports many of the goals of modern writing instruction. For
example, the rhetoric and composition field now views writing as an inherently collaborative and interactive social act requiring negotiation with the audience and the genre’s affordances. A hybrid pedagogy positions learning as a likewise collaborative and interactive social act that requires similar negotiations with the content and the medium being used. An awareness of the choices made in one situation could transfer to the other, enhancing the teaching and learning experiences. Further, as technology changes the way we write, the subject of a writing course necessarily changes, too. If technology changes the way we teach, the delivery of a writing course also changes, making FYC particularly susceptible to dynamism on account of technological developments.

As technology has changed in recent decades, our teaching methods have not always kept up. As discussed in the expectations section above, students use their past experiences to determine their expectations for future courses. In the research setting from this project, that reliance on past experience for students meant that most participating students had based their expectations for online learning from their experiences with Florida Virtual School (FLVS), which they generally did not respect as a genuine opportunity for learning. Instead, students in this study had a clear and often-expressed belief that learning only happened in face-to-face environments. To them, online spaces were places where tasks were completed, but learning was not an expected result. Instructors at the post-secondary level, then, have students who arrive expecting not to learn from online courses. A blended model further complicates the matter because teachers expect online and in-person components to seamlessly mix, and for learning to continue from one environment into the other, yet students expect all the learning from the course to take place in a reduced span of time, only while the class meets in person. Instructors need to be aware of this phenomenon and work with their students to create environments that allow for the kinds of work and learning that both parties need.

7.4 Final Thoughts

The analysis above provides a complex response to this project’s overall research question, “How do instructors and students perceive, construct, and interact with FYC courses taught via face-to-face or
blended delivery? I have shown that expectations for course modalities based on prior experiences shape the perception of new blended courses. I explored the co-construction of FYC courses through active participation in various course components, from in-class discussions to assignment responses. I also highlighted interaction as a defining characteristic of course modalities, arguing that student/teacher interactions directly affect student perception, instructor satisfaction, and tool adoption. Composing a hybrid FYC course is an interactive process of co-creation that brings together the instructor’s expertise and the students’ active participation in both in-person and online environments.

I must stress that I am not claiming that blending a course necessarily leads to better student learning outcomes. Indeed, my own portfolio assessment data (discussed in Chapter 5) support Russell’s (1999) “no significant difference phenomenon.” But if we are to use FYC as a means of introducing students to the complexities of digital composition, we must consider how digital writing changes the nature of what and how we study writing. Our courses will need to become increasingly hybridized to accommodate the needs of the field and the content we ask our students to study. By critically analyzing our pedagogies and by conscientiously applying hybrid learning principles, we can create FYC courses that give students the ability to understand how this field—and their work within it—fits in with today’s communication methods. Our classes have already expanded beyond the four walls of our classrooms. Applying critical digital pedagogy to online course components will ensure our students learn in each of the meaningful spaces our courses inhabit.

Because classes consist of interfaces among various factors, those interfaces warrant the bulk of our attention if we wish to improve the way we teach or the way our students learn. It also means that instructors cannot effectively create a course interface without an understanding of, and the participation of, their students. Just as the genre expectations of a piece of writing dictate how that writing should be composed, the student expectations of a course dictate how the course must be composed. The most effective way of negotiating these expectations is through a cooperative, shared creation experience in which students and instructors adopt novice and expert personae as appropriate, relying on their expertise when they can provide it and approaching new situations as a novice, willing to experiment and learn. If all par-
Participants in a FYC course can create these hybrid personae, the content of a writing class can incorporate the compositions being studied, the composition being done for the course, and the composition of the course itself. Technology is inherently part of every writing class. By composing the classroom with our students, we can construct a hybrid environment that takes learning beyond the interfaces of class and into interfaces with the world.
Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Christopher R. Friend

Date: July 12, 2012

Dear Researcher:

On 7/12/2012, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

- **Type of Review:** Exempt Determination
- **Project Title:** The Role of Delivery Mode in an Outcomes-Based Composition Curriculum
- **Investigator:** Christopher R. Friend
- **IRB Number:** SBE-12-08471
- **Funding Agency:** N/A
- **Grant Title:** N/A
- **Research ID:** N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Patria Davis on 07/12/2012 01:18:30 PM EDT

IRB Coordinator
APPENDIX B: FYC GUIDING PRINCIPLES
The following are the guiding principles of FYC at UCF (University of Central Florida Department of Writing and Rhetoric, n.d.-b):

- Writers need both declarative and procedural knowledge about writing. That is, they need to know how to use language effectively and how to adjust their writing processes to be most effective given the rhetorical situation in which they are writing. But they also benefit from a deep understanding of writing-related concepts such as rhetorical situation, genre, plagiarism, error, incubation, discourse community, and so on. Thus, the University of Central Florida (UCF) composition courses include instruction in drafting and revising, but also have a clear content drawn from Writing Studies research and theory about composing.

- Writers need to engage in sustained drafting and revision in order to write most effectively. Student writers respond best to comments about their writing which they have time and opportunity to incorporate suggestions into revised drafts. Thus, the UCF composition courses are based on a process approach to writing instruction that requires students to engage in substantive global revision over time, in addition to careful editing at the sentence level to produce thoughtful and polished final drafts.

- Writers write most effectively when their writing is purposeful, transactional, communicative, contributive, and rhetorical. Thus, the UCF composition courses encourage students to understand and write for specific audiences to achieve clear purposes that are meaningful to the student.

- Writing instruction should strive to teach transferable practices and concepts. Thus, the UCF composition curriculum is rooted in research on knowledge transfer that suggests students should learn flexible concepts about writing rather than rigid rules, and they should engage in continual reflection on their writing practices to encourage mindfulness.

- Particular genres are best learned in the contexts where they mediate activity. Thus, the UCF composition curriculum focuses on purpose and content first in the belief that form follows function.
Students in ENC 1101 and ENC 1102 will write in a variety of genres appropriate to their rhetorical purposes and learning goals. Genres specific to various disciplinary activity systems (for example, lab reports or philosophy essays) should be taught within the classrooms where those genres mediate meaningful work and learning. Genres or “modes” will not be taught acontextually in ENC 1101 and ENC 1102.
APPENDIX C: STUDENT SURVEYS
• **Attitudes about reading and writing**
  
  Below there are statements about reading, writing, and conducting research. For each statement, select the response that best describes your feelings about the prompt. [Uses a traditional Likert scale.]

  1. I enjoy writing for pleasure.
  2. I feel confident writing papers for school.
  3. When I write a paper for school, I usually write more than one draft before I turn it in.
  4. I believe that I write a good paper in only one draft.
  5. I feel confident in my ability to write for different purposes and/or audiences.
  6. I feel confident in my ability to read for all of my college classes.
  7. When I must read something long or difficult for a class I am able to understand what I read.
  8. I feel confident in my ability to use research databases in the library catalog.
  9. Writing errors are always considered errors, no matter what the audience, purpose, or style of writing is.
  10. I believe some people have a special talent for writing and others don’t.
  11. I believe I can learn to write better if I make an effort.

• **Writing-related behaviors**

  1. I usually engage in the following when I write a paper for school (check all that apply):
     - Plan in advance
     - Draft in advance
     - Draft at the last minute
     - Brainstorm
     - Freewrite
     - Conduct outside research
– Outline
– Write a rough draft
– Write a thesis statement
– Ask others for comments
– Revise for content (like ideas)
– Proofread for errors
– Change words
– Add or remove sentences

2. Below there are statements about reading, writing, and conducting research. For each statement, select the response that best describes your feelings about the prompt. [Uses a traditional Likert scale.]

(a) I regularly write more than one draft of an academic paper for school.
(b) The procedures I use when I write change depending on what I am writing.
(c) When I write a paper, I think about my audience and trying to write appropriately for them.
(d) When I must read something on more difficult for a college class, I have some strategies to help me understand the material.
(e) When I must write a long or complicated paper, I have some strategies to help me do so successfully.
(f) I adjust my writing practices for the situation (i.e., audience, purpose, type of text being written, etc.)

• Previous reading and writing experiences

Below are some questions about your previous writing and reading instruction. Please answer these to the best of your ability. [Uses a traditional Likert scale.]

1. I think that my previous writing instruction was good and useful.
2. In my previous writing classes, I have a lot of experience writing about research.
3. In my previous writing classes, I learned about rhetoric and the rhetorical situation.

4. In my previous writing classes, we talked a lot about writing appropriately for different audiences and situations.

5. In my previous classes, I wrote in many different forms (genres). (For example, I wrote essays, research papers, letters, lab reports, journals, etc.)

**Knowledge of concepts related to writing and reading**

Below are statements about reading, writing, and conducting research. For each statement, select the response that best describes your feelings about the prompt. [Uses a traditional Likert scale.]

1. I understand how to correctly cite sources within the text of the paper using a style manual such as MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.

2. I can correctly create works cited pages at the end of my papers using a style manual such as MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.

3. I understand how to use direct quotations from outside sources in my own papers.

4. I understand how to paraphrase from outside sources in my own papers.

5. When I find potential sources for a paper I am writing, I understand how to evaluate them to see if they are credible.

3.2 Student Survey, Semester Start

Hello, there. Welcome to the first survey of the 1101 Delivery-Mode Study. Before the questions start, here is some information about the research you should know.

**Project Overview**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you. You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. If you are under 18, you cannot participate.
Purpose

This study will examine Comp I (ENC 1101) classes at UCF to see how the format of the course—in-person versus mixed-mode—affects the course and student performance. The research includes student and teacher perceptions of class formats, plus achievement in student portfolios.

Procedures

You are being asked to complete two online surveys, one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end. If you would like, you can also participate in a follow-up focus group, which will meet twice during the semester for conversation between the researcher and several students from your class. The surveys and the focus group will discuss your perception of the class and its format. You will also be asked about what you think you do and do not learn in the class.

Participation

Each of the two surveys is expected to take about 10 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you will be given the opportunity to provide your email address if you wish to be considered for the focus group. The researcher will not tell your teacher whether you participate. If you participate in the focus group, you will be asked to attend two one-hour meetings during the semester. These meetings will be audio-recorded for further study, but your name will be removed from the data after the semester ends.

1. Do you want to participate in this survey?
   □ Yes
   □ No

2. Are you at least 18 years old?
   □ Yes. I am 18 or older.
   □ No, I am under 18.


Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, feel free to contact Christopher R. Friend, Graduate Student, Texts & Technology Program, CAH, by phone at 407-374-3632 or by email at friend@ucf.edu. If you prefer not to speak to the researcher directly, you may also contact Dr. Elizabeth Wardle, Faculty Supervisor, DWR, at 407-823-5416 or by email at ewardle@mail.ucf.edu.

To learn about your rights in this study or to report a complaint

Research at UCF involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the IRB. This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246, or by telephone at 407-823-2901.

Thoughts About the Writing Process

For this part of the survey, please consider the statements below and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.

How much do you agree with these statements?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some people naturally have writing ability; others do not.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing process adapts in response to varying writing situations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer controls the meaning in a piece of writing; the reader’s job is to interpret that meaning.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a classroom, knowledge moves from teacher and textbook to student.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is little benefit in revising my writing; my first draft is usually good enough.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing involves collaboration.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are rules that determine if writing is good or if it has errors.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thoughts About Your Writing**

As before, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. How much do you agree with these statements?
### Writing History

These statements address the writing you did in school before this class. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each.

How much do you agree with these statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy writing for pleasure.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I adjust my writing practices for the situation (such as the audience, purpose, or type of text).</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident writing papers for school.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I read something long or difficult for a class, I can understand what I read.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my ability to write for different audiences and purposes.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I write a paper for school, I usually write more than one draft before I turn it in.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my ability to read appropriately for my college classes.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I write, I think about my audience and try to write appropriately for them.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think my previous writing instruction was helpful.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In previous writing classes, I gained experience writing about research.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My previous writing classes taught me about rhetoric and writing purposes.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My previous writing classes emphasized writing for different audiences and situations.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In previous classes, I wrote many kinds of documents (like essays, research papers, letters, journals, or lab reports).</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Behaviors**

Think about the process you use when you write something for school. From the list below, please select the activities you use to write school papers.

3. **Which of these do you do when writing a paper for school?**

   **Check as many as apply.**

   - □ Plan in advance
   - □ Write a rough draft in advance
   - □ Brainstorm
   - □ Write a draft at the last minute
   - □ Freewrite
   - □ Conduct outside research
   - □ Outline
   - □ Ask others for help/comments
   - □ Write a near-final draft in advance
   - □ Revise for content (like ideas)
Proofread for errors (like grammar/spelling) □ Rewrite sentences □ Rewrite entire paragraphs

Writing Concepts

As before, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below.

How much do you agree with these statements?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to read and understand complex research-based texts.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing can be used to negotiate (give and take) authority among people.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple forms of literacy exist.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The audience and purpose of writing determine what is considered a writing error.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers use predictable textual moves in academic publications.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person should first join a community before analyzing its texts.</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have to write a long or complicated paper, I have strategies I use to help me write successfully.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A Little About You...**

To help sort the information, would you let me know about yourself?

4. **Who is your instructor?**
   - ☐ Mr. Brown
   - ☐ Mr. Grey

5. **How does your class meet?**
6. What college year are you?
   □ Freshman
   □ Sophomore
   □ Junior
   □ Senior
   □ Other (non-degree, non-traditional, etc.)

7. What is your name? _________________

8. From what type of high school did you graduate?
   □ Home school
   □ Public school
   □ Private school
   □ Other

9. Who is primarily paying for your college education?
   □ loans
   □ scholarships
   □ my employer
   □ parent(s) or other family member(s)
   □ I am paying my own way

Interested in the focus group?

If you are considering being a part of the focus group for your class, please provide your email address so I can contact you.

By filling in your address, you are not committing to join. You are simply requesting additional information.

10. Your email address _________________

3.3 Student Survey, Semester End

Welcome to the final survey of the 1101 Delivery-Mode Study. Before the questions start, here is some information about the research you should know.
Project Overview

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you. You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. If you are under 18, you cannot participate.

Purpose

This study will examine Comp I (ENC 1101) classes at UCF to see how the format of the course—in-person versus mixed-mode—affects the course and student performance. The research includes student and teacher perceptions of class formats, plus achievement in student portfolios.

Procedures

You are being asked to complete two online surveys, one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end. If you would like, you can also participate in a follow-up focus group, which will meet twice during the semester for conversation between the researcher and several students from your class. The surveys and the focus group will discuss your perception of the class and its format. You will also be asked about what you think you do and do not learn in the class.

Participation

Each of the two surveys is expected to take about 10 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you will be given the opportunity to provide your email address if you wish to be considered for the focus group. The researcher will not tell your teacher whether you participate. If you participate in the focus group, you will be asked to attend two one-hour meetings during the semester. These meetings will be audio-recorded for further study, but your name will be removed from the data after the semester ends.

11. Do you want to participate in this survey?

☐ Yes

☐ No
12. Are you at least 18 years old?

☐ Yes. I am 18 or older.

☐ No, I am under 18.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, feel free to contact Christopher R. Friend, Graduate Student, Texts & Technology Program, CAH, by phone at 407-374-3632 or by email at friend@ucf.edu. If you prefer not to speak to the researcher directly, you may also contact Dr. Elizabeth Wardle, Faculty Supervisor, DWR, at 407-823-5416 or by email at ewardle@mail.ucf.edu.

To learn about your rights in this study or to report a complaint

Research at UCF involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the IRB. This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246, or by telephone at 407-823-2901.

Thoughts About the Writing Process

For this part of the survey, please consider the statements below and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.

How much do you agree with these statements?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some people naturally have writing ability; others do not.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My writing process adapts in response to varying writing situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer controls the meaning in a piece of writing; the reader’s job is to interpret that meaning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a classroom, knowledge moves from teacher and textbook to student.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is little benefit in revising my writing; my first draft is usually good enough.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing involves collaboration.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are rules that determine if writing is good or if it has errors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Thoughts About Your Writing*

As before, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below. How much do you agree with these statements?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy writing for pleasure.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I adjust my writing practices for the situation (such as the audience, purpose, or type of text).</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident writing papers for school.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I read something long or difficult for a class, I can understand what I read.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my ability to write for different audiences and purposes.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I write a paper for school, I usually write more than one draft before I turn it in.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my ability to read appropriately for my college classes.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I write, I think about my audience and try to write appropriately for them.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing History

These statements address the writing you did in school before this class. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each.

How much do you agree with these statements?
I think my previous writing instruction was helpful.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In previous writing classes, I gained experience writing about research.  

My previous writing classes taught me about rhetoric and writing purposes.  

My previous writing classes emphasized writing for different audiences and situations.  

In previous classes, I wrote many kinds of documents (like essays, research papers, letters, journals, or lab reports).  

Writing Behaviors  

Think about the process you use when you write something for school. From the list below, please select the activities you use to write school papers.  

13. Which of these do you do when writing a paper for school?  
Check as many as apply.  

- Plan in advance  
- Brainstorm  
- Freewrite  
- Outline  
- Write a near-final draft in advance  
- Write a rough draft in advance  
- Write a draft at the last minute  
- Conduct outside research  
- Ask others for help/comments  
- Revise for content (like ideas)
Writing Concepts

As before, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements below.

How much do you agree with these statements?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to read and understand complex research-based texts.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing can be used to negotiate (give and take) authority among people.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple forms of literacy exist.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The audience and purpose of writing determine what is considered a writing error.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers use predictable textual moves in academic publications.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person should first join a community before analyzing its texts.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</table>

A Little About You...

To help sort the information, would you let me know about yourself?

14. Who is your instructor? □ Mr. Brown □ Mr. Grey

15. How does your class meet?
☐ Face-to-Face
☐ Mixed-Mode

16. What college year are you?
☐ Freshman
☐ Sophomore
☐ Junior
☐ Senior
☐ Other (non-degree, non-traditional, etc.)

17. What is your name? ____________________

18. From what type of high school did you graduate?
☐ Home school
☐ Public school
☐ Private school
☐ Other

19. Who is primarily paying for your college education?
☐ loans
☐ scholarships
☐ my employer
☐ parent(s) or other family member(s)
☐ I am paying my own way
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS USED TO STRUCTURE INTERVIEW SESSIONS
4.1 For Ms. White

1. What’s your history teaching Composition I (ENC 1101)? Teaching mixed-mode courses?
2. When you designed your mixed-mode materials, what drove the changes? What did you focus on maintaining?
3. Are there course outcomes that you believe are more challenging for students to achieve in the mixed-mode format than in face-to-face?
4. Are there outcomes that work better in the mixed-mode class? Why is that?
5. Do you see a difference in student performance between modes?
6. What assignment or unit shows the most difference, either for student achievement or your delivery, across modes?
7. How would you characterize your interactions with students in your mixed-mode classes? in face-to-face?
8. Do you have a different sense of time throughout the semester between the modes? Does one seem more rushed or more disconnected than the other?
9. Has your face-to-face teaching changed as a result of your mixed-mode experience?
10. When teachers set out to adapt existing face-to-face ENC 1101 courses for mixed-mode, what do they most need to keep in mind?
11. As teachers begin planning for their courses, what signs might there be to indicate upcoming success, failure, comfort, awkwardness in designing or delivering m courses?
12. Will maintaining contact with students in mixed-mode courses present a challenge? How can instructors best overcome that?

4.2 Pre-Semester Interviews

1. What’s your background with teaching ENC 1101 at UCF?
2. What approach/philosophy/guidelines are on your mind as you prepare to adapt your course to the mixed-mode format?

3. What differences do you anticipate between format implementations?

4. What problems do you think might crop up as a result of the mixed-mode format?

5. What do you think mixed-mode will allow that you’ve not been able to do yet with face-to-face?

6. What changes will you make to your mixed-mode assignments as a result of the delivery mode?

7. Has your work on the mixed-mode course influenced your thinking about your face-to-face course design or expectations?

8. This department is very outcomes-focused. How does that affect your course development process? Does it restrict/hinder your work, or does it help focus/clarify your planning?

9. How will you assess student performance during the semester?

10. Will your online components have a predictability or a formula to them?

11. Do you anticipate any specific problematic pedagogical issues?

4.3 For Mr. Brown

1. Have you been able to get the 110% effort you were seeking?

2. Did your students know what mixed-mode classes were when enrolling?

3. Can you tell if your teaching style is changing as a result of the new modality?

4. Is your face-to-face class relatively similar to your classes from previous semesters? Do you find that you use it as a baseline for comparison of your mixed-mode class? Do you find that things you do in your mixed-mode class work in your face-to-face course, as well?

5. You said you’d plan face-to-face first, then mixed-mode. How has that worked and remained constant as you’ve progressed?

6. What unexpected adaptations have you made to your mixed-mode class that you hadn’t planned for?

7. How much web content do you use in your face-to-face class?
8. How much has your mixed-mode class (in design, expectation, or activity) bled into your face-to-face course?

9. You were concerned about voice and authority in your discussions; how have they played out?

10. You teach to student outcomes. Does the mixed-mode mode seem to help you do that or make things more difficult? What has happened in class to lead you to that answer?

11. Which outcome/concept is the hardest for students to get?

4.4 For Mr. Grey

1. Do you explicitly teach discussion in face-to-face?

2. In our last interview, you said you wanted classes to be more “dynamic, interested, invested.” You also said you wanted your students to learn by exploring. How have those terms played out so far?

3. You said it was like Monopoly, and that you learn the rules as you go. What rules have you learned about mixed-mode courses?

4. What unexpected adaptations have you made to your mixed-mode class that you hadn’t planned for?

5. How has your mixed-mode class (in design, expectation, or activity) bled into your face-to-face course?

6. You spoke about the difference between accountability and responsibility. How have those played out in both modes?

7. You said you didn’t want to let structure and predictability sink your classes. Have you fallen into a routine, or have you avoided it?

8. You teach to student outcomes. Does the mixed-mode mode seem to help you do that or make things more difficult? What has happened in class to lead you to that answer?

9. Is your face-to-face class relatively similar to your classes from previous semesters? Do you find that you use it as a baseline for comparison of your mixed-mode class? Do you find that things you do in your mixed-mode class work in your face-to-face course, as well?
10. What changes have you made to your expectations from students in your mixed-mode course?

4.5 Student Focus-Group Questions

- Opening
  1. What online or mixed-mode courses have you taken?
  2. Where did you go to high school, and what kinds of writing did you do for classes or clubs there?

- Transition
  1. Generally how vocal are you in class? How likely are you to speak up or answer quickly?
  2. How do you feel about writing classes overall? This one in particular?
  3. How comfortable with technology do you consider yourself?
  4. What kinds of writing have you done for your class? This can include anything from major papers at home down to note taking or quick writes in class.
  5. In what ways did you use the Internet when completing your assignments for this class?
  6. What are you learning right now in your class?

- Key
  1. Describe the expectations your instructor has for your writing. Are they clear?
  2. What has been the hardest concept to learn in class so far? Which has been the most important?
  3. How connected do you feel with your instructor? With your classmates?
  4. Tell me about your ability to communicate with others (student or teacher) in class.

- Ending
  1. What are the benefits or drawbacks of your course mode?
  2. If you could give advice to next year’s ENC 1101 students, what would it be?
  3. If you gave your teacher advice about the use of technology in class, what advice would you give?
4. What factors cause you to choose one course format over another?

5. Anything that we missed?

4.6 Questions Added for End of Semester

1. How will that material help you in the future?

2. What benefit will you get from taking this course?

3. What benefit does the course format provide? What are its limitations/problems?
APPENDIX E: CODES USED TO ANALYZE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS
• ‘Dynamic’
• ‘Ownership’
• ‘Perception’
• Assignments
  – Assessment
  – Assignment Design
  – Feedback
  – Instructor Expectations
  – Kinds of writing done in class
  – Location of Work or Submission
  – Writing About Self
• Availability of Sufficient Time
• Communication
  – Connection to Peers
  – Interaction with Instructor
  – Online Discussions
  – Talking in Class
  – Trust
• Comparing Delivery Modes
  – Class size
  – Electives versus Academics
  – Science vs Humanities
• Course Outcomes Coverage
  – Construction of Meaning
  – Reading complex texts
• Current Course
– Advice to future students
– Advice to instructor
– Authority
– Benefit of the Course
– Freedom and Flexibility
– Immediacy of Assistance
– In-Class Technology
– Trouble with Tech

• Deadlines
• Engagement
• Environmental Effects

• Learning
  – Demonstration of tech
  – Difficult Concepts
  – Discovery
  – Important Concepts
  – Learning from failure or experience
  – Learning Styles
  – Student Engagement
  – Threshold Concepts
  – Time on task or student focus

• Making connections with the material
• Measures of failure
• Participation and behavior
  – Abandonment or Attrition
  – Procrastination
- Student Performance

- Perception of students

- Planning
  - Adaptation concerns
  - Guiding Philosophy
  - Modes influencing one another
  - New technology
  - Time required to plan or adapt

- Previous Experience
  - Comfort with Technology
  - Experience teaching 1101
  - Feelings About Writing Classes
    - with Mixed-mode courses
    - With online courses
    - With writing courses

- Productive failure

- Registration and Enrollment

- Revision
  - Peer Revision

- Schedule of class or components
  - Balancing online with in-class
  - Predictability or Routine
  - Self-motivation to complete

- Student Characteristics
  - ‘Sophisticated’
  - Autonomy
- Maturity
- Playfulness
- Shyness

- Trust
- Workload for students

(Numbers indicate the occurrences of those codes across the collected interviews.)

Teacher Response, 272  How do teachers plan for and respond to new course modalities, and what factors influence these responses?

Assignments, 26 Accommodation of Delivery Mode, 1  To what extent do teachers accommodate delivery mode in their assignment design?

Affordances of Delivery Mode, 0  Are there features of assignments that are distinctively afforded by the delivery method?

Assessment, 17

Assignment Design, 8

Instruction, 86

Performance Expectations, 144

Teacher Expectations or Own Performance, 47  How does a new delivery mode influence teachers’ expectations for their own performance and effectiveness?

Teacher Expectations of Student Performance, 96  How does a new delivery mode influence teachers’ expectations for their students’ performance?

Student Reaction, 305  How do students react to differences in course delivery mode?

Prior Experience, 35  How do students’ prior experience with different delivery modes inform their views?

Student Decisions about Course Selection, 41  What factors inform student decisions about course-selection, and how do those decisions relate to their perceptions of different delivery modes?
Student Performance, 80 How does student performance, as seen through student final portfolios, compare between instructional modes?

Student Views of Course Delivery, 149 How do students perceive different delivery modes?
6.1 Original from Department
ENC1101 PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Portfolio Identification Code: _______________

Reviewer Name (please print):

_______________________________________________

Overall Grade for Portfolio (can use plus or minus): __________________

Does this portfolio include the pilot outcomes-based cover letter? Circle YES / NO

This portfolio is (circle one) ELECTRONIC PAPER-BASED

For the following outcomes, give the portfolio a grade for each of the possible demonstrations of learning first. Then, assign a grade for the achievement of the overall outcome.

Outstanding = A  Good = B  Adequate = C  Poor = D  Failing = F  Other/Not Observed = NA

Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of writing processes and how writing processes change.

Some ways students might demonstrate this outcome include:

1A. The writer uses acquired vocabulary for talking about writing processes and herself as a writer, including terms like incubation, recursiveness, and revision: _______

1B. Drafts demonstrate substantial and successful revision. _______

1C. The writing responds to substantive issues raised by instructor and peer feedback. _______

1D: Other (explain):

Overall Rating for Outcome 1:  A  B  C  D  F  NA (not an average)
Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate an awareness of rhetorical situations and acquire strategies for writing in different contexts.

Some ways students might demonstrate this outcome include:

2A. The writer uses acquired vocabulary for talking about rhetorical situations, including terms like audience, exigence, and constraints. _______

2B. The writing employs style, tone, and conventions effective for the genre and situation at hand. _______

2C. The portfolio as a whole demonstrates the writer’s ability to write for different purposes and situations, either inside and/or outside the university. _______

2D. The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices. _______

2E. Other (explain):

Overall Rating for Outcome 2: A B C D F NA (not an average)

Outcome 3: Students will improve as readers of complex texts.

Some ways students might demonstrate this outcome include:

3A. The writer identifies and explains the “moves” common to academic, scholarly texts (e.g. CARS, references to prior research, explanation of methodology). _______

3B. Writer uses college-level texts in strategic, focused ways (e.g. summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing. _______

3C. Writer demonstrates understanding of reading being discussed. _______

3D. Other (explain):

Overall Rating for Outcome 3: A B C D F NA (not an average)
Outcome 4: Students will demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between discourse conventions, lexis, genres, and their related communities.

Some ways students might demonstrate this outcome include:

4A. The writer uses acquired vocabulary for analyzing how language mediates a community’s actions, including terms like discourse community, genre, lexis, authority, and literacy. ____

4B. The writer identifies and analyzes discourses, communities, and conventions. ____

4C. The writing demonstrates an ability to respond to varied discourse conventions and genres in different situations (e.g. different classes). ____

4D. The writing demonstrates responsible use of genre conventions, including formatting, document design, and citation (e.g. MLA). ____

4E. Other (explain):

Overall Rating for Outcome 4: A B C D F NA
(not an average)

Is this portfolio interesting/special/unusual enough to return to during the bottom-up assessment review? Circle YES / NO
Comments (if any):

Does this portfolio demonstrate any sort of learning or mastery that is not accounted for in the rubric above? Circle YES / NO
If “YES,” please explain:
6.2 Used for Norming
### Portfolio Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Not observed/other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ___ demonstrate an understanding of writing processes, including strategies for changing them depending on writing contexts.
  - use acquired **vocabulary** for talking about writing processes, including terms like incubation, planning, prewriting, invention, recursiveness, revision, heuristic, etc.
  - demonstrate use of a **planning document**.
  - connect writing tasks to own process.
  - demonstrate substantial and successful **revision**.
  - respond to substantive feedback from instructor and peers.
  - Other (explain):

- ___ demonstrate an awareness of rhetorical situations.
  - use acquired **vocabulary** for talking about rhetorical situations, including terms like audience, exigence, and constraints.
  - employ **effective style, tone, and conventions** for the given genre and situation.
  - show an ability to write for **different purposes and situations**, either inside or outside academia.
  - articulate and assess the **effects of writing choices**.
  - perform **rhetorical analysis** on own writing.
  - Other (explain):

- ___ improve as readers of complex texts.
  - use acquired **vocabulary** for talking about reading texts, including terms from the CARS model, intertextuality, etc.
  - use **college-level texts** in strategic, focused ways (e.g. summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.
  - isolate relevant selections from referenced work(s).
  - demonstrate understanding of referenced readings.
  - identifies a perspective from which a text is read.
  - reads one text in terms of another text.
  - synthesizes multiple readings
  - Other (explain):

- ___ demonstrate an awareness of discourse communities and their conventions, lexis, and genres.
  - use acquired **vocabulary** for analyzing how language mediates a community’s actions, including terms like discourse community, genre, lexis, authority, or literacy.
  - analyze discourses, communities, and conventions.
  - identify that language use is key to acceptance into a discourse community
  - respond to varied **discourse conventions** in different situations (e.g., for different purposes).
  - use appropriate **genre conventions**, including formatting, document design, and citation.
  - Other (explain):

Does this portfolio stand out as being particularly distinctive/exceptional/interesting, warranting special review or comment? **YES | NO**
6.3 Final Version
## Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**understanding of writing processes, incl. strategies for changing them depending on writing contexts**

- **DECLARATIVE score for writing process**
  - Uses acquired vocabulary for talking about writing processes, including terms like incubation, planning, prewriting, invention, recursiveness, revision, heuristic, etc.
  - Asserts the benefit of revision in the writing process.
  - Claims that the writing process should be flexible, malleable, adaptive, etc.
  - Other declarative indicator (explain):

- **PROCEDURAL score for writing process**
  - Demonstrates use of a planning document.
  - Connects writing objectives to own process.
  - Demonstrates substantial and successful revision.
  - Responds to substantive feedback from instructor and peers.
  - Other procedural indicator (explain):

**awareness of discourse communities and their conventions, lexia, & genres**

- **DECLARATIVE score for discourse community**
  - Uses acquired vocabulary for analyzing how language mediates a community’s actions, including terms like discourse community, genre, lexis, authority, or literacy.
  - Analyzes discourses, communities, and conventions, such as a community’s lexis or genre.
  - Acknowledges that language use is key to acceptance into a discourse community.
  - Other declarative indicator (explain):

- **PROCEDURAL score for discourse community**
  - Responds to varied discourse conventions according to the needs of a community.
  - Uses a community’s genre conventions, including formatting, document design, etc.
  - Other procedural indicator (explain):

**skill as a reader of complex texts**

- **DECLARATIVE score for skilled reading**
  - Uses acquired vocabulary for talking about reading texts, including terms from the CARS model, intertextuality, etc.
  - Recognizes the varying levels of complexity for course texts.
  - Describes differences in reading process given different texts or purposes.
  - Other declarative indicator (explain):

- **PROCEDURAL score for skilled reading**
  - Uses college-level texts in strategic, focused ways (e.g. summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.
  - Isolates relevant selections from referenced work(s).
  - Demonstrates understanding of referenced readings.
  - Identifies a perspective from which a text is read.
  - Reads one text in terms of another text.
  - Synthesizes multiple readings.
  - Other procedural indicator (explain):

**awareness of rhetorical situations**

- **DECLARATIVE score for rhetorical situation**
  - Uses acquired vocabulary for talking about rhetorical situations, including terms like audience, exigence, and constraints.
  - Articulates and assesses the effects of writing choices.
  - Makes purposeful distinctions among writing situations.
  - Other declarative indicator (explain):

- **PROCEDURAL score for rhetorical situation**
  - Employs effective style, tone, and conventions for the given situation.
  - Shows an ability to write for different purposes and situations, either inside or outside academia.
  - Performs rhetorical analysis on own writing.
  - Other procedural indicator (explain):

Is this portfolio particularly distinctive/exceptional/interesting, warranting special review/comment? **YES | NO**
APPENDIX G: REGISTRATION SCREENS
Figure G.1: Course search results from FAU showing blended courses
Figure G.2: Course search screen from FAU’s registration system
Figure G.3: Course search results from FIU showing blended courses
Figure G.4: Course search screen from FIU’s registration system
### Figure G.5: Course search screen from GSU’s registration system
Figure G.6: Course search results from KSU showing blended courses
Figure G.7: Course search screen from KSU’s registration system
7.5 Portland State University

**Sections Found**

**University Studies**

CH 117, (503) 725-5890.

**NATURAL SCIENCE INQUIRY - 16083 - UNST 2868 - 002**

This course is fully or partially online and requires you to have an ODIN account. To create an ODIN account and get instruction for its activation, go to http://oam.pdx.edu. You must be enrolled in the class before you can create your account. You should be able to access the course online no later than the first day of the term.

Associated Term: Fall 2013 Quarter

Levels: Undergraduate

Institutional (PSU) Campus

Hybrid Instructional Method

4.00 Credits

**Scheduled Meeting Times**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Time</th>
<th>Days Where</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Schedule Type</th>
<th>Instructors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 10:00 - 11:50</td>
<td>R Cramer Hall 207</td>
<td>30-SEP-2013 - 14-DEC-2013</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Jeremy Perra (P)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SEM: SKILLS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE - 16248 - UNST 407 - 006**

This course is fully or partially online and requires you to have an ODIN account. To create an ODIN account and get instruction for its activation, go to http://oam.pdx.edu. You must be enrolled in the class before you can create your account. You should be able to access the course online no later than the first day of the term.

Associated Term: Fall 2013 Quarter

Levels: Undergraduate

Institutional (PSU) Campus

Hybrid Instructional Method

2.00 Credits

**Scheduled Meeting Times**

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<td>Class 16:00 - 17:50</td>
<td>W Cramer Hall 225</td>
<td>30-SEP-2013 - 14-DEC-2013</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>David Alan Osborn (P)</td>
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Figure G.8: Course search results from PSU showing blended courses
Figure G.9: Course search screen from PSU’s registration system
7.6 San Diego State University

Figure G.10: Course search results from SDSU showing blended courses

Figure G.11: Course search screen from SDSU’s registration system
Figure G.12: Course search results from UA showing distance courses

Figure G.13: Course search results from UA showing online courses
**Class Detail**

3300 111 - 005  English Composition I  
The University of Akron | 2014 Fall | Lecture or WWW

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<td>Class Number</td>
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<td>Spring 2014</td>
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<td>Class Components</td>
<td>Lecture or WWW</td>
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<td>Room</td>
<td>217B School of Business</td>
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<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Elizabeth Rhodes</td>
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<td>Meeting Dates</td>
<td>08/25/2014 - 12/07/2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment Requirements</td>
<td>Prerequisites: Placement test (ACT English &gt;= 18 or SAT Verbal &gt;= 330 or COMPASS Writing &gt;= 39) or 20150342 (Nemours 10150342)</td>
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<td>Enrollment Total</td>
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<td>Course will use interactive distance learning method of teaching.</td>
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<td>Extensive and varied experience in developing writing skills, with practice in expressive, reflective, and analytic forms of writing.</td>
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<table>
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<td>Textbooks to be determined</td>
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---

Figure G.14: Class detail results from UA
Figure G.15: Course search screen from UA’s registration system
## 7.8 University of Central Florida

**Search for Classes**

**Search Results**

When available, click View All Sections to see all sections of the course.

University of Central Florida | Fall 2014

The following classes match your search criteria Course Subject: English, Course Number contains 1101, Course Career: Undergraduate, Show Open Classes Only, Mode of Instruction: Hybrid Mode/ReducedSeatTime (HRST)

![Course search results from UCF showing blended courses](image)

**ENGL 1101 - Composition I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Days &amp; Times</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Meeting Dates</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>08235</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>MWF 11:30AM - 12:20PM</td>
<td>SAT 206</td>
<td>Carolyn Glassoff</td>
<td>08/18/2014 - 12/05/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08236</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Th 9:00AM - 10:15AM</td>
<td>HPR1 207</td>
<td>Mary Gomrad</td>
<td>08/18/2014 - 12/05/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08237</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Th 3:00PM - 4:15PM</td>
<td>HPA1 207</td>
<td>Leslie Watson</td>
<td>08/18/2014 - 12/05/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08238</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Th 1:30PM - 2:45PM</td>
<td>VAB 0107</td>
<td>Leslie Watson</td>
<td>08/18/2014 - 12/05/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08239</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Tu 9:00AM - 10:15AM</td>
<td>VAB 0107</td>
<td>Mary Gomrad</td>
<td>08/18/2014 - 12/05/2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>08240</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Tu 1:30PM - 2:45PM</td>
<td>VAB 0107</td>
<td>Leslie Watson</td>
<td>08/18/2014 - 12/05/2014</td>
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</table>

**Figure G.16:** Course search results from UCF showing blended courses
Figure G.17: Class detail results from UCF
Figure G.18: Course search screen from UCF’s registration system
Figure G.19: Course search results from UD showing blended courses
SPAN107028 Spanish III - Intermediate
2014 Fall Semester [2148]
Manuelov, Doris B
WF 1:25PM - 2:15PM
Lecture (4 credit hours)
Review of grammar, continued practice in speaking and writing, and reading texts of average difficulty. PREREQ: SPAN106 or SPAN111. RESTRICTIONS: Four years of high school Spanish acceptable in lieu of prerequisite. Satisfies College of Arts and Sciences language requirement.
Information valid for courses offered 2014 through 2015.
Notes: SPAN 107. All sections, you must have taken SPAN 106 or 4 or more years of Spanish in high school or cristaj@udel.edu. This section is offered in a hybrid format where two of the four weekly class-sessions will be substituted with online instruction instead of meeting face-to-face in a classroom. You must have an up-to-date computer and a reliable high-speed Internet connection. Note: The course materials used in hybrid courses are different from the ones used in regular sections.
Check course reserves or view textbooks.
College: AS
Department: FLIT
Last updated: 4/28/14 at 08:31 PM

Figure G.20: Hybrid class details from UD
Use this form to search for information about courses including locations, times, and seat availability.

If you have questions, contact the Office of the Registrar. Also see the Office of the Registrar's Web site for course offerings and experimental and topic course descriptions.

Term: 2014 Fall (2148)  
Search type: All courses  
Course number: ENGL110 (e.g., ACCT, ACCT207, ART110, ACCT207010)  
Course title:  
Course instructor:  
Course location: All locations  
Preferred start time: Hour AM/PM  
Preferred day(s): Mon Tue Wed Thur Fri Sat  
Number of credits: Any  
Keyword:  
Academic requirements: Discovery Learning Experience (DLE)  
First Year Experience (FYE)  
Honors course (HON)  
Multi-cultural Course (MCC)  
Writing course (WRI)  
University Breadth requirements: Creative Arts and Humanities  
History and Cultural Change  
Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Math, Natural Sciences and Technology  
Cross-listed courses: Include only cross-listed courses  
Subject: English (ENGL)  
College:  
Search

Figure G.21: Course search screen from UD’s registration system
Figure G.22: Course search results from UNC Charlotte showing blended courses
Figure G.23: Course search screen from UNC Charlotte’s registration system
Figure G.2.4: Course search results from UNM showing blended courses
Figure G.25: Course search screen from UNM’s registration system
Figure G.26: Course search results from USF showing blended courses
Figure G.27: Course search results from USF showing face-to-face courses
Figure G.28: Course search screen from USF’s registration system
Figure G.29: Course search results from UTA showing blended courses
**Class Details**

**ENGL 2303 - 001 TOPICS IN LITERATURE**

**Texas Common Course Number** ENGL 2341

**University of Texas, Arlington | 2014 Fall | Lecture**

**Class Details**

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<td>Units</td>
<td>3 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction Mode</td>
<td>Hybrid/Blended Course</td>
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<td>Class Components</td>
<td>Lecture, Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>8/21/2014 - 12/3/2014</td>
</tr>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>University of Texas, Arlington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>University of Texas Arlington</td>
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**Meeting Information**

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<th>Room</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Meeting Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Tu 8:00AM - 9:00AM</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Bethany K. Shaffer</td>
<td>08/22/2014 - 12/03/2014</td>
<td>Working Class Literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Enrollment Information**

**Enrollment Requirements**
ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302 or two ENGLISH 1300 level (transfer) courses (six hours) or student group E200 required

**Class Attributes**
Special Topics Course

**Class Availability**

| Class Capacity | 42 |
| Enroll Total   | 29 |
| Wait List Capacity | 0 |
| Wait List Total | 0 |
| Available Seats | 13 |

**Description**

Focus on a particular genre, theme, or issue to enable comparison and analysis of several texts. Emphasis on critical thinking, reading, and writing. Possible course topics are literature of the Cold War, working-class literature, environmental literature and film, or the Gothic as cultural text. May be repeated for credit as course content changes. Prerequisites: ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302

---

*Figure G.30: Class details from UTA blended courses*
Figure G.31: Course search screen from UTA’s registration system
Figure G.32: Course search results from VCU showing blended courses

Figure G.33: Course search results from VCU showing FYC courses
Figure G.34: Course search screen from VCU’s registration system
APPENDIX H: MR. GREY’S SYLLABI
ENC 1101: Composition I  
Department of Writing and Rhetoric  
College of Arts and Humanities, University of Central Florida

COURSE SYLLABUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Mr. Grey</th>
<th>Term:</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
<td>304 I, Colbourn Hall</td>
<td>Class Meeting Days:</td>
<td>Mon, Wed &amp; Fri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept. Phone:</td>
<td>407-823-5417</td>
<td>Class Meeting Hours:</td>
<td>3:30 – 4:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Mail:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mister.grey@ucf.edu">mister.grey@ucf.edu</a></td>
<td>Class Location:</td>
<td>CI1 301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>MWF: 12:30 – 1:20 &amp; 2:30 – 3:20 and by appointment</td>
<td>Section:</td>
<td>0130</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Credit Hours:</td>
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I. Welcome!  
This is a 16-week call to learning. Students who participate fully in the course will engage in a substantial, lifelong learning experience. In college, students are responsible for their own learning. Guidance and support toward lifelong success is bountiful at UCF, but you must seek it out and follow-through on it. Two keys to success in this course are Discipline and Responsibility.

II. University Course Catalog Description  
ENC 1101 CAH-WRITE & RHET 3(3,0)  
Composition I: Expository writing with emphasis on effective communication and critical thinking. Emphasizing the writing process, writing topics are based on selected readings and on student experiences. The "NC" grading policy applies to this course.

In ENC1101, students read research findings from Writing Studies intended to help them gain both procedural and declarative knowledge about writing that they can generalize ("transfer") to later writing situations. Course topics include:

- How writers and readers construct texts  
- Effective writing processes and practices  
- How discourse communities shape writing  
- Understanding writing in the university

As students study each of these topics, they engage in writing-to-learn activities to help them understand and apply the various concepts; they also compose and revise extended texts employing those concepts at the end of each unit.

III. Course Topics and Student Learning Goals (What we'll read about, discuss, and learn)  
1. Improving as readers of complex, research-based texts  
2. Understanding how writers construct texts persuasively (or not)  
3. Understanding how readers construct meaning(s) from texts  
4. Understanding what it means to say that knowledge is constructed  
5. Recognizing and understanding common misconceptions about writing
6. Understanding the Rhetorical Situation concept, and applying it to writing and reading situations
7. Acquiring a vocabulary for talking about writing processes
8. Understanding ourselves as writers
9. Actively considering our own writing processes and practices and adapting them as necessary to make them most effective
10. Understanding writing and research as processes requiring planning, incubation, revision, and collaboration
11. Understanding how language practices mediate group activities
12. Understanding how language plays a role in discourse community enculturation
13. Understanding the relationship between language, identity, and authority
14. Considering various understandings of what it means to be literate
15. Gaining tools for examining the discourses and texts of various communities
16. Considering how discourse is used in the university
17. Recognizing the textual “moves” common to many forms of academic discourse
18. Understanding which discourse conventions vary across disciplines and why they do so
19. Acquiring tools for successfully responding to varied discourse conventions and genres in different classes

IV. Course Outcomes (How our work will be assessed)
1. **Thinking:** demonstrates college-level thinking and exploration of ideas and issues
2. **Polish:** demonstrates college-level polish (editing, formatting, etc.)
3. **Rhetorical Analysis:** at least one paper demonstrates the ability to rhetorically analyze complex texts written by others
4. **Consider Ideas:** at least one paper demonstrates the ability to carefully consider an idea or issue
5. **Reflection:** (in reflective comments, revision memos, or papers,) demonstrates the ability to carefully reflect on writing processes and practices
6. **In-text Citation:** uses correct in-text citations
7. **Work Cited:** uses correctly formatted works cited pages
8. **Outside Sources:** includes two or more carefully integrated outside sources per paper
9. **Macro (Global) Revision:** demonstrates evidence of appropriate macro-level revision between drafts
10. **Micro (Local) Revision:** demonstrates evidence of appropriate micro-level revision between drafts
11. **Peer Feedback:** displays evidence of peer feedback on or with drafts

V. Course Prerequisites
None

VI. Required Texts and Materials
• *Writing about Writing: A College Reader* by Wardle and Downs, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010
• *The Everyday Writer* by Lunsford, Bedford/St. Martin’s, UCF Custom Edition
• 8½ x 11-inch loose-leaf paper, or a notebook
• A pocket folder or three-ring binder for keeping handouts and loose-leaf paper
• Three hard-copies (8½ x 11-inch) of computer-processed Unit Paper drafts
• A spiral-bound portfolio of all course material (sans readings) to be handed in at the end of the semester
VII. Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials
  • Dictionary; Thesaurus; Laptop computer

VIII. Gordon Rule: ENC 1101 is a Gordon Rule course. You must earn at least a C- in order to fulfill university and state Gordon Rule and GEP requirements. Over the course of the semester you will write at least 6000 words of evaluated writing, as mandated by UCF and the Department of Writing and Rhetoric. Assignments that fulfill the Gordon Rule are indicated with an asterisk (below) as mandated by UCF policy. Each has the following characteristics:
  1. The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
  2. It will provide adequate support for that idea
  3. It will be organized clearly and logically
  4. It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
  5. It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way

IX. Basis for Final Grade

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Paper Grading Scale

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<td>D+ .. 68</td>
<td>if student completes all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D .. 65</td>
<td>work and attends all classes .. NC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D- .. 62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F .. 55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay grades are generally determined according to the following (see Course Outcomes):

A An “A” paper is one which would move your instructor and the best members of your class to admiration. It implies not only that the theme is virtually free of errors but that it makes its point clearly, logically, and gracefully. An “A” final grade is the product of work of consistently high quality and occasional brilliance.

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spelling. Improvement is desirable, but you should remember that a “C” grade does indicate average college work.  

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Last Day for full refund: ................. Thu, Aug. 23 Withdrawal Deadline: ..................... Mon, Oct. 29
Last Day to Add Classes: ............... Fri, Aug. 24 Final Examination:...........Fri, Dec. 7; 1:00-3:50pm
# Schedule of Readings and Major Writing Assignments

## Segment 1: Course Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8/20</th>
<th>8/22</th>
<th>8/24</th>
<th>Read “The 6th Paragraph”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Segment 2: Develop Course Concepts

**Learning Goals:**
- Recognizing and understanding common misconceptions about writing
- Understanding the Rhetorical Situation concept, and applying it to writing and reading situations
- Acquiring a vocabulary for talking about writing processes
- Understanding writing and research as processes requiring planning, incubation, revision, and collaboration
- Gaining tools for examining the discourses and texts of various communities
- Recognizing the textual “moves” common to many forms of academic discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8/27</th>
<th>8/29</th>
<th>8/31</th>
<th>Read Greene &amp; Read Kleine</th>
<th>Read “Evocative Objects”</th>
<th>Read Sun Selections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>9/7</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday</td>
<td>Read Grant-Davie</td>
<td>Read Kantz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Read Murray “Autobio”</td>
<td>Read Interlude Selections</td>
<td>Read Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>Unit 1 Paper Draft Due (3 hard copies)</td>
<td>Read Keller</td>
<td>Read Swales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read Harris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Segment 3: Reinforce Course Concepts

**Learning Goals:**
- Improving as readers of complex, research-based texts
- Understanding how readers construct meaning(s) from texts
- Actively considering our own writing processes and practices and adapting them as necessary to make them most effective
- Understanding how language plays a role in discourse community enculturation
- Considering various understandings of what it means to be literate
- Acquiring tools for successfully responding to varied discourse conventions and genres in different classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9/24</th>
<th>9/26</th>
<th>9/28</th>
<th>Read Brandt</th>
<th>Read Berkenkotter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>Read McCarthy</td>
<td>Read Perl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>Read Haas and Flower</td>
<td>Read Mirabelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Unit 2 Paper Peer Review Due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Read Sun Selections</td>
<td>Read Sun Selections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Segment 4: Reboot Course Concepts

Learning Goals:  --Understanding how writers construct texts persuasively (or not)
    --Understanding what it means to say that knowledge is constructed
    --Understanding ourselves as writers
    --Understanding how language practices mediate group activities
    --Understanding the relationship between language, identity, and authority
    --Considering how discourse is used in the university
    --Understanding which discourse conventions vary across disciplines and why they do so

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Unit 2 Paper Due</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Read Heath</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Read DeVoss et al.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Read Tierney and Pearson</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Unit 3 Paper Draft Due (3 hard copies)</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>Read Dawkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit 1 Paper Revision Due</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Veteran’s Day Holiday</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>Unit 3 Paper Peer Review Due</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Unit 3 Paper Due</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Read Hyland</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Read Casanave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unit 2 Paper Revision Due</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12/3</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Additional in-class assignments, homework assignments and readings from The Everyday Writer will be assigned in class
ENC 1101: Composition I
Department of Writing and Rhetoric
College of Arts and Humanities, University of Central Florida

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Mr. Grey
Office: 304 I, Colbourn Hall
Dept. Phone: 407-823-5417
E-Mail: mister.grey@ucf.edu
Office Hours: MWF: 12:30 – 1:20 & 2:30 – 3:20
and by appointment

Term: Fall 2012
Class Meeting Days: Mon, Wed & Online
Class Meeting Hours: 10:30 – 11:20
Class Location: TA 202A
Section: 0M04
Number: 80377
Credit Hours: 3

I. Welcome!

This is a 16-week call to learning. Students who participate fully in the course will engage in a substantial, lifelong learning experience. In college, students are responsible for their own learning. Guidance and support toward lifelong success is bountiful at UCF, but you must seek it out and follow-through on it. Two keys to success in this course are Discipline and Responsibility.

II. University Course Catalog Description

ENC 1101 CAH-WRITE & RHET 3(3,0)
Composition I: Expository writing with emphasis on effective communication and critical thinking. Emphasizing the writing process, writing topics are based on selected readings and on student experiences. The "NC" grading policy applies to this course.

In ENC1101, students read research findings from Writing Studies intended to help them gain both procedural and declarative knowledge about writing that they can generalize ("transfer") to later writing situations. Course topics include:
- How writers and readers construct texts
- Effective writing processes and practices
- How discourse communities shape writing
- Understanding writing in the university

As students study each of these topics, they engage in writing-to-learn activities to help them understand and apply the various concepts; they also compose and revise extended texts employing those concepts at the end of each unit.

III. Course Topics and Student Learning Goals (What we'll read about, discuss, and learn)

1. Improving as readers of complex, research-based texts
2. Understanding how writers construct texts persuasively (or not)
3. Understanding how readers construct meaning(s) from texts
4. Understanding what it means to say that knowledge is constructed
5. Recognizing and understanding common misconceptions about writing
6. Understanding the Rhetorical Situation concept, and applying it to writing and reading situations
7. Acquiring a vocabulary for talking about writing processes
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17. Recognizing the textual "moves" common to many forms of academic discourse
18. Understanding which discourse conventions vary across disciplines and why they do so
19. Acquiring tools for successfully responding to varied discourse conventions and genres in different classes

IV. Course Outcomes (How our work will be assessed)
1. Thinking: demonstrates college-level thinking and exploration of ideas and issues
2. Polish: demonstrates college-level polish (editing, formatting, etc.)
3. Rhetorical Analysis: at least one paper demonstrates the ability to rhetorically analyze complex texts written by others
4. Consider Ideas: at least one paper demonstrates the ability to carefully consider an idea or issue
5. Reflection: (in reflective comments, revision memos, or papers,) demonstrates the ability to carefully reflect on writing processes and practices
6. In-text Citation: uses correct in-text citations
7. Work Cited: uses correctly formatted works cited pages
8. Outside Sources: includes two or more carefully integrated outside sources per paper
9. Macro (Global) Revision: demonstrates evidence of appropriate macro-level revision between drafts
10. Micro (Local) Revision: demonstrates evidence of appropriate micro-level revision between drafts
11. Peer Feedback: displays evidence of peer feedback on or with drafts

V. Course Prerequisites
None

VI. Required Texts and Materials
- Writing about Writing: A College Reader by Wardle and Downs, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010
- The Everyday Writer by Lunsford, Bedford/St. Martin’s, UCF Custom Edition
- 8½ x 11-inch loose-leaf paper, or a notebook
- A pocket folder or three-ring binder for keeping handouts and loose-leaf paper
- Three hard-copies (8½ x 11-inch) of computer-processed Unit Paper drafts
- A spiral-bound portfolio of all course material (sans readings) to be handed in at the end of the semester
VII. Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials
• Dictionary; Thesaurus; Laptop computer

VIII. Gordon Rule: ENC 1101 is a Gordon Rule course. You must earn at least a C- in order to fulfill university and state Gordon Rule and GEP requirements. Over the course of the semester you will write at least 6000 words of evaluated writing, as mandated by UCF and the Department of Writing and Rhetoric. Assignments that fulfill the Gordon Rule are indicated with an asterisk (below) as mandated by UCF policy. Each has the following characteristics:
1. The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
2. It will provide adequate support for that idea
3. It will be organized clearly and logically
4. It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
5. It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way

IX. Basis for Final Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation-------</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Unit 1 Paper-------</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Unit 2 Paper-------</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Unit 3 Paper-------</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Unit 4 Paper-------</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Last Day to Add Classes: ............... Fri, Aug. 24  
Final Examination: Mon, Dec. 10; 10:00-12:50pm
## XIX. Schedule of Readings and Major Writing Assignments

### Segment 1: Course Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/20</td>
<td>Read &quot;The 6th Paragraph&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/22</td>
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<td>8/24</td>
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### Segment 2: Develop Course Concepts

#### Learning Goals:
- Recognizing and understanding common misconceptions about writing
- Understanding the Rhetorical Situation concept, and applying it to writing and reading situations
- Acquiring a vocabulary for talking about writing processes
- Understanding writing and research as processes requiring planning, incubation, revision, and collaboration
- Gaining tools for examining the discourses and texts of various communities
- Recognizing the textual “moves” common to many forms of academic discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Read Greene, Read Kleine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>Read &quot;Evocative Objects&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/31</td>
<td>Read Sun Selections</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>Read Grant-Davie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/7</td>
<td>Read Kantz</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Read Murray “Autobio”</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Read Interlude Selections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Read Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Read Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Read Keller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>Read Swales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Read Harris</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Segment 3: Reinforce Course Concepts

#### Learning Goals:
- Improving as readers of complex, research-based texts
- Understanding how readers construct meaning(s) from texts
- Actively considering our own writing processes and practices and adapting them as necessary to make them most effective
- Understanding how language plays a role in discourse community enculturation
- Considering various understandings of what it means to be literate
- Acquiring tools for successfully responding to varied discourse conventions and genres in different classes

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Unit 1 Paper Review Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>Read Brandt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>Read Berkenkotter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Unit 1 Paper Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>Read McCarthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>Read Perl</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>Read Penrose and Geisler</td>
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<td>10/10</td>
<td>Read Haas and Flower</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>Read Mirabelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Unit 2 Paper Draft Due (3 hard copies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>Read Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Unit 2 Paper Peer Review Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>Read Baron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>Read Sun Selections</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Read Sun Selections</td>
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</tbody>
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Segment 4: Reboot Course Concepts

Learning Goals:

--Understanding how writers construct texts persuasively (or not)
--Understanding what it means to say that knowledge is constructed
--Understanding ourselves as writers
--Understanding how language practices mediate group activities
--Understanding the relationship between language, identity, and authority
--Considering how discourse is used in the university
--Understanding which discourse conventions vary across disciplines and why they do so

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Unit 2 Paper Due</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Read Heath</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Read DeVoss et al.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Read Tierney and Pearson</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Unit 3 Paper Draft Due (3 hard copies)</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>Read Dawkins</td>
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<td>Unit 1 Paper Revision Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Veteran’s Day Holiday</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>Unit 3 Paper Peer Review Due</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>Read Johns</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Unit 3 Paper Due</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td></td>
<td>11/23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Read Hyland</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>Read Casanave</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Read Tomlinson</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit 2 Paper Revision Due</td>
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Unit 4 Paper Due with Portfolio
Unit 3 Paper Revision Due with Portfolio
Final Portfolio Due at Final Exam

NOTE: Additional in-class assignments, homework assignments and readings from The Everyday Writer will be assigned in class
APPENDIX I: MR. BROWN’S SYLLABI
ENC 1101-0037
Introduction to Writing Studies
Fall 2012, University of Central Florida
August 20 - December 11

Instructor: Mr. Brown
Location: Teaching Academy 202A
Course meets: TR 10:30am-11:45am
Email: mister.brown@ucf.edu
Office: Colbourn Hall room 305 C
Office Hours: Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 9:00am-10:00am; 1:30pm-3:00pm

Course Description:
The focus of this course introduces students to the discipline of writing studies. We examine writing practices, varying modes of communication and literacy, and the tenants of rhetoric, discourse, and the ways that communities mediate communication practices. In particular, we will closely examine digital communication.

Required Texts:
Writing about Writing: Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs
The Everyday Writer: Andrea Lunsford

Blogger
You have already received an invitation to join the blogger site, and it is an invite only site, which means only students in my 1101 classes will have access to the site. You will be expected to create your own blogger page for your semester long portfolio, and instructions for that are on the site itself. In addition to housing all of your assignments for the class, there are links to helpful articles and videos. Throughout the term, you will also be asked to post responses to blog topics on the Writing Studies Blogger Page. This page is our electronic home base, if you will. Half of your participation grade will come from online blog response postings. There are fifteen opportunities to complete online blogs, and to earn full credit, at least ten blogs have to be completed. Note: completion of a blog posting doesn’t guarantee credit. You still have to demonstrate critical thinking and deliver an effective response. If you do more than ten responses, I will count the best ten responses towards your participation grade. The other half of your participation grade will come from in-class quizzes and homework (which will include occasional reading annotation checks).

Required Item:
You must obtain access to a digital recording device. Many laptops and phones have audio recording features. Be sure the device is capable of recording at least twenty minutes continuously.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course the student will:
1. Demonstrate awareness of rhetoric and an understanding of the constituents of rhetoric
2. Demonstrate understanding of one's own writing process from both cognitive and psychological perspectives
3. Ascertain an understanding of how discourse communities in online environments shape, mediate, and otherwise influence writing and reading practices
4. Demonstrate an improved ability to understand complex texts
5. Demonstrate an ability to examine and synthesize data
6. Recognize various inclinations of what literacy is
7. Understand ways in which genres enable discourse
8. Demonstrate an ability to utilize evidence to support arguments

Course Policies and Procedures:
• I will occasionally e-mail students to communicate information about the course. You are responsible for making sure that your Knights e-mail is working and that you check it regularly. I will not receive e-mail from outside e-mail addresses such as Hotmail, Gmail etc.
• All readings listed in the course outline are to be completed by the date listed.
• Your work in this class is always public. Please do not write things you wish to remain private.
• All out of class work must be typed.
• I do not accept late assignments unless you have written documentation of a hospitalization or death in the family (documentation must be presented to me). If you are having trouble meeting a deadline, you must come to me during office hours, at least three days prior to the deadline to see if we can make accommodations.
• I do allow electronic devices, but if I catch you using the device for something unrelated to our class, your privilege may be revoked.

Gordon Rule:
ENC 1101 is a Golden Rule course. You must earn at least a C- or better in order to fulfill university and state Gordon Rule and GEP requirements. Over the course of the semester you will write at least 6000 words of evaluated writing, as mandated by UCF and the Department of Writing and Rhetoric.

Attendance:
There are random homework checks and quizzes, and though attendance is not mandated, missing in class assignments may cause your participation grade to drop.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is the deliberate or unintentional use of another’s words without giving the source proper credit. Plagiarism is an unacceptable behavior and will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Severe cases of plagiarism could result in failure of the course and a referral to an academic hearing.

Disability Statement:
It is the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to provide the instructor with appropriate documents from the Office for Students with Disabilities. Accommodations will be provided as authorized by the office. Notice for needed accommodations should be given by the second week of the semester.

Withdrawal Deadline: Oct. 29, 2012
**Holidays:** Classes will not be held for the following holidays:
- Thanksgiving: Nov. 22-24
- Labor Day: Sept. 3
- Veterans Day: Nov. 12

**Assignments and Grading Breakdown:**

- Participation (Homework/Reading Quizzes/Responses) 20% = (100 points)
- Literacy Narrative 10% = (50 points) due Sept. 25th
- Process Essay 10% (50 points) due Oct. 4th
- Construct Essay 10% (50 points) due Oct. 25th
- Digital Discourse Community Ethnography 10% = (50 points) due Nov. 29th
- Final Portfolio 40% = (200 points) due Dec. 11th

**Grading Breakdown:**
462–500 points A 93%–100%
448–461 points A– 90%–92%
433–447 points B+ 87%–89%
413–432 points B 83%–86%
398–412 points B– 80%–82%
383–397 points C+ 77%–79%
363–382 points C 73%–76%
348–362 points C– 70%–72%
300–347 points F below 69%

Grade of NC- Student may be awarded a grade of NC if he/she has completed all the course work and attended the vast majority of classes but does not meet the standard for college level academic writing.

**Course Outline:**
(Course outline is subject to change)
- WWW: indicates a reading which can be found on the World Wide Web
- WAW: indicates a reading which is in the Writing about Writing text

**Week 1: Introduction to course**
- Aug. 21: Syllabus overview; introduction to course
- Aug. 23: Reading: WWW: “How to Mark a Book,” Mortimer Adler; Discuss: how does marking texts aid in reading texts? How should we read academic texts?

**Week 2: Unit 1 Exploring Your Literacy Past**
- Aug. 28: WAW: “Sponsors of Literacy,” Brandt, 331-352; Discussion: how have sponsors impacted your development as a writer/reader
Week 3: **Unit 2 Exploring Your Literacy Past and Writing Process**

Sept. 04: WAW “The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers,” Perl, 191-215; Discuss: review think aloud composing; begin drafting literacy profile


Week 4: **Unit 2 Exploring Writing Processes**

Sept. 11: **first draft literacy narrative due; in-class/take home peer review**; Portfolio overview/ tutorial on creating a blogger account (bring laptop or tablet to class)

Sept. 13: WAW “Tuning, Tying, and Training Texts: Metaphors for Revision” Tomlinson, 251-270; bring transcribed think aloud protocol to class; in class coding of protocol

Week 5: **Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs**

Sept. 18: **Take home peer review due for literacy narrative**; (bring laptop and transcribed protocol to class- drafting process essay)

Sept. 20: **first draft of process essay due/take home peer review**; WWW: “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” Carr; Discuss: what kinds of online writing do you do? How is the online writing you do constructed?

Week 6: **Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs (rhetoric)**

Sept 25: **final draft of literacy narrative due;** WAW “Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents,” Grant-Davie, 101-119; Discuss: How does Grant-Davie underpin the tenants of rhetoric?

Sept. 27: **Take Home Peer Review for Process Essay due**; Grant-Davie continued; Discuss: applying Grant-Davie to a JK Rowling speech

Week 7 **Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs**

Oct. 02: WAW “Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning,” Hass and Flower, 120-138; Discuss

Oct. 04: **Final draft of process essay due;** WWW “Introduction: Why You Need Digital Know-How—Why We All Need it,” Reingold; Discuss: How are we using the Net to communicate? [http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/chapters/0262017458chap1.pdf](http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/chapters/0262017458chap1.pdf)

Week 8 **Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs**

Oct. 09: WAW “The Phenomenology of Error,” Williams, 34-55; Discuss: How are conceptions of error constructed?

Oct. 11: **first draft of construct essay due/ in class and take home peer review;** WWW “Anatomy of a trending topic: How Twitter & the crafting community put the smackdown on Urban Outfitters,” Amber [http://www.myaimistrue.com/2011/05/urban-outfitters-ripoff-trending-topic/](http://www.myaimistrue.com/2011/05/urban-outfitters-ripoff-trending-topic/); Discuss: what are the implications of power brokerage as impacted by social media?

Week 9 **Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities**
Oct. 16: WAW: “Argument as Conversation: The Role of Inquiry in Writing a Researched Argument” Greene 9-21; Discuss: What do academic research arguments do?

Oct. 18: take home peer review for construct essay due; WAW: “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction,” Gee 481-497 Discuss: How are ways of saying/being/doing/valuing imagined and developed in digital communities?

Week 10 Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities
Oct. 23: WAW: “Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces,” Wardle 520-537 Discuss: How are identities and personas formed in online communities?
Oct. 25: final draft of construct essay due; WWW “The Psychology of Cyberspace,” Suler; Discuss: How are your online persona’s imagined and how is communication and writing impacted?

Week 11 Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities
Oct. 30: one page report about data collected for your digital discourse community due; Discuss: how are you analyzing your data? What outside sources might you need to look into? What other kinds of research needs to be done? (interviews/focus groups/observations)  
Nov. 01: WWW: “IMing, Text Messaging, and Adolescent Social Networks,” Bryant, Sanders-Jackson & Smallwood; Discuss: How do digital social interactions affect other community interactions?

Week 12 Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities
Nov. 06: WAW: “Learning to Serve: The Language and Literacy of Food Service Workers,” Mirabelli; Discuss: What kinds of literacies are prevalent in the community you are investigating?
Nov. 08: Bring data and laptop to class: Drafting the digital discourse community ethnography; Discuss: How to say something new in academic conversations or how to continue a tradition of what others have already said.

Week 13 Unit 4 Examining Discourse Communities
Nov. 13: WAW: “Helping Students Use Textual Sources Persuasively,” Kantz 67-85; Discuss: How to construct an original argument
Nov. 15: Bring data and laptop to class; Share what your research direction is. What do you have left to investigate? What other kinds of sources do you need?; portfolio review session

Week 14 Unit 4 Examining Discourse Communities
Nov. 20: WAW: “What Is It We Do When We Write Articles Like This One—and How Can We Get Students To Join Us?” Kleine; Discuss: How has your idea of research changed over the course of this term?
Nov. 22: no class Thanksgiving observed

Week 15 Unit 4 Examining Discourse Communities
Nov. 27: Initial draft of digital discourse community ethnography due/peer review; (bring laptop and all data to class)  
Nov. 29: Final Draft of Digital Discourse Community Ethnography Due  

Week 16/17 Course Summation/Final Exam Week  
Dec. 11: 10:00am-12:50pm; students will present 3-5 minute presentation of final project;  
Final Portfolio Due
ENC 1101-0M08
Introduction to Writing Studies
Fall 2012, University of Central Florida
August 20 - December 11

Instructor: Mr. Brown
Location: Teaching Academy 202A
Course meets: R 7:30am-8:45am
Email: mister.brown@ucf.edu
Office: Colbourn Hall room 305 C
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Required Texts:
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The Everyday Writer: Andrea Lunsford

Blogger
All course assignments can be located at a blogger site. You have already received an invitation to join the blogger site, and it is an invite only site, which means only students in my 1101 classes will have access to the site. You will be expected to create your own blogger page for your semester long portfolio, and instructions for that are on the site itself. In addition to housing all of your assignments for the class, there are links to helpful articles and videos. Throughout the term, you will also be asked to post responses to blog topics on the Writing Studies Blogger Page. This page is our electronic home base, if you will.

Every week, in compliance with the online component of our course, you will produce two reading responses. The first response will be due every Sunday evening before 11:59pm (Eastern Standard Time). The second posting (a response to one of your peers) will be due no later than 11:59pm on Tuesday evening. The prompts for the responses essentially ask you to interact and react with the text and do more than just summarize the text. These blog postings make up the bulk of your discussion grade, and should be seen as an opportunity for you to interact with the authors of the texts we are reviewing. Your responses must go beyond rehashing the content of the text and should demonstrate critical thinking. Your response to a peer’s postings should also demonstrate critical thinking as well. There will sometimes be other students posting in this forum (from other sections I teach), so when you post, it is important that you put your last name, and the section number of the course you are in, so I can easily track responses.

Required Item:
You must obtain access to a digital recording device. Many laptops and phones have audio recording features. Be sure the device is capable of recording at least twenty minutes continuously.

**Course Objectives:** At the completion of this course the student will:

1. Demonstrate awareness of rhetoric and an understanding of the constituents of rhetoric
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- All readings listed in the course outline are to be completed by the date listed.
- Your work in this class is always public. Please do not write things you wish to remain private.
- All out of class work must be typed.
- I do not accept late assignments unless you have written documentation of a hospitalization or death in the family (documentation must be presented to me). If you are having trouble meeting a deadline, you must come to me during office hours, at least three days prior to the deadline to see if we can make accommodations.
- I do allow electronic devices, but if I catch you using the device for something unrelated to our class, your privilege may be revoked.

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- Labor Day: Sept. 3
- Veterans Day: Nov. 12

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- Process Essay 10% (50 points) due Oct. 4th
- Construct Essay 10% (50 points) due Oct. 25th
- Digital Discourse Community Ethnography 10% = (50 points) due Nov. 29th
- Final Portfolio 40% = (200 points) due Dec. 6th

Grading Breakdown:
- 462-500 points A 93%-100%
- 448-461 points A- 90%-92%
- 433-447 points B+ 87%-89%
- 413-432 points B 83%-86%
- 398-412 points B- 80%-82%
- 383-397 points C+ 77%-79%
- 363-382 points C 73%-76%
- 348-362 points C- 70%-72%
- 300-347 points F below 69%

Grade of NC- Student may be awarded a grade of NC if he/she has completed all the course work and attended the vast majority of classes but does not meet the standard for college level academic writing.
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(Course outline is subject to change)
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WAW: indicates a reading which is in the Writing about Writing text

Week 1: Introduction to course
Aug. 23: Syllabus overview; Discuss: how does marking texts aid in reading texts? How should we read academic texts?

Week 2: Unit 1 Exploring Your Literacy Past
Aug. 30: WAW: “Sponsors of Literacy,” Brandt, 331-352; “Learning to Read,” Malcolm X, 353-361; “The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me,” Alexie, 362-366; Discuss: in class brainstorming about past literacy moments; how have sponsors impacted your development as a writer/reader?

Week 3: Unit 2 Exploring Your Literacy Past and Writing Process

Week 4: Unit 2 Exploring Writing Processes
Sept. 13: first draft literacy narrative due; in-class/take home peer review;
WAW “Tuning, Tying, and Training Texts: Metaphors for Revision,” Tomlinson, 251-270; Discuss: bring transcribed think-aloud protocol to class; in class coding of protocol; Portfolio overview/ tutorial on creating a blogger account (bring laptop or tablet to class)

Week 5: Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs
Sept. 20: Take home peer review due for literacy narrative; first draft of process essay
due/take home peer review; WWW: “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” Carr; Discuss: what kinds of online writing do you do? How is the online writing you do constructed? (bring laptop and transcribed protocol to class- drafting process essay)

Week 6: Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs (rhetoric)
Sept 27: final draft of literacy narrative due; Take Home Peer Review for Process Essay due; WAW “Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents,” Grant-Davie, 101-119; Discuss: How does Grant-Davie underpin the tenants of rhetoric? Applying Grant-Davie to a JK Rowling speech
Week 7  Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs
Discussion: How does rhetorical reading benefit students? Why isn’t it practiced more often? How is your attention deployed in online spaces?

Week 8  Unit 3 Examining Writing Constructs
Oct. 11: first draft of construct essay due/ in class and take home peer review; WAW “The Phenomenology of Error,” Williams, 34-55; WWW “Anatomy of a trending topic: How Twitter & the crafting community put the smackdown on Urban Outfitters,” Amber http://www.myaimistrue.com/2011/05/urban-outfitters-ripoff-trending-topic/ Discuss: what are the implications of power brokerage as impacted by social media? How are conceptions of error constructed?

Week 9  Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities
Oct. 18: take home peer review for construct essay due; WAW: “Argument as Conversation: The Role of Inquiry in Writing a Researched Argument” Greene 9-21; WAW: “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction,” Gee 481-497 Discuss: How are ways of saying/being/doing(valuing imagined and developed in digital communities? What do academic research arguments do?

Week 10  Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities
Oct. 25: final draft of construct essay due; WAW: “Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces,” Wardle 520-537 WWW “The Psychology of Cyberspace,” Suler; Discuss: How are identities and personas formed in online communities? How are your online personas imagined and how is communication and writing impacted?

Week 11  Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities
Nov. 01: one page report about data collected for your digital discourse community due; WWW: “IMing, Text Messaging, and Adolescent Social Networks,” Bryant, Sanders-Jackson & Smallwood Discuss: How are you analyzing your data? What outside sources might you need to look into? What other kinds of research needs to be done? (interviews/focus groups/observations) How do digital social interactions affect other community interactions?

Week 12  Unit 4 Examining Digital Discourse Communities
Nov. 08: WAW: “Learning to Serve: The Language and Literacy of Food Service Workers,” Mirabelli; Bring data and laptop to class. Discuss: What kinds of literacies are prevalent in the community you are investigating? Drafting the digital discourse community ethnography; How to say something new in academic conversations or how to continue a tradition of what others have already said.
Week 13 Unit 4 Examining Discourse Communities
Nov. 15: WAW: “Helping Students Use Textual Sources Persuasively,” Kantz 67-85; Bring data and laptop to class
Discuss: How to construct an original argument; Share what your research direction is. What do you have left to investigate? What other kinds of sources do you need?; portfolio review session

Week 14 Unit 4 Examining Discourse Communities
Nov. 22: No Class/ Thanksgiving Holiday observed
WAW: “What Is It We Do When We Write Articles Like This One—and How Can We Get Students To Join Us?”

Week 15 Unit 4 Examining Discourse Communities
Nov. 29: final draft of digital discourse community ethnography due; portfolio overview

Week 16/17 Final Exam Week/Summation of Course
Dec. 6: Final Portfolio Due; 7:00am-9:50am: Students present final research project in a 3-5 minute speech
APPENDIX J: MR. GREY’S ASSIGNMENT SHEETS
WHAT IS MY WRITING PROCESS, WHERE DOES THIS COME FROM, WHAT AFFECTS IT, HOW DOES IT CHANGE DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION, AND HOW MIGHT I CONTINUE TO CHANGE AND IMPROVE MY PROCESSES?

Purpose
To articulate a new, critical understanding of yourself as a reader and writer; to gain more control over your future experiences as an academic reader and writer.

Due Dates
- Monday, 10/15: WP Paper Draft Due (complete draft; 3 hard copies)
- Monday, 10/22: WP Paper Peer Review Due (review drafts of 3 peers)
- Monday, 10/29: WP Paper Final Draft Due
- Monday, 11/26: WP Paper Revision Due (if applicable)

Assignment
In 4–12 pages, rhetorically analyze yourself as a reader and a rhetor, especially your writing processes, how these might be changing overall, and how these processes change to fit different writing situations. Explore the connections between your writing process and your literacy sponsorships, including your earliest literacy sponsorships. Ground at least some of your exploration within the context of your writing process for the Rhetorical Analysis Paper.

Give specific consideration to the impact of your environment and surroundings on your writing process and yourself as a writer, and how controlling these factors may or may not benefit you. Also give specific consideration to the impact of the affective and cognitive domains in your writing experiences, and how this awareness changes (or does not change) your perception of yourself as a writer and offers (or does not offer) new strategies for your writing processes.

Organization and Structure
Use whatever organization and structure makes sense to you, for your purposes. Definitely consider using headings and breaking your paper into parts or sections to help you control your writing and aid your audience’s reading.

Suggestions (also to be discussed in class)
- Start by brainstorming literacy sponsors, significant positive and negative writing and/or reading experiences, the impact of different environments, and the role of
the affective and cognitive domains (especially the affective!) in influencing your perceptions of yourself as a writer.

- Thoroughly reflect on your writing process for the Rhetorical Analysis Paper
- Brainstorm a variety of writing that you do, and the processes involved with each, e.g. texting, grocery lists, drawings, note-taking, personal cards, etc.
- Do some primary research/experimentation: Consider new and different ideas for various parts of the writing process, and try these out. Journal about your experiences.
- Consider what you are now learning vs. what your perception may have been at different times before now.
- Use/refer to course readings to establish territory and frame your thinking and discussion.

**Format**
All submitted drafts, including the final draft, should follow the following format guidelines:

- 4-12 pages, double-spaced (page count does not include the Works Cited page)
- 1” left and right margins (not 1.25”!)
- MLA style for in-text citations (as explained in *The Everyday Writer*)
- MLA style for a list of works cited (as explained in *The Everyday Writer*)
- Refer to the student research essay in *TEW* for heading, title, and page number info.

Remember to use your letter/number code everywhere in place of your name.

**What will Be Valued**

Sincerity; interest; thoughtfulness (thoughtful content choices and deep reflection; thorough and considered); critical thinking (asking meaningful questions and making meaningful connections; context; new realizations and awareness; strong claims); support of claims; polish; analyzes more than summarizes; effective writing process analysis, including where this comes from, how it’s situational and how it might be changing (achieves the assignment’s purpose)

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HOW DO REAL DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES USE LANGUAGE TO FUNCTION, SURVIVE, SUCCEED & THRIVE?  HOW DOES LEARNING ABOUT THIS HELP ME AS A DEVELOPING WRITER & ACADEMIC WRITER?

Purpose
To articulate a new, critical understanding of how communities use reading and writing in order to function, survive, succeed and thrive; to demonstrate your increasing understanding of the Discourse Community concept, including its usefulness and applicability.

Due Dates
- Monday, 11/5: DC Paper Draft Due (complete draft; 3 hard copies)
- Wednesday, 11/14: DC Paper Peer Review Due (must be submitted in class!)
- Monday, 11/19: DC Paper Final Draft Due
- Final Portfolio: DC Paper Revision Due (if applicable)

Assignment
In 4–12 pages, (or an 8–20 minute video,) analyze how one or two real workplace discourse communities use language to function, survive, succeed and thrive, and discuss how your analysis helps you as a developing writer and/or academic writer.

Organization and Structure
Use whatever organization and structure makes sense to you, for your purposes. Definitely consider using headings and breaking your paper into parts or sections to help you control your writing and aid your audience’s reading.

*Include your interview transcripts as appendices after your works cited. If the interviews are electronic, include a URL (preferable) or make a note that the electronic file has been submitted to the instructor.

Suggestions (also to be discussed in class)
- Explain the discourse community concept to a couple of relatives and interview them about their workplace discourse communities.
- Consider whether it’s analytically useful to look for moments of comparison or contrast between the communities.
- Thoughtfully focus on certain elements of your interviews worth discussing, rather than reporting on everything learned in the interview. For example, it could be more effective to analyze and write about one or two responses from the follow-up interview rather than reporting on everything learned in both interviews.
- If possible, gather as many textual examples as you can that are used to mediate activities in the discourse community.
- In addition to questions you asked in the interview, consider writing about any of the following questions that might help you write analytically:
How have they moved from being a non-member to a member (and possibly an expert member) in this Discourse Community? What texts are most valued, and which ones are tangential but still important to the Discourse Community? What are the functions of these texts? How do non-members become members of the discourse community? How do members (or non-members) become fully assimilated into the discourse community? How is discourse, both written and spoken, used to mediate the activities of members in the community? Does your interviewee consider that he or she is “successful” within the discourse community? Can he or she give instances of others who have tried but were unable to assimilate into the discourse community? Does he or she have any examples of discourse communities they tried to assimilate into, but were unsuccessful? Can you begin to explain why? These are just some questions you can consider to get started, so feel free to add your own.

**Format**

All submitted drafts, including the final draft, should follow the following format guidelines:

- 4-12 pages, double-spaced (page count does not include the Works Cited page)
- 1” left and right margins (not 1.25”!)
- MLA style for in-text citations (as explained in The Everyday Writer)
- MLA style for a list of works cited (as explained in The Everyday Writer)
- Refer to the student research essay in TEW for heading, title, and page number info. Remember to use your letter/number code everywhere in place of your name.

**What will Be Valued**

Sincerity (genuine, authentic, honest) & interest (engages the reader); thoughtfulness (thoughtful content choices and deep reflection; thorough and considered); critical thinking (asking meaningful questions and making meaningful connections; context; new realizations and awareness; strong claims); support of claims; polish; analyzes as much as summarizes; Discourse Community Analysis (DS Analysis—effective analysis of something specific within the discourse community,) including how learning about this is useful to a developing writer and/or academic writer.

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WHAT DOES ANALYZING MY PAST EXPERIENCES IN RHETORICAL SITUATIONS TEACH ME ABOUT RHETORICAL ANALYSIS AND ABOUT MYSELF AS A READER AND WRITER?

Purpose
To apply/practice/perform rhetorical analysis; to rhetorically analyze real-life situations to learn more about the value of rhetorical analysis, and who we are as readers and writers.

Due Dates
Monday, 9/17: Unit 1 Paper Draft Due (complete draft; 3 hard copies)
Monday, 9/24: Unit 1 Paper Peer Review Due (review drafts of 3 peers)
Monday, 10/1: Unit 1 Paper Final Draft Due
Monday, 11/5: Unit 1 Paper Revision Due (if applicable)

Important Additional Task: Log Your Writing Process/Activities/Progress
You must keep a log of your process and progress while working on this assignment. This log must be kept in your notebook or in a saved file. Write both the date and “RA Log” in the top right corner of any pages where you take notes on what you are doing, thinking, or attempting to do while working on this assignment. **NOTE:** these reflective notes should be kept separate from any brainstorming, question-asking or note-taking work for the assignment itself.

Assignment
In 4 – 12 pages, rhetorically analyze your own past high school experiences as rhetorical situations. Address the “So What” question by explaining what you’re learning about the potential of rhetorical analysis; explain what you’re learning about yourself as a reader and writer, and where this comes from.

Organization and Structure
Use whatever organization and structure makes sense to you, for your purposes. Definitely consider using headings and breaking your paper into parts or sections to help you control your writing and aid your audience’s reading. Some students may find it effective to separate the rhetorical analysis from the discussion about writing processes, while others may find it more effective to include their writing process analysis throughout their rhetorical analysis.
Suggestions (also to be discussed in class)

- Start by brainstorming the many rhetorical situations you experienced as a high school student, especially reading and writing assignments. Consider using several of these for your analysis.
- Consider situations when you’ve been the rhetor as well as those when you’ve been the audience. Also consider that there may be situations where you’ve played both of these roles at different times during the situation.
- Consider what you are now learning vs. what your perception may have been then.
- Spend time considering purposes, and whether these were always clear or unclear.
- Consider relevant constraints, and how much of an impact they may have had in the situation.
- Use/refer to course readings to ground and frame your thinking and discussion.

Format

All submitted drafts, including the final draft, should follow the following format guidelines:

- 4-12 pages, double-spaced (page count does not include the Works Cited page).
- 1” left and right margins (not 1.25”!)
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What will Be Valued

Sincerity; interest; thoughtfulness (thoughtful content choices and deep reflection); critical thinking (asking meaningful questions and making meaningful connections; context); support of claims; polish; analyzes more than summarizes; effective rhetorical analysis.

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Literacy Narrative Assignment

Assignment Overview

The literacy narrative assignment calls you to investigate your past literate experiences, share stories about moments and situations that shaped your trajectory as a reader and writer, and make an overall point. Throughout your life, many experiences have helped you develop as a reader and writer. Parents, teachers, mentors, and institutions are among the entities that have likely helped you develop your literacy. These sponsors (as Deborah Brandt would call them) are agents that enable and procure literacy opportunities but also stand to gain something from the sponsorship situation.

Begin by considering your history as a reader and writer. Mine your memory for important moments and situations that helped you develop your sense of value regarding reading and writing. Think about who helped you to develop your sense of value regarding reading and writing. Think carefully about key experiences that impacted your perception of writing and reading.

Brainstorming

Start the brainstorming process by answering all of the questions below:

- What is your earliest memory of reading and writing?
- How did you learn to read and write?
- How did you come to identify certain values with reading and writing?
- What kinds of reading have you done in your past and what kinds of reading do you do now?
- Which teachers do you remember from your past who had a particular impact on your reading and writing?
- What is your current attitude towards reading and writing?
- Have literary institutions impacted your reading and writing?
- How much have you enjoyed particular kinds of reading and writing that you did in your past? Why?
- Has there ever been a sense of reward or punishment associated with reading or writing from your past?
- What from your past has made you the kind of reader and writer you are today?
- What moments from your past do you remember as particularly empowering or disempowering?

Organizing

After you have answered these questions, you should make a literacy profile. You might arrange your literacy experiences according to empowering experiences and disempowering ones. You should organize your profile in any way that makes sense to you. Below is an example of my literacy profile:

- Early Listening Experiences: My earliest recognition of literacy was listening to...
grandmother tell fairytale stories. My parents told these stories too, but I remember my grandmother telling us about the Three Little Pigs, Jack and the Beanstalk, and The Woman with a Wig and a Wig who stole a bunch of money from a witch among others. These stories all carried themes about working hard, persevering, and upholding certain values.

Early Readers: My parents had a rich clustering of story books for us to read as well. We had the Dr. Seuss collection, books of poems by Shel Silverstein, a series of biographical picture books about famous Americans, and cards from Wild Kingdom that depicted different animals and plants from around the world. We read these story books with my mother before going to bed. I remember reading The Lorax and again I was being exposed to books that carried these little lessons: one being that it is important to take care of the environment.

Learning Disabilities: When I got to second grade, I was diagnosed with a learning disability called ADHD. My teacher was about 85 years old with the temperament of a drill sergeant. I remember being led into a doctor’s office where nodes were attached to my head. The final prognosis: I was to be put on Ritalin. My father refused to let me go on Ritalin and I was sent back to school. Surprisingly my grades turned around when I got to third grade. The class was much more engaging and fun. I started to get A’s and B’s again.

My mother gave me interesting things to read. In fifth grade my mother gave me a book called Bo Knows Bo, the autobiography of Bo Jackson. Since I was athletic and enjoyed sports, Bo Knows Bo was great. In the first twenty pages, Bo wrote about losing his virginity at age seven. I really enjoyed showing my friends the racy sections where Bo talked about his sex life. In 7th grade my mother gave me a book called The Hot Zone. This thriller is about an Ebola outbreak in a small African nation. This book really sparked my interest and there were times where I was sneaking some reading while in class.

Sports Literacies: My mother pushed my academics, but my father pushed me to develop sports literacies. I learned a lot about how to be a good teammate and set personal goals aside for the betterment of the team. I’ll never forget the little league game where I pitched a one-hit shutout. Our only run scored was by our first baseman who hit a Homerun. He gave me his Homerun ball after the game and said if it hadn’t been for my pitching performance that day, we would not have won the game. I learned about perseverance, teamwork, giving credit to others, and how to both lose and win gracefully.

Video Game Literacy: After having me, my mother had my brother eighteen months later. Taking care of us both became quite a task, so my mother got me a video game system called Atari. Since Atari, I have come to own many other systems including Sega Genesis, Nintendo, Sony PlayStation, Nintendo Wii, and so on. One genre of video games really stuck with me: it was role playing strategy games. These games involve an epic story where a hero character (the one I controlled) set out on an adventure. I remember playing various role playing games, but there was always the character setting out on an adventure that brought me back to the game. Inadvertently I started to develop a taste for these adventures, and along with the early stories that my grandmother told me, these stories that emerged out of my game console were also filled with lessons to be learned. One offshoot of this was learning about failure. Every time I failed at the video game, I learned better ways to try it another time. No failure in the world of gaming was enough to cripple me, and I almost always found a way to finish the game.

Decline of traditional print literacies: Once I got into early high-school I fell out of favor with writing and reading for a bit of time. I read the sports page of the newspaper nearly every day, but I began to be less interested in reading and writing. The downward spiral of traditional print literacies continued into 12th grade where I had an instructor who had us watch movies for the duration of our senior year of English. We watched many films, but I didn’t really learn any writing skills that would help me write in college.

The community college English teacher grabbed my butt: I earned a C in my first college level English course and was still disappointed in my abilities as a writer and reader. This
A freshmen level English teacher wore Kansas Jayhawks shirts to class every day. She regularly tore into my papers, and this was justified because I had just spent one year of an English class my senior year of high school watching movies.

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**Finding a Main Point or Theme**

After completing your profile, you should start to see some sense of direction or some themes emerging with your profile. You must decide upon what it is that you will talk about out of all the possibilities from your past. As you consider what you want to write about, you should consider an overall 'main theme' or an overall 'so what' point that will guide your narrative. Your main theme, also known as your central finding, should guide and control the overall direction of the essay. For example, you might have discovered that you were steered away from certain kinds of literacy, but this motivated you to pursue those types of literacy even more fervently. Or, you may notice an insight emerge that helps explain why you read and write as you do today.

This main point or main finding should be supported by evidence from your past experiences. For example, if I pull some common themes from my narrative, a few ideas emerge:

1. The impact of the adventure story has carried throughout my literacy development
2. My motivation fluctuated at different points of time based on relationships I had with sponsors

I might make a claim that relationships are paramount for sponsorships to succeed and for literacy to flourish.

**What makes the literacy narrative good?**

1. Tells a story about past literacy experiences
2. Makes connections between your literate past and where you are now as a reader and writer
3. Delivers an overall point
Writing Process Assignment

Subject
An essay about your writing.

Occasion
An assigned essay and an opportunity for self-analysis regarding writing.

Task
Write an essay that analyzes your writing process and related writing practices to discover what confounds or contributes to being a skilled writer. Support your thesis with an analysis of your own writing process and practice.

Purpose
• to understand writing processes and practices
• to actively think about and reflect on your own writing process and practice
• to practice analysis and synthesis of primary and secondary sources

Format
MLA 3-5 pages

Process:
While you draft your literacy narrative essay, you will conduct a think-aloud protocol and should record your thoughts as you draft. After recording your think-aloud protocol, you must transcribe it. During class we will investigate different ways to code the transcript and make sense of your think-aloud protocol.

The think-aloud protocol will serve as the primary evidence for your process essay, but you must also analyze and make assessments about your writing process and practice based on what we have looked at so far: pitfalls of unskilled writers, rules and practices, confused and impenetrable language, awareness of the rhetorical situation, and drafting and revision practices. How familiar are you with writing into some rhetorical situation? What parts are you unfamiliar with? Consider and describe your writing behaviors in the order they occur. Look for patterns in your think aloud protocol, useful strategies, “blockers,” and inconsistencies in your own process and practice. Are there differences in how you approach self-sponsored and assigned writing tasks? What rules or practices do you seem to take for granted? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your writing practice? Why do you enjoy, despise, or tolerate writing based on any of the above? Write an essay that takes into account these questions regarding your writing, quoting from at least two of the sources we’ve looked at thus far. Include a Works Cited page formatted according to MLA style

Evaluation Criteria: How well does your essay demonstrate the following?
• consistent focus on analysis and synthesis of writing process and practice
• accurate, sufficient analysis of your own writing process and practice
• appropriate, sufficient support for your thesis (integration, citation, documentation)
Discourse Community Ethnography Assignment

Assignment # 4 Discourse Community Ethnography

BACKGROUND
The key concept of this chapter is discourse community, so we'll be examining how several authors use this idea to describe how writing happens on the job, in clubs, at churches and homeowner's associations, or wherever else we see people with common goals communicating in writing and otherwise. To prepare for this assignment, while we're reading the authors' definitions of discourse community, be sure to consider the various discourse communities you belong to, your respective position in them, and any communities you might like to join. This assignment asks you to look to see how writing is constructed and used in the world.

ASSIGNMENT
First, choose a discourse community that has impacted you or interests you. Some possibilities include specific clubs, occupations, organizations, or church groups that you belong to, come into contact with, or would be interested in joining. Then, find a preliminary answer to this research question: “What are the goals and characteristics of this discourse community?” Your job is split into three steps:

Step 1: Collect Data
Observe members of the discourse community while they are engaged in a shared activity; take detailed notes (what are they doing? what kinds of things do they say? what specialized language do they use? What do they write? How do you know who is “in” and who is “out”?)
Collect any thing people in that community read or write (their genres)—even very short things like forms, football plays, notes, IMs, and text messages
Interview at least one member of the discourse community (tape record and transcribe the interview). You might ask things like, “How long have you been here? Why are you involved? What do X, Y, and Z words mean? How did you learn to write A, B, or C? How do you communicate with other people [on your team, at your restaurant, etc.]?

Step 2: Analyze the Data: Use the researchers we read (Swales, Mirabelli, Wardle, Gee, Johns) to help you organize and analyze the data you've collected.
- Are there conflicts within the community? If so, why?
- Do some participants in the community have difficulty?
- Who has authority here, and where does that authority come from?
- What kinds of “modes of belonging” are newcomers using, and how are they using those modes?
- What types of “multiliteracies” do members of the community possess?
- Are members of the community stereotyped in any way regarding their literacy knowledge?
- What kinds of identity displays are present within the community and how are those displays able to earn power or prestige?

Step 3: Present Your Findings
Given all the data you’ve collected and analyzed, decide what you want to focus on in your paper. Is there something interesting regarding the goals of the community? Types of literacies in the community? Its lexis or genres? Refine the above research question to fit your purpose(s) and then construct an essay that demonstrates what you’ve learned about discourse communities, reviews relevant literature, describes your methodology and your findings, and presents an answer to your specific research question.

Also, be sure to include a Works Cited page.

You’ll need to have gathered all of your data on your discourse community (attended a meeting/activity, collected the genres, and interviewed at least one member) by April 8th.
Electronic Portfolio Requirement

ENC 1101 Electronic Portfolio Requirement

ENC 1101- Introduction to Writing Studies calls you to develop your own online portfolio. The function of this portfolio is to showcase the work you have done for ENC 1101 focusing on product presentation, process, and reflection. You should set up a blogger account and develop an overall theme for the portfolio. All of the major assignments for the semester should be included in the portfolio in addition to reflections about your process and rationale for each piece. You may also want to include some smaller assignments as well, such as reading response postings or some free-writing you did to prepare for an assignment. If you produce digital communication for this course, for example a video blog or a Prezi, the file should either be imbedded in your blogger page or it should be accessible through a link.

You have a lot of freedom and creative license for how you design your final portfolio. Putting your own design stamp on your project is important, and visual rhetoric is welcome.

You should engage in developing your portfolio as the semester progresses, and we will discuss the overall tenants of the portfolio as the term progresses. Examples of student portfolios forthcoming.

Blog outline

The blog must have several pages and should contain all of the major assignments you have done throughout the semester. The front page of your portfolio should be your final course reflection. You should give this reflection a title that makes sense as a title for your entire portfolio.

Main Reflection Page [GIVE THIS A CREATIVE/DESCRIPTIVE TITLE]

A Few Notes on the Construction of this Portfolio

Use this helpful guide to help you to construct your portfolio. A few pointers to keep in mind before you begin:

1. Remember to make sure the title of the blog includes your full name.
2. Be sure to link to your blog in the assignment box created for the final portfolio in our course blog.
3. Remember to clearly label which drafts are final. Be sure everything is in the right place.
4. This is a blog, so take advantage of that form. Feel free to use pictures, links, or videos to help you make your point. You can also play with the look and feel of the blog if you like, but please keep individual sections that are listed below.
5. As always, if you have any questions, email [your email address] at
What to Include on this Main Reflection Page

Put your overall reflection on your work this semester here. It should be as long as it takes to fully explain and reflect on your work, but you should plan to write several paragraphs at a minimum. Consider the following:

- How has your understanding of writing and yourself as a writer changed (or not changed) throughout the semester?
- What are your current views on your ability to write for different audiences and situations? Be honest. What do you think you’ve learned? What do you still need to work on?
- How will you use any of the skills we practiced, concepts we discussed, or research we conducted in the future? What ideas from this class do you think will be useful to you? How so?

Remember that this isn’t the place for wishy-wasy sentimentality or purely abstract discussion; instead, use the actual writing you’ve completed (big or small, for this class or somewhere else entirely) and discussion of the writing process you’ve engaged in as evidence for a compelling argument about where your writing’s been, where it’s gone this semester, and where you think it will go in the future.

This is your chance to sell me on your work and development as a writer throughout the semester, and where you think it will go in the future.

After creating your main page, you have to create other pages for all of the major assignments of the term. Each page should have a title and should follow a similar format to all the other pages.

What to include in the Literacy Narrative Reflection Page

Put your reflection on the Literacy Narrative here. It should be as long as it takes to fully explain and reflect on your work, but you should plan to write several paragraphs at a minimum. Consider the following:

- Explain your process for writing this piece. Where did you begin? What made this assignment hard or easy for you? What difficulties did you encounter?
- How successful were you in overcoming them?
- Consider the feedback you received in working on this assignment. What sort of feedback did you get from Professor Longhany? What sort of feedback did you get from your peers? What sort of feedback did you get from elsewhere?
- Finally, consider what terms/strategies were necessary for you to know and employ in writing this assignment. What did you have to understand while writing this literacy narrative?

Then create a new page

What to include in the Essay Contest Reflection Page

Put your reflection on the Essay Contest Essay at the top of the new page. It should be as long as it takes to fully explain and reflect on your work, but you should plan to write several paragraphs at a minimum. Consider the following:

- Explain your process for writing this piece. Where did you begin? What made this assignment hard or easy for you? What difficulties did you encounter?
- How successful were you in overcoming them?
- Consider the feedback you received in working on this assignment. What sort of feedback did you get from your peers? What sort of feedback did you get from somewhere else entirely? and discussion of the writing process you’ve engaged in as evidence for a compelling argument about where your writing’s been, where it’s gone this semester, and where you think it will go in the future.

This is your chance to sell me on your work and development as a writer throughout the semester, and where you think it will go in the future.

After creating your main page, you have to create other pages for all of the major assignments of the term. Each page should have a title and should follow a similar format to all the other pages.

What to include in the Literacy Narrative Reflection Page

Put your reflection on the Literacy Narrative here. It should be as long as it takes to fully explain and reflect on your work, but you should plan to write several paragraphs at a minimum. Consider the following:

- Explain your process for writing this piece. Where did you begin? What made this assignment hard or easy for you? What difficulties did you encounter?
- How successful were you in overcoming them?
- Consider the feedback you received in working on this assignment. What sort of feedback did you get from Professor Longhany? What sort of feedback did you get from your peers? What sort of feedback did you get from elsewhere?
- Finally, consider what terms/strategies were necessary for you to know and employ in writing this assignment. What did you have to understand while writing this literacy narrative?

Then create a new page

What to include in the Essay Contest Reflection Page

Put your reflection on the Essay Contest Essay at the top of the new page. It should be as long as it takes to fully explain and reflect on your work, but you should plan to write several paragraphs at a minimum. Consider the following:

- Explain your process for writing this piece. Where did you begin? What made this assignment hard or easy for you? What difficulties did you encounter?
- How successful were you in overcoming them?
- Consider the feedback you received in working on this assignment. What sort of feedback did you get from your peers? What sort of feedback did you get from somewhere else entirely? and discussion of the writing process you’ve engaged in as evidence for a compelling argument about where your writing’s been, where it’s gone this semester, and where you think it will go in the future.

This is your chance to sell me on your work and development as a writer throughout the semester, and where you think it will go in the future.

After creating your main page, you have to create other pages for all of the major assignments of the term. Each page should have a title and should follow a similar format to all the other pages.
Finally, consider what terms/strategies were necessary for you to know and employ in writing this assignment. What did you have to understand while writing this process essay?

**What to include in the Process Essay Reflection Page**

Put your reflection on the Process Essay at the top of the new page. It should be as long as it takes to fully explain and reflect on your work, but you should plan to write several paragraphs at a minimum. Consider the following:

- Explain your process for writing this piece. Where did you begin? What made this assignment hard or easy for you? What difficulties did you encounter?
- How successful were you in overcoming them?
- Consider the feedback you received in working on this assignment. What sort of feedback did you get from your peers? What sort of feedback did you get from Professor Longhany?
- Finally, consider what terms/strategies were necessary for you to know and employ in writing this assignment. What did you have to understand while writing this process essay?

**What to include in the Ethnography Reflection Page**

- Explain your process for writing this piece. Where did you begin? What made this assignment hard or easy for you? What difficulties did you encounter?
- Consider the feedback you received in working on this assignment. What sort of feedback did you get from your peers? What sort of feedback did you get from Professor Longhany?
- Finally, consider what terms/strategies were necessary for you to know and employ in writing this assignment. What did you have to understand while writing this process essay?

Beyond having reflections for each assignment, you must also have separate link lists for each assignment. You should have four link lists (one for each assignment: Literacy Narrative, Essay Contest, Process Essay, and Discourse Community Ethnography). After creating the link lists, you should upload documents to Google docs and then use those URLs to link up your drafts of each paper.

If you have any questions as you develop your digital portfolio, please don’t hesitate to contact me at Longhanyj@seminolestate.edu

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REFERENCES


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