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Reimagining Composition One as a Course in Storytelling Across Disciplines Using New Media

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REIMAGINING COMPOSITION I AS A STUDY IN STORYTELLING ACROSS
DISCIPLINES AND MEDIA

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the role that College Composition courses can and should play in addressing the digital divide and the literacy divide. For this project, digital divide refers to the space between those students who have opportunity to participate in online discourse communities and to contribute to the collective intelligence described by Henry Jenkins and those who have not had this opportunity even though they do have access to current technology. The literacy divide discussed is created when literacy is defined simply as the ability to read and write. Students need to be visually, digitally, and technologically literate.

In response to these gaps, I propose reimagining the first-year writing course as a course in storytelling across disciplines and media. Story, oral storytelling, digital narrative, and transmedia narrative are explained. An analysis of several stories including a canonical comic book, a commercial, and a long-term narrative television show are analyzed using Aristotle, Propp, Saussure, Jenkins, Birkerts, and other theorists important to work in Texts and Technology.

The guiding question for this project is How can a focus on storytelling using new and digital media in the first-year English composition course create an authentic and relevant learning experience for contemporary students while bridging the digital divide created by the lack of opportunity to participate in the collective intelligence of the convergence culture?

Finally, the dissertation includes a research protocol which describes and justifies future research to test the claims made in this dissertation.

For the Triplets

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The goals of this project are to demonstrate the need for a composition one course focused on storytelling practice, narrative theory, and multiple literacies while promoting the use of new media to produce story and to contribute to discourse communities online, in the classroom, and in the workplace. The end result will be students who have not only access to new media, but the skill and knowledge to use new media to bring image and text together to communicate effectively, to create knowledge, and to engage with diverse online populations.

Research Question

How can a focus on storytelling using new and digital media in the first-year English composition course create an authentic and relevant learning experience for contemporary students while bridging the digital divide created by the lack of opportunity to participate in the collective intelligence of the convergence culture?

This work grows from three areas of research and practice:

- the digital divide as lack of opportunity to engage with and use technology in meaningful ways
- college composition
- literacy: with and without adjectives

Background

Digital Divide

Only 68% of students who live in households earning less than \$25,000 have computers in their homes; in contrast, 98% of students living in households with \$100,000 or more in income have computers in their homes (Bulman and Fairlie 2016). Access is one layer of the digital divide; a much more important layer is the “lack of guidance needed for productive utilization” (Brotman). This matters in college and after as digital skills play a significant role in entry level and even many jobs once called middle class professions. These may not have required knowledge of any technology or digital skills a generation ago, but in 2018 and beyond 82% of these middle-class professions require digital skills. This is a four percent increase since 2015. Needing digital skills for entry level and middle level roles is actually a good thing for employees as the roles requiring these skills pay 17% more on average according to industry research conducted by Burning Glass Technologies in partnership with Capital One (2017).

The idea that a digital divide exists between the techno-haves and the techno-have nots is not new. In 1970 Ted Nelson admonishes readers that, “Computers are not everything, they are just an *aspect* of everything, and not to know this is computer illiteracy, a silly and dangerous ignorance” (303). He asserts that the “chasm between layman and computer people widens fast and dangerously” (303). Four decades later, there is still concern over and debate around the issue of access, but this is complicated by the fact that the line between layperson and computer person isn’t as clear now. Is a computer person an expert at programming? Can a person who uses the computer expertly to communicate via email and social media be a computer person? If a nurse uses a computer at work for documenting signs, symptoms, and treatments, but doesn’t know the difference between Twitter and Skype when off the clock, is she still a computer person? Clearly, concern for the impact that disparate access to digital knowledge has on students, employees, and

voters does require one to define one's terms. What is meant by access is an excellent starting place. In *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, Henry Jenkins, et al., asserts the central goal of the paper as shifting focus from access to technology to access to participation in the participatory culture and collective intelligence of the twenty-first century web.

Before addressing the present and future of new media and its role in first-year writing, it is helpful to look to new media's past. In *As We May Think*, *Man-Computer Symbiosis*, and *From Augmenting Human Intellect*, Vannevar Bush, J.C.R. Licklider, and Douglas C. Engelbart respectively argue for a heavier reliance on technology to combat the limits in memory, speed, organization, and recall innate to humans. Whether through invention, symbiosis, or an intellect augmenting framework, each proposes a new media as a means of better, faster problem solving, more efficient use of time, and increased comprehension of complex ideas. The clarity of ideas and the prescience demonstrated by each vary from Licklider's opaque use of the term symbiosis to Bush's foresight and vision of a future where huge amounts of data fit into small spaces, where cameras take pictures that require no developing, and where speech can be typed, and type can be spoken by the machine.

The strength of Licklider's theories is his optimism that a man-computer symbiosis will result in the most creative and exciting years in the history of mankind (75). The weaknesses in his argument are related to assumptions he makes about the desirability of this intimate association between the human brain and machines. When asserting, "The hope is that...human brains and computing machines will be coupled together very tightly" (74) he fails to identify whose hope this is. Even more noteworthy is his lack of address of people, large groups of people, who would see this union of machine and human as a dangerous turn in human evolution.

Licklider's use of symbiosis is problematic from the start as the example he provides, the fig tree and the *Blastophaga Grossorum*, is one of life and death. Without the fruit of the fig tree the insect dies. Without the insect pollinating the trees, the fig trees die. Licklider may not actually be arguing

that people and computers become so reliant on one another that death results if the relationship ends, but this seems to be his suggestion. And, though there are people in the 21st century who think a day without iPad, Blackberry, or Google is akin to death, a link this drastic is not an easy one to support, even in 2018. For industry however, this is a fitting analogy as organizations that do not use technology and do not take advantage of collective intelligence do not survive.

Bush is the most prescient of the three writers. His work basically predicts, as much as anyone in 1945 could have, the desktop computer, Google, and digital photography. Bush envisioned his Memex as a way to house huge amounts of information in a small space, to retrieve data quickly, and to overcome the limits of human memory. In 2018, we call the machine that does these things a computer. While there are obvious differences, on the desk versus in the desk for one, Bush's Memex is a step toward the desktop computer which holds all of a person's "books, records, and communications" (45). It stands to reason that just having the condensed data in one place is not useful if one cannot find specific information easily and quickly. Bush addresses this with the ideas of indexing and trails. Now, we have Google. Google is made of the trailblazers Bush predicted. Through algorithms, Google can establish "useful trails through the enormous mass of the common record" (Bush 38) allowing one to find all previous research on ideas as disparate as ninja and grandmother (2,400,000 hits) or The French Revolution and Mars (2, 940,000 hits). Perhaps most interesting and striking are Bush's thoughts on the camera and the photo of the future. We have the photos without development (38) that he imagined, and photos that form as soon as the camera is operated (39) are de rigueur for the typical American teenager. While Bush did miss the mark when he predicted we would have walnut cameras strapped to our foreheads, this can be attributed to his inability to predict Steve Jobs and the impact he would have on design and style. Businesses in the 21st century depend on the ease with which customers photograph and post images of meals, shoes, carpets, and paint swatches as this is free advertisement and makes the customer an

unpaid ambassador. W.J.T. Mitchell's pictorial turn (15) grew in part out of the changes in photography predicted by Bush. The dominos in the trail eventually fall upon college students who need to be able to read images meant to evoke action whether making a purchase or casting a vote. As important is the work students need to do to learn the art and science of making thoughtful choices about the images they use professionally to tell stories that create loyal followers, customers, donors, readers, or voters. In other words, Bush predicted a technology that would play a significant role in being a well-rounded productive citizen.

Why spend time on these three writers and their predictions of the future? Because they shed light on how quickly ideas move from fantasy to reality. In my lifetime, technologies that existed only in science fiction have become household items. The need to adapt and to participate and to combat Nelson's dangerous ignorance, one must think of computers not as a mysterious and frightening piece of technology, but as a tool that "any nitwit can understand" (303). This once radical stance, as detailed in *Computer Lib* reads like a manifesto, one for the liberation of the computer as well as for the average person who is on the wrong side of the gap between the public and the Computer Priesthood (304). While the technology has changed and the ways we use technology to communicate, to learn, and to work couldn't have been imagined accurately when Bush, Licklider, Engelbart, and even Nelson were writing, the concern is the same. The dire consequences of being on the wrong side of "the divide" are perhaps greater now than ever as those who know, understand, and adapt to technology are less understanding of those who do not. Being a Luddite is not a forgivable offense in the modern workplace. As Castells explains, "Increasingly...inability to use computers or find information on the web is a matter of stigma, of social exclusion" (Castells qtd. in Livingstone). Computers are no longer just huge adding machines that do work so mystical that only the Alan Turings of the world can comprehend them.

Henry Jenkins' argument in *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century* is sound and important for the 21st century student. To address "the divide" requires also speaking to the new literacy created by Convergence Culture, and the role that educators play in preparing students to participate regardless of their entry point as well as the implications that transmedia storytelling has for what it means in the 21st century to be an educator, a student, an author, and a reader.

Before addressing the new skills identified in *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*, I would like to focus on a problematic shift that is required in American schools.

Participatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement. The new literacies almost all involve social skills developed through collaboration and networking. These skills build on the foundation of traditional literacy, research skills, technical skills, and critical analysis skills taught in the classroom. (Jenkins, et al.)

The quote above contains two items that imply obstacles to the changes needed to address and bridge the access and opportunity divide. An assumption that informs this response must be addressed first. As Digital Humanities is often housed in English departments (Kirschenbaum 2012) I am addressing this topic under the assumption that teaching the new skills identified in Jenkins' MacArthur Foundation paper will happen in English classes, specifically in the first-year writing course. This alone is troubling as first-year writing has been trying to establish a unified and coherent purpose for decades (Fulkerson 1979; Goggin 1995; Wardle 2013).

First, a shift from the focus on individual expression to community involvement requires teachers to change their mindset. The paradigm shift needed for teachers in American schools to see collaborative writing as a means of developing and demonstrating literacy might be compared fairly to the tectonic shift that separated North America from Europe. The prevailing wisdom in first-year writing courses is that students learn to write and demonstrate that they have learned to write

effectively by producing the five-paragraph essay. Not only does collaborative work mean that multiple voices will be combined, but the five-paragraph structure will no longer be the best model for written work. This also complicates authorship and ownership which is a defining element of new media (Manovich). The predominant logic in the composition class is that there is one author who is responsible for the composition being submitted for a grade. As long as grading is the focus, it will be difficult to achieve the widespread buy in required to bridge the gap and ensure opportunities to participate in transmedia worlds.

The focus has been and is on teaching students to follow rules with the expectation that following those rules will result in *good* college level writing. Jenkins' work calls on educators to redefine college-level writing and the products that qualify as texts. Anyone creating, teaching, or supporting composition studies will have to acknowledge that, "In the end, knowledge has to be about creativity, innovation and imagination. It is time to imagine an education system that nurtures creativity rather than hinders it" (Kalogeras).

To return to the broader issue, focusing on opportunities to participate is a better way to bridge the digital divide than concentrating on access to technology. As devices become more affordable, and as our culture shifts its view of various technologies from extravagant toys to everyday necessities, more and more people regardless of socioeconomic status have access to smartphones, tablets, and laptops as well as to high speed Internet.

The students in these households have the technology but not an understanding of how to use that technology to create, produce, and distribute. They are missing out on a side of the Internet that produces creative and critical thinkers who have access to a diverse network of professionals and novices willing to collaborate and mentor. The students most affected by this are those who can least afford it as they tend to be at an economic and social disadvantage.

Students are on a journey through university. They start at one point, and to be successful must end at another, but if the goal is simply the end destination, then students are merely tourists. They need only race from one item to the next, from cause and effect to definition essay to argument paper without any time to truly experience the culture of college, to learn the language of learning, to accept and learn from the disorientation inherent in being in a foreign place. Travelers eat the authentic foods and risk embarrassing themselves as they dance to the native music. Writing in a public transmedia space is akin to being a traveler not a tourist as participating in collaborative online culture results in a meaningful experience, a connection between the person and the experience. To create a transmedia narrative is to perform theory, rather than mindlessly following a pattern. Learning to play or experiment with one's surroundings, practicing the skills needed to follow stories both fiction and nonfiction across modalities, and appropriating ethically (Jenkins 2006) in the freshmen composition class is a rejection of the system that emphasizes form and an embracing of a system that emphasizes thought (Moss 219) which is bound to benefit students as they progress through their programs and into their careers.

The New Skills

It is important to recognize that before students can be provided with opportunities to master the new skills identified by Jenkins as part of the shift in view of the digital divide, educators must be knowledgeable and feel confident addressing these skills in and out of the classroom. Below is an address of what these skills might look like in a first-year writing class in which transmedia narrative is used as teaching methodology:

- **Play** — Students are tasked with playing a Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) and then blogging about the experience in terms of problem-solving skills used,

leadership skills used, how they felt their identity transferred from real life to video game, and what role trust played in their interactions with fellow players.

- **Performance** — Students post in an online forum as a male and as a female for several weeks and then document the types of responses received using criteria created in conjunction with the instructor and research to classify responses in a way that can produce quantifiable stats for the students to use in a visual of their choosing – they should also write about the differences in response and interaction. Their writing could be in a course blog, on Twitter, or another social media.
- **Simulation** — Students are assigned a problem and asked to create two models, one using only resources that are realistic and within a given budget and another ‘pie-in-the-sky’ version that assumes no limits in available technology or funding. Students should then share their two ideas in an online forum and interact with those who comment.
- **Appropriation** — Students are tasked with creating a mashup of two texts that are theoretically opposed to one another. They should then write about how they chose the texts and what ethical concerns they have with the final product.
- **Collective Intelligence** — Any of the above tasks completed as either a face-to-face or virtual team.
- **Judgment** — Students should find and evaluate multiple Twitter accounts related to their major.
- **Transmedia Navigation** — Students will analyze a transmedia franchise using Jenkins’s criteria then write a proposal for adding another element to this franchise or creating a new platform for a book or movie that does not have any cross-media components.

- **Networking** — Students should pose a request for help with info on several social media sites and then evaluate the responses using criteria determined via research into the topic and relevant best practices

These goals can also be met during the creation of an interactive immersive web project that requires students to incorporate or exploit media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence while telling a story that solves a problem relevant to the student author. Henry Jenkins' *Convergence Culture* addresses the three key components that make for a successful transmedia narrative: media convergence, participatory culture, and collective culture. In this book, the idea of convergence culture is primarily addressed as both a corporate and a consumer venture. Corporate executives and marketers are making top down decisions to grow their franchises, while young consumers are deciding what they want in a story, how they want the story presented, and how much involvement they want in and with the characters and the plot. This research endeavor will use the same concepts but will apply them to writing for transfer of knowledge in the first-year writing course which operates with goals that differ significantly from the media empire mogul and the teenage media consumer described in Jenkins's work. The focus on transmedia as an element of popular culture, namely entertainment is also addressed in work as diverse as Nancy Baym's 2000 book, *Tune In, Log On: Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community* and Mark Andrejevic's 2008 article "Watching Television Without Pity: The Productivity of Online Fans." This focus on entertainment is understandable as leisure activities are so important in US culture, and television, music, and movies are not just multimillion dollar enterprises they "speak back to us and offer us 'reality' (Fulton 3), but entertainment is only one field that benefits from the power narrative to construct our reality (Fulton 3). As this research project will demonstrate, narrative, and especially narrative across media, is an essential element of work, academic, and personal life in the 21st century and beyond. For this reason, this research culminates in a proposed digital storytelling project based

first-year writing course. Such a digital storytelling project will be created and presented as a part of this dissertation.

Another category of research in digital narrative and transmedia storytelling addresses the role that this new convergence of old and new media, of participatory audiences, and collaborative knowledge plays in journalism, or to be more dramatic, the salvation of journalism as newspapers and other print media decline in followers and revenue each year (Beckett 2008). The rules of game play can also be found in much of the research into how new media can prevent the extension of print journalism (Beckett 2009; Ellis 2012). These online works make the point that young readers do not want to carry a newspaper around with them, rather they will gladly use a smart phone, a tablet, or other mobile device to consume news throughout the day, unlike the older reader who sits with the newspaper once per day and reads everything in that one sitting. This speaks to more than just how younger media consumers prefer to stay current in terms of local news, global events, and national politics. This is the same audience that wants to know about social causes as they unfold (Ford, S. 2006) and will respond via a comment on a blog, via a retweet on Twitter, or via mass messaging friends and colleagues.

This phenomenon in both entertainment and journalism is in line with Bates' assertions about successful games beginning with action; even in real world situations, new media consumers want to be a part of the action in real time, rather than passive readers after the fact. Perhaps the takeaway from this is that the audience of the 21st century, is not satisfied reading the hero's journey or even pretending to be the hero (Campbell), rather the modern media consumer wishes to be the hero, in on the action, effecting change and solving problems. It is significant to note that transmedia narrative has a special hold on younger audience members, (Brooker 2001) a group with disposable income and an odd combination of the idealism of youth and a mistrust of government that has not been the norm since their grandparent's generation. This group is ripe for using the

method and modality of their favorite entertainment and news outlets as a method for contributing to the research and writing in their current and future discourse communities.

Composition

Complaints about student writing are certainly not new. In 1878, Harvard rhetoric professor, Adams Sherman Hill lamented, “Everyone who has had much to do with the graduating classes of our best colleges has known men who could not write a letter describing their own commencements without making blunders which would disgrace a boy twelve years old.” (Braddock, et al. 2) One hundred forty years later, professors across university campuses make similar claims. While Hill and his contemporaries developed pedagogy based on their observations and experiences, professors in the 1950s turned to research to determine what worked and did not work in first-year writing courses. *Research in Written Composition* was published in 1963. Despite the age of this publication, it is essential in a discussion of first-year writing as it was the first publication to comprehensively summarize the existing research on student writing and the teaching of writing in response to what the writers described as current research that “may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from alchemy” (5). Braddock and his coauthors took issue with the loosely defined terms used in research about writing instruction and the treatment of “dreams, prejudices, and makeshift operations” (16) as legitimate evidence for pedagogical and practical choices in teaching writing. For composition and rhetoric educators, for writing center directors, and for researchers in composition studies, *Research in Written Composition* is an “indispensable source of information” (Blount 1080). Because the research was well funded and supported across agencies and universities, Braddock and his coauthors were able to “search thoroughly titles of dissertations, to establish rigorous screening procedures, and finally to select and fully report five studies adjudged to be those most soundly based” (Lodge 151).

While *Research in Composition* presented relevant findings such as the study of grammar having little or no effect on the quality of student writing, what is most often cited in the report is the list of 24 questions which are items the report creators identified as areas needing further research.

A variety of researchers have taken up the call of filling in the gaps identified in Braddock's work, though most in the decades following Braddock's report studied students in Kindergarten through 11th grade. In 1976, Hall, et al. for instance focused on the home environment of children who learned to write early and found that having parents who are college graduates and writing materials freely available in the home played a role in the children having positive attitudes toward writing and toward achievement which address questions 1 and 14 on Braddock's list:

1. What kinds of situations and assignments at various levels of schooling stimulate a desire to write well?
14. What techniques of composition most effectively help build self-discipline and pride in clarity, originality, and good form?

In 1967, Stiff studied the consequences of three types of feedback:

1. Marginal notes only
2. Terminal notes only
3. Combination of marginal notes and terminal notes

Student writing did not improve with any one method of feedback in Stiff's study, but he does note that the college students who received both comments in the margins and at the end of the paper were happier with the feedback and had more positive attitude toward writing. Providing this level of feedback does take a lot of time and one has to balance the additional time and effort with the results which do not include writers who made stronger arguments or committed fewer errors on subsequent papers.

Related to Stiff's work but different in the population and specific treatment being tested, Gee (1970) and Groff (1975) each concluded that student writing does not improve or decline in quality because of feedback from instructors regardless of the feedback being positive or negative. Positive comments did however increase students' positive attitude toward writing more than negative or no comments. It is noteworthy that each of these studies were conducted on high school students, while Stiff's participants were college students. As a new composition instructor, I was surprised by the number of students who were certain they could not write and did not want to write because of comments made by high school English teachers. Some of these students were producing interesting work, but they lacked confidence and viewed English courses as something to get through.

Other research projects conducted in the two decades after Braddock's *Research in Written Composition* (1963) focus on the effect of class size, the level of individualization of instruction, and peer versus instructor editing and review. Smith's 1974 study on high school students used six large classrooms receiving instruction for the entire class only, and six other large classes that were instructed as entire classes but were also split into small groups some of whom were provided additional instruction while in smaller groups and others received individualized instruction as well. Smith's findings include evidence that small class size positively affects improvement, and the students who were low to average performers benefited from small group instruction even more than their high performing peers. She found that her participants receiving individualized instruction showed better retention of skill and knowledge six weeks after the study concluded. If teaching for transfer is a concern, then this study is certainly relevant. Lagana (1972), Ford B.W. (1973), and Farrell (1977) all found that students receiving peer feedback either alone or combined with instructor feedback improved in grammar and wrote more during class because of the immediate feedback.

While these studies may seem an odd focus for a researcher in 2018, they are quite relevant as they show that educators have been trying for decades to determine through rigorous study how to teach students to write. These studies are also evidence that the concerns of composition instructors are oddly unchanged in 50 years. Educators now though must compete with 200+ channels on television, smart phones that allow students to take many of those channels with them, iTunes, Hulu, Netflix, dating sites, Facebook, Twitter, email, and the entire universe of information and misinformation on the Internet. And, we are teaching students who do not read newspapers or books. In 2014, Huang, et al. reported that the 1,265 students who self-reported their reading habits spent 7.72 hours on academic reading per week, 4.24 hours on pleasure reading per week, and 8.95 hours on the Internet each week. Anyone teaching college students can attest through anecdotal evidence through observation in the classroom, student union, hallways and walkways of campus that students on the Internet are not reading; they are flipping, surfing, clicking, and moving from page to page and from image to image in seconds, devoting little if any time to the words on the screen and taking no time at all to process what they have seen, to analyze it, to question it, to apply it. One need not take instructors' anecdotal evidence alone as proof that students are not reading.

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America (NEA 2004) studies reading habits of Americans from 1982 to 2002 and found that reading decreased in Americans in every age group, in every education level, across white, black, and Hispanic Americans, and this is true for both genders (Table 1). The group with the most significant decrease in time spent reading is young adults 18-34. This group dropped from most likely to read literature to least likely to read literature in just 20 years.

Table 1. Reading by Age Group (NEA 2004)

Age group	1982	1992	2002	Rate of decline (1982-2002)
18-24	59.8	53.3	42.8	-28% This rate of decline is 55% greater than the decline for All Ages.
25-34	62.1	54.6	47.7	-23
All ages	56.9	54	46.7	-18

This decline in reading is concerning by itself, but when one considers additional findings of the NEA report cited above, it is clear that a decline in reading is a decline in engagement with activities that make us better citizens, more well-rounded people, active participants in communities. Non-readers are less likely to visit art museums, to do volunteer work, to attend sport events, and to attend performing art events (NEA 6). The connection between reading and being a participant in other meaningful activities is significant to this project as both speak to literacy. Reading and writing were the tandem abilities required of literate people, and literacy of this kind was associated with power and autonomy. Literacy in the 21st century encompasses more than reading and writing text; literacy is often qualified with words such as global and cultural to refer to an understanding of how the people and places in the world are organized and connected and to refer to the ability to live in and participate with other cultures respectfully. Other types of literacy that students need in 2018 and beyond are visual, technological, and information. While each of these terms includes the word literacy because the ability to read and write provided a good analogy for what a person was doing when being globally literate, reading the world or technologically literate, deciphering the meaning of technology, these are no longer phrases using literacy as analogy; rather, literacy encompasses the ability to read texts, people, politics, cultural practices, images in print and online, and to read technology and its role in daily life from multiple perspectives. Literacy will be discussed in detail in the next subsection as it plays a role in the background of this project.

As the research described in this subsection demonstrates, teaching college composition has never been easy and has not resulted in the same success that a teacher who imparts introductory

level knowledge or skill in psychology, medical terminology, or business administration experiences when students leave the course and transfer their knowledge to specialized areas of study in higher level courses. Technology and the changes it caused directly and indirectly have made teaching composition more complicated and challenging a task. Kress (2003) and other scholars have argued that the visual is no longer supplement to the real text, the words; rather the visual is the text in many cases and is an equal partner to the words in other messages. Just as words lose ground to image in terms of the privileged form of communication, the hardcopy page is losing ground to the tablet, smartphone, and laptop screen. Because of the time spent on devices, students are consuming and writing in quite different ways than students just a decade ago. Imagine the challenge this presents to faculty who began teaching college writing when the terms blogging and texting did not exist.

Literacy

Scribner and Cole's final thoughts on whether literacy has cognitive consequences are as relevant to this project in 2018 as they were to the field of literacy studies and reading education in 1981:

We approach literacy as a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use. The nature of these practices, including of course, their technological aspects, will determine the kinds of skills ("consequences") associated with literacy. (236)

Thirty-seven years after Scribner and Cole's research was published, literacy is often used with a qualifier, visual literacy, digital literacy, information literacy, technical, or computer literacy. This word didn't always need to be modified as literacy was once the straightforward ability to read and write. As more skill is required to work, learn, and function in a digital world, this definition of literacy has come to refer to a skill that is "the intellectual equivalent of all-purpose flour" (Hull 649),

while one can't make cake, pizza dough, or pancakes without it, no one is celebrating all-purpose flour or literacy of this kind in 2018; rather, we view this skill as the most basic and assume it of the general population. Enter the adjectives: digital, computer, visual, technological. This project argues that instead of an adjective to express literacy that includes the ability to use digital media to communicate, learn, and work, one should accept that literacy in the 21st century includes the ability to contribute to collective intelligence on the Internet and to create information and knowledge rather than only consuming it. This is not an issue of technological inventions; rather it is an issue of knowing how to use the technological inventions in meaningful ways that benefit the user, the community, an organization, or an industry. Because images are as important as words to contemporary readers and creators, literacy does not need to be qualified with the adjective *visual*. There is no longer a divide between the image and the text, all arts are multimedia and multimodal, “purely visual or verbal arts” (Mitchell 5) are as antiquated as the definition of literacy that is concerned only with the ability to read words on a page

Literacy that addresses text, image, the digital, the “complicated amalgamations of literacy’s past, present, and future” (Brandt 485) should be reflected in the first-year writing course as the students in these classes will be expected to operate successfully using the skills and tools of the old literacy and the new literacy simultaneously and seamlessly. One could ask how digital literacy and the ability to use new media tools to create digital artifacts that integrate text, image, and sound to tell a story is the purview of English departments which have privileged the written word in instruction and examination for decades. The answer is that using technology is not new to English departments of writing faculty. Writing has become so necessary to daily life that it is viewed as natural and taken for granted but it is artificial, a human construct (Ong). English departments should embrace the work of producing literate students because literacy, the old and the new, is tied to and contributes to one’s power. In the 1800s, one had to be literate to read the Bible and to teach

others the moral code of the community. Those who could not read were subject to the interpretations of the literate, those with the power to dictate acceptable behavior, beliefs, and thought. This places literacy within the Foucaultian discourse on power in society and the creation of subjects.

Janet Murray asserts in her introduction to Waldrup-Fruin and Montfort's *New Media Reader* (3) that the field of New Media has been influenced by a tradition of competing utopic and dystopic perspectives by scientists and humanists. This speaks to a recurring debate relevant to composition courses that precedes not only new media technologies but written texts. Aristotle warned that if men learned to read and write, they would lose their ability to memorize. As memory is one of the five canons of rhetoric, Aristotle's concern is understandable given the context. While criticizing his concern would be anachronistic, one must acknowledge that society is not lamenting the loss of our ability to recall arguments or epic poems or even phone numbers that we use daily. Unlike Aristotle's concern, Murray's point is at the heart of an ongoing debate amongst critics, scholars, and to some extent the general public.

Each side of this divide can be examined using works by Sven Birkerts, Robert Coover, Collin Brooke, and Marcel O'Gorman. While this list is balanced, Birkerts and Coover on the dystopian side and Brooke and O'Gorman on the utopian side, amongst academics not involved in new media, digital humanities, or texts and technology research or criticism, the view of new media, and particularly new media used in higher education is profoundly dystopic.

Birkerts admits in *The Gutenberg Elegies* that he is a lover of books. He invites readers to picture him as an old man with a book spread across his lap. In a series of essays that while academic, analytical, and critical are also autobiographical, Birkerts addresses a change that has taken place in society, though change hardly seems strong enough a word given the problem as Birkerts describes it and the repercussions to our culture as he predicts them. Using his undergraduate

students as an example, Birkerts paints a picture of generations of Americans who don't read, "never were readers" because they occupied their time with music, television, and videos. Any instructor who has been told unashamedly by a student, "I don't like to read" can understand Birkert's frustration as an individual who has devoted his professional life to books and as one who spends as much time reading for pleasure as engaging in any other activity. Readers tend to take it personally when someone announces their disinterest in a good book. But, his point is more than a personal lament. Birkerts argues effectively that without reading, important elements of our culture are not passed on, assumptions about right and wrong, historic explanations for current phenomena are lost. Students who do not read are not connected to one another, to their neighbors, or to their nation via shared experiences, values, and lessons that are housed in books.

One might counter Birkerts' pessimism with an argument promoting the use of technology to communicate the lessons, the history, and the values of a culture. Is reading about The Great Depression or The Civil Right's Movement online really that different from reading about these important events/periods in a book? Birkerts argues that the difference is significant as are the consequences. When new media is used to acquire information, it is done quickly. One types in a key word, hits enter, and clicks on a web page, then a link, then a different page. This continues, and the web user takes in a lot of information in small pieces, blurbs, images. But, the reader doesn't digest the information, doesn't apply it to his or her lived existence, doesn't internalize it. People read electronic texts differently. And, worse, they think less as they use new media to acquire information. While the Internet has increased the information available, it has not improved our ability to process, analyze, or synthesize data. Birkerts argues that people don't read through a web page to reach a well-thought out conclusion about an idea. Worse still is the belief that this isn't a choice. Students, digital natives, non-reading web users cannot read a book, cannot stop and think, cannot slow down and digest difficult language, eloquent but unusual syntax, complex or

contradictory ideas presented as equally plausible or accurate. My goal in this dissertation is to design a course that offers students a way to use new media to create multimedia texts as thoughtfully as an author writes an article or book and perhaps more importantly to analyze other texts whether in print, online, still image or video carefully, critically, and to take the time to synthesize the information gained and the knowledge created with prior knowledge and information.

Robert Coover's "The End of Books" is less pessimistic and less alarmist than Birkerts' work, but if one reads carefully, it is clear that despite his willingness to teach creative writing using hypertext and despite the fair and nonjudgmental way in which he describes the process and end result of student work produced using new media technology, Coover does assert that the technology becomes more important than the prose. This is a valid concern and one I would argue can be answered with careful instruction and thoughtful choices during the planning and implementation of the course proposed in the final chapter.

Hypertext, a term coined by Ted Nelson, refers in this context to text that is linked to other text, pages, or images. It is hypertext that creates nonlinearity that both Coover and Espen J. Aarseth address as a component of new media or electronic literature. While readers of hypertext fiction are no longer subject to the supposed tyranny of the author, they also do not get to experience and appreciate plot, well- developed characters, effective use of time-indicating literary devices, and a satisfying end to a story. Coover's observations about the changes that students make to the collaborative story at the heart of his course (aliens giving birth to full grown bartenders, characters changing gender, gratuitous sexual encounters), while presented as mere fact, do make it easy for others to judge the work as silly and inconsequential. Even student work should matter. Students in a writing course should learn to write, not to play with technology. Student writers, regardless of whether they are in a creative writing or technical communication course, are admonished ad nauseum to consider the reader. There is no indication that these writers are considering the reader.

If the reader is the unifying element in a written work (Barthes) and if text finds its meaning in the reader not in the author (Barthes), then Coover's description of the work in his course paints a dystopian picture of at least one type of and one use of new media.

Writers on the utopian side of the debate are less overt about their support of new media as they are not writing specifically to praise new media and the role it can and/or does play in improving the human condition; rather, one can read into the arguments these new media writers, researchers, and educators make about theory and instruction. Marcel O'Gorman's book, *E-Crit*, provides an example of this as well as an interesting and somewhat troubling contradiction worth noting.

O'Gorman's book is about two things, the basics of and need for the E-Crit program he is a part of at a university and his theory for changing the way academic work is written/produced which he calls hypericonomy. O'Gorman's discussion of the E-Crit degree is outside the scope of this project and will not be discussed here, but his argument about hypericonomy, academic writing, and the apparatus in place to enforce the standards of academic publication are very much pertinent to a discussion of new media as they speak to his implied belief in the utopic nature of new media and the changes to the academy made possible by these technologies.

O'Gorman, like all members of The Florida School who study under Gregory Ulmer is a proponent of innovation over evaluation. O'Gorman and Jeff Rice for instance both take a derisive view of scholars who apply feminist theory or new criticism to literature as this does not produce something new in their view. Analyzing and evaluating literature, especially in a thesis-driven article, is the work of yesterday and has been or should be replaced with work that creates new models, methodologies, and theories. Such an extreme view of work that has been creating knowledge, educating readers, and adding to a canon of criticism that documents ways of thinking in particular times and places does strongly suggest a belief in new media as a tool for building a perfect world,

but this can only happen if traditional academics and publishers get out of O’Gorman’s way. This is evidenced in O’Gorman’s use of the comments on a rejection he received when he submitted an experimental text to a traditional humanities journal. He doesn’t share the submitted work, so the reader’s ability to analyze and evaluate the comments in context is limited. What O’Gorman does share is both his condescending attitude toward the gatekeepers of traditional publishing and an assumption that readers of E-Crit will agree with his frustration with the old guard and belief in a focus on hypertext and electronic literature and writing *with* instead of *about* as the best uses of one’s intellectual energy. Only one devoted wholeheartedly committed to an idea or object could ignore obvious concerns, questions, or opposing points of view.

Ironically, O’Gorman shares an example of work he asks of his undergraduate students which is meant to demonstrate hypericonomy but also sheds light on a contradiction between what O’Gorman says and what he does. In the assignment, students are given art work by William Blake but text that is part of the work has been removed. The students add text of their own. O’Gorman’s argument that this exercise is more valuable than asking students to interpret the artwork and Blake’s words is debatable, but what is more interesting is his choice of artists. Blake is a member of the canon. He is part of the literary tradition that many criticize for being too male, too white, and too dead. O’Gorman’s example, rather than making clear the goals and applications of hypericonomy, begs several questions. Would O’Gorman’s argument be better made using a new media artist? Is Blake’s work accessible to 21st century students? Are the students exposed to the politics and religion relevant to Blake and his work? The course I propose in this dissertation would certainly allow for the use of Blake or other canonical writers and artists but only if a student chose to focus on such a figure in a digital story.

Collin Brooke’s work in *Lingua Fracta* is an interesting call to use something ancient to address work created with technology and new media. Like O’Gorman, Brooke doesn’t overtly

praise new media or credit it with making the academic world better, but his focus on new media texts and rhetoric's place in creating and evaluating new media texts suggests that his academic and professional loyalty lies with technology, and his book does not contain the warnings or lamentations that Birkerts' does. Instead of focusing on problems, questions, and dilemma created by new media, Brooke focuses on using the five canons of classical rhetoric while working in new media. His assertions are interesting because unlike O'Gorman, or even Jenkins in his transmedia storytelling work and Murray and her four affordances, he doesn't argue for a new theory or methodology; rather, he reasons that the canons are a neglected yet effective tool for instruction in composition classes even when those classes use or focus on new media. This is particularly relevant to my work as I am a strong proponent of new media while also wanting to preserve the elements of liberal arts education that make it liberal arts those components that promote intellectual activity for the sake of learning rather than to develop technical or work-related skill, yet storytelling is a work-related skill and the new media tools used to tell digital stories require technical skill. My goal is to balance the two so that composition is still a course that promotes intellectual curiosity and allows for reflection, creative expression, and analytical reading and writing.

Conclusion

The research question driving this project attempts to bridge a gap in the work being done in three areas: literacy studies, composition I pedagogy, and educational technology in the college classroom. While the research and theory creation in each of these areas grows almost exponentially each day, there is a space where these three intersect that is not being addressed. In Chapter Four of this project, I detail a research protocol for implementing and assessing a first-year writing course that helps educators bridge the digital divide while teaching to the multiple literacies students need in college and in the workplace without sacrificing the elements of liberal arts courses that make them

valuable. Students in the proposed course supported by this research would be encouraged to ask questions, challenge information, solve problems, and use creative expression while telling stories using digital media.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter One introduced the three background areas that inform this project and the proposed intervention detailed in Chapter Four and the Appendix. In this chapter, I will provide a review of the literature in three areas. First, I will focus on the research relevant to storytelling in business, especially marketing and leadership. I will focus on the literature around educational technology, and I will conclude the chapter by addressing the research on types of storytelling including digital and transmedia. It is important to note that narrative theory and the literature important to its history and development are used throughout the next chapter to analyze a variety of narratives including an online commercial, a comic book, an annual report, and a television show.

Storytelling in Business

This section addresses the literature about storytelling in business, particularly in advertising/marketing and leadership. Many of the books and articles discussed here were published in the first decade of the 2000s as this is when story and storytelling became buzzwords in the corporate arena. While story is everywhere currently, evidenced by organizations such as Nike, Google, and Microsoft having official storytellers, and workshops in corporate and nonprofit storytelling offered at places such as IDEO and The Story Studio, it was once odd, if not comedic, to hear storytelling used in a discussion of big business. Stories were for children at bedtime or for vacationers on the beach, they were not the purview of strategists and decision-makers in the business world. That has changed. Effective storytelling is now required of professionals in every field. My goal in this chapter is to discuss the marketing, banking, and engineering professionals who recognized the power of story early and believed in its importance enough to educate other business people about the *why* and *how* of great storytelling. The literature about corporate uses for storytelling

are important for this dissertation and for the reimagined composition course detailed in the final chapter.

Sixty-five percent of conversations consist of stories according to Jeremy Hsu's 2008 book, *The Secrets of Storytelling: Why we love a good yarn*. While Hsu was reporting research on personal conversations, it is easy to see how the importance and ubiquity of story would be relevant to business people and would therefore be the subject of a large canon of books aimed at members of the corporate world. Business has become more relational and less transactional, and story creates relationships quickly and easily.

In her 2001 book, *The Story Factor*, Annette Simmons defines story as the "narration of a sequence of events that stimulates a visual, sensory, and emotional experience" (73) and she identifies the significant difference between storytelling, a pull strategy" and other methods of influence, "persuasion, bribery, or charismatic appeals" which are "push strategies". This opposition is significant to business professionals who know that pulling people, whether employees experiencing change or customers choosing the one big purchase of the holiday season, allows them to be more active in the exchange and therefore more loyal; and, pulling allows for developing a long-term relationship as opposed to pushing which focus on short-term transactions. Simmons' focus is on the types of story every leader should be able to tell and the purpose each serves, but she warns against looking for a how-to recipe to be followed step-by-step.

1. Who I am stories
2. Why I am here stories
3. Vision stories
4. Teaching stories
5. Values in action stories
6. I know what you are thinking stories

Simmons' claims are based on eight years of experience during which she focused on how much she uses story in her professional life. She deems this topic important because being able to tell the types of stories that she focuses on in her book allow one to share knowledge, and she is very aware of the belief that if one can't share knowledge, one doesn't have the knowledge. Story allows a person to use both their left brain and their right brain according to Simmons to tap into their wisdom and knowledge and to use that to influence others not only to act and agree and purchase but also to find their own wisdom. These ideas are similar to those discussed in *The Social Life of Information* by John Seely Brown and P. Duguid. Brown and Duguid credit story with promoting organizational learning and increasing employee intelligence.

Craig Wortmann's book *What's Your Story* also focuses on categories, but he has selected categories that support different functions of leadership in business and sales. He then arranges these categories to fit onto a matrix (see Table 2) that further groups stories based on career and leadership skills such as execution and teamwork.

Table 2. Categorical matrix example (Wortmann 2006)

	Culture/company	Execution	Sales	Service	Teamwork	Me
Success						
Failure						
Fun						
Legends						

A noteworthy difference between Wortmann's work and Simmons' is Wortmann's focus on why story is effective and why business professionals, particularly leaders in sales and marketing, should be effective storytellers.

Wortmann argues that stories create presence. Leaders are aware of both the distance and the overload created by technology. Stories get attention and create a sense of being there between storyteller and recipient. Connection to teaching and learning in Composition I: Feeling isolated is a

common complaint from online students. Stories help relieve the feelings of lack of support and connectedness. As instructors, we share our personality in our stories of successes, failures, workplace fun, and legends. A bond is forged when people share stories.

For Wortmann, bullet points are a problem, and stories aren't bullet points; rather, they are a solution to this problem of communicating in phrases. Bullet points on a PowerPoint lack context which hinders understanding. A story unfolds and allows the listener to experience the messiness and complexity while creating meaning. Connection teaching and learning in Composition

I: Students need context to understand how the concepts in a textbook will apply to their work lives. Stories also allow students to connect the information in the story to their previous knowledge.

Stories build stronger relationships and illustrate success and failure. Students need to learn to build relationships and why this is important long before they graduate. A storytelling environment is a logical place to do this. Students often see in binary oppositions. Success is good. Failure is bad. Story teaches a lesson about the learning, growth, and development possible if one is aware of failure as a lesson.

Wortmann demonstrates that stories allow for reflection. Action is valued in the workplace at the peril of sitting and thinking over choices made. Stories force one to slow down and wait for the next zig or zag in the narrative. We connect those pieces of story to previous stories, choices, successes, and failures. Connection to teaching and learning in Composition I: Contemporary students, especially nontraditional students, often must jump quickly from assignment to assignment rushing to get reading, written work, and tests completed. There is also a tendency for online course developers and instructors to include articles, links to journals, embedded videos, and relevant images. While the intention is a rich learning environment, the result is often cognitive overload.

In the classroom, Wortmann's list supports a rich learning environment which empowers students to think critically and analytically. Stories are an antidote to thinking in context-free phrases

which simplify complex issues and subjects while moving focus from the *what* to the equally important *how* and *why*. Students need to learn the role that perspective and experience play in how people see small events and the world at large. Stories present multiple perspectives and can give voice to previously ignored points of view. Stories help us unlearn the ideas, preferences, and biases that stand in the way of learning, of embracing diverse ways of knowing, and of innovative problem-solving.

At the heart of Wortmann's reasons that stories work is the idea that stories pull people together, and even in the business world, people need to make connections as the professional world has become more relational and less transactional. An important part of his ideas is that stories slow people down and help alleviate information overload so that they can see accurately what is happening and from diverse points of view. His research suggests that story also adds context which is essential for truly understanding complex issues which he presents as a natural contrast to sharing information without story for instance via PowerPoint slide which creates an oversimplified message that doesn't resonate with employees or customers.

In the 2005 book, *Storytelling in Organizations: why storytelling is transforming 21st-century organizations and management*, authors John S. Brown, et al., address storytelling or narrative in theme-based chapters. The topics addressed such as *narrative as knowledge medium* and *narrative as a tool for change* are illuminated in story. Each chapter contains a story typically featuring the writer as the protagonist demonstrating how story created success in his or her business life. It is interesting to note that this group of writers includes a historian, a scientist, an economist, and a lawyer. This diverse background allows for the examples in each chapter to come from a buffet of workplaces across disparate industries. Most interesting stories in this book tend to be about Stephen Denning's work at the World Bank. Like Simmons and Wortmann, these writers provide a list of categories that stories fall into regardless of industry or the storyteller's purpose.

1. Stories about other people
2. Stories about the work itself
3. Stories about the organization
4. Stories about the past
5. Stories about the future
6. Stories about life

One caveat about this book and using it for research in the 21st century and beyond is the negativity expressed about new media particularly, electronic storytelling and telecommuting. It is odd that in 2005 people in leadership roles could not see the value in using new media to achieve all the goals of the organization.

In addition to detailing the types of stories common to all businesses the writers focus on the attributes of story as elements that occur in all stories regardless of field or storytellers goal.

1. Stories endure
2. Stories are salient
3. Stories explain

An important element of storytelling in organizations is the assertion that the importance of storytelling grows as the amount of knowledge and information in organizations and in society grows. The writers point out that some stories are used to transfer social knowledge and some stories are told by artifacts or are told about artifacts. Discussion of knowledge culminates in the idea that many organizations while in business to do one thing have succeeded because they become knowledge organizations; they've made knowledge and information essential components of their business. This important assertion in the book comes specifically from Denning's work at the World Bank and telling through story the transition the organization went through as it grew from one that protected its information and data from other organizations to one that intentionally shared its

knowledge and information with other organizations as a part of its business practice in a transition that in effect saved the World Bank from bankruptcy and extinction.

The explanation for why storytelling works so well as a means of sharing knowledge inside and outside of the organization comes in the final chapter in a very extensive long list important points of the list are that while storytelling is free it also allows for communicating naturally, collaboratively, persuasively, and holistically. Mirroring Wortmann's emphasis on context, Denning, and Brown, et al., also assert that story communicates in context and with context which allows for more accurate knowledge transfer. They also detail storytelling as a means of communication that is intuitive and entertaining and that flies under the radar of the organization. These writers state that storytelling can change values and attitudes through a process they call double-loop learning. Godin and Wortmann credit story with the same power though they refer to it as unlearning which involves helping audiences forget what they think they know and open their minds to something new and even contradictory.

Storytelling in Organizations includes a discussion noticeably missing from the other works and that is an address of the enemies of storytelling or those who would disagree with the assertions made in this book namely Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes.

Seth Godin's provocatively titled book *All Marketers are Liars* is the least compelling and most self-serving of the books read for this project. It opens with a bold introduction to the importance of story, "make no mistake... Either you are going to tell stories that spread, or you will become irrelevant" (150). Godin's focus differs from previously discussed works in that it is emphasizing telling stories to consumers not to followers in an organization and not to business partners but to customers to get them to buy a product. He highlights the ability of story to take advantage of what the audience already believes to be true or expects to be true and to reinforce that in a way that encourages the audience to purchase a product or service. He readily admits that what

consumers believe to be true based on their own values and the story they are told often flies in the face of scientific proof.

Godin tells two stories, one about wine glasses made by an artisan glassblower and the other about granola to illustrate his point. Because of the storytelling skill of the glassblower and what wine enthusiasts expect to be true, people drinking from glasses made by the glassblower believe the wine, scotch, or espresso tastes better, but double-blind testing done by a third party proved that a one-dollar glass and a \$20 glass had no impact at all on the taste of wine. Despite irrefutable scientific evidence that the glass does not improve the taste of the beverage, the glassblower sells millions of dollars' worth of glasses each year. Granola is not a healthy snack, but consumers believe it is healthy. They have treated it as if it were healthy eating it on hikes in the woods, on camping trips, and mixed into yogurt for breakfast at a spa for decades. Marketers seized on this belief and began portraying granola as a healthy snack because it fit into the world view of the consumer. This second example supports Godin's admission that the title of his book is misleading. It isn't marketers who are liars; rather, it is consumers who lie to themselves. Marketers who hope to be successful must use those lies as part of their effective storytelling. In other words, it isn't the glass that improves the taste of the wine, it is a combination of the glassmaker's narrative and the consumers' beliefs.

Despite the title of the book referring to marketers as liars, Godin's list of important elements of a story begins with the importance of the story being true. He defines true as consistent and authentic. In addition to being true, great stories according to Godin, must:

1. make a promise
2. be trusted
3. be subtle
4. happen fast

5. appeal to the senses
6. be aimed at a specific audience
7. never contradict themselves
8. agree with the target audience's worldview

Godin doesn't discuss Consumer Storytelling Theory, but his work is certainly related to the psychological explanations for why storytelling is effective at connecting potential consumers and brands. The literature strongly suggests that understanding consumer psychology requires understanding story and storytelling (Holt 2004) as people think in story or narratively rather than in terms of persuasion or according to a particular paradigm (Hiltunen 2002; McKee 2003). Ari Hiltunen in *Aristotle in Hollywood: The anatomy of successful storytelling* (2002) and Douglas Holt in *What becomes an icon most?* (2003) describe human memory as episodic so that the human mind doesn't recall facts in isolation, but episodes or stories complete with context, conflict, and resolution. Hiltunen further asserts that retrieving and reliving the stories that we call memories is cathartic and results in what Aristotle termed "proper pleasure". Holt on the other hand credits the narrative nature of human memory with the experience of Jungian archetypes. In *Building Brands and Believers: How to connect with consumers using archetypes*, Kent Wertime argues that certain products or brands serve as props that allow consumers to act out Jungian archetypes. For instance, a brand of jeans may have as its corporate identity *rebel* so the consumer who buys this product is living the outlaw archetype through the product even though the consumer is a 32-year-old elementary school teacher or a 45-year-old accountant. This is only possible because of all the stories that perpetuate this archetype as something inherent to humans rather than a character created by humans.

Educational Technology

In this section, I will review literature related to educational technology which I will abbreviate ed-tech, a term I have borrowed from Escueta, et al., meant to refer to a subset of information and communications technology (ICT) that “aims to improve education” (10). Being aware of the research in this area is important as it speaks to the space left open for my proposed intervention, it sheds light on important lessons educators and administrators should learn regarding technology in the classroom, and when reviewed and analyzed, it can direct decision makers who have spent 8 billion dollars on PreK – 12 ed-tech as of 2016 (The Software & Information Industry Association). Two points are worth making here. First, the students using technology in classrooms for 12-14 years become the college students at the center of this project. Second, the amount of money spent to bring ed-tech into classrooms is important and somewhat surprising given the speed at which technology is brought to market. Eight billion dollars is a significant amount of money even when the spending is research driven and the desired results have been achieved consistently in controlled settings and uncontrolled environments, but researchers, educators, and other experts do not agree about the which ed-tech is most helpful and in which situations or for what group of students (Molnar 2017).

A variety of research has been done to test the consequences of increasing access to computers at home or in an education setting (Fairlie and Kalil 2017, Fairlie and Robinson 2013, Malamud and Pop-Eleches 2011, Goolsbee and Guryan 2006). The experiments resulted in more time spent on a computer and less time spent waiting to access one, but at the K-12 level, neither positive nor negative influence on learning was supported by the research which was conducted in the US, England, Romania, and The Netherlands. In fact, recent research strongly suggests that educators are guilty of being so enamored of new technology that we use it without analysis before or reflection after. Not only does technology not always help, it can hinder student learning (Escueta, et al.).

Software packages meant to deliver subject content have been popular since the 1990s, and the demand for and use of computer assistant learning products has grown so that thousands of companies now produce these, and millions of people at schools, colleges, and businesses use them daily. It is important to review the literature on this to ensure that choices are made based on fact not unsupported preferences and intuition. Most of the recent research on computer aided learning has focused on software that allows the user to practice a specific skill such as conjugating verbs in a target language or solving equations using a given formula or method. For instance, Barrow, et al. (2009) and Beal, et al. (2013) found that when middle and high school students were chosen at random to learn algebra skills using a computer aided learning program, the students using the program scored higher on class specific post tests and on a standardized test administered by the state than the students who learned and practiced the same algebra skills without the computer-based learning software. No theory explains this yet, but the relationship between this type of improvement is supported by some research and treated as fact by educators and administrators.

That technology in classrooms is so popular because of wide held beliefs in the power of technology and because of the desire to be innovative and progressive is troubling yet relevant because this project proposes testing the use of not just a technology in the form of hardware or software but the use of technology to promote analytical and creative thinking, writing, and creating. This work is needed as presented elsewhere in this dissertation, students, even Digital Natives, are not arriving on college campuses with sophisticated technology skills that allow them to use technology to learn in more effective ways or that allow them to use the course content innovatively.

Storytelling, Digital Narrative, and Transmedia Narrative

In this section, I define oral, written, and digital story. I address the history of oral storytelling which is as old as people since we have always told stories. Some of our ancestors didn't have the

wheel or fire, but they all told stories. An important element of this chapter is the critique of image as story. Despite the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words, words are needed for story. I have used examples from an historical archive and from contemporary advertising to show how images can create a PR crisis when used as the entire story or when used to communicate symbolically. This chapter helps answer my primary research question because it demonstrates the gap between those who can use the tools in a vacuum and those who are literate and know that using the tools to create a story means considering history, current social issues, politics, and the impact that an image has or doesn't have based on audience expectation, knowledge, and filters. Finally, this chapter explains the difference between content and story, terms that are used interchangeably by marketers, advertisers, and others in business. Not all content is story. Content marketing is effective and worthy of study, but it is not story and addressing the difference is important in this paper as students need to learn to make this distinction when consuming and producing work in the classroom and the workplace especially since so many of them are used to consuming information in flashes, on multiple webpages while listening to music on their smartphones. They consume so many tiny chunks of info void of context and with no true beginning, middle, and end due to their expectations that information must grab their very divided attention in a fraction of a second and must prove useful or entertaining at first glance or they move on. Introducing narrative as a process and a product teaches students an academic theory and practice while also increasing engagement and perceived relevance.

Oral Tradition: Story is everything. It always has been. Stories promote ideas, organize information, and preserve history. As much as the photograph became a means of proof of events both personal and historic, the idea that a picture is worth a thousand words cannot be expressed without words (Ong). An image can be misleading or incomplete while story can be as detailed as the storyteller wishes or as the audience demands.

The problem of image as evidence: Why we need story in the visual turn

The public's fascination with Sherlock Holmes has resulted, 132 years after the character's debut, in two successful movies starring Robert Downey Jr, an American television show with a female Asian American Watson, and an excellent BBC series starring Benedict Cumberbatch as a 21st century Sherlock who uses text messages to communicate with Watson and is embarrassed that in the one photo of him published in a newspaper, he is wearing a deerstalker cap. Holmes' long life can be attributed to audiences' respect for the character's ability to see the particulars of a situation as if he were reviewing a photograph.

It is no coincidence that Holmes' seemingly superhuman ability brings to mind a photograph as these artifacts, whether personal, professional, or historic are evidence; they give us proof of events and relationships that we can return to over and over. Photographic evidence serves multiple purposes. Because of photos we need not trust our memories to construct our childhoods or our family gatherings. And, because of photographs we don't have to rely on the words of others to construct the broader past.

It is easy to treat historic events as more real when photos of the event exist. Despite the fact that the majority of history as we know it happened before the invention of photography, we still treat historic images as sacred, as proof that a war, natural disaster, or presidential victory happened as a monument to the people affected. Given the reverence with which we treat historic photographs, I am interested in investigating via one image whether or not the Conjectural Paradigm (Ginzburg) can be used to gain knowledge from or reveal truths about a photograph documenting the Holocaust. Perhaps, a better way to think about this question is whether applying this or any logic results in a reading that coincides with what we know about the event in general or about the photograph in particular. Unlike an unsolved crime, an event like the Holocaust has been studied, and thanks to archivists, scholars, and survivors we have information about the context of many

photographs that document this atrocity. Will reading the image as a whole result in a different understanding of the moment represented? Will reading the particulars of the image as if diagnosing an illness or predicting crop growth contradict what is known about the event represented in the image? Why does this matter?



Figure 1. Photograph #26543
Courtesy of The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

If read as one object rather than as pieces, the photo of Jews being removed from the Warsaw Ghetto (Figure 1) is clearly an image of one group's power over another. Is that all that an audience should take from this image? Or, should readers notice the woman at the front of the crowd looking over her shoulder? Noticing this piece of the image allows one to consider her concerns, the guard and his gun pointed toward the boy, perhaps, or someone who should be in the queue and is not. The importance of documenting such a moment, at least many years afterward, is to make sure that history doesn't repeat itself, that it isn't allowed to repeat itself. This requires that viewers connect with or identify with the people in the image, with the emotions in the image. There are two children in the photo who are looking at the camera from different vantage points. The girl peeking from behind the line of adults looks into the camera and returns the photographer's gaze. She isn't smiling or crying, but her fear is evident. Does our understanding of the image of the girl

change if we know that the photographer was documenting a Nazi success? Do we miss out on an accurate reading of the photo if we are unaware that his image was part of a report from Nazi soldiers to their commanding officers? The original caption for this photo is “Pulled from the Bunkers by Force.” How does this knowledge, this text-based information, change the way we read the image? I am not sure that it does, but I would suggest that it adds a layer to the story that viewers construct around the image.

The boy in the foreground, the most well-known piece of the image, and the piece never cropped out of the image, is the little boy in the cap standing with arms raised at the front of the photo. He is frozen in youth, in fear, and in innocence. These three particulars within the larger image communicate the more complete message of fear and oppression and domination rightfully associated with the Holocaust. This reading of the image certainly captures the symbols of the Holocaust and supports the reason that images of such victimization are needed; they speak for the victims who cannot speak for themselves.

There is a problem with this reading of the image though; there is a story of strength and power that cannot be seen in the photograph. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, this photograph was taken after an uprising from April 19 to May 16, 1943. The Jews in The Warsaw Ghetto refused to be transported; they hid for 20 days and left only after the headquarters of their leaders were set on fire and the leaders killed. This act of resistance is as important a part of the story as the fear in the children’s faces, but this element cannot be read in the photo regardless of the logic or methodology used. This is not to suggest that captions are the only thing standing between photographs being meaningful and being captured coincidences, as Walter Benjamin asserts, but it does imply that there is no one way to reason with or to interpret an image, especially a historical one. History is too complex to be explained accurately by or proven with one image as we capture and view them now. Story is the answer to this complexity. Story aloud, written,

combined with images captures and retells a representation of the event that is much more complete than the moment captured in a photograph no matter how artistic, emotional, or symbolic the image may be.

A second problem with images lies in the unpredictable ways that viewers respond. Dove soap learned this lesson after posting an ad on Facebook that showed a woman with brown skin removing her shirt to reveal a white woman (Figure 2). Viewers saw the ad as racist implying that brown skin is dirty and white skin is clean. The white skinned woman in the ad takes off her shirt to reveal another woman of color, but this image was ignored by angry viewers and was not included in the screen shot circulated on social media after the ad was removed by Unilever.

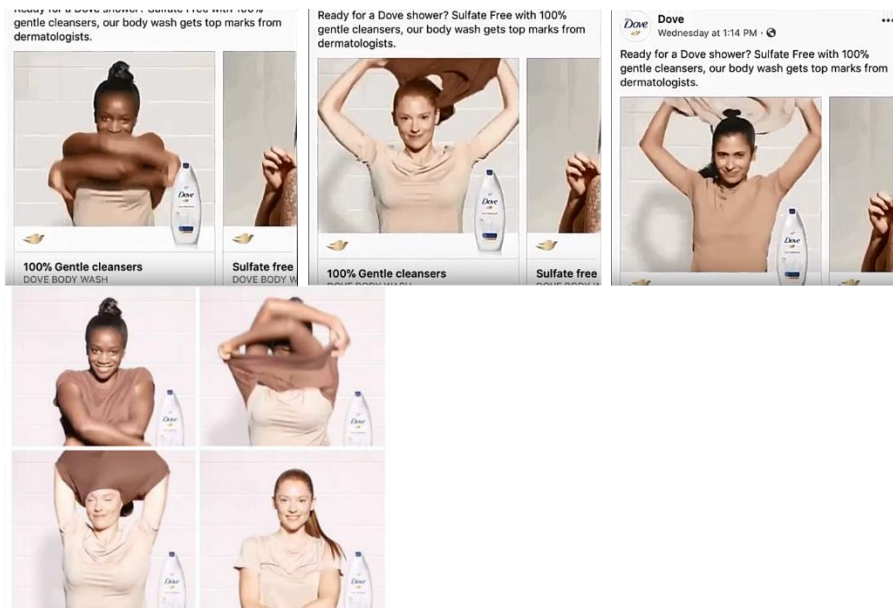


Figure 2. Dove ad from Facebook

Advertising is not the only discipline that has experienced the trouble caused by images either without a story or that overpower the story so that the intent is lost. September 11th may be the most photographed tragedy in history, and most of the photos documenting the day's horrible events have been accepted as necessary visual representations of the historic day. But, the images of the people jumping from the Towers to escape smoke and flame were not among these (Figure 3).

By September 13th newspaper editors were apologizing to an outraged public for exploiting these victims and for stripping them of their dignity and privacy (Cauchon and Moore). This is a good point at which to ask if the journalists obligation to report the events as they are outweighs the photographer's, editor's, and publisher's duty to treat no one as a means to an end or in this case as a way to sell more newspapers.



Figure 3. Falling Man
Credit: AP Photo/Richard Drew Taken September 11, 2001

To investigate why the public would view these images alone as “leering pornography” (Junod), I will use Mitchell’s assertions on Ekphrasis and his concluding questions, as well as Peterson’s Cognitive Approach, and McCloud’s vocabulary, particularly Abstraction, Extension, Identification. Mitchell tells the story of two radio announcers trying to describe photos to listeners to demonstrate that “words can site but not sight” (152), while his point is that words cannot replace or do justice to images, this same concept can explain the visceral response that viewers had to the

images of 9/11 jumpers. If words could be used to describe the images, the events, or the feelings caused by either, then the images would not be as shocking, as traumatic, or as enraging as these images that defied words. This speaks to Mitchell's "why are we so anxious about representation" (420). Representations like the 9/11 "Falling Man" image rob us of a basic ability that separates us from animals, the ability to tell stories as a means of understanding an event, as a way of process the complex and the tragic, and as a means of making sense of the chaos that is often part of life. This and other *jumper* images also create anxiety because they present a weakness that scares viewers without providing the resolution and denouement that make narrative satisfying and useful. The person in the jumper photo experiences a tragic resolution but that resolution isn't represented in the image and rather than helping viewers create and process meaning, it serves as a reminder of the meaningless suffering and loss experienced on 9/11. Story does this both fiction and nonfiction, between exposition and dialogue, the entire story is told and while the outcome may be as tragic, story cannot after all turn back time, stopping the planes or leading the people out of The Towers, it can provide a cathartic address of the day's events and it can honor those hurt or killed on that day. For instance, Jonathan Safran Foer's 2005 novel is set very soon after the attacks and tells the story of a child whose father died in one of The Towers. While the subject matter is tragic, and the tragedy is a required piece of the narrative, there is also a great deal of hope as the protagonist, nine-year-old Oskar Schell, tries to solve a mystery he thinks was left for him by his father. The kindness the characters show the child once they know his story is also a narrative strategy that makes the horror at the heart of the story, a boy missing his father and living with the fact that he didn't answer the phone when his father called for the last time, more digestible. The story of a person with a name and face, one who is affected by the conflict and invested in the resolution allows the reader to experience the tragedy without being victimized by it. Proof of this can be seen at the end of the

novel which is formatted as a flip book with an image inspired by a jumper photo but the person in the cartoon falls up.

In the face of tragedy, Americans want images of strength, bravery, and heroism, or of suffering that demonstrates true helplessness, a blameless victim. Photos of people jumping show victims, of course, but victims who made a choice that many people cannot understand and that many religions condemn, regardless of circumstance. Clearly this interpretation of the impact these photographs have is viewer-centric, which suggests that Peterson's Cognitive Method may be a way to make sense of images that capture a moment which does not make sense, an event that does not make sense, and deaths that do not make sense. Despite the challenge inherent in viewing these photographs, a Cognitive Method approach may help viewers read these images for their relevance to a community traumatized by the event depicted.

One may still question why these photos, in particular cause anxiety, evoke public outrage, and require a different means of viewing than images of other tragedies, such as a Tsunami in Japan or The Holocaust. McCloud's abstraction, extension, and identification can be used to explain the difference in the photos and in the public's reaction to the photos. McCloud asserts that abstraction happens when artists focus on specific details in order to strip the object in the image to its basic meaning (30).

In the 9/11 jumper photos, there are no faces, the subjects of the images are clearly human bodies, but without faces, without eye contact via the camera, without frowns or smiles the subjects are just that *bodies* not beings. McCloud argues that humans are a self-centered race (32), who see faces everywhere, and so having faces in photos of even the most infamous example of inhumanity makes the images easier to process and to accept as necessary artifacts documenting life and death. Faces cannot be seen in the jumper photos; the images move beyond abstract and rob the person of his or her face. This is most disconcerting to a species that can see faces on electrical outlets and

automobile frames. Not being able to see a face on what is obviously a person provokes feelings that cannot be expressed in words, returning the issue to Mitchell's Ekphrasis.

While McCloud's definition of extension and identity are applied to inanimate objects that become part of people's bodies and then identities, I would suggest that people are as likely to extend their beliefs, stereotypes, and schema into photos and to use this process to identify with the people in the photo. It does not take much time or imagination to transform a prisoner in the Holocaust photo into one's father, favorite uncle, or respected teacher. By extending one's preconceived notions about people into these images, much like the physiognomies described in Ray, the viewer extends him or herself, into the photo. This identification allows viewers to feel sympathy for the subjects, and an understanding, even if rudimentary or imagined, of the situation. In other words, some images allow for narrativizing the event or moment represented. The 9/11 images of people jumping from The Towers however do not allow viewers to extend their schema for brother, mother, or other loved one into the image as it is impossible to determine age, race, nationality from the photographs. Lack of age, race, and nationality reinforces the feelings prompted by the lack of a visible face further depriving the subject of his or her human identity while preventing the viewer from making the conceptual connection that according to McCloud explains the human ability to accept and engage with images.

Digital

The stories on StoryCorps work well as digital narratives in both audio and visual format for several reasons. In most of the narratives, an interview is actually taking place, and because the interviewee and interviewer are closely connected to one another, there is an appealing sense of intimacy, as if the listener or viewer is being included in a secret or a private conversation over Sunday dinner. The stories are not altered, so the speaker's voice, emotions, and pauses, protect the authenticity of each narrative, preventing what Fulton describes as the hyperbole of television

(Fulton 1). By avoiding the overly determined and overly manipulated narratives in television, movies, and perhaps most often advertising, these stories exploit the power of digital stories to evoke emotion that is genuine, to create connections that have a lasting impression on participants and audiences, and to preserve and build individual and national identity. As creators of identity, the stories play a role in reinforcing some dominant ideology in US culture, but they do so in a less contrived way than other forms of media.



Figure 4. Q and A
(www.npr.org/series/storycorps)

While many of the stories can be heard online and on National Public Radio, others have been turned into animated shorts. The storyteller's voices have been used and the stories have not been edited, so they remain the original authentic narratives. The animated shorts add a layer to these digital stories by exploiting the power of visuals to engage viewers in both of the narrative, what is told, and narration, the act of telling a story (Genette). Two particularly powerful examples of this are "Q and A" and "John and Joe." In "Q and A" an autistic boy interviews his mother about everything from her thoughts on a world without animals to the differences between him and his sister (Figure 4). He asks bluntly if he has met her expectations of what a son should be. Using a

simple interview format to create a narrative about family ties, insecurities, and uncertainties is brilliant, and doing this as digital media rather than a written question and answer makes the story more poignant, as the child's voice is part of the story; the mother's nervous laughter is a part of the story. These elements are captured in audio in a way that doesn't translate to old print media. "Q and A" is drawn simply. It is easy for any parent to imagine herself in this story answering, sometimes funny and other times difficult, questions honestly yet kindly. "Joe and John" addresses a small individual narrative that is part of a much larger American narrative (Figure 5). The storyteller, Joe Vigiano, Sr. lost both sons, his only children on September 11th, 2001. In an unmistakable New York accent, he tells without embellishment the events that lead one son to become a NYPD officer and the other to follow in Joe Sr.'s footsteps and become a NY firefighter. Because he speaks so plainly, the story is more poignant than if this had been written down, edited and revised. This important element would be lost without Vigiano's own voice telling the story, not just his own words, which print media would allow for, but his voice, his pronunciations, his inflections create as much of the emotion in the narrative as the words, if not more. Claude Levi-Strauss would disagree with my emphasis on the speaker's voice as this is "the long-supported error that a sound may possess a certain affinity with a meaning" (429) but digital stories do not necessarily support the theories or beliefs that informed our understanding of text when all text was written and analog.

The animation style used to tell this story of loss without regret is reminiscent of Saturday morning cartoons in the 70's. Using a retro style in a new media artifact creates a balance between the two media and prevents a somber story from being told through flashy visuals. Once again, the creators of these narratives use the power of digital media to tell a compelling story rather than to create a story that uses the bells and whistle available to influence viewers.



Figure 5. John and Joe
(www.npr.com/series/storycorps)

Finally, these narratives are part of digital media or Web 2.0 because they democratize and build a community. Anyone can archive an interview or a story, and the stories are shared via online screenings. Viewers, participants, and archivists communicate through Twitter making these stories a part of a huge social network of people who would not otherwise work together, know one another, or share stories. They also work as texts for structural analysis as one strength of structuralism is that anything can be textual and analyzed in the way we used to think of only as a means of examining literary works.

Transmedia

The television shows and movies that typically exemplify transmedia entertainment, as Henry Jenkins describes it, are clearly in the sci-fi and fantasy genre, both classics and modern franchises, namely *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Lost*, and *True Blood*. This makes sense as it has been the sci-fi fan boys who have written alternative endings and prequels for their favorite programs and characters long before googol was spelled Google and was something other than a one with a hundred zeros behind it. These are the fans who are willing to attend conferences, dress in costumes, and spend money on collectibles related to their favorite time travel or space exploration stories.

Despite the long history between sci-fi/fantasy fans and the elements we now call transmedia storytelling, the strongest evidence that transmedia storytelling is a permanent part of the entertainment landscape may be found in the most unlikely story, the cozy cop dramedy *Castle* which aired on ABC until 2016. While I deem this unlikely because of the stark contrast between sci-fi and this program, it also makes sense that this fuller richer experience that transmedia storytelling provides would spread to other genres of TV because of the importance of narrative in general and the power of television to “speak back” and to “create reality in the form of parody” (Fulton). Audiences use and contribute to the reality and the hyperbole as part of the escape from the mundane that television provides.

The premise of the show is that a successful writer, the titular character Richard Castle, uses his connections in the New York Mayor’s office to gain access to a division of the NYPD. The lead detective, Kate Beckett, is Castle’s inspiration for Nikki Heat the protagonist of several crime novels. While Beckett and her small team of detectives use their police training to solve crimes, novelist Castle uses his imagination and understanding of plot and character to assist.

Spreadability vs. Drillability and Worldbuilding

Henry Jenkins provides seven core concepts of transmedia narrative (2009). One is the contrast between spreadability and drillability. This contrast however does not mean that spreadability and drillability are mutually exclusive. Fans of *Castle*, for instance, can spread or share the story in a number of ways. Tweeting during the show using #castle allows fans to compare thoughts as well as to attract new viewers (Figure 6). A 2012 campaign called on fans to Tweet at the start of the first episode of the season in order to cause *Castle* to trend on Twitter (ABC.com). Fans combined the two main characters’ names Beckett and Castle and created a #Caskett for those invested in the relationship component of the show.

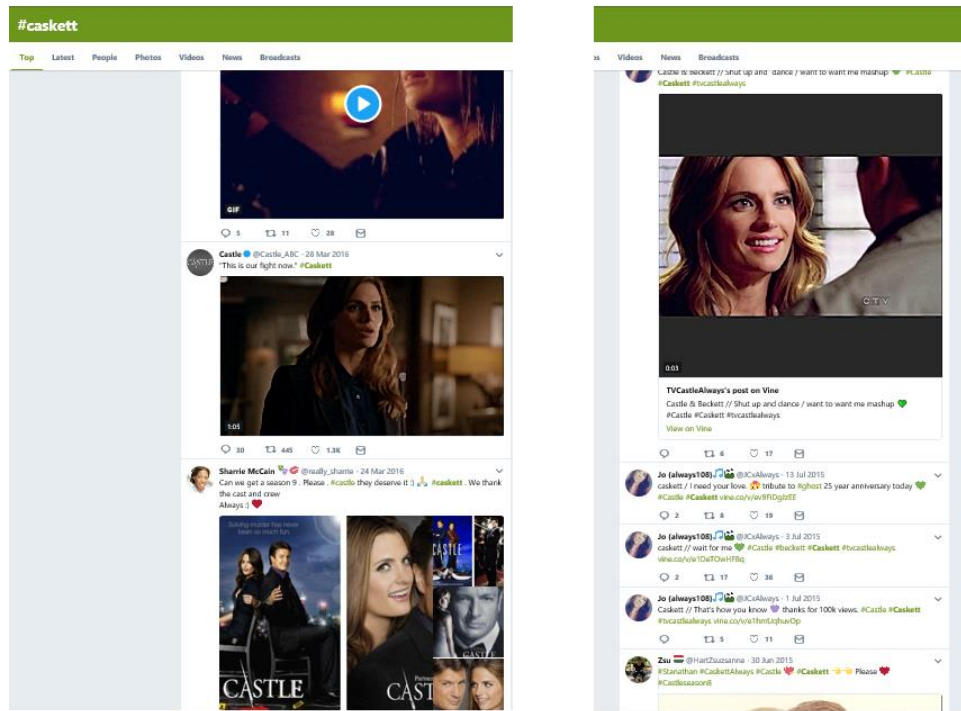


Figure 6. Castle Twitter feed

The fictional author, Richard Castle, has an author's page that is indistinguishable from the websites maintained by real authors in order to promote their books and interact with fans (Figure 7). On the author's site, fans can share what they love, ask questions of Richard Castle, and enjoy inside jokes that only fans can understand. Not only does this demonstrate spreadability, this type of crossover site supports worldbuilding that Jenkins credits with providing a "richer depiction of the world in which the narrative plays out" (95). The author's site adds richness to the world of Castle and Beckett through shared recipes from Castle's fictional mother played by Susan Sullivan, and by allowing Castle to advise writers who pose questions. His replies always reveal elements of his character, life, and work history that are not addressed on the television show. These exchanges then not only build the world of the narrative; they allow viewers to drill deeper into a story that has captivated them in one medium via another medium.



Figure 7. Richard Castle's Author Page

What does Spreadability vs. Drillability and Worldbuilding look like when teaching digital storytelling in a composition course? This element of transmedia storytelling can allow students to drill deeper into a character in a fictional work who is only presented superficially. A student concerned for instance with the ways that women or people of color are represented or underrepresented on television could tell the story from a television show from the point of view of a character who is a person of color or female. While writing this character's story, the student has to address the role that construct of gender and the role various institutions play in dividing populations based on race or ethnicity. Telling a well-known story from another character's perspective invites or even requires that politics, religion, and societal norms and expectations past and present be addressed sometimes overtly and sometimes subtly.

Seriality and Performance

Castle episodes demonstrate seriality in that while each episode typically ends with a crime being solved and a bad guy being arrested which makes it procedural or would if that described the show completely; there is also a larger story arch that continues throughout the season. In season one, the longer story involved Beckett investigating her mother's murder, while in season two the

story that ran across episodes was the hunt for the sniper who shot people at random across New York and ended his spree by shooting Kate Beckett. The use of seriality is successful in this program as regular viewers get the immediate gratification of the smaller crime solved in one episode and the longer drawn out pleasure of watching another plot build all season and climax in the finale.

Performance, or audience members contributing to the story, is often in the form of fan literature or fan fiction on a blog. Castle's marketers have gone beyond this and are using Twitter to invite fans to contribute work to the franchise. Recently, fans were invited to participate in a Twitter based contest, #murderhewrote. The goal is to create an original poster for Richard Castle's newest book. Twitter users created posters using images of Beckett and Castle and the book's title, and then uploaded these to Twitter (Figure 8). There are hundreds of entries posted on Pinterest as well.

Integrating performance this way creates a connection between fans and the story and an investment in the story that does not happen through viewing alone. Such a richness and deep level of participation also speak to Singer's (2004) work with narrative and identity. Playing an active role, being a contributor rather than a passive viewer contributes to one element of a fan's identity and connects each person to other fans who participate in the performance.

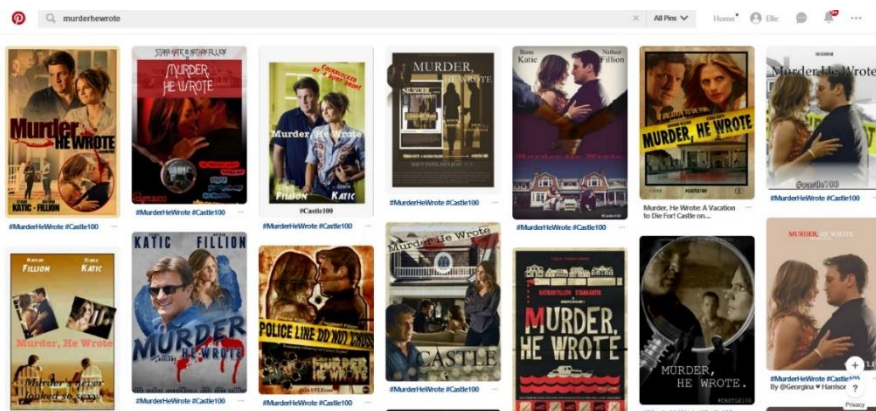


Figure 8. #murderhewrote entries on Pinterest.com

Continuity vs. Multiplicity

The *Castle* franchise demonstrates the use of continuity rather than multiplicity. In all elements of the narrative whether TV show, books written by the fictional author, blog posts, and Twitter feeds, the characters are human beings living and working in New York. Becket and Castle aren't magically transported to Victorian England or to a spaceship headed for Mars. This works for the narrative as it is realistic fiction, not fantasy or science fiction and the fans appreciate the realistic world in which the story is set. The one what-if (Bates) is merely what if a writer could become a member of an investigative team. It seems unlikely that this would happen, but it does speak to the real privilege afforded to people with money, specifically to men with money who are friends with other men with money and/or power. In this case, the titular character has money because of his best-selling novels and he is friends with the mayor of New York who tells the police department that Castle will be allowed to shadow the team as long as necessary, so he can research his next book.

What does Continuity vs. Multiplicity look like as online teaching practice? For the project I propose in the final chapter, continuity is the more appropriate element. Students are asked to solve a real-world problem relevant to them. My logic for this is that this work is for a composition course rather than a creative writing class. Cognitive psychologists argue that continuity is important because the real-world relevance translates to ability to see the problem and motivation to find a solution (Ornstein and Hunkins). Recent research in video game play disputes this idea and suggests that even in instances of multiplicity, people can be quite motivated to solve problems, even obviously fictional ones. Video games and the people who play them are the brunt of many jokes in this society. The stereotype of the socially awkward loner video gamer living in the basement has quickly become a cliché and a stock character. The research though paints a different picture of this group, and that picture relates to the way that gamers use new media to communicate with one

another. Jane McGonigal's research of gamers playing *World of Warcraft* resulted in noteworthy and surprising statistics. First, to date, gamers have spent more than 5 million years solving the problems of an imaginary world. Second, in a country like The United States, serious gamers spend a little more than 10,000 hours playing video games by the time they are 21 years old. Malcolm Gladwell's research strongly suggests that if someone spends 10,000 hours doing something in the first 21 years of life, he or she will be an expert. We often call these people prodigies because we are unaware that they spent 10,000 hours on a golf or tennis court with a determined parent before finding themselves in the public eye. All of this begs the question, what are these gamers experts at? A few things actually, but what matters in a discussion of communication which is an essential objective of the first-year writing course is they are experts at building social networks. They communicate to build teams, to go on quests, to solve problems, and ultimately to win. All of that communication happens online using new media synchronously and asynchronously, so it is discounted by much of society and certainly by a large percentage of academics. McGonigal's call to action is an investigation of what these expert communicators could do with those network building and problem-solving skills in the real world if their expertise were valued and applied. Because this dissertation aims to bridge the divide between technology for consuming limited information or entertainment and participating fully by contributing to multiple discourse communities, by creating actively rather than consuming passively, and by interacting with the collective intelligence, work on the digital story will be treated as an important part of the 10,000 hours of practice needed to be expert users.

Even Birkerts might take comfort in this scenario and might see in it hope that society as a whole is not getting dumber and less inquisitive and less capable of navigating a complex and nuanced text. I propose that that working on a digital story project to solve a problem requires

Perhaps what video game research demonstrates beyond changes in communication and collaboration due to new media is a change in what should be included in the term *text*. While novels, despite being criticized as arrogant and middle class (Coover), can share the term *text* with blogs and video games according to McGonigal's study making these and artifacts like them appropriate for study and creation in a first-year composition course.

Immersion vs. Extractability and Subjectivity

The only elements of Jenkins' definition of transmedia narrative not apparent in *Castle* are Immersion and Subjectivity. There is no amusement park or video game based on the Castle TV show, and for now, an episode has not been written from the point of view of other characters. One can however purchase books written by a mystery writer using the pen name Richard Castle. The writing is less than sophisticated which is problematic given the TV character's wit, knowledge of history, and keen understanding of effective storytelling.

Castle ended on May 16, 2016 after eight seasons. The ninth season was to feature Richard Castle solving crimes after the death of Kate Beckett. Show runners made this change for financial reasons as cutting actresses Stana Katic and Tamala Jones commanded large salaries. Executives assumed it was better to lose half of Caskett but keep the show on the air. Fans disagreed. The push back from viewers on social media fell into two groups. One group was opposed to the cutting of two actresses because of the statement this made about women being dispensable. Thinking that the show could be the same and could achieve the same success without the two female leads discounted the value the two women brought to the program. It said, we think the show loses nothing if the two of you are gone. Fans also read this as punishment for doing well. The other problem fans had with this plan for a Beckett-less *Castle* was the affect this would have on the story. Fans were invested not in a rich bored writer joining the NYPD on cases and few could relate to a

female detective working in a male dominated force while searching for her mother's murderer. Fans did however respond to the chemistry between two people who obviously shared an attraction but could not admit to the attraction much less act on it. For fans of the show, the only satisfying story was one that included the relationship between the two characters. Fans would not accept Castle working without Beckett in an ongoing story nor would they accept an ending that left the characters separated by death.

The outrage, the threats of boycott, the overwhelming sympathy for Katic and Jones and condemnation of show writers, producers, and male actor Nathan Fillion ultimately pushed the decision-makers to end the show and to give the characters a happy ending. While the result was a rushed episode that few liked, it did quiet the masses. For students in a composition course, this is a great lesson in the power of collaboration to effect change and to protect those we care about using words, images, and new media. Students creating a problem-solving digital story should aspire to use story and digital media to do the same in other contexts.

Content Marketing: It's all content but it isn't all story

Content marketing and storytelling occupy the same space in a great many blogs, e-books, and videos; but, they are not the same thing and to use story to refer to content is to misuse the word and to cloud the meaning of story. This erroneous use of story when one means content also ignores the fact that story is a kind of content but not all content is a story because not all content contains a narrative and a plot. Another problem caused by this misuse of the word story is that a productive discussion is based on common understanding and definition (Bal; Ong 11)

Content marketing (CM) is a powerful way to build a brand, create consumer interest, desire, and action, and to build an association between a brand and organization or product and the concepts chosen for their appeal and relevance to a target audience. This marketing strategy requires

a strong and dynamic presence across social media especially Instagram (image) and Facebook. The content provided in a CM campaign must address more than the product or service and often the product is a symbol of a lifestyle system or a defining trait that motivates viewers to engage in an activity, to change a behavior, or to embrace a movement. When content marketing is successful - consumers then are willing to buy a product that tethers them to other people who share their passion, their preferences, or their values.

It is no accident that social media site Instagram is so popular with businesses that excel at CM. The grid layout provides structure, visual appeal and creates the appearance of unity among images created by diverse users, the organization, and third parties such as advertisers and the media (Figure 9). The use of squares is rhetorical. While *be there or be square* would suggest that the square is dull, we also depend on three square meals and hope that every deal is a square one. We trust squares. But, it is noteworthy that each organization and individual chooses a profile image and that image is presented in a circle at the top of the page. The circle alludes to the human eye, the original lens, the sense that makes discussions like this one possible. Just as there is no visual without the eye, there could be no life on Earth without the sun, also represented by the circle. The use of grid, squares, and a circle may not be obvious to the average user of Instagram, but these associations and their importance impact people regardless of awareness and help explain another layer of the success of Content Marketing which differs from story but is a successful method of achieving awareness and loyalty from consumers who may find it easy to narrativize the images on Instagram or the user generated content on Facebook.

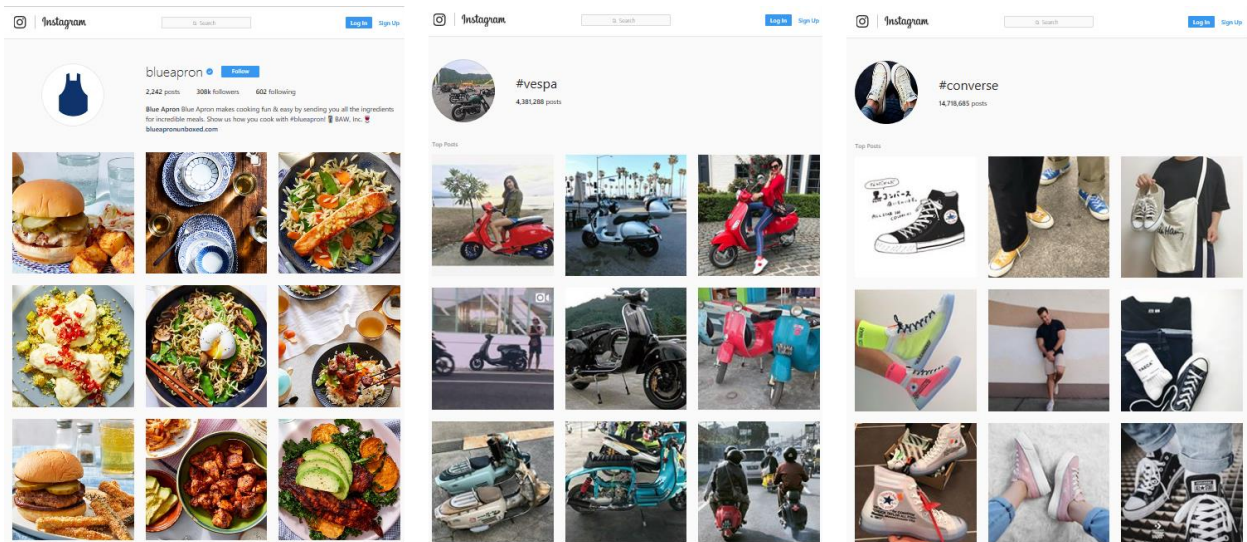


Figure 9. Instagram Content Blue Apron, Vespa, and Converse

The number of networks catering to foodies, the rise of and long-term success of celebrity chefs, and the prohibitive costs and health repercussions of eating takeaway regularly created the perfect environment for the start-up Blue Apron, a food delivery service that provides the fresh ingredients and instructions for preparing a meal at home.

Many businesses start during a perfect storm and still don't succeed or only experience mild success before plateauing. Blue Apron, on the other hand, grew 500% in a single year in great part because of their expert use of content marketing (Figure 10). Blue Apron's content marketing includes:

- Articles posted online before a recipe is released. The articles include history traditions and techniques associated with the recipe. A separate section provides educational articles that provide micro training complete with excellent images on tools needed in the kitchen, everyday ingredients, and how to achieve or avoid particular flavor profiles based on preferences.

- Beautiful photographs that display the food expertly plated but not so perfectly that the novice home cook would be intimidated before even trying the service.
- Blue Apron's Facebook page invites customers to share their own content namely photos of the meals they have created using the boxes of premeasured ingredients delivered by the organization -- consumer produced content serves two purposes for the organization. First, much of the consumer produced content is visual photos of meals they prepared photos of their families consuming the meals photos of them standing with pride next to the food they've cooked. Second this type of content creates a community. The subscribers who share this content connect with one another they engage in good-natured competition and they give each other tips on food preparation. (Mitchell and Lester)
- Content on the website, content included in the package of food delivered, and images uploaded by subscribers have fun as their common thread-- the content is not focused on persuading viewers to purchase the products rather it is focused on content that helps the potential customer and current customers see the product is something that will allow them to have fun and to be successful. These elements often include references to family or emotional events that the audience can relate to and connect with much in the way that readers connect to story, so the result is similar, but content marketing is just that, content not a story.

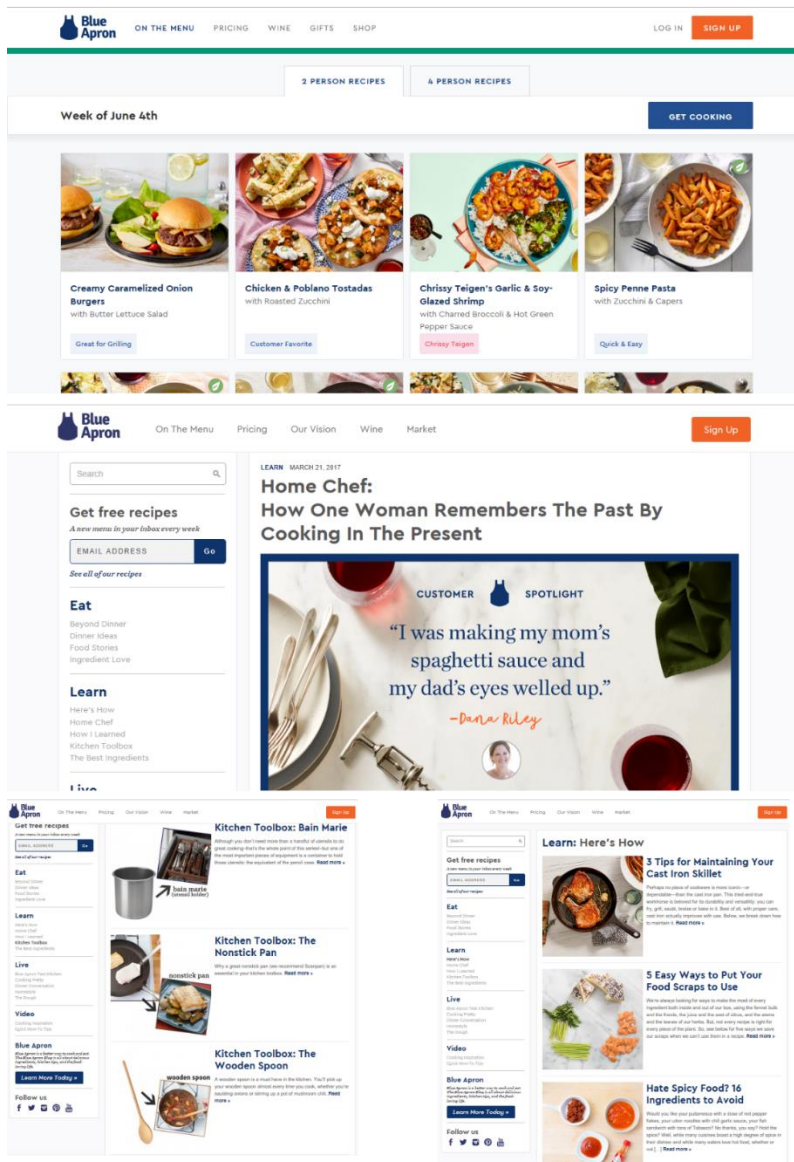


Figure 10. Blue Apron (www.instagram.com/blueapron)

All these elements of a content marketing campaign are effective, but they are not story. There is no beginning, middle, and end. No disruption or conflict occurs to unsettle the normal or to either contradict the dominant ideology or to perpetuate it. While marketers have used story as a synonym for content, a better way to think about content marketing is interactive or two-way communication between organization and consumer. Sometimes, content marketing is what is

needed rather than story. Customers want to be engaged with information about a product, to be inspired by the experiences of other customers, or to share photos of their own success using a product or enjoying the result of a service. While these examples of content when taken together in a short time are easily narrativized, they are not necessarily a narrative. Students are exposed to this method of communication and may see it as effective storytelling. The course I propose would show them the difference and help them learn why the differences matter.

CHAPTER THREE: NCTE RESOLUTIONS

In this chapter, I will name and discuss the position statements of the influential professional associations, The National Council of Teachers of English and The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). The stories used in this chapter demonstrate that a narrative commercial, a comic book, an annual report, and a television show can be used in teaching a first-year writing course while meeting the expectations and goals for this important class as determined by the NCTE and CCCC.

As the largest professional association for language arts teachers in The United States, The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) promotes research based best practices in teaching, course design, and faculty development. They achieve this goal through the resolution process which began in 1911 and is still the method used to voice The Council's stand on trends, controversies, and changes in the teaching of English. Each position statement supports the mission of the NCTE, "The Council promotes the development of literacy, the use of language to construct personal and public worlds and to achieve full participation in society, through the learning and teaching of English and the related arts and sciences of language." It is important to my work to note that literacy is not defined or limited by adjectives and "to achieve full participation in society" allows for the kind of writing for and creation of digital artefacts this dissertation proposes.

Guiding Principles. Sound Writing Instruction:

1. Emphasizes the rhetorical nature of writing
2. Considers the needs of real audiences
3. Recognizes writing as a social act
4. Enables students to analyze and practice with a variety of genres

5. Recognizes writing as iterative and complex
6. Depends upon frequent, timely, and context-specific feedback
7. Emphasizes relationships between writing and technologies
8. Supports learning, engagement, and critical thinking in courses across the curriculum

The analyses of a Coca-Cola commercial, a biographical/autobiographical comic book, an annual report, and a long-term narrative television show for story and narrative demonstrates that a variety of media can be used to teach the concepts relevant to narrative and story while aligning with the position statements from the NCTE above.

Research suggests that the human brain is wired for story because narratives help us make sense of the events and information that would otherwise be overwhelming. It stands to reason then that narrative ads would be effective at least in terms of engaging audiences bombarded by products and services. The research shows that this is true but more importantly, narrative ads are more effective forms of persuasion than non-narrative ads for several reasons. Narrative evokes an empathy response and when viewers feel empathetic (Deighton, et al.) they are more likely to be influenced by an ad. Furthermore, story causes what Brock and Green (2000) termed *transportation*, a flowlike state that viewers find pleasurable. Viewers experiencing transportation are more likely to have positive thoughts about the product and less likely to have negative thoughts (Brock and Green). Because actors in narrative commercials take on the role of character rather than spokesperson, viewers connect with these people and transfer that feeling of connectedness to the product. All of these thoughts about narrative ads matter for this project because ads are as ubiquitous as narrative; they are everywhere on television, billboards, the Internet, the radio making them one of the “prodigious variety of genres” Barthes wrote about in his oft cited “Introduction to Structural Analysis”. Barthes’ pronouncement that narrative is “simply there, like life itself” (79) is as

true in 2018 as it was in 1966 due in large part to marketing and its evolution from promoter of products based on product benefits and features to narratives complete with characters, plot, setting, and theme all playing out in just 60 to 90 seconds. While examples of story being used to mean mere content can be found, marketing in general has certainly been affected by the narrative turn (Hyvarinen 2006) which started with the Russian Formalists and informed Barthes, Todorov, and Genette's acceptance of narrative in many formats, media, and genres. Students in the freshman composition course proposed as part of this dissertation will be encouraged to create digital stories that are relevant to their research interests and both their academic and professional goals. Many will choose to create a story that sells a product, creates a brand, or supports the mission of an organization. It is my goal in this section to demonstrate the value of analyzing ads for story and for creating commercials that tell stories with words, actions, and/or images.

The Elevator

Aristotle declaring that plot is the most important element of narrative and that good plot has a beginning, middle, and end seems an oversimplification of what will become narrative theory. A closer reading though reveals that his argument is really for plot being intentional, organized, and complete which speaks to the complexity of narrative and the complications that arise when one considers how aesthetic choices and representation work with, through, and around each other to create plot.

When Aristotle defines beginning and ending for story as "A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it" he is doing more than providing definitions; rather, he is asserting that narrative or story is intentional. An intentional beginning and ending do not always

mimic the way events happen in life which is often messy and arbitrary and creates the need for story much of the time. A clear-cut beginning and ending also suggest Aristotle's understanding that audiences could determine what happened before based on the events described which Barthes refers to as narrative as a system of post hoc ergo propter hoc thinking. Audiences can assume the cause that occurred outside of the story if they are given the effect in the beginning. For example, in "The Elevator," a Coca-Cola commercial created by McCann Madrid for the Taste the Feeling campaign viewers see the opening shot of cameras held high and forward by people in a crowd. The shutters click, and the flashes burst on and off. It is clear from this opening that the paparazzi await a famous person whose photo they very much want to take. This assumption is confirmed in the next few seconds of film as a young man emerges from an SUV using sunglasses, hoodie, and baseball cap to hide his face. In a representation, this is a perfectly good place to begin a story. It is intriguing, viewers might wonder who the famous person is supposed to be or why his photo is so desirable. For many viewers, this figure evokes street artist Banksy, famous for keeping his identity a secret despite 20 years of painting and activism. Banksy has taken on mythological status and has been the inspiration for characters and storylines in television shows such as *Bones*, *White Collar*, and *Criminal Minds*.

Does the story of a reclusive artist begin in the chaos of fame in real life? Would it have begun years ago as the artist made a name for himself? Did it begin when a mentor warned him about the trappings of fame, the loss of privacy, the barrage of people willing to use a famous friend to achieve an agenda? In a representation, all of the history is not needed. In fact, in a representation, less yet stronger information is more helpful to readers or listeners seeking clarity. Cutting from the close-up shot of a reclusive famous person to the establishing shot of a hotel maid, a person who doesn't need to hide to be invisible to most of the people she encounters in a day is significant in that the long hallway is a metaphor for her long day of hard work. That she is small in

the image is also a part of the narrative in that her role is seen as small by society and the way she is treated may make her feel small.

The beginning of this narrative commercial focuses attention on paradigmatic themes presented as binaries such as rich versus poor, artist versus the help, famous versus invisible as part of the exposition. The final moment in this opening brings the two characters, side by side in the elevator backlit as the doors close creates disruption to the equilibrium created by separation of these characters based on socioeconomic status and careers as the two disparate characters meet in a confined space (Figure 11). Further, the viewer is now, even if only for a moment, on the outside of the storyworld and not able to see the action.

Placing characters from different segments of society in the elevator creates a high level of narrativity, a concept that not all narrative theorists appreciate or value but that is useful in describing why *girl has insomnia* makes a better story than *girl sleeps through the night* (Herman 27). Two wealthy guests of the hotel in an elevator doesn't evoke questions or suggest a clash of worlds the way that rich reclusive artist and anonymous hotel staff does. Contrast is more interesting than correspondence and more effective than conflict.

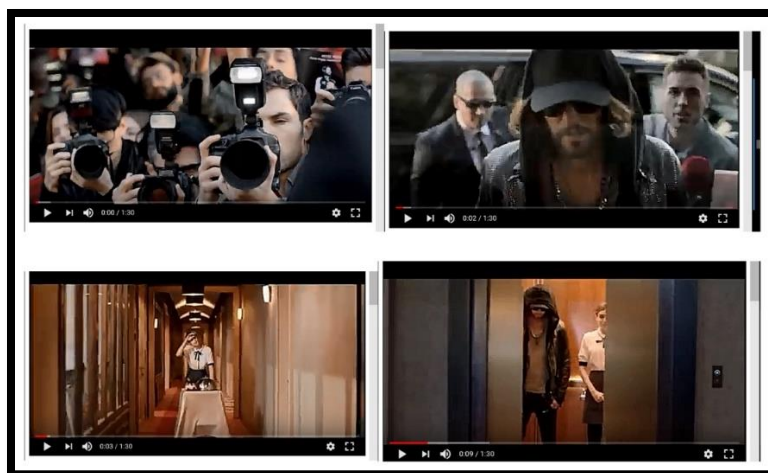


Figure 11. Beginning of “The Elevator”
(www.youtube.com/coca-cola)

In the middle of the narrative commercial, the pair realize they are stuck in the elevator; they become uncomfortable due to the heat, and the maid has a solution, an ice-cold bottle of Coke from her cart (Figure 12). Revealing the product this way is typical of narrative commercials while content marketing focuses on the product first and foremost from beginning to end and in a variety of ways through various media and on as many platforms as deemed appropriate or affordable. Because the product has made them more comfortable, they are able to dance, laugh, and connect. The artist even shares his glasses and hat with the young woman which creates an interesting image of him literally sharing his identity with her as the glasses and hat are more than accessories for a secretive artist working diligently to avoid photographers and to protect his privacy. This exchange is similar to character change or growth in a written story or longer film. This also presents a disruption to the divisions in society created by socioeconomic status or job title which fits the American mindset of equality, at least in theory. We like the idea of a famous person shedding the barriers between himself and a working-class girl an idea played out in movies such as *Working Girl*, *Pretty Woman*, and *Maid in Manhattan*.

Hodge and Kress assert that the most fundamental dimension of semiotic space is the physical relationship between people in the space (52). As the characters in the elevator dance, share music, and sit on the floor to pass time, they reduce the space between them and create a closeness that was not present in the beginning of the story. This closeness can, according to Kress and Hodge, signify positive or negative relationships, but strong relationships nonetheless (53). In this narrative, the closeness begins when the characters share the product, making it an important element in the story. This closeness as a symbol reinforces the ideology of equality while also appealing to the materialism that is inbred in American culture. There is no problem that cannot be solved with the purchase of the right product, in this case Coca-Cola. This demonstrates that images are both product and propagator of ideologies. The ideological message is made subtler by the use

of story to advertise the product. The subtlety is more evident when one compares the contemporary narrative ad to the non-narrative commercial for the same product.

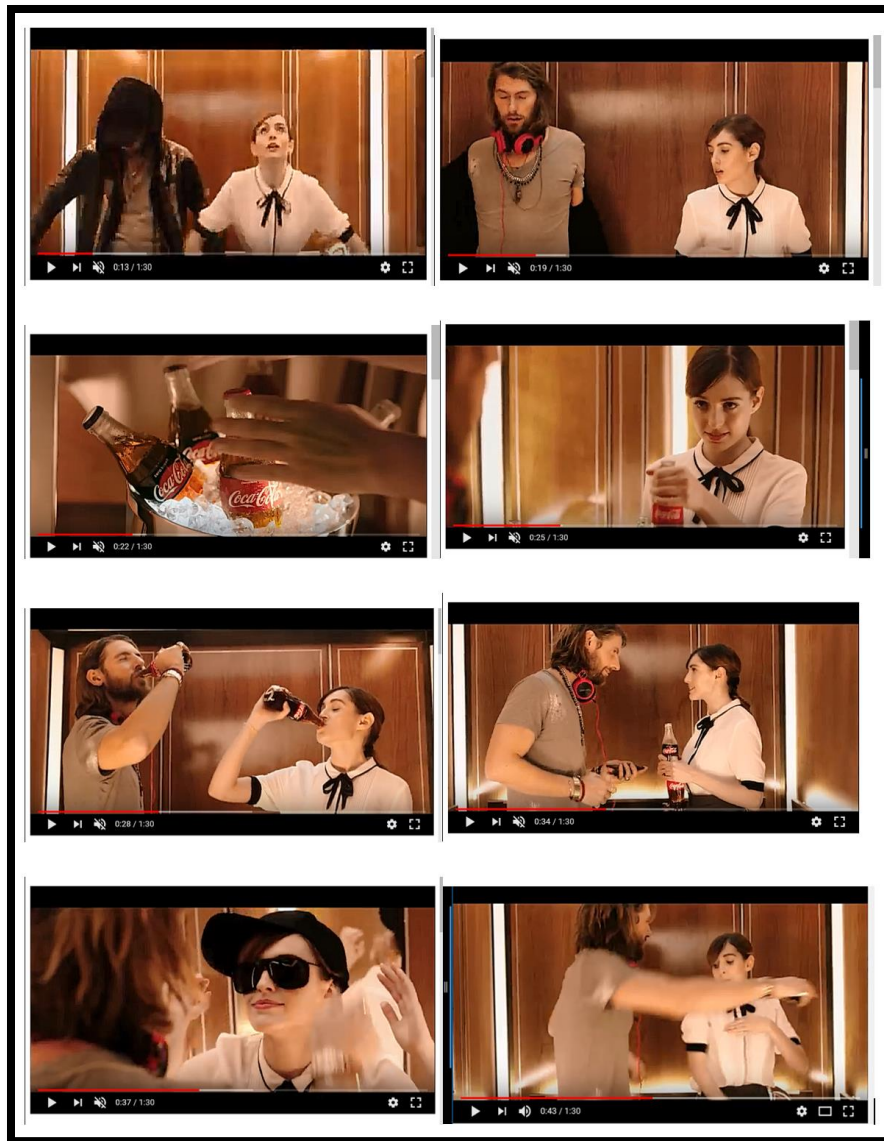


Figure 12. Middle of “The Elevator”
(www.youtube.com/coca-cola)

The narrative ends predictably with the pair being rescued (Figure 13). Before the artist can leave the elevator, the maid stops him and pulls out her phone for a selfie making her character true

to that of twenty-somethings in 2018. Later, as she pushes her cart down the hall, which in comparison to the original shot, is made smaller and less important in a close shot of the young woman, she pulls out her phone to examine the picture only to find that the artist has obscured his face with the bottle of Coke. From an advertising perspective, this puts focus on the product and from a storytelling perspective it returns the character to his real world outside of the elevator. This emphasizes the conflict between the worlds which makes even such a short story more appealing because as Lukács under Hegel's influence states, "the central force of drama is the collision of social forces" (57). While this may seem an overstatement for an analysis of a Coke commercial, it is on point for an analysis of narrative, whether tragedy or comedy.

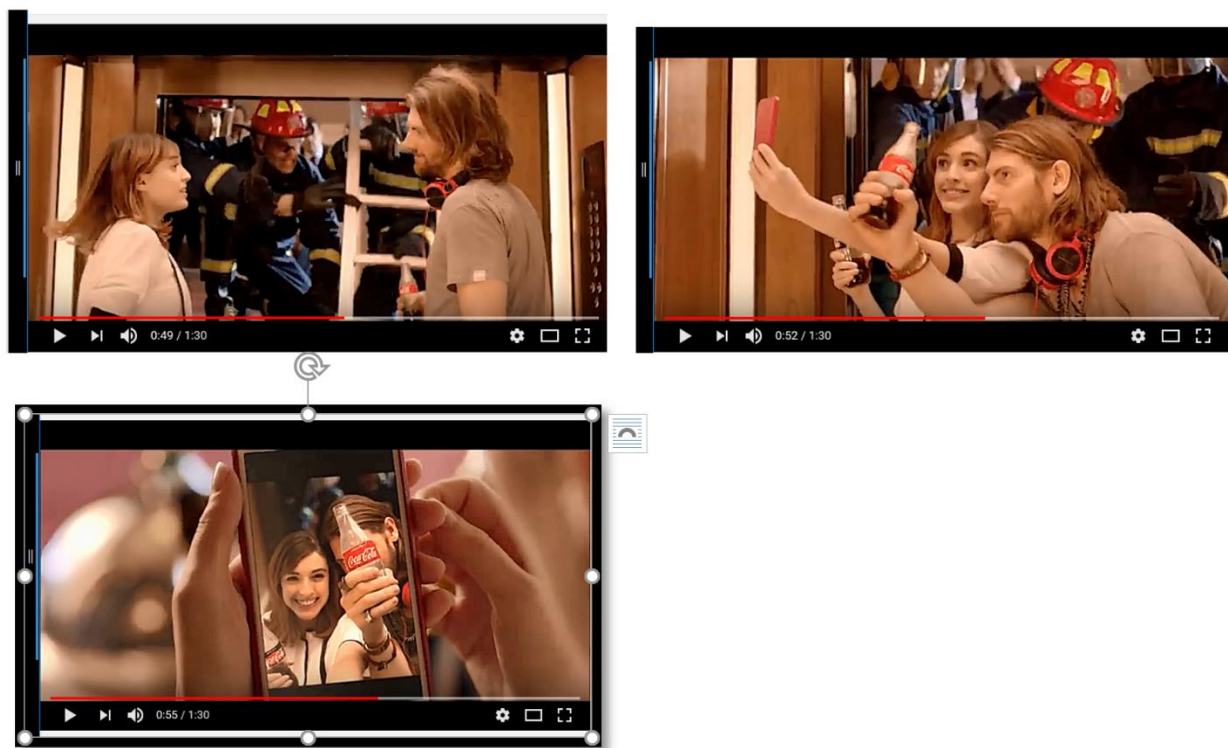


Figure 13. End of "The Elevator"
(www.youtube.com/coca-cola)

The connection between advertising and narrative can be seen when one compares advertising's Two World Method (Figure 14), also called Before and After, with drama's Freytag's Pyramid (Figure 15).

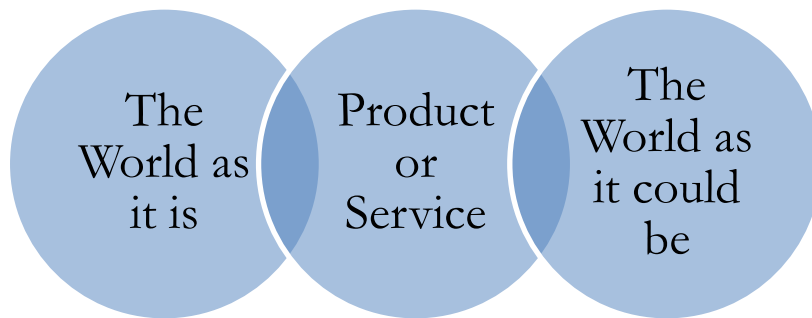


Figure 14. The Two World Method

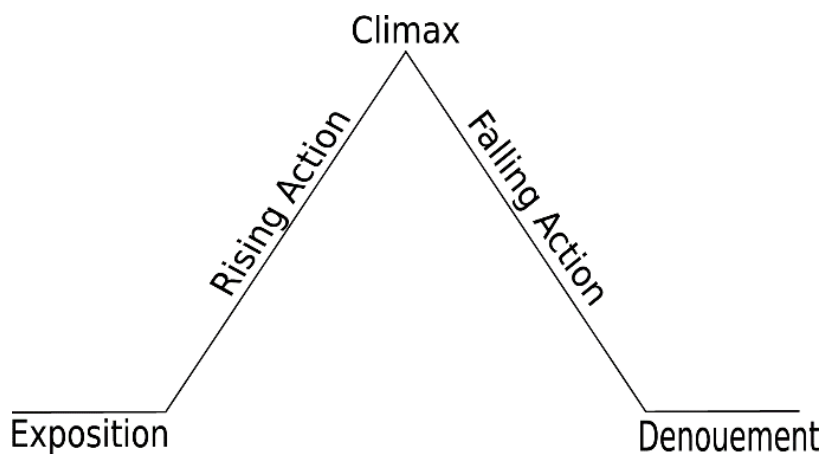


Figure 15. Freytag's Pyramid

Figure 16 shows an example of these two paths. The World that Is or Exposition: Once upon a time business person presenting in a wrinkled shirt.

Inciting Incident: Investors questioned his judgement and he failed miserably. Brand, Product, or

Service is Introduced or Rising Action: Bounce removes wrinkles in the dryer

Climax: Business person uses the product before the big presentation

The World that Could Be or Resolution: The presenter pitched his idea to investors confidently. They were receptive, and he achieved his goals and lived happily ever after.



Figure 16. Dove Two World Method in Four Images
(www.youtube.com/user.bounce)

Warby Parker: Annual Report

While most readers can easily recall losing sleep, neglecting laundry, or procrastinating at work in order to read one more chapter, or two more, or the entire book; few people would claim that they just could not tear themselves away from an annual report to get to bed on time, or to finish a household chore, or to catch up on those work emails. Annual reports have a reputation for being such dense dull documents that most stakeholders won't even read them. Technology is changing that. Annual reports have become a way to tell more than the financial facts of a business. These documents are now viewed as a key piece of the overall corporate storytelling and communication strategy.

Annual reports are something of a one-off in a discussion of storytelling because the narrative is nonlinear and delivered quite often in very small chunks of text associated with an image. There may not appear to be characters in the traditional sense either, but the organization is the character, the protagonist. As protagonist, the organization slays dragons that jeopardize the financial security of the stakeholders.

Another way to look at these documents in their recent version as online and interactive stories is that of Hypertext Nonfiction. While Hypertext Fiction has been written about, studied, praised and criticized extensively for three decades, there is a gap in the literature where Hypertext Nonfiction exists, and the interactive nature of contemporary digital annual reports makes these documents exemplars for study through this lens.

“Afternoon, A Story” by Michael Joyce is often cited as what can be achieved in a work of Hyperfiction. The content wasn’t sacrificed to a focus on the technology in this tale of a Peter, a technical writer, who sees recounts an accident that may have involved his ex-wife and son. Reviews of the work would lead one to believe that Hyperfiction would change the world, “[Afternoon] is to the hypertext...what the Gutenberg Bible is to publishing” proclaimed the reviews from *Toronto Globe and Mail* while *Whole Earth Review*’s Pamela McCorduck compared “Afternoon” to Joyce’s *Odyssey*.

Nelson created the term hypertext in the seventies to describe the elements of Xanadu, a system of texts linked to one another and not only open for consumption by anyone but open to being authored by anyone so that each text could eventually have multiple authors and no one person would be the sole author, the beginning of the collective intelligence discussed in Jenkins’ work in the early part of the aughts, and an interesting idea in light of Barthes’ assertions about the death of the author in the sixties, and the his work on a social writing space in the seventies. Hyperfiction, the combination of hypertext and fiction, connect previous sections of this project

with the effectiveness of the interactive digital annual report. Coover famously proclaims that hyperfiction, a combination of Nelson's hypertext and fiction, is "the end of books" in the nineties. This may seem a strange list of somewhat connected events to relay in a section about the corporate annual report, but if one looks closely, the relevance becomes clear.

The annual report since the early 2000's has been interactive, and has been mostly text-based though images for both visual appeal and information sharing have improved and increased drastically, the digital format allows creators of annual reports to move beyond the linear form of the bound book, the user has options in terms of clicking on one link rather than another or focusing on the entertaining portion of the report or going straight to the financial section, but the user is also limited to the options created by the designers, writers, and programmers who determined that users can do these actions but not those or that users could not access a page of the digital document until they accessed certain other pages. Each of these traits is also a trait of hyperfiction making annual report an excellent example of hypernonfiction.

Hypernonfiction, like hyperfiction, appeals to readers because when well-designed, there is an implied "what's next?"

Maus

When I read Kandinsky's *On the Problem of Form*, "people regard each new value with hostility; indeed, they seek to fight it with ridicule and slander. The human being who carries this new value is pictured as ridiculous and dishonest. The new value is laughed at as absurd." I picture Scott McCloud, or an abstract representation of McCloud, nodding his head. McCloud's *Understanding Comics* is a defense of comics as an old genre (Figure 17) but a new value (Figure 18). The word defense is important as McCloud addresses the fact that some comics "were crude, poorly-drawn cheap, disposable kiddie fare (3), but he also asserts that this need not be the case. It is

important to note that the criticism levied against comics that McCloud admits to and defends against is the idea that this genre is for children and therefore can be dismissed as unworthy of critique. Peter Hunt, editor of *Understanding Children's Literature*, comments in his introduction to Perry Nodelman's chapter, "Illustration in Picture Books," that it is unlikely that one could write a 6,000-word analysis of a two-page spread in a picture book if one subscribes to the much-accepted view that children's books are "beneath serious critical notice" (70). Fortunately, Nodelman didn't subscribe to this view and though McCloud is attempting to explain the value of another often-maligned genre in a work similarly titled (*Understanding Comics*, *Understanding Children's Literature*), he misses an opportunity to paint the connection between comics and children's literature in a positive light. That criticism aside, McCloud's work is an interesting address of the importance of a clear definition as a necessary first step to combat the stereotypes and "show that the potential of comics is limitless and exciting" (3). It is also an excellent introduction and explanation of the complexities and nuances of comics to readers new to the genre. As a means of analyzing *Maus*, it is not as effective or useful a lens as Mieke Bal's *Narratology* or Paul Martin Lester's *Visual Communication: images with messages*.



Figure 17. Old genre (McCloud 1994)

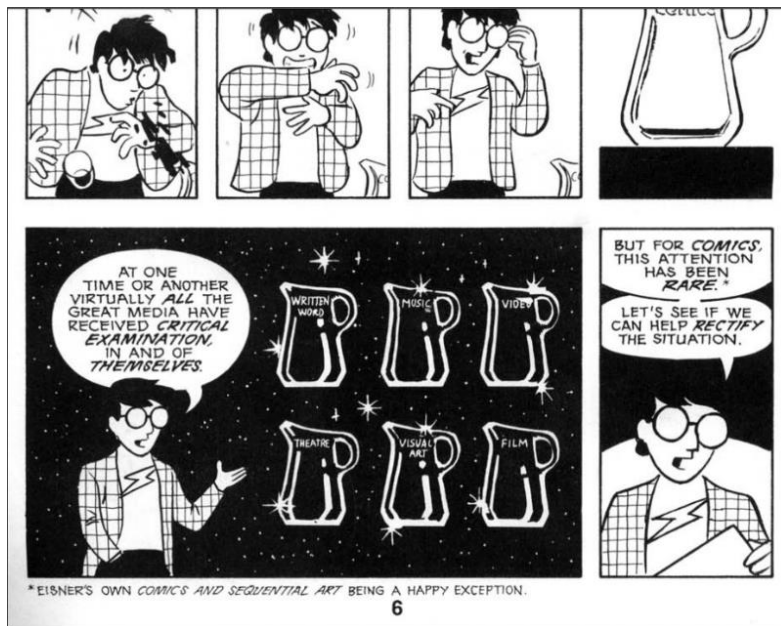


Figure 18. New value (McCloud 1994)

Ewert's reading of the text in *Reading Visual Narrative: Art Spiegelman's Maus* is an excellent address of *Maus* as a visual narrative but Bal's work allows for a look at the layers created by differentiating text, story, and fabula, as well as the significance of the narrator in a biographical

work that is significantly mediated with son as mediator of father's experience as well as autobiographical because the author/son experiences and writes about being the child of Holocaust survivors in the same text that he tells his father's *truth* about experiencing WWII as an imprisoned Jewish Pole. Lester's book contains a useful framework of perspectives: personal, historical, technical, ethical, cultural, and critical that can be used to analyze images in advertising, political campaigns, news articles, and even comic books about Nazi Cats and persecuted Mice.

In *Narrative: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Mieke Bal provides a "three-layer distinction – text, story, fabula" (6) as a means of studying narrative texts. The text is the artefact, the book, play, or movie while the story is the idea on which the artefact is based. Setting, characters, and events comprise the fabula. Bal calls these elements as a means of differentiating them from aspects which are traits of a specific story regardless of text or fabula. *Maus* is an interesting object for this type of analysis as the story is so well known while this text is not outside of comic book aficionados and literary critics whose work focuses on comics or visual art.

The story of the Holocaust is well known across generations and cultures. It is studied in English and history courses in high schools, colleges, and universities. The idea of the Holocaust is not new or unfamiliar. So well-known are certain events or phenomena that Spiegelman questions his father's firsthand account when it does not match the research. Ewert illustrates this point with the frame showing Vladek Spiegelman marching to work outside of Auschwitz each morning. While the younger Spiegelman is familiar with the purported orchestra that played as the men marched each morning, Vladek has no recollection of such an orchestra. Accounts not being identical certainly happen especially when the eye witness has been traumatized. This difference is significant though as an example of why Bal considers the narrator, "the most central concept in the analysis of narrative texts" (19). As the person holding the point of view in *Maus*, Art Spiegelman has the power to include the orchestra in the frame (Figure 19) and even after his father has contradicted the

historic record, the author leaves a few visible pieces of the orchestra while the rest is hidden behind the crowd of men being marched out of the camp to work (Figure 20). This fabula or event in the text featuring son, father, and memory somewhat rejects Bal's assertion that the narrator is the only one who narrates or utters language that constitutes a narrative. Because comics are written mostly in dialogue, the narrator's utterances are actually statements to other characters. If his statements still constitute narration, then so do those of Vladek whose rejection of the existence of an orchestra is included in the text as two types of images, words and picture.

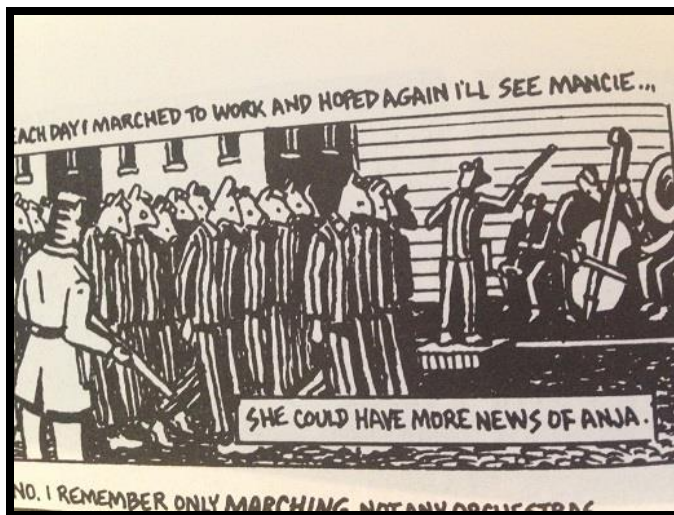


Figure 19. Orchestra is in the scene (Spiegelman 1986)

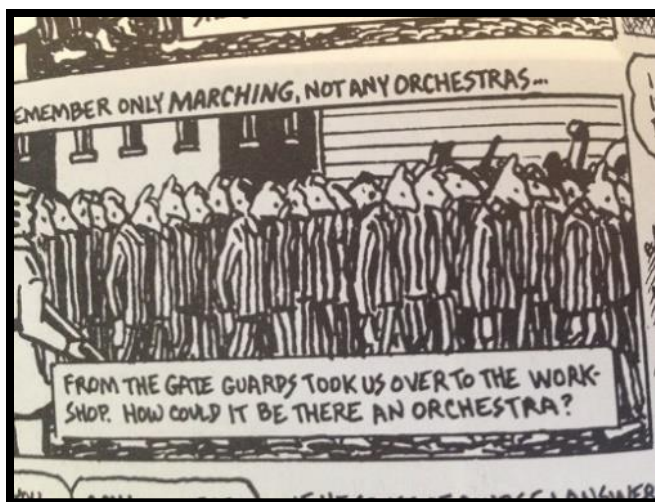


Figure 20. Marching out of camp (Spiegelman 1986)

This is not meant to contradict the earlier statement that Bal's work is a more interesting way to read *Maus* than McCloud's as the concept of a character bound narrator or CN is one who tells about him or herself. Spiegelman's reluctance to omit an element of the fabula based on his father's statements tells the reader a great deal about the author's struggle to believe his father, to trust his father, or to take his father seriously. It also speaks to the author's trust in historic accounts. Whether one focuses on the words, the image, the historic story, or the father-son dynamic, one can see that Bal's theory of the narrator forces readers to consider what *truth*, whose *truth* is being told in a narrative, and what is at stake for the author and for the readers who accept or reject the truth.

Using Lester's book to analyze *Maus* requires one to apply the six perspectives to an image to move from an initial personal and perhaps emotional reaction to an analytical and critical view (122) that adds value to a discussion of the image or a reading of the larger text. This method is valuable to me as a PhD student but also as an instructor who encourages students to move beyond summarizing the image or writing an opinion of an image in order to write critical judgement that is supported by the image itself as well as the context in which the image was created, and the medium used to produce it. This is a challenge as students are inundated with images and think that because they know an iconic image or because they have access to a virtually unlimited library of advertising, political, and artistic images thanks to the Internet, that they are visually literate. Leading them to see the difference is essential as these young adults more than any generation before them are not just consumers of visual media, they are producers. As such, they need to understand the cultural, ethical, and critical implications that an image carries into its audience.

Below is an application of three of Lester's Six Perspectives to an Image from *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began*. I start with a viewing from the personal perspective, and then use the technical perspective and finally the ethical perspective to demonstrate the reading possible using Lester as a framework.

I read a lot of Holocaust literature and historical fiction as a child and teen so my initial reaction to this image is one of association. I immediately associate the image with stories of tattoo identification numbers in *Night* and *The Hiding Place* among others. As a lesbian I notice the triangle immediately and I am reminded how proud I was to wear the symbol on a t-shirt or as a piece of jewelry when I was young. The words ‘took from us our names’ strikes me – the first marker of one’s identity, a name. That it could be taken away is terrifying and sad. I am surprised that he uses ‘my’ to describe the number. I imagine I’d not want ownership of such a memento. My initial reaction to the image is negative and sad but because of the subject not because of the quality of the image as the drawing itself is quite good as is the small amount of accompanying text (Figure 21).



Figure 21. Holocaust tattoo (Spiegelman 1986)

It is important to note as a critical reader of visual texts and as an educator that this initial response is not worthy of printing or sharing for any reason other than as a teaching moment. Students need to be taught overtly that if their analysis ends here, they are missing an opportunity to “perceive the image in a more meaningful way (Lester 122).

Lester asserts that images are artifacts that preserve the past. I would add that they also *prove* the past. Images are often meant to serve as a record that an event, a triumph, a loss actually happened. While this is truer of photographs than of other media, drawing is an act of preservation in *Maus* as the author and artist is documenting his father's experiences in order to better understand his family. This is significant for two main reasons, first, Art Spiegelman's mother committed suicide, so his father's stories are the only entry point to her stories. Second, between the publication of *Maus I* and *Maus II* Art's father died. His work in these comic books serves as proof that his father lived during a war and survived one of the worst examples of humankind's ability to be inhumane.

Reading this image from an historical perspective requires one to consider three time periods, the one depicted in the image, the one during which the image was created, and the one in which the reader lives.

The third perspective, technical, requires that the reader understand the media used to create and produce the image. In this case, we return to McCloud to inform a technical analysis of the image.

The first noteworthy element of the image of Vladek pointing to his Auschwitz ID tattoo that it is without a frame. All the other images on the two-page spread are contained within a frame. Vladek's framelessness means there is no gutter or space between two panels. It is in this space that readers process information. This gutter can be a buffer before and after a jarring image as well. Without a gutter, the reader must see and continue to see Vladek and his tattoo. The focus is on the chilling words, "they took from us our names" instead of on any moments before or after the moment in the image. The second technical element that deserves discussion is the contrast between abstraction and realism. Vladek's head, that of a mouse, is an abstraction of a mouse rather than a realistic drawing of a rodent. There are no details, so the reader is free to see him or herself in

Vladek's place. McCloud explains convincingly that this is the same mechanism of visualizing that allows readers to see a yellow circle with two dots and an upward curving line as a human face. Spiegelman demonstrates a keen understanding that the more cartoon-like the drawing, the more people it can represent (McCloud 31).

An analysis from the technical perspective benefits college students in intro courses as it not only challenges them to critique from a place other than their subjective opinion, it trains them to see quality or lack of quality in images that are meant to persuade them to buy, vote, or act. This prepares them to be better consumers, voters, and citizens which is the goal of a liberal arts education. For me as an educator, this is an excellent way to provide both liberal arts ideals and new media technical skills for my students. Another benefit of viewing an image from this perspective is that one is able to comment on beauty and value using critical judgement. While the image of Maus being analyzed here is not meant to be framed and hung on the wall of a museum, gallery, or one's living room, the images are art even when used as narrative rather than standalone pictures. Oscar Wilde asserted that all art is useless. This statement is easy to misunderstand as a condemnation of art when in fact it can be used to justify the value of art for art's sake regardless of its monetary value. This is an important concept that can be addressed during the technical analysis of an image.

Analyzing an image from the ethical perspective requires one to focus on the ethics of the image's creation and distribution, not on the event depicted in the image. It can be challenging to keep the two separate. In the image of Vladek pointing to his ID tattoo, the ethics of branding human beings is obvious and not the concern of this element of image analysis; rather the ethics of who created the image and how and for what reasons and to what end.

To analyze this image from an ethical point of view is to ask several questions about Art Spiegelman. First, why rats? Is it ethical to portray a group of people as rodents? Is this insulting?

Ewert addresses this by pointing to the epigraph in *Maus II* which is a statement by Hitler published in a newspaper in the 1930s.

“Mickey Mouse is the most miserable ideal ever revealed...Healthy emotions tell every independent young man...that the dirty and filth-covered vermin, the greatest bacteria carrier in the animal kingdom, cannot be the ideal type of animal...Away with Jewish brutalization of the people! Down with Mickey Mouse!” (qtd. in Ewert, 92)

This explanation leads to other questions. Is using Hitler’s words to inform artistic choices in a Holocaust narrative ethical? Is this reclamation of some sort akin to an African American collecting Mammy figurines as a way of taking the racist power out of the icon? Is this Art’s place as he is not the one who experienced the Holocaust? Spiegelman’s explanation for using mice, cats, and pigs instead of people is more satisfying as an explanation of this choice as an ethical issue, “if one draws this kind of stuff with people, it comes out wrong...I’ve never lived through anything like that...it would be counterfeit...” (Spiegelman and Mouly 105). It is interesting to note that the characters in the text are aware of the metaphor and Art uses it to express his difficulty with the subject he’s writing about as well as with the success of the first book and with his relationship with his father. He doesn’t force the metaphor and even allows for inconsistencies when necessary which Ewert explains forces the readers to “see mice as people, rather than Jews as mice” (95).

Another ethical consideration is the choice of medium for the topic. Can the Holocaust be addressed respectfully in a comic book? Is there something innately wrong about using this genre to tell a Holocaust narrative? Does unease with this combination speak to the prejudice that comics face as the unsophisticated literature of children and teenaged nerds? And, finally, did the author/artist exploit his father’s suffering for commercial success? This ethical dilemma is actually addressed in the opening of *Maus II*. The author admits to being depressed and even takes the readers with him to see his therapist.

Answering all of the ethical questions inspired by an image may not be possible. Readers must accept this and understand that the answer isn't always the goal in work such as visual analysis. Often, it is the questions that matter.

Scott McCloud's book is an excellent starting point for understanding comics as literary genre and art. Using it in conjunction with Bal's work on narrative and Lester's six perspectives is a useful exercise in visual analysis of Spiegelman's *Maus* and other visual narratives as well. There is also great potential for introducing several practices essential to critical thinking to college students. First, these works together can prepare students to move beyond opinionated subjective responses to images in favor of critical analysis. Second, this is an effective means of introducing schools of ethical thought and applying them to something as ubiquitous as images so that students see the relevance of ethics to their everyday lives. Finally, this can be used to help students understand the importance of a work of art regardless of its monetary value. This can be a gateway to discussing *purposiveness* versus *purpose* in meaningful ways.

Long Term Narrative on Television: This is Us

In "Lost and Long-Term Television Narrative" David Lavery begins with a quote from Steven Johnson's "Everything Bad is Good for You" to set the tone for Lavery's enthusiastic address of long term narrative and the changes this type of drama has required of television and in viewers.

Narratives that require that their viewers fill in crucial elements take...complexity to a new level. To follow the narrative, you aren't just asked to remember. You're asked to analyze. This is the difference between intelligent shows and shows that force you to be intelligent.

This passage from Johnson is a fitting introduction to Lavery's prologue which details the "richly intertextual, open-ended, enigmatic" *Life on Mars* which he asserts is not a LT*TN, and the "exemplary" *Lost* which is not only a LT*TN according to Lavery but is also a fitting example to support his assertion that the unlikely source of all long term serialized narratives is Charles Dickens.

Lavery is not alone in attributing modern television structure to Dickens. In “Tune in Next Week,” Emily Nussbaum argues that the cliffhanger ending is a marker of serialized television that modern viewers owe to Dickens.

But there is also something to celebrate about the cliffhanger, which makes visible the storyteller's connection to his audience—like a bridge made out of lightning. Primal and unashamedly manipulative, cliffhangers are the signature gambit of serial storytelling. They expose the intimacy between writer's room and fan base, auteur and recapper—a relationship that can take seasons to develop, years marked by incidents of betrayal, contentment, and, occasionally, by a kind of ecstasy. (Nussbaum)

Any fan of serial drama can attest to the truth of Nussbaum's argument. A well-written cliffhanger has viewers celebrating what they don't know, rather than what they do know which is typical of non-serialized programs. Pleasure in the unknown goes beyond the cliffhanger ending; fans of LTTN from *24* to *The West Wing* know that inferring what happened in the past or between episodes is part of the joy of following such complex stories. Steven Johnson asserts that viewers of LTTN weren't the first audience to enjoy “making sense of information that has been either deliberately withheld or deliberately left obscure” (qtd. in Johnson). Not only does LTTN force viewers to be intelligent by withholding or being obscure, it feeds the human need to solve puzzles and to play a role in the story.

One could argue that all fiction on television is story, procedurals may not require viewers to watch in the order presented, but they do each tell a story of a crime being solved or a family situation being resolved. This is a case of degrees or levels of narrativity. Procedurals tell one story that begins and ends in one 30 or 60-minute stand-alone chapter while long term television shows are similar to chapters in a novel. Reading chapter three without reading chapters one and two will leave a reader confused and with questions about the characters, the setting, and the rising action that led to the events of chapter three. Increased narrativity in this project equates to increased investment in the narrative and in enjoyment of the shorter stories within as well as the larger story arch. Viewers of serialized narrative television know the pleasure of a reference to an episode a year

ago or the appearance of a character who previously existed only off screen. Knowledge of these elements and making the connection between past and present or in some cases future events places viewers in the inner circle. An aha moment when a viewer places a character or connects a moment in the current narrative with a moment in the past is quite satisfying cognitively and emotionally.

Focus is a significant difference between long term narrative and procedural drama. In a procedural television show, the focus is on the case of the week, typically a medical mystery that must be diagnosed or a crime that must be solved. Character development is used only to support this primary focus of closing the loop on the case of the week rather than as part of a greater theme or for the sake of interesting character development as an element of a story. This can be seen in the procedural *House* which aired from to

In contrast, the current award winning LTTN *This is Us* focuses on characters and the themes that invite viewers to relate to and sympathize with the Pearson family as they experience victory and defeat in their personal and professional lives. Three episodes in season two are dedicated to character development with each episode devoted to one of the Pearson triplets and the events of the past that shed light on current behavior, challenges, or successes. This speaks to the core focus of LTTN which is building a relationship with viewers which takes time and effort. This mirrors an important change in business from completing start-stop transactions to building long term relationships that result in a loyal consumer base.

The pilot episode of *This is Us* presents three sets of characters whose connection, if any, is not apparent other than sharing the same birthday. Kate and Kevin are twins preparing to celebrate their 36th birthday amid career angst and weight loss struggles while Jack and Rebecca are a married couple expecting triplets at the same time that Jack is turning 36, and Randall is the wealthy husband to Beth and father to two young girls who has, through a private investigator, found the biological father who left him at a fire station after his birth mother died. Randall and his family are African

American while the rest of the cast is Caucasian. Observant viewers think that Randall is also a twin as he receives an email titled “We’re 36, brother.” This seems to be a show about multiples and about people turning 36 years old who are otherwise not connected though viewers certainly assume the characters’ lives will intersect at some point. All of the missing pieces add to the narrativity as viewers fill in the story with speculation. The richness of the characters as well as the conflict each faces invites the viewers to write the story as they await the scripted narrative.

At the heart of the hook in the pilot episode is the moment after Jack learns that one of the triplets didn’t survive the delivery and he visits the surviving twins in the nursery. Kate’s voice is heard over this scene asking Kevin what their dad used to say about using the sourest lemons to make something resembling lemonade. Viewers recognize this as the phrase used by the doctor while trying to comfort Jack over the loss of one of the babies. At the nursery window, Jack is joined by a firefighter dropping off an abandoned baby. In a move that shocks modern day viewers and begins the big reveal, the firefighter offers Jack a cigarette to smoke in the hospital. And the camera pans the hospital common area revealing that Jack’s beard and wardrobe aren’t the retro fashion of a 2018 hipster, rather they are the au courant attire of a 36-year-old living in the 1970s. The camera then lands on three babies in the nursery, Kate, Kevin, and an African American baby in the next bassinet.

The narrative has been following two timelines, Rebecca and Jack in the past, and Kate, Kevin, and Randall in the present. This revelation is attention-grabbing in its surprise and sets up the idea that this will be a story full of parallel and perpendicular narratives taking place in different decades. This is a narrative that won’t shy away from tricking viewers for a little while in order to deliver a satisfying story in the end. Viewers appreciate the complexity and richness of a well-constructed narrative in a world of information overload created by blurbs free of context, nuance, or layers.

It is noteworthy that *This is Us* presents Kevin as the star of a successful sitcom and then makes fun of his show and the fact that he could be successful doing something that isn't smart or artistic but is commercial and uses low brow humor while exploiting him for his physical appearance. The writers of *This is Us* clearly want to make a statement about the superiority of *This is Us* to other television and further the point by having Kevin work in the theatre after he leaves the sitcom. This message goes hand in hand with the idea that LTTN's have a propensity for literary allusion something that shows low in narrativity would not dare do for fear of losing the audience; rather, they focus on the silly problem of the week and the absolutely unrealistic overly simplistic solution that somehow works perfectly. Lavery provides several examples of references to Dickens in *Lost* and *The Gilmore Girls*. In various episodes of *The West Wing*, poems by John Masefield and Robert Herrick are quoted or intentionally misquoted; and the Bible, Graham Greene, and Kahlil Gibran are quoted by characters or referenced in episode titles. Dr Who visits Shakespeare, H.G. Wells, Agatha Christie, and of course, the Father of long term narratives, Charles Dickens. All of these literary references are more than interesting; they speak to the other side of the coin in the opening quote from Johnson. While serialized television makes viewers smarter, one could argue that the people creating these programs are also smarter and this intelligence shows in the references to literature, as for the first time in television history, prime time programs may be worthy of classification as literature. The goal of my proposed research, detailed in Chapter Four, is to assess the effectiveness of storytelling as a means of teaching effective communication by exposing students to LTTN, narrative marketing, and other uses of story while asking them to use their own storytelling to solve problems and answer research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH PROTOCOL

Researcher: Elle O’Keeffe

Research Protocol for Digital Storytelling in Composition I

Introduction/Justification

The goal of this research is to test the effectiveness of a digital storytelling focus in the first-year writing course which is known by various names across university systems. This research will use first-year writing to refer to Composition I, Freshman Composition, and First Year Writing Seminar. There is no shortage of literature addressing the problems with student writing and the debates around how composition should be taught. Another corpus of literature relevant to this study is the need to address college students’ lack of technological skill when technology is used for academic or professional purposes rather than to play games or chat casually with friends.

Complaints about student writing are certainly not new. In 1878, Harvard rhetoric professor, Adams Sherman Hill lamented, “Everyone who has had much to do with the graduating classes of our best colleges has known men who could not write a letter describing their own commencements without making blunders which would disgrace a boy twelve years old” (2). One hundred forty years later, professors across university campuses make similar claims. While Hill and his contemporaries developed pedagogy based on their observations and experiences, professors in the 1950s turned to research to determine what worked and did not work in first-year writing courses. *Research in Written Composition* was published in 1963. Despite the age of this publication, it is essential in a discussion of first-year writing as it was the first publication to comprehensively summarize the existing research on student writing and the teaching of writing in response to what the writers described as current research that “may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from alchemy” (5). Braddock and his coauthors took issue with the loosely defined terms used in research about writing

instruction and the treatment of “dreams, prejudices, and makeshift operations” (16) as legitimate evidence for pedagogical and practical choices in teaching writing. For composition and rhetoric educators, for writing center directors, and for researchers in composition studies, *Research in Written Composition* is an “indispensable source of information” (Blount, 1973). Because the research was well funded and supported across agencies and universities, Braddock and his coauthors were able to “search thoroughly titles of dissertations, to establish rigorous screening procedures, and finally to select and fully report five studies adjudged to be those most soundly based” (Lodge 151).

While *Research in Composition* presented relevant findings such as the study of grammar having little or no effect on the quality of student writing, what is most often cited in the report is the list of 24 questions which are items the report creators identified as areas needing further research.

A variety of researchers have taken up the call of filling in the gaps identified in Braddock’s work, though most in the decades following Braddock’s report studied students in Kindergarten through 11th grade. In 1976, Hall, et al. for instance focused on the home environment of children who learned to write early and found that having parents who are college graduates and writing materials freely available in the home played a role in the children having positive attitudes toward writing and toward achievement which address questions 1 and 14 on Braddock’s list:

1. What kinds of situations and assignments at various levels of schooling stimulate a desire to write well?
14. What techniques of composition most effectively help build self-discipline and pride in clarity, originality, and good form?

In 1967, Stiff studied the consequences of three types of feedback:

1. Marginal notes only

2. Terminal notes only
3. Combination of marginal notes and terminal notes

Student writing did not improve with any one method of feedback in Stiff's study, but he does note that the college students who received both comments in the margins and at the end of the paper were happier with the feedback and had more positive attitude toward writing. Providing this level of feedback does take a lot of time and one has to balance the additional time and effort with the results which do not include writers who made stronger arguments or committed fewer errors on subsequent papers.

Related to Stiff's work but different in the population and specific treatment being tested, Gee (1970) and Groff (1975) each concluded that student writing does not improve or decline in quality because of feedback from instructors regardless of the feedback being positive or negative. Positive comments did however increase students' positive attitude toward writing more than negative or no comments. It is noteworthy that each of these studies were conducted on high school students, while Stiff's participants were college students. As a new composition instructor, I was surprised by the number of students who were certain they could not write and did not want to write because of comments made by high school English teachers. Some of these students were producing interesting work, but they lacked confidence and viewed English courses as something to get through.

Other research projects conducted in the two decades after Braddock's *Research in Written Composition* (1963) focus on the effect of class size, the level of individualization of instruction, and peer versus instructor editing and review. Smith's 1974 study on high school students used six large classrooms receiving instruction for the entire class only, and six other large classes that were instructed as entire classes but were also split into small groups some of whom were provided additional instruction while in smaller groups and others received individualized instruction as well.

Smith's findings include evidence that small class size positively affects improvement, and the students who were low to average performers benefited from small group instruction even more than their high performing peers. She found that her participants receiving individualized instruction showed better retention of skill and knowledge six weeks after the study concluded. If teaching for transfer is a concern, then this study is certainly relevant. Lagana (1972), Ford, B.W. (1973), and Farrell (1977) all found that students receiving peer feedback either alone or combined with instructor feedback improved in grammar and wrote more during class because of the immediate feedback.

While these studies may seem an odd focus for a researcher in 2018, they are quite relevant as they show that educators have been trying for decades to determine through rigorous study how to teach students to write. These studies are also evidence that the concerns of composition instructors are oddly unchanged in 50 years. Educators now though must compete with 200+ channels of television, smart phones that allow students to take many of those channels with them, iTunes, Hulu, Netflix, dating sites, Facebook, Twitter, email, and the entire universe of information and misinformation on the Internet. And, we are teaching students who do not read newspapers or books. In 2014, Huang, et al., reported that the 1,265 students who self-reported their reading habits spent 7.72 hours on academic reading per week, 4.24 hours on pleasure reading per week, and 8.95 hours on the Internet each week. Anyone teaching college students can attest through anecdotal evidence through observation in the classroom, student union, hallways and walkways of campus that students on the Internet are not reading; they are flipping, surfing, clicking, and moving from page to page and from image to image in seconds, devoting little if any time to the words on the screen and taking no time at all to process what they seen, to analyze it, to question it, to apply it. One need not take instructors' anecdotal evidence alone as proof that students are not reading.

Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America (NEA 2004) studies reading habits of

Americans from 1992 to 2002 and found that reading decreased in Americans in every age group, in every education level, across white, black, and Hispanic Americans, and this is true for both genders. The group with the most significant decrease in time spent reading is young adults 18-34 (Table 3). This group dropped from most likely to read literature to least likely to read literature in just 20 years.

Table 3. Decline in Reading (NEA 2004)

AGE GROUP	1982	1992	2002	RATE OF DECLINE 1982-2002
18-24	59.8	53.3	42.8	-28% This rate of decline is 55% greater than the decline for All Ages.
25-34	62.1	54.6	47.7	-23
ALL AGES	56.9	54	46.7	-18

This decline in reading is concerning by itself, but when one considers additional findings of the NEA report cited above, it is clear that a decline in reading is a decline in engagement with activities that make us better citizens, more well-rounded people, active participants in communities. Non-readers are less likely to visit art museums, to do volunteer work, to attend sport events, and to attend performing art events (NEA 6).

Participation is a key concept for this study as digital storytelling is meant to increase students' participation in online discourse communities by guiding them through the process of creating an artifact that contributes to the discourse around a common interest, hobby, sport, art movement, music genre, television show, political view, health concern, medical condition, or career field.

Technological Skills

Fourteen years ago has a different meaning in the digital age, the age of either change rapidly or become obsolete rapidly. But, the findings in the 2004 "Convenience, Communications, and

Control: How Students Use Technology” by Robert Kvavik for The Educause Center for Analysis and Research and The University of Minnesota are relevant in 2018 as they paint of picture for comparison between groups of Digital Natives (Prensky) separated by a decade and a half. Kvavik conducted qualitative and quantitative research on college students at 13 universities in five states. His goal was to address the assumptions that college students who had never known a world without computers, laptops, tablets, and smart phones would be technically literate and have high expectations for technology use for teaching and learning in undergraduate courses. These assumptions are supported by the observations of educators and higher education researchers (Table 4) who see in the Digital Natives students who see trial and error as a more appropriate way to learn than by following a set of rules based on logic and methodical experimentation (Frاند) and who expect other people to use the newest technology to communicate and collaborate (Hagner).

Table 4. Computer Use by Digital Natives (NEA 2004)

Activity	Mean score 1 = do not use, 2 = use < 1 hour, 3 = use 1-2 hours, 4 = use 3-5 hours, 5 = use 6-10 hours
Classroom activity other than writing a document or studying on a computer or other electronic device	4.01
Writing a document	3.76
Surfing the internet for pleasure	3.47
Email: creating and sending, reading	3.47
Im or texting	3.45

Kvavik’s work supports an important assumption behind the hypothesis of this research. Digital Natives have access to technology. One hundred percent of the participants had internet access. While 82.2 percent of the freshmen participants accessed the Internet using their university’s network 56.4 percent of seniors in the study used commercial access, but regardless of how Internet

was accessed, all of the 4,374 students were able to use the Internet. And, almost all, 99.5 percent and 96.4 percent, used computers for writing documents and classroom activities and perhaps more significantly, most reported using the computer first for coursework and studying. Just over 97 percent of the students reported surfing the web for pleasure.

The quantitative data and the qualitative data collected in interviews support that the students are using computers for school work, for communication, and for entertainment but this does not translate to being technologically literate or astute at using technology to contribute to academic or professional discourse communities online. Despite having access to technology and using it regularly, the students self-report low scores in the skills needed to fully participate in the visual and interactive space that is the Internet such as creating web pages, editing audio and video, and working with graphics (Table 5).

Table 5. Skills of Digital Natives (NEA 2004)

The Skill	Mean Score 1 = very unskilled, 2 = unskilled, 3 = skilled, and 4 = very skilled
Surfing the web, typing documents, communicating using technology	>3
Graphics	2.45
Creating Web pages	2.17
Creating and editing audio and video	2.07

Despite the assumptions made about digital natives, students in this study did not arrive with technical skills. They credited their college courses with providing them with the opportunity to develop tech and information literacy.

Despite the widespread belief in Digital Natives as a technology-savvy generation (Prensky, 2001; Oblinger and Oblinger, 2005; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008) possessed of sophisticated digital and technical skills that created in this generation new ways of thinking and learning (Prensky, 2001), the research and anecdotal observation do not find special digital abilities in students born after the 1990. Dede (2005) described the Digital Natives' learning style in grand terms, crediting them with, "fluency in multiple media...learning based on collectively seeking, sieving, and synthesizing experiences...frequent opportunities for reflection; expression through nonlinear associational webs...rather than linear stories; and codesign of learning experiences personalized to individual needs and preferences." Most first-year writing instructors wonder where these reflective, codesigning, media literate students are because they are not in first-year writing courses. Despite the lived experiences of first-year writing teachers, universities make decisions and spend money on physical and technical spaces and infrastructure based on the belief in Digital Natives abilities and needs that separate them significantly from their predecessors, Digital Immigrants.

Kennedy, et al., (2008) determined, after studying 2,120 undergraduates that widespread changes to course curriculum based on beliefs about Digital Natives' needs and assumed abilities is not supported by research because contrary to widely held beliefs about these students, the research shows that being a Digital Native is not "synonymous with knowing how to employ technology strategically" (414). It is unfortunate that Kennedy et al. did not do qualitative research in addition to the quantitative study as this would have paired students' thoughts, attitudes, and preferences as well as their motivations and challenges regarding technology with the numerical data painting a fuller picture of the Digital Natives.

Bullen, et al. in 2008 and Nagler and Ebner in 2009 came to similar conclusions as Kennedy et al. They found that students known as Digital Natives used basic communication tools such as email and IM as well as chat rooms regularly and considered this technology a part of everyday life,

but again none of the data collected supports the idea that this generation of learners possesses advanced digital or technological literacy; rather, the data suggested that students relied on a “limited toolkit” of technologies used in context dependent ways without demonstrating a deep knowledge of the technology.

Research Question/Hypothesis

The question addressed by this research and experiment is: How can a focus on storytelling using new and digital media in the first-year English composition course create an authentic and relevant learning experience for contemporary students while bridging the digital divide created by the lack of opportunity to participate in the collective intelligence of the convergence culture?

Hypothesis: A composition one course focused on storytelling practice, narrative theory, and multiple literacies while promoting the use of new media to produce story and to contribute to discourse communities online will result in students who have the skill and knowledge to use new media to bring image and text together to communicate effectively, to create knowledge, and to engage with diverse populations in academic and professional conversations and are engaged actively with the course concepts and materials, their classmates, and the professor.

Description of Planned Method and Design

Participants will be college students enrolled in for-credit first-year writing courses at three universities. To increase diversity and increase the chance that the sample closely mirrors the general population of college students, the three universities will be:

- One public university in the state system
- One private for-profit university operating both brick and mortar campuses and online
- One for profit school operating exclusively online

Once the participating classes are identified but before the experiment begins, separate research activities must be performed. First, student technology use and writing ability will be documented and coded using a Likert Scale. This will be used for comparison to support the hypothesis that by providing opportunity to use technology in meaningful and participatory ways, one increases student knowledge and skill and develops students who are technologically, digitally, and visually literate. Prior success in technology- based courses and English/writing courses will also be documented and used to assign participants to the treatment or non-treatment group in each course using Stratified Randomization. This process involves averaging each student's grades in previous courses as well as scores on the assessments that determine prior technical skill and effective writing skills. Participants will be assigned to either a treatment group or a nontreatment group with balance in mind so that the treatment group and the non-treatment group have roughly the same number of participants who earned a high composite score which consists of grades in most recent courses and scores on pretests; the same number of students who earned lowest on the composite score will be assigned to each group as well.

Group A in each course will receive the intervention for one semester and Group B will be asked to do typical written assignments required in previous sections of the first-year writing course. Pre and post test scores that assess student ability to present a cogent argument, to follow the rules of English grammar and syntax, and to format a document with both visual appeal and logic in mind will be used to support findings of increased immediate learning. Ideally participants would be re-evaluated one year after the first-year writing course and three years after graduating or leaving university. These assessments would speak to long term transfer of knowledge in other subject areas and in the workplace.

Description and Explanation of Treatment/Intervention

The treatment at the heart of the experiment includes creating digital stories using a variety of media. Students will be introduced to the concepts of visual communication, narrative structure, nonlinear story, and several technologies for creating digital stories such as Articulate Storyline 3, Wordpress, StoryBird, ZooBurst, and ACMI Storyboard Generator. Students will write a plan before and a reflection after beginning and completing each of three digital stories.

Students in the intervention group will be able to focus on a project related to their major or career interests. Students majoring in advertising for instance could create a story that solves a problem for a product that has suffered a PR crisis, or they could create a narrative ad for a product or service. Nursing students could create a story meant to educate patients about a condition or to solve a problem in a particular area of medicine. The final step of the intervention will be presentation of and discussion about the stories and the process that began with a question and resulted in a digital narrative.

Conclusion

Even though this protocol describes intended future research for me and potential future research for other first-year writing instructors interested in an innovative approach to teaching students to use text and image to convince, solve problems, and answer questions relevant to specific discourse communities, rather than research completed during the written portion of the project, it is not just a hypothetical research project; rather, it is an extension of the informal research conducted in my business and human resource management courses. Consistently, students who are allowed to approach concepts related to business ethics in creative and narrative ways produce thought-provoking work when they are invited to find a visual metaphor used in one context and use it to reinforce one of an organization's core values. For instance, a student in Business Ethics chose the image from United Colors of Benetton's clothing ad campaign to

represent a financial institution's commitment to inclusion and diversity in hiring (Figure 22). Using the image and visual metaphor as a jumping off point, the student of this assignment then wrote a thoughtful analysis of the image and made a business case and an ethical case for actively working toward diversity and inclusiveness in business.

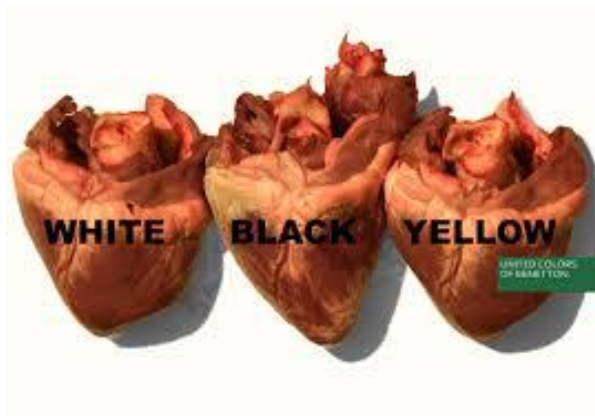


Figure 22. Three Hearts

This research is a step toward changing the focus of research on educational technology from technology, such as computers in the classroom and learning management systems for organizing grades or housing online discussions, to meaningful sophisticated ways to use technology (Merzenich 2007) and to apply technologies pedagogically so students participate fully with the content of the course.

The need for this research is somewhat urgent as students are using technology to communicate, to be entertained, and to pursue personal interests for several hours a day and beginning long before they enter a college classroom. Creating literate college graduates requires empowering students to question the technology that mediates the messages in a way that to them seems natural, to challenge the information presented on the web using standards that assess for accuracy, relevance, and bias, and to be aware of the power and the limits of images, text, the Internet, and the software they choose to use and those they are required to use in classes and in the workplace.

If the results are not as expected, this experiment is still valuable as it adds valuable inferential and descriptive data to the current body of knowledge in multiple areas relevant to students, composition and digital media educators, course designers, and professionals in a variety of fields. While seeing no relationship between the proposed course and increased communication and literacy would be surprising based on my early casual observation and more recent systematic observation, it would still contribute needed information to the ongoing debates around best practices in first-year writing courses.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation, I present a research protocol for testing the effectiveness of a composition one course focused on narrative theory and digital storytelling. The goals of this project are to demonstrate the need for a composition one course focused on storytelling practice, narrative theory, and multiple literacies while promoting the use of new media to produce story and to contribute to discourse communities online, in the classroom, and in the workplace. The expected result will be students who have not only access to new media, but the skill and knowledge to use new media to bring image and text together to communicate effectively, to create knowledge, and to engage with diverse online populations.

The Research Question guiding this work is How can a focus on storytelling using new and digital media in the first-year English composition course create an authentic and relevant learning experience for contemporary students while bridging the digital divide created by the lack of opportunity to participate in the collective intelligence of the convergence culture? This question speaks to the practical and theoretical natures of this project.

In Chapter One, I explain that the idea for this work grows primarily from three areas of research and practice. First, the concept of the digital divide as a lack of opportunity to engage with and be engaged by technology and other people using the technology rather than as a lack of access to technology is addressed. Then, college composition is detailed in terms of its history, purpose, and challenges. Finally, literacy and its evolving meaning is addressed as the proposed focus on digital story is intended to improve the diverse literacy needed in the contemporary and future workplace. Chapter Two presents a literature review of storytelling in business, technology for education, and digital and transmedia storytelling as this project is informed by these areas of

research and is meant to fill a gap missing in the work being conducted in educational technology and composition instruction pedagogy. Chapter Three provides a brief address of NCTE and CCCC's position statements and a deeper analysis of several examples of stories that are not written texts but do support the NCTE and CCCC mission and position statement on best practices in teaching composition. Chapter Four is the research protocol for obtaining empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the proposed composition one course.

This project should be implemented because it fills a gap in the current research informing first-year writing instruction and design and provides a solution for the need for technology skills that college students, even Digital Natives, lack because they use technology for entertainment and personal communication but not for academic or professional endeavors. Regardless of the results of the research, this experiment is valuable as the data will contribute to the corpus of research which is outnumbered by qualitative research and can reduce decisions made about educational technology based on intuition and feelings. The diversity inherent to this subject is evident in the background and theoretical frameworks sections. Because of this, the results of the research project fit into several areas such as pedagogy, educational technology, teaching for transfer, digital storytelling, and interdisciplinary studies, literacy studies, and New Media.

APPENDIX: EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENT

Example Assignment: Video Game Treatment

The Video Game: Emma Phoenix

Game Description: Emma Phoenix is an action adventure game for a female preteen and young teen audience. Players are on a quest to locate pieces of a clock hidden throughout the world. Players must solve science and math-based riddles, battle evil members of DoOM, and find ways to travel great distances with limited resources in order to collect the 12 pieces of clockwork meant to be encased in a leather book called *The Tempus Custos*. Players will take Emma on a version of Campbell's Hero's Journey (1953) as she is called from her ordinary world in Jacksonville, FL to an adventure that she initially refuses until a mentor in the form of the mysterious texting Ms. Duckworth convinces Emma that she has an obligation. Players will face tests, make allies, and battle enemies to retrieve not an elixir but pieces of a clock. Knowledge of biology, botany, and engineering will be required throughout the game. Assembling the pieces of the clock as they are located will require knowledge and application of geometry and physics.

Game beginning: Wide shot of a dark haired bespectacled Steam Punk girl with one green eye and one grey eye crouched behind a counter in an antique store. Zoom in on the girl as she looks at a picture on her iPhone and carefully raises her head to look at the same object hanging on a wall across the room. A ball of fire speeds toward her head, just missing her as she ducks behind the counter. Special effect shows the angle of Emma's movement. Emma texts Ms. Duckworth: Seriously, one of Morgana's demented offspring is chucking fireballs at my head. A reply flashes on Emma's phone: Be that as it may, if you don't retrieve all 12 pieces of the Druid's clock, we cannot end this war, and if The Descendants of Original Morgana build the device first, there will be no saving humankind.

Emma's thoughts are heard (her voice is a bit sarcastic but deep and serious): *Does she think I don't know that? It is kind of impossible to forget that two months ago I was a run of the mill angry product of the foster*

care system and just because I solved some puzzle in a junk store, I had to train to save the world by finding escape wheels, main springs, and clock trains hidden all over the world.

When Emma's thoughts stop, the player must navigate the shop to get the rusty metallic gears introduced in that 5 second opening. This short opening is meant to both educate the player and place the player in action in the first moments of the game per Bates' assertion in *Game Design* (2004). Obstacles in this first piece of play are: fireballs from a figure across the room, chains swinging from the ceiling at varying intervals so that a particular rhythm is required to cross the room. Once the item is retrieved, the playing stops and Emma Phoenix hooks a magnetic disc onto the frame of the closest window and repels the 6 stories to the street below. In this cut scene, Emma makes a call to someone identified on her phone as Duckworth. From the short dialogue between Emma and Duckworth, the player learns that Emma has retrieved the first piece of the clock and must get out of Chicago and head to Zurich where the next piece is rumored to be. The short call also makes clear to the player that Emma's mission is about something larger than an artifact. Duckworth surprised Emma though when she ends the call with, "one flag on the pay, Emma. The intel about Zurich was a hoax. You'll have to figure out where the next piece is hidden using the info I'm uploading to your phone now."

Game middle: The player must use clues about geographical structures, landmarks, governments, and historic events to determine the location of the next piece of the clock. As the player progresses, the clues require more knowledge of math and science. As the game is in the Steam Punk genre, the player must also distinguish between real science and pseudoscience that is a staple of the genre.

Once the player chooses the correct location, he or she must then overcome obstacles to retrieve the piece. There will be detours at higher levels as intel is not accurate or a member of DoOM arrives first and claims the piece. Emma then has to use clues in the physical area, or

messages from Duckworth, or people in the location to overcome the new challenge. Emma's growth shows in this long section because she must communicate with people appropriately, trust others, be confident, and travel to places like Prague and Vienna after living in the small world of the Jacksonville, FL foster care system. This element is included despite the fear that it borders on cliché in order to address the lack of socioeconomic diversity in students choosing STEM majors.

Game end: When Emma has all 12 pieces of the clockwork, the final challenge is to arrange the pieces in the correct pattern in The Tempus Custos. This pattern will be based on algebra and geometry puzzles hidden in the game. Once arranged correctly, the clock begins to run and figures in royal blue robes begin appearing from every direction. They walk toward Emma lead by a girl the same age as Emma wearing a particularly beautiful blue and white robe, the hood pulled over her head, dark hair spilling out of the hood and her arms outstretched toward Emma.

Emma's phone buzzes and she looks down while also trying to measure the intent of the crowd getting closer and closer. Duckworth's message: Don't be afraid. It is time you met Abigail, now that you freed her, she will help with the next battle in this war.

Emma and the beautiful girl make eye contact, and Emma locks on the eyes staring back at her, one grey and one green. The scene fades to black. *Just for Now* by Imogen plays.

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