December 2017

Expanding Composition Pedagogies: A New Rhetoric from Social Media

Ashley Evans
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

EXPANDING COMPOSITION PEDAGOGIES:

A NEW RHETORIC FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

by

Ash Evans

A Dissertation Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in English

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

December 2017

ABSTRACT

EXPANDING COMPOSITION PEDAGOGIES:
A NEW RHETORIC FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

by

Ash Evans

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2017
Under the Supervision of Professor Anne Frances Wysocki

Traditionally, the field of rhetoric and composition has valued long-form essay writing, which requires students to engage patiently and at length with revision. In contrast, students today spend much time outside of school producing fast-paced and short posts for social media. This dissertation argues that students' social media interactions provide them nuanced, dialogic, and complex rhetorical understandings about writing—but that students need help developing discursive processes to support transfer of their social media knowledge to other writing contexts, including long-form academic writing. Drawing from two semesters of in-class study, I construct for first-year composition classrooms a pedagogy that embraces and cultivates the rhetorical knowledge students gain from social media; I demonstrate how students can analyze, reflect on, and transfer this knowledge to academic contexts. Citing students' social media and academic writing, I draw from students' intuitive understandings of the rhetorical concepts medium, context, audience, *ethos*, and purpose to illustrate how these concepts can productively shift and expand in FYC instruction. To situate this pedagogy within contemporary practices, I analyze leading FYC textbooks and highlight how textbook pedagogies can acknowledge and foreground

students' expanded rhetorical understandings of social media for richer composing processes in all media and for all contexts, digital and non-digital.

For the teachers I learned from,

For the students who teach me,

And for my peripatetic companions,
Rommie and Andy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first want to thank the ENG 240 students who stuck with me as I asked them to think about composing and writing in ways that felt new to them. I hope they know how privileged I felt to work with them.

I am especially appreciative of a group of students who called themselves the "Golden Six" for their encouragement and support. Golden Six: you provided the seeds of thought that this project grew from all the way back in *Intro to English Studies*. I am indebted to you, like Gilgamesh is to Enkidu.

My dissertation chair, Anne, has provided me with her time, patience, and trust. When I met Anne five years ago, she asked me why I chose to have a piercing on my wrist. I couldn't provide her with a very good answer—I just liked the idea of a piercing in that spot. That moment returns to me every now and then because Anne has always encouraged me—and challenged me—to articulate the reasons why I make decisions as a teacher, scholar, and writer. She requires me to think more completely and purposefully. Anne, thank you.

My preliminary exams and dissertation committee members, Chuck and Bill, have continually provided me with helpful feedback, ideas, and encouragement. I am so appreciative of their thoughtfulness toward my work and my personal life. On the night that I finished dissertation revisions, I had a dream that the three of us were fly-fishing somewhere in the Cascade Range. It was sunny, there was no sign of wildfire smoke, and the water was calm and clear. Bill caught the most beautiful, colorful trout. I felt at peace.

There is a group of UWM folks who I think of as both colleagues and life-long friends: Thank you to Kristi Prins for your mento-ing and your mentoring. You reminded me that "it's just work," and I repeat that to myself almost every day. Loretta, I am grateful for your company, friendship, and (my gosh) your infinite loyalty. Leslie, I am honored to be your collaborative writing partner, and I look forward to our yearly 'friendcations' in Tampa. Thank you to Chris Lyons for your mentorship when I was on the WPA, and thank you for talking about anything but teaching with me when I wasn't on the WPA. Finally, Barb Lucius provided wonderful support and encouragement through all stages of this dissertation (and the past few years of life in general). Barb, you are a true friend.

Ingrid, your passion and conviction—in and out of the classroom—challenges me to be a better teacher… and a more thoughtful, loving person. Thank you for your friendship, your support of all aspects of my life, and for becoming my family.

My neighbors in Shorewood fed me, loved Rommie, decoded my dreams, and always (always!) asked about my dissertation and teaching. When I say I miss Milwaukee, these people are part of the reason why: Ken, Jeremy, Bill, Steven, and the folks at City Market.

My Dad believed that I would be able to complete a doctoral degree the minute I received an acceptance letter to graduate school. I cannot describe what it means to have that unconditional support. Thank you, Dad.

For years—literally YEARS, people—my dog Rommie has slept at my feet while I typed at my computer. She waits patiently to go outside every single day, and I swear she has learned the words, "Five more minutes." Rommie can't read, and so she cannot know how much I appreciate her. But if you ever see me with Rom, give her a nice back scratch or belly rub in honor of her good dog status: She's a 14/10.

Finally, my partner Andy has never known me when I wasn't dissertating. I am thankful that he has loved me this whole time. He also spent many weekends in therapy with me: hiking around Oregon and Washington.

Writing and hiking have a similar process for me:
I begin with anticipation and excitement…
I quickly feel tired…
I complain about my suffering every few minutes…
I eat nonstop…
I have to keep moving forward, even if it there is no end in sight.
Finishing a piece of writing offers relief. Summiting a mountain also offers relief, but the view is far better.

Andy, thank you for climbing this mountain by my side. The view from the top of this one looks pretty good.

Introduction

"The way teaching and learning functions is by using the familiar to explain the new." – Dylan[1]

"Overall, I think it is important to have education be fluid into our lives. It should be work, but more than anything I believe that learning and education should be ongoing. If you use social media in education, chances are education will be used in social media. " –Claire

Students write a lot in their daily lives, and much of this writing occurs on social media. When students enter the first-year composition (FYC) classroom, there is often a disconnect between the writing that they find valuable and familiar and the writing that instructors find valuable and promote through teaching process writing. In the pages of this project, I illustrate how students enter the FYC classroom with complex, intuitive approaches to social media writing and suggest how instructors can provide students with activities and assignments to turn these understandings into a discursive, reflective, and rhetorical process of writing. Each chapter analyzes a contemporary or classical rhetorical concept traditionally taught in FYC—medium, context, audience, ethos, and purpose—and

[1] Each chapter begins with quotations from students in two sections of *Rhetoric and Social Media*, a class that I detail in further explanation below. I received Institutional Review Board approval from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to study both sections. The protocol number for the first study, "Rhetoric and Social Media: Students' Perspectives in ENG 240," is 15.280-UWM. The protocol number for the second study, "Rhetoric and Social Media: Students' Perspectives in ENG 240 (Part 2)," is 17.046-UWM. Students are quoted verbatim, including all grammatical and spelling errors. I have provided pseudonyms for anonymity.

demonstrates how students' intuitive knowledge can contribute to their understanding of these terms.

With the voices of students from two semester-long studies, I argue that FYC instruction can draw from students' social media knowledge to expand existing rhetorical terms, which will provide students with a rhetorical awareness for any writing situation, including academic writing. In the rest of this chapter, I provide context for the various components of this project. I begin by discussing how this project came into existence, including the two *Rhetoric and Social Media* courses I both taught and used as my objects of study. As a logical corollary, I then explain the importance of social media to my argument. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the chapters in this project, including the main themes found in the chapters.

ENG 240: Rhetoric and Social Media

During my initial years of teaching, I developed questions regarding students' cognitive and composing processes on social media, which led me to study social media in my FYC classroom. Initially and informally in early sections of my teaching, I examined whether various social media could be productive tools in first-year composition (FYC) classrooms, but I quickly realized that bringing social media into the classroom for academic purposes only confused students and their nascent rhetorical approaches. For instance, many students did not want to use their personal Twitter accounts when tweeting thesis statements or live-tweeting reading assignments: They worried that their audiences would not engage with this content and would 'unfollow' them. And, these students rightfully argued, such tweets from their classmates would clog up personal newsfeeds

with content unrelated to their otherwise carefully cultivated interests. From my early experiences integrating social media into the classroom, I realized that asking students to organically study their writing on social media might be more useful for classroom analysis and reflection.

In the spring of 2015 (Section 1) and the fall of 2016 (Section 2), I designed and taught two sections of a general-education writing course that I titled Rhetoric and Social Media (ENG 240): I hoped to discover whether all of the time that students spent on social media helped them gain rhetorical insight about their writing practices.[2] These courses were taught at a large Midwestern university with a student body diverse in race, culture, age, and socioeconomic status; the students highlighted in this project are representatives of this diversity. In this dissertation, I reference or quote over half of the students studied. While some of the students profiled were avid social media users, several of the students quoted heavily in this work reported that they were unaware of or uninterested in the course topic when they registered for the class. (Some students reported fulfilling a general education requirement for their major by taking the class.) One student quoted in this work had never used social media before, but he was regularly posting on Twitter and Facebook by the end of ENG 240. Further, ENG 240 students ranged from first-year status to senior status and included one self-reporting non-traditional student. I believe that the students quoted in this work are a fair representation of the ENG 240 population.

I found that students in both Section 1 and 2 articulated similar ideas about social media writing and identified similar, intuitive, approaches to the rhetorical terms medium, context, audience, ethos, and purpose. However, from my experiences teaching Section 1, I

[2] You can access the course description and goals for both sections in Appendix A.

learned to more overtly foreground discussions about transferring students' observations and analyses into academic contexts. Below, I describe in detail how I designed Section 1 and how I fine-tuned Section 2 to foster students' social media knowledge and transfer it to academic writing.

In Section 1, twenty students used the semester to analyze, reflect on, and produce social media writing in order theorize about rhetorical choices: Why do they communicate thoughts on Twitter but adamantly claim the same post is not Facebook-worthy? Who, exactly, are they writing to when posting nonsensical memes? What does it mean to construct an ethos in an ever-shifting, user-reactive social media environment? Some of the students in Section 1 estimated that they spent 35-40% of their waking day on social media sites; they saw social media as a pivotal and consuming aspect of their lives. At the beginning of the course, students articulated that they made purposeful composing decisions from social media site to social media site—but they had immense difficulty describing why they made such choices. By the end of the course—after weeks of my prompting to help them develop a discursive method to their writing on social media—I came to understand that these students had an approach to composing on social media that was more complex than the rhetoric I offered in any of my writing courses. While at first offering what seemed like simplistic descriptions of their writerly choices, I encouraged these students to develop their understanding of writing on various social media sites—understandings which were nuanced, dialogic, and dependent on how the media invite users to compose. Further, these students were able to articulate—without having much specific terminology—that in order to compose effectively on these sites, a user must take into consideration the various ways they can communicate a purpose (with or without

words), how the circulation of posts affects composing, the expectations of multiple audiences, and the layers of context in which posts might appear.

By the end of the semester, students in Section 1 had developed a rhetorical process grounded in their awareness of the media. As a way for students to enact their newfound rhetorical awareness, I asked them to produce social media projects where they were instructed to "enact, perform, or complete your own social media 'rhetorical act,'" such as making a video that goes viral, creating a fandom account, or posting content on a personal account that could contribute information about users' beliefs (political, racial, gendered, etc.). In reflective essays about their final projects, several students claimed that they were stressed out, and this was because they had immense difficulty making sense of their social media actions in an academic essay. What I had required of the students was not natural: I had helped students develop a robust rhetorical theory that they applied within their social media projects, and then I proceeded to require them to complete writing with a forced rhetorical situation in an academic essay.

In Section 2, I restructured ENG 240 to explicitly foreground the rhetorical aspects of students' social media writing so that their rhetorical awareness could transfer to their approaches to academic writing. The assignment and grading requirements I created for Section 2 almost always required students to provide descriptions and examples, thorough analysis, and complex discussion of rhetorical concepts. The 24 students in Section 2 were asked to analyze, reflect on, and produce social media writing, but they were also asked to think about their social media observations in relation to academic contexts; students in Section 2 were asked to apply their rhetorical knowledge from social media—what became an expanded understanding of the rhetorical situation, grounded within media choices—to

more transparent, slower media, like their academic writing in print essays. In Section 2, students not only began to see academic essays as rhetorical texts, but they also acknowledged that their rhetorical approaches to academic essays were not entirely different from their rhetorical approaches on social media.

In the upcoming chapters, the voices of students from Section 1 join students from Section 2, as I argue for an expanded rhetoric in FYC that can be applied to all media, whether social or academic, digital or print. My goal is to demonstrate how students can learn to articulate their intuitive knowledge about writing on social media, how instructors can layer that knowledge with existing rhetorical theory and make adjustments to productively expand concepts, and how students can begin to transfer their knowledge and the expanded rhetorical theory into other kinds of writing, including academic contexts. Students in both sections demonstrate the steps of transfer I have outlined here, and so I do not distinguish sections when introducing students.

The Role of Social Media

The students in the ENG 240 courses report spending up to 40% of the waking day on social media sites. One student said earnestly to me in class: "Twitter is how you change the world." For many of the students in the ENG 240 courses, social media provides an outlet for meaningful, productive writing. Demonstrating that the ENG 240 students are not unique, a 2015 PEW research report claims that 92% of teens ages 13-17 spend time online daily (Lenhart 2), and 71% of these teens spend time on multiple social media sites (3). As Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe argue: "Studying almost any aspect of rhetoric and composition without acknowledging the significant roles that digital environments play as

people make meaning in their homes, in schools, in communities is, in sum, to be blind to the realities of contemporary communication" (188). Similarly, in *A Teaching Subject*, Joseph Harris references the various ways of composing online and digitally, arguing teachers can "use the web to change both how student texts circulate and interact with each other as readers and writers" (174). Many scholars believe that integrating these spaces into our classrooms can encourage students to see the writing they do online as intellectual work, and more simply, to see it as actual writing worth taking seriously. In addition, many scholars also recognize that students' writing on social media can provide useful heuristics for rhetoric and composition pedagogies. The following chapters expand on the work of scholars who argue that students' social media writing is complex, rhetorical, and collaborative. These scholars believe there is value in asking students to analyze their social media composing and so to achieve the learning outcomes of their FYC courses. Below I synthesize a small sampling of scholarship published in the past 10 years that urges compositionists to consider students' social media writing as valuable rhetoric and writing heuristics or scholarship that integrates social media in the composition classroom. These arguments come from composition journals focused on writing and technologies (*Computers and Composition*, *Kairos*) and from edited collections that focus primarily on using social media in academic settings.

Frequently cited scholarship stresses the importance of addressing the new ways students are writing (Vie, 2008, and Maranto and Barton, 2010). Vie asserts that neglecting social media or treating it as something 'students do' rather than an important scene of literacy only furthers the divide between students' knowledge when they enter writing classrooms and teachers' knowledge. She urges the field of composition to "begin looking at

online social networking sites through an academic lens to examine the complexities these sites showcase and what ramifications they may hold for our pedagogies and our field" (21). But, as more and more instructors and universities began to integrate social media into curricula, however, Maranto and Barton also warn against blurring lines between social and academic uses of sites like MySpace or Facebook, suggesting that instructors should consider students' privacy when integrating social media into the classroom.

Heeding calls to treat social media as a relevant and robust site of composing, other scholars examine how sites like MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter could promote awareness of interfaces, collaboration and interactivity, and critical engagement in the composition classroom (Coad, 2013; Miller, Gilkeson, and Pignotti, 2015; Williams, 2009; Clark, 2010; Frost, 2011; and Gerben, 2012). Erin Frost's integration of social media into the classroom allowed students to "examine the ways in which social networking forums colonized their daily lives" (275). Frost advocates: "By letting student innovation drive pedagogical practice… composition teachers can be assured of having a text for critique that blurs the lines between student underlife and classroom practice" (275). Frost continues to explain that students, "often find a tangible connection between their personal and academic lives empowering, especially when they have been allowed to seek that connection on their own" (275). Christopher Gerben's 2012 dissertation explores these links further by focusing on collaborative interaction, particularly the similarities between online, social writing and classroom work. Gerben argues that "being more cognizant of the ways in which student-users make use of the affordances of websites in order to promote writing and interaction increases compositionists' ability to perceive bridges between online and academic writing" (214).

Many scholars present social media as sites for students to gain rhetorical awareness and as a way to shape connections between students' writing on social media and their academic composing (Buck, 2015; Balzhiser et al., 2011; Swartz, 2011; Amicucci, 2017; Dubisar and Palmeri, 2010; Monty, 2015; and Shepherd, 2015). In a 2015 webtext, Elisabeth Buck proposes that social media is ideal for usage in a FYC classroom because students already have established online habits of practice; students only need theory and practice in order to analyze and explain their decisions in more complex, rhetorical ways. Focusing primarily on understandings of audience and exigence, Buck argues that one area for exploration in the classroom is examining how students know when to post something on Twitter verses Facebook or Instagram; she believes these choices are related to the affordances and conventions of a site, whether audience constraints or constraints of mode. In a webtext containing similar arguments, Jennifer Swartz asks students to analyze and reflect on the deliberate choices they make on MySpace and Facebook, particularly focusing on questions of online identity construction. Swartz believes one job of writing instructors is to "emphasize that writing does not occur in a vacuum, but rather is a set of rhetorical choices that always has an audience and a social context."

This study extends the scholarship that illustrates students' complex rhetorical awareness of both self and audience on social media. However, despite this rich body of work in rhetoric and composition and writing studies that addresses students' rhetorical awareness on social media, there is a deficiency of scholarship about how students' writing on social media can help them approach the kinds of long-form writing, critical thinking, and writing processes (including multiple drafts and discursive reflection) that is required of them in many writing courses like FYC. While a few scholars have begun to discuss the

concept of 'transfer' in relation to social media, the field is still on the cusp of understanding how students can move from rapid, short-form media like Twitter and Facebook to the slower long-form writing required for an academic essay. For instance, Katherine Fredlund argues that students can transfer their rhetorical knowledge from social media into other writing contexts, but there are no descriptions of how students navigated the transfer of skills from the sample assignments to the rhetorical analysis that required "academic prose" at the end of the semester (114). This project takes up this gap: I not only continue to invite students to analyze and reflect on their social media rhetorical processes, but I also ask them to analyze and reflect on those same processes when writing in academic contexts.

A Look Ahead

The chapters ahead examine the knowledge about media, context, audience, ethos, and purpose that students brought from their social media use and then developed in ENG 240. Using students' observations, analyses, and reflections, I propose an expanded rhetorical theory for FYC that can offer students an approach for all writing contexts, whether academic or social, print or digital. Using ENG 240 students' belief that the media they write with on social media affect the way their messages are received, I form a writing pedagogy for FYC that invites students to observe how all media require rhetorical shifts, depending on the available modes, the circulation of the message, and the level of interaction from the audience. Each chapter begins with a scenario where students in ENG 240 challenged an understanding that I held about a rhetorical concept, because the rhetoric I had studied and learned up to this point primarily addressed the culture of print

texts. Within each chapter, this productive challenge raises questions that I then explore through scholarship and theory, as well as pedagogical approaches to teaching writing in FYC. In each chapter, I demonstrate the tensions among theory, FYC textbook instruction, and students' approaches to writing; placing these approaches in conversation allows me to demonstrate where rhetorical theory for FYC could be expanded so that students can use the same theory for all media, digital and non-digital. In each chapter, I develop an expanded rhetorical definition for the concept in question, so as to allow FYC instruction to engage students as rhetorical, critical composers in a variety of media, and I include sample assignments and in-class activities to demonstrate how students might be guided toward such thinking and writing.

Chapter 1 asks how students can gain an awareness of the materiality of texts and how can they use this knowledge to understand how rhetorical considerations shift when composing in different media. Students in ENG 240 were able to articulate (without having such specific terminology) that, in order to compose effectively on social media, they must take into consideration how the medium affects their composing choices. But in analyzing the top five FYC textbooks of 2015, I learned that references to medium are too frequently made in ways that separate medium from rhetorical considerations; the textbooks invite students to think about medium only in terms of product, or as a momentary decision made at the beginning or end of the composition, or as stylized elements. By thinking of medium through *interplay* and *invitation*, students can gain the ability to see how elements of the rhetorical situation need to be given expanded readings, given the media they choose for composing. At the end of the chapter, I demonstrate how *interplay* allows students to connect the media they choose with rhetorical considerations when they begin academic

assignments and explain how *invitations* provide students with a process for analyzing and producing in both digital and print contexts.

Chapter 2 asks how students learn to become rhetorically aware of and responsive to the relevant context of a given topic. FYC textbooks ask students to question how they are situated as writers, how the sometimes unknown audience is situated, and how the subject material is situated within both local and global contexts. But when students are operating within unfamiliar contexts to begin with, this contextual awareness becomes a guessing game that threatens students' rhetorical agency. In chapter 2, therefore, I argue that students' understanding of 'community' on social media really is knowledge of media conventions that suggest agreed-upon norms for composing. I refer to this knowledge and norms as *presumed context*. Often when students call upon presumed context, they are writing within situational and momentary contexts and can demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how a text is immediately situated and what might happen when it circulates. Students can use presumed context to understand the complex layers that contribute to context before they even begin writing. At the end of the chapter, *academic lurking* is offered as a tangible process for students so that they can observe and analyze how media suggest conventions and norms of composing that can shift as texts circulate to new contexts.

In chapter 3, I focus on what I believe is the most difficult rhetorical concept to teach in the FYC classroom: Audience. In continuing to explore how students can approach unknown writing contexts, I address the following question: if we can't always remove the abstraction of audience in writing, how can we offer a better working theory of audience for students when composing in both print writing and with other media? Students in this

chapter came to the understanding that the media they write with situate them as contributing members of given audiences, and I build upon this knowledge to guide them toward a more productive approach of writing for both known and unknown audiences, in any context or any medium. Thus, this chapter encourages textbook instruction to move away from conceptualizations of 'audience-as-people' to promoting the expectations and habits that are associated with certain audiences. Adding to presumed context, the theories of *audience defined*/*audience intended* (AD/AI) offers students a way to identify what certain modes specifically suggest about audience as well as how students can actively situate their writing to meet expectations of a particular audience. At the end of the chapter, I highlight areas where students in my courses struggled—despite their theorizing, discursive reflection, and social media writing—to demonstrate how AD/AI can be employed in assignments with both real, physical audiences and imagined audiences.

In chapter 4, I take up the following question: How do the media and contexts within which students write position them to compose and position them as composers? The students highlighted in this chapter believe that their ethoi is a reciprocal construction among audience, the media they use, and the content they write. While FYC textbook instruction about ethos might strive to implement a similarly reciprocal approach, academic frameworks often constrict this relationship. In order to move students away from conceptions of ethos that might stem from certain buzzwords like "authoritative" and "credible," I expand the notion of ethos by encouraging students to develop their *self-presentation*, which allows students to draw upon their agency to develop an ethos that suits their own rhetorical needs (and not just that of academic scholars).

In chapter 5, the culminating rhetorical chapter, I question: Within the constraints of a FYC classroom—including the lack of feedback from students' audiences, limited time, impartiality or disengagement, and a looming grade—how can instructors provide students with assignments to construct rhetorically salient purposes? I highlight a student's passion for writing on social media and show that this passion is often connected to dialogue with other users and affirmations that allow her to post continually well-received messages. This same student claims that, when she writes for academic audiences, she writes without the same sense of fulfillment because her writing is not well received and there is no authentic engagement. Moving away from "thesis statement" and "exigency," which often result in content-focused writing, I illustrate how students can analyze the personal and external stakes in their academic writing through *engagement* and *affirmations* in the FYC classroom. To do so, I examine how limiting FYC textbooks are because they treat purpose as a uniting theme of an essay (thesis statement, purpose statement, a product to be achieved) rather than allowing students the opportunity to develop salient purposes while engaging in authentic dialogue with stakeholders.

Each chapter follows a consistent format, as outlined in the Table of Contents. I begin with a brief introduction that provides context about the chapter's rhetorical concept, transition into rhetorical theory, examine the rhetorical term as it manifests in five FYC textbooks (which remain the same), offer an expanded theory of the rhetorical concept, and apply the expanded rhetorical concept in classroom activities, homework, and essay assignments. I engage with the voices and work of ENG 240 students in almost all sections, because they provide the foundation of the expanded rhetorical framework. I have placed

important or redefined terms in italics the first time I use them in chapters; subsequent uses of the word are not italicized.

Assignments found in each “Pedagogical Application” section are meant to cover a semester of work, and multiple in-class activities and homework assignments are included for each rhetorical concept. The assignments move students from social media observation, analysis, and reflection of rhetorical concepts into observation, analysis, and reflection in other media, including academic texts. I make notes where the homework is meant to grow directly out of in-class assignments, and I explain how the assignments scaffold for both the rhetorical concepts discussed in the chapter and for the students’ more holistic rhetorical theory. When I discuss individual activities or assignments with other instructors, they often respond with, “What comes after this?” or “What do you do with your class the next day?” As the chapters progress, the assignments begin to build on students’ rhetorical awareness, and so I hope to have created a path that instructors can follow (with flexibility) that demonstrates how instructors can guide their students through observation, analysis, and reflection about media, context, audience, ethos, and purpose.

As you, my readers, progress through this project, I ask that you take up the words of Karine Nahon and Jeff Hemsley: in their theory about digital virality they write, "Instead of thinking of this as a recipe, think of it as a set of considerations" (78). The rhetoric proposed in this project is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, I see it as a gesture to expand how students think about and apply the rhetorical concepts we discuss every day in the FYC classroom. Similarly, I do not expect every classroom of students to respond as generously as the students in ENG 240. I have been careful to depict fair representations of the students included but did leave out voices of students who adamantly worked against

reflection, analysis, or simply doing their homework in my courses. In highlighting the growth of the students in this text, my goal is to focus on the positive and to provide the field with potential: I hope we can continue to expand the teaching of rhetoric so that students can gain awareness of their agency in the various media they write with throughout the day.

Finally, as I compose this introduction, my social media newsfeeds display near-constant evidence of a nation experiencing political unrest, of violence and anger in cities and on campuses across the United States, of weekly protests and marches and vigils. The social media contexts that students reference in this study feels like a different reality than what composition and rhetoric scholars and instructors might currently experience when they are online. Despite this contextual shift—or perhaps because of it—I believe it is more important than ever that students develop a process for speaking purposefully to, for, and with others. As I illustrate in the chapters to come, ENG 240 students identified themselves as online activists, creative artists, and as savvy rhetoricians. In the years to come, students need to continue building on this agency and to be aware of how words and messages can profoundly affect others.

Four Assumptions in this Project

The argument found in the following chapters does not promote social media writing in the FYC classroom or a theory of pedagogy for social media. Instead, the argument arises from a belief that students are creative and sophisticated social media composers—although they often need help to articulate this writing as a discursive, rhetorical process—and that this rhetorical awareness can inform their academic writing.

As I make this argument, I frequently return to four assumptions about students' writing relating to textbook instruction, transfer, long-form writing, and students' agency, and below I explain how I situate these assumptions in contemporary discussions about these topics.

Textbook Analysis

Instructors in the field of rhetoric and composition, writing studies, and other fields that privilege text-based writing do not always give students the credit that they deserve for the level of thought they have when composing on social media. While a distinct group of instructors have made this shift (as evidenced by previously cited scholarship), too often compositionists exclude conversations about students' social media writing from classes and make little effort to discuss what rhetorical lessons students gather from their social media experiences. Because of this, students can think that rhetoric has nothing to do with what they write about outside of FYC.

To ground my argument that current FYC rhetorical frameworks can benefit from acknowledging the rhetorical understandings that students gain from using social media, I analyze throughout this writing five leading rhetoric textbooks: I demonstrate how their approaches could be modified to better account for what students know and do.

Marilyn Moller, formerly a lead editor at W.W. Norton & Company, a global publisher of rhetoric and composition textbooks (among other disciplines), lists the five leading rhetorics in the field, based on various usage and marketing data: *They Say / I Say*, *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, *The St Martin's Guide to Writing*, *Writing Today*, and

Everyone's an Author.[3] Efforts to understand rhetoric in online writing environments are slowly appearing in these texts, but any reference is often only a few pages or a short chapter; this approach is worth noting precisely because these texts shape the pedagogical context of composition across the field.

As partial reason for their 2004 analysis of writing textbooks, Anne Wysocki and Julia Jasken suggest that, "throughout North America's educational history, textbooks have always contributed to shaping the trajectory of the discipline, and in times of great educational change, this shaping force has been especially strong…" (38). The population of instructors who are assigned FYC across the country—often graduate teaching assistants unfamiliar with composition pedagogy or contingent faculty—do not all have the same goals, flexibility, or experience. Composition textbooks are one indication of how a large population of instructors across the field might approach instruction for FYC courses, which outline semester-long approaches with scaffolded rhetorical teachings, assignments, and readings. In order for students' knowledge of social media rhetoric to inform current pedagogical approaches across the field of composition, I situate it within pedagogical frameworks found in texts like these. In each chapter, I present my argument by constructing a conversation between the processes and rhetorical approaches found in the five textbooks listed above with the voices of the ENG 240 students who performed analyses of their own writing on social media.

My intention with the textbook analysis is to highlight areas where rhetorical instruction could be expanded to better respond to students' rhetorical knowledge on

[3] While *They Say / I Say* is not considered a 'traditional rhetoric textbook,' because it "doesn't cover research, documentation, writing process, or genres," Moller ranks this text as the leading rhetoric, in use at more than 1,500 schools with more than 1.5 million copies sold.

social media. If at times my critique sounds negative, it is only because I have the luxury to develop the nuance of rhetorical concepts; I have tried to remind myself of the limitations of textbook writing and the constraints authors face (page limits, editorial decisions, marketing instead of pedagogical motivations, and instructor reviews and requests). At the same time, my analysis hones in on areas where textbook authors and instructors of FYC can take better advantage of the way rhetoric and writing are presented to students: If textbooks do not have the room to develop nuanced rhetorical concepts, then textbook authors and writing instructors must become more savvy about how such concepts are introduced and discussed with students. I argue that it is in the areas of medium, context, audience, ethos, and purpose where students are most aware of rhetoric on social media and where the textbooks are most lacking; I therefore have arranged this project according to these areas and how they build upon each other, starting with the one most fundamental to how rhetorical practices have shifted because of students' introduction to new kinds of media.

Transfer

As my argument makes clear in each chapter, when students gain awareness of media and modes, they are able to transfer rhetorical theory across writing contexts. Social media has been explicitly linked to transfer and the teaching of writing in academic settings (Rosinski, 2017; Sabatino, 2014; Head, 2014; Fredlund, 2016; DePalma, 2015; and Harrell, 2016). Samuel Head suggests that Facebook can help students learn about audiences and

achieve high road transfer for a variety of writing contexts.[4] Fredlund likewise argues that social media can lead students to develop high road transfer; students are asked to analyze rhetorical situations, genre conventions, and audiences on social media, and then are asked to apply these skills in multiple assignments, such as posting on a variety of social media platforms and creating memes. Fredlund explains, "Ultimately, incorporating writing prompts and assignments that ask students to reflect upon and experiment with social media encourages students to see themselves as capable writers while practicing the transfer they will inevitably find challenging" (114). Michael-John DePalma encourages students to recognize the various contexts and forms that each mode takes, and he encourages his students to recognize that modes cannot often be used in the same way when changing media. Students are thus taught to be aware of both the semiotic resources and the rhetorical capabilities of the texts they are remediating. In DePalma's description of "tracing," students are required to identify *what* a mode can achieve—both rhetorical and functional—as well as *how* it achieves those functions. DePalma calls this practice "a heuristic for mining rhetorical possibilities" (635).

Paula Rosinski studies the transfer among students' self-sponsored (voluntary) writing online and their academic writing, examining two concerns: first, whether students can transfer rhetorical understanding from self-sponsored online writing to academic writing and second, whether students can strengthen their ability to transfer from one

[4] Head draws from D.N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon's 1988 theory of "high road" transfer. Perkins and Salomon define high road transfer as the "deliberate mindful abstraction of skill or knowledge from one context to application in another" (25). They continue, "High road transfer can bridge between contexts remote from one another, but it requires the effort of deliberate abstraction and connection-making and the ingenuity to make the abstractions and discover the connections" (27). This project responds to my immediate classroom sensitivity about students' learning rather than growing out of transfer scholarship. However, if I were to embed my research within transfer scholarship, the process of analysis, writing, and reflection that I promote within these pages would be regarded as "high transfer."

context to another by reflecting on their rhetorical understanding. Rosinski's findings are not surprising, given the context of my own study: The students in her study had more rhetorical understanding in self-sponsored writing than in academic writing, but "did not initially transfer rhetorical knowledge or writing strategies between their self-sponsored and academic writing" (266). Rosinski observes,

> When students discussed their digital self-sponsored writing, they made significantly more references to writing for different audiences, as well as for multiple audiences; they discussed selecting the appropriate medium, content, and words; and they showed kairotic understanding when they discussed the importance of being aware of the timing of their writing. On the contrary, when students discussed their academic writing, they made far fewer references to making decisions based on their audience… they were very cynical about not having to take their audience into account because they were writing for their professors for a grade. (260)

To account for the rhetorical differences among self-sponsored writing and academic genres, Rosinski argues that students must be offered the opportunity to write for authentic audiences and to reflect on their writing decisions. Rosinski argues that in order for transfer to occur, students "must be able to recognize the similarity in situations, or the affordances available" (252). The chapters of my dissertation take up Rosinski's call for instructors to "encourage the potential transfer of rhetorical strategies between students' digital self-sponsored and academic writing," but I extend classroom application beyond the suggested "short, informal, and low stakes" activities and suggest a semester-long approach for students to develop transfer between contexts (267).

The chapters of this dissertation demonstrate how instructors can help students become aware of their rhetorical knowledge on social media, how this knowledge can be developed into a discursive and reflective process, as well as how this knowledge can be transferred into other writing contexts, like academic essays. However, as many scholars argue, transfer is a complex process. Rebecca Nowacek reasons, "good writing is not a skill that can be extracted from the complex social contexts for writing and applied unproblematically. Rather, writing knowledge is actually a complex constellation of knowledges and abilities linked together by a writer's understanding of genre" (100). Linda Adler-Kassner et al. similarly note that drawing from writers' prior knowledge—which includes "experiences, attitudes, and beliefs"—can be very complex, and thus instructors "need to [help students to] articulate it, sometimes building on it and other times amending it" (43). When students learn rhetorical awareness in one context and then understand not only that they can apply it in another writing context but also *how* they can apply it in another writing context, I believe they have achieved transfer—and this is exactly what the chapters that follow demonstrate and discuss. The expanded rhetorical terms and assignments in each chapter lead students to become aware of how and why they write on social media, in the hope that their rhetorical awareness and agency online will promote transfer to their academic writing.

In chapter 1, I argue that students can begin the work of transfer from their social media rhetorical knowledge to academic texts by approaching medium as a pivotal factor in the composing process. Several transfer scholars argue that with awareness of genre, students develop transfer capabilities from one writing context to another. For instance, Nowacek believes that through attention to genre, "instructors can help facilitate mindful

transfer" (17). Nowacek defines genre as "a rhetorical act," and argues that it is useful for transfer because it allows students to find similarities among different contexts. Genre "is a way to avoid reinventing the wheel, a way of seeing general trends" (20). For students to effectively integrate their awareness of genre, Nowacek explains that instructors must help students find productive language to discuss their writing as they move through various contexts and that students should be required to reflect on their writing to forge connections between writing tasks. Yet Nowacek concedes that, "first-year students did not have such a robust understanding of genre. For many students, genres were simply types of papers, with an emphasis on format and other formal conventions" (102). Despite similar results, Adler-Kassner et al. demonstrate from their study that "awareness of even superficial similarities and differences constitutes a fledgling stage of genre awareness that ultimately can result in effective transfer" (36). Even if definitions of genre are expanded so that they are no longer viewed as sets of conventions for specific kinds of texts and are instead treated as what Nowacek calls "a sociocognitive resource for crafting a response to a social situation," instructors still need to provide students with a process for analyzing and determining how genres are constructed and how writers respond to genres (18).

Students in ENG 240 demonstrated more awareness of medium than genre, because they were more aware of the materiality of texts than discourse conventions. From my reading of students' social media posts, I believe that students interpret the various potentialities of genre—including decisions about which genre is most appropriate—based upon their understanding of the medium and its rhetorical influence. Students' understanding of medium aligns with Anis Bawarshi's theory of genre: Genres are "sites in which communicants rhetorically reproduce the very environments to which they in turn

respond—the habits and the habitats for acting in language" (71). Genres, according to Bawarshi's definition, are both actions that are performed and the places where such enacted actions are established. For students, social media is a place where actions and reactions contribute to meaning. In a print, academic essay, ENG 240 students often feel as if they are writing alone or writing according to pre-determined expectations; writing on social media, however, is a site where they operate within continually shifting expectations that they can influence. In Bawarshi's theory, genres possess conventions that are both suggested by and contributed to through the genre's use; conventions of a genre are "established by our culture and rhetorical reproduced and enacted by the genre, which in turn help us perform certain activities in certain ways" (74). Each medium has its own expectations of composing—what Bawarshi refers to as "rhetorical habits and social habitats"—that contribute to the ways of composing (73).

While theories like Bawarshi's could provide students with the approach to genre awareness that aligns with their intuitive understandings, the goal of my argument is to demonstrate how instructors can draw from students' knowledge to define and transfer rhetorical concepts; I believe this requires students to work with their own knowledge, rather than asking them to use complex terms that that they have difficulty understanding. In my analysis of FYC textbooks, I demonstrate how medium is often conflated with genre, as if to suggest that an understanding of the materials a student writes with also suggests genre conventions. Students in ENG 240 make clear that there must be a distinction: The students can identify what modes they use regularly on social media, but they have much more difficulty identifying what genres they write with on Twitter or Facebook. I therefore

draw from students' media awareness because it provided ENG 240 students with a much more approachable process for analysis and transfer than genre awareness.

Long-form Writing

While students do not partake in the same kinds of long-form writing on social media that instructors assign in FYC classrooms, they still engage in the same kinds of rhetorical thinking that instructors aim for in FYC classrooms, such as critical thought and collaborative or dialogic exchanges. The pedagogy suggested in each chapter aids students as they develop rhetorical language and writing processes in order to approach a variety of writing contexts, including those that compositionists writ large have declared relevant for writing instruction. In "Short-form writing: Studying Process in the Context of Contemporary Composing Technologies," Pamela Takayoshi argues that, "we must pay attention to *writing as a process*" (2, original italics). In studying how two students compose short form messages on Facebook through think aloud protocols, Takayoshi concludes that studying social media writing as a product can be viewed as "insubstantial, trivial, and of little consequence" but studying the "processes of composing" reveals "a complex, rhetorically-rich, decision-making process of meaning making" (10). Through studying students' processes of composing, I observed that students could achieve similar rhetorical awareness in both academic contexts and social media.

As I argue in the following pages, shifts in media create shifts in rhetorical considerations. This means how students write on social media cannot be directly applied in their long-form writing, like with academic essays. Because of this, I examine the

disconnect students feel between the writing they complete in the FYC classroom and their frequent social media composing. In *Writing New Media*, Anne Wysocki argues,

> We can be most effective in teaching when we see, and so can teach about, how our compositions only ever work within and as part of other, already existing structures and practices. There needs to be more of this sort of critique for new media, which shows us… that new technologies do not automatically erase or overthrow or change old practices. (8)

Writing long-form academic essays teaches a process of writing and thinking that is not replicated when switching to faster media, like texting or posting on social media. But as Wysocki argues, we should consider moving among media as more of a *shift* in form rather than assuming every medium has a distinct practice. In exploring how students can shift among media, I argue that the rhetorical approaches students develop for social media expand upon classical and contemporary rhetorical approaches that are traditionally applied to print media. I also argue that the knowledge students bring from social media can be useful for the complex tasks they encounter in the FYC classroom, including their academic writing: composing multiple drafts of essays, revision, long engagement with a complex text (whether reading or writing), and juggling multiple complex ideas within a text over a long period of time. In working through these complex aspects of writing, students can develop a rhetorical process from social media that helps them approach academic texts. In *Everyone's An Author*, a textbook that takes into account the digital environments that surround FYC students, Andrea Lunsford et al. emphasize the importance of rhetorical thinking. They explain to students,

> Those who think rhetorically are in a very strong position. They have listened

> attentively and thought carefully and methodically; viewed their topic from many alternate perspectives; done their homework; and engaged with the words and thoughts of others. This kind of rhetorical thinking will help you to get in on conversations—and will increase the likelihood that your ideas will be heard and will inspire actions that take root and prosper. (Lunsford et al. 16)

As students from ENG 240 discuss how they think about these very same considerations on social media, I develop their thinking and writing into a rhetorical theory that can be applied to multiple media, including academic writing. Social media is used as a conduit: Sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are places where rhetorical approaches are observed, analyzed, and then expanded for long-form writing contexts.

Agency

If students are given an opportunity to observe, analyze, and reflect on their own and others' social media writing, I believe they can develop a rich, thorough theory of rhetoric that can be applied to any writing context. In each chapter, I argue that developing a rhetorical theory grounded in media awareness strengthens students' awareness of their writerly agency. Marilyn Cooper rejects the notion that agency is "a possession" because agents continuously take action (423). Cooper argues, instead, that

> What we need is not a pedagogy of empowerment, but a pedagogy of responsibility. We need to help students understand that writing and speaking (rhetoric) are always serious actions. The meanings they create in their rhetoric arise from and feed back into the construction of their own

dispositions, their own ethos. (443)

I build from this notion of rhetorical action in this text by presenting rhetorical concepts dependent on the reciprocal construction of meaning among the constituents of a text: the media, the student, and the audience. I argue that students who gain a greater awareness of their agency become observant and responsive to the ways media, audiences, and contexts are already at work at positioning them before they begin writing.

My understanding of agency also stems from Shawna Shapiro et al., who similarly regard action as a crucial component of agency. They explain, "Central to the ability to take action is the idea of 'noticing' that an action needs to be taken and awareness of the available actions one might take" (33). An aspect of gaining agency is observing what action needs to be taken (33) and gaining awareness of the affordances and constraints that accompany each writing situation (34). Such awareness requires students to practice reflection, both in learning how others respond to writing and for self-evaluation. When I refer to agency, I refer to the ability to gain awareness about each writerly choice made and to know when to employ such choices, which requires both action and reflection. This means that students are thinking not only about how they compose, but also about why they compose, especially in relation to the rhetorical considerations examined in the upcoming chapters. When students develop this agency, they can produce more rhetorical texts (in all contexts) because each decision they make is purposeful.

Chapter 1: Medium

A computer does not do anything by itself; it needs other things to be able to do what we want a computer to do. – Blake

Every day there are unspoken expectations. If I do not text my friend back, I may be putting our friendship in jeopardy or if I do not submit a paper to the dropbox on my school's site, I may end up doing poorly in class. In order to complete these tasks, I must first understand how *to perform them. – Hilary, original emphasis*

This chapter illustrates the rich understanding students have of media and modes on social media. When provided the opportunity to develop this awareness into a discursive process, students gained awareness of their agency as writers and their rhetorical ability to purposefully write in a variety of media. I argue that FYC instructors and scholars should draw from students' social media knowledge to improve writing pedagogies: The students I study below clarify how instructors can approach terms like medium, modes, interface, and genre. I do not argue that writing instructors should teach students to compose better social media posts. Instead, I argue that writing instructors should take these forms of communicating very seriously, because as ENG 240 students demonstrate, social writing has a lot more to offer the process of composing than the records of our current pedagogies demonstrate.

In this chapter, I explore four principles of social media interaction that characterize ENG 240 students' observations and reflections. When students in the course became alert

to the materiality of texts, they developed greater awareness of their agency and rhetorical purpose; the four principles I am about to offer examine the complexity and nuance of students' observations, especially as they learn to see the media and modes as rhetorical considerations of composing. After presenting these principles, I examine how rhetoric and composition scholars define "medium." First, I demonstrate that the theory found in scholarship remains too vague to apply in the classroom, especially when compared to ENG 240 students' articulation of their own media awareness. As a solution to this, I attempt to find pedagogical instruction in first-year composition (FYC) textbooks, examining how media is regarded during the composing process. To improve these approaches, I circle back to students' knowledge of social media writing, arguing that the principles outlined by the ENG 240 classes can productively lend themselves to all kinds of writing, including academic. Finally, I demonstrate how such principles can be integrated directly into the FYC classroom and for academic writing through *interplay* and *invitation*: pedagogical instruction that helps students connect media, modes, and rhetorical considerations by recognizing the places within all media where they are invited to compose. I offer lesson plans to demonstrate how *interplay* and *invitation* might look in practice.

This project relies heavily on the terms *media* (*medium* as the singular form) and *mode* to describe students' rhetorical understandings. Based on how I interpret ENG 240 students' observations, thinking, and composing, I define "media" as the materials created purposefully by people and used purposefully by people to compose; rhetorical considerations must shift when a writer moves from medium to medium.[5] Analysis of media requires students to recognize the materiality of texts: what occurs during the

[5] While I focus primarily on writing in this project, I use the word "compose" to highlight how media allow for more forms of communication than writing.

composing and production process, how texts circulate, and how texts are shared, read, and reused. A mode is a method of communication with or within a medium; modes indicate the possible ways that meaning is created within a medium. Analysis of modes encourages students to consider how expectation and norms of composing suggest rhetorical considerations. These definitions arise from my reading of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's theory in *Multimodal Discourse*. Kress and van Leeuwen define media as "the material resources used in the production of semiotic products and events, including both the tools and the materials used," and modes are the way that discourse is formulated or realized within media (22). As I discuss in more detail below, Kress and van Leeuwen's definitions highlight the occasional overlap of medium and mode. Although these terms might seem abstract or imprecise now, I work to clarify them with student examples later in this chapter. Throughout this text my use of the words media/medium and mode refer to these definitions, which grow out of students' intuitive and reflective understandings of the materiality of texts. Students' use of words like 'affordance' or 'interface' result from engagement with composition scholarship or media theory; in defining words like *medium* and *mode* with practices that students are already (somewhat) familiar with, they are provided with immediate acknowledgement of their agency as communicators.

I begin this chapter by sharing an anecdote, which leads into the four principles that I identified in students' work to demonstrate their intuitive awareness of medium and modes on social media. Precisely because students demonstrated so much awareness about media without having complex or theoretical language to support their thinking, I

spend ample time developing how they understand and approach media and modes before moving to definitions found in contemporary scholarship.

The anecdote describes a moment in Section 1 of ENG 240: To help students develop a beginning sense of the materiality of texts, one day in class I held up a book and asked if they knew how to read it.

"Like, where do you even start?!" I asked with mock drama.

Most students offered me skeptical looks and one good sport called out, "You start on the first page!"

"So you start reading without even knowing what it's about?" I challenged.

Eyes rolled.

The same student responded, "No, you obviously read the title."

"Oh. So you don't start on page one. You start on the front with the big font and colored lettering?"

Although they nodded in agreement, the students were unimpressed with this discussion. 'We know how to read books,' their faces seemed to say, 'so why are you making us have this conversation?'

But students were fascinated by the notion of 'reading gravity,' or the concept that in Western traditions, eyes first land on a text in the upper left-hand corner and then make their way diagonally downward to the lower right-hand corner—a habit that reflects how a reader is expected to approach a text.[6] Here was something new and surprising: They had

[6] Noah Stupak et al. elaborate, "When a display is divided into four quadrants, Western readers expect to begin in the upper left area and end at the lower right. The upper left area is known as the primary optical area and should contain the most important information" (368). Stupak et al. draw from the Gutenberg diagram, which "takes advantage of the natural order of attention given" to interfaces (368). References to reading gravity can also be found in print media style guides.

never questioned why they read books that way, and many students wondered if there were books to read that did not start in the upper left-hand corner. Students reengaged as we examined the evolution of book materials over time, from scrolls to manuscripts to ebooks.

In a class activity later that day, groups analyzed the various materiality of digital composing sites, like Microsoft Word, our university learning management system, and social media like Facebook. The group analyzing Microsoft Word struggled to get past the "blank screen" staring back at them, and despite our long class conversation about the different ways pages have taken shape over time, they failed to recognize that a Microsoft Word screen mimics a printed page. The Facebook group struggled in a different way, as they attempted to align Facebook with the media from our discussion about books. The group wrote in their notes, "Very square—going back to the book thing?" This group wondered if Facebook's homepage could be read the same way a book page should be read: from top to bottom and left to right. They were trying to connect the only process they had for recognizing composing materials with a familiar social site, even if the action did not match their effortless daily navigation.

After this lesson, I realized that these students lacked a process for analysis when looking at different materials for composing; they could not understand why they were expected to compose in certain ways within certain media. For example, none of the students had ever thought about why they read from top to bottom, left to right, nor had any of the students ever asked why they write in Microsoft Word, despite some of their claims that they have been doing so since fourth grade. When I taught this lesson again to Section 2, I asked the group of students analyzing Microsoft Word, "Who creates the

expectations that accompany academic writing?" Two students shook their heads in confusion, but one student said, very assuredly, "The government." It was then clear to me that students entering my classrooms have very little experience analyzing the social, economic, and material layers that affect how and why they write (and speak! and think!) in certain ways, every single day.

Unlike the constraints of university classrooms, where students often feel that they write according to an instructor's specifications (or the government, I suppose), most students in ENG 240 never wavered from the belief that their social media writing involved complex decisions regarding the medium and modes, even if students could not always supply technical language to describe this process. Because so many students in ENG 240 were open to discussing their composing processes on social media, I found an opening for students to observe how multiple constituents influence how they are expected to write (rather than just one authoritative figure, like the instructor). As ENG 240 students began recognizing how they compose within a medium and the choices available to create meaning, they also realized that the medium situates them to compose a certain way by offering a particular set of modes. Jordan, for example, decided what messages to post on which social media site based on what was offered to him: "While Facebook gives me more space to articulate myself and ground my material, on Twitter you have to be mindful that what you're hitting your cues rather quickly due to the affordances you're allowed in single doses." Jordan understood that some messages are more appropriate for certain media than others, and he emphasized that the materials available for writing have a role to play in those decisions.

After working with students in ENG 240 and reading all of their work, I developed four principles:

- Principle 1**:** Agency is developed when writers develop awareness of how the media situates them within a rhetorical exchange and how they can communicate within the media.
- Principle 2: Modes are purposefully employed to create a sense of writerly self.
- Principle 3: A change in medium indicates a (potential) change in connection, engagement, and/or experience.
- Principle 4: Purposeful use of media requires connecting modes with a message's purpose and the future circulation of that message.

Below, I illustrate how students have foregrounded these principles in their thinking about medium and modes but have not yet developed a discursive understanding of the principles. Later in this chapter, I offer two methods to help students become more alert to these four principles so that they can guide their social media knowledge to transfer for other writing contexts.

Principle 1: Agency is developed when writers develop awareness of how the media situates them within a rhetorical exchange and how they can communicate within the media.

When the materials and modes of social media sites become more visible for students, they gain the opportunity to recognize how the medium contributes to their composing process. The first principle demonstrates how ENG 240 students started to recognize the materials of composing. No matter how intuitive a medium might make

writing, these observations are not always easy. Several of the students in Section 1 learned to view media as materials that could be purposefully used in order to communicate messages. For example, in early analyses, Hilary described social media as a place where she could write informally and she described the university as the place where she "must speak 'oh so properly' when submitting academic assignments." But in later reflections, Hilary complicated her media awareness by trying to understand why these expectations exist; to do this, she examined the how each medium invites her to compose and guide her choices: "I have a tendency to get lost in my thoughts and Twitter LITERALLY (and figuratively) cuts me off when I've said too much." In a later reflection, Hilary pushed even further on these observations, comparing Twitter to her long-form academic writing:

> I also find it really interesting how things must always be explained in academia, yet, on social media they don't. I never thought about the character limit on Twitter promoting spontaniety but this definitely holds true from my own, personal experience on Twitter and what I've seen others post. This whole idea of social media creating 'spontaniety' could be explored in so much depth. Its odd how certain sites promote it while others do not and how it correlates to the medium you are expressing your ideas.

With a framework to examine the materiality of her writing, Hilary began to question and explore how media can contribute expectations for writing.

Another student, Madison, noted that students are aware of these expectations from social media site to social media site. (Although, as evidenced in this project, students often required help to articulate these understandings.) Madison argued that efficient, effective social media users must have an awareness of the media in order to recognize how they are

invited to compose. This is why students who used Instagram, for instance, described their hesitance to share news articles, use the site for instant messaging, or write long messages to their audiences because the site is not supposed to be used in those forms. As Madison described, "Online, we are aware of our purpose for communicating. We post the things we post because we want to portray a certain stereotype or want to meet expectations. The purpose for communicating shifts depending on what social media interface we are using and on what medium." This means not only recognizing the materials with which a writer composes but also recognizing how to purposefully make rhetorical choices with those materials. When students are able to observe how different media contribute to their composing decisions—and when students gain the ability to work with, against, and create expectations within such choices—they can also become more aware of their rhetorical agency.

Often when students articulated an awareness of a medium—the materials that were written with, in, or on—they also articulated a rhetorical awareness, including how others shaped the communicative process. However, some media were easier to navigate for students than others. One example would be students' texting. They always reported thinking about the person who was receiving the text, rather than simply sending a nebulous exchange of words. When students discussed their experiences of writing emails or writing in a Word document, however, they articulated having difficulty envisioning that others were on the receiving end of those texts. As I discuss later in this chapter, when students have a difficult time recognizing how a medium situates them to compose, they also lose their sense of rhetorical awareness.

Writing to others was a primary reason students gained an understanding of the media and modes they employed on social media. When they began reflecting on their social media writing, several students came to the realization that there was often some other 'thing' involved in the writing process. When I first asked the class why writing is a different process behind a screen than when communicating face-to-face, Miranda responded, "[P]robably because we forget that there actually is a real person on the other side of the screen that views and takes notice on our actions." Hilary took a similar stance, while pointing out a major difference between the academic writing that Miranda referred to and the social writing that they both do daily: "When I write in a Word document or in a journal I feel very 'alone' in my writing, which can sometimes be great, but social media is an 'informal' reminder that other things and people and events are going on" (original scare quotes). When Miranda and Hilary began developing their understanding of media—including an awareness that others are involved behind the materials they write with—they began to see choices of medium as reactive, with rhetorical consequences.

Principle 2: Modes are purposefully employed to create a sense of writerly self.

Once students grasped the idea that writing always situates them in a rhetorical exchange among people and media, they also began to think about employing their own agency. The second principle is that students purposefully used the media and modes to create a sense of writerly self. Students spent several class periods and assignments dissecting their own and each others' writing habits online, as well as thinking about how they would describe their university writing. While my own experiences as a writing instructor have led me to hear numerous complaints from other instructors claiming that,

'students write carelessly online,' multiple students in the ENG 240 course stated that they often "agonize" over their social media posts, and reported sometimes even engaging in a kind of 'peer review' process with friends or family before posting. In students' reflections, this careful attention to posting was associated with rhetorical decision-making: Students care so much about what they post because of their audiences, their purposes, and the context that their posts will be viewed.

Within this rhetorical mindset, students articulated processes of writing that took into consideration the available modes for composing, including how certain modes could communicate multiple messages. Hilary noted how a person's Facebook profile is indicative of their online 'self', which includes an amalgamation of different uses of the medium and modes:

> A 'check in' at the library means you are studious, a status with multiple friends tagged means you are popular, a shared news article means you are up to date on current events. It seems that people's projection of self is presented mainly in a positive light on this particular site.

Cameron suggested that social media users could also create "social presence" by "expressing their emotions and creating their identities" in multiple ways, including on the sentence level. Michelle applied Cameron's theory when she described her own practices on Tumblr and Facebook:

> I really do take into consideration when I type on tumblr or on facebook that I want to seem more laid back and not I am not in a academic environment, even though it takes maybe an extra second to hit the shift key while typing… [A]t some point I add letters into the words I use to show some sort of emotion.

Michelle used the example of typing "guuurrrllllll" to her friend, and painstakingly counting the number of extra letters she added so that it had the intended effect that she wanted—mimicking her face-to-face cadence, rather than merely looking "ridiculous." As these examples demonstrate, rather than just writing however they please, students thought of what modes to employ in order to communicate meaning, specifically modes that contributed to their own identify or 'self.'

Just as when I described while discussing Principle 1, how Hilary and Miranda came to certain realizations about media, students who purposefully employed modes were able to learn how they had an affect on others. The students observed that they could use certain modes to better express their messages or further their own purpose, but the students also made clear—sometimes with chagrin at the difficulty of it—that writing with others' expectations in mind (especially when those expectations were in continual flux) was really hard work. In a discussion forum asking students to analyze their language and style on social media, multiple students reported following "rules" when they write on social media. Maria was one student who reported 'agonizing' over her Facebook posts: She reported trying to think about the way others post and how her own posts have so many meanings, which is why "what results is often a completely unrealistically stylized response." Maria further theorized that people on the internet "will erect their own set of conventions." In an earlier assignment, Cameron had reflected similarly: "The norms in which we communicate will always be a product of existing social structures, and those social structures are created by us." As the semester progressed and students gained a sense of how a medium guides their composing, and how they in turn use the modes within that medium, they began to recognize the layered and dialogic rhetorical contexts.

Principle 3: A change in medium indicates a (potential) change in connection, engagement, and/or experience.

Through analysis and reflection of their social media writing, the students profiled in Principles 1 and 2 developed awareness that writers, audiences, and the media are all active constituents within writing contexts. However, in students' writing assignments and class discussions, they did not demonstrate the same ability to articulate their academic rhetorical understandings. This might be because many students felt that social media writing afforded them more opportunities to express themselves than academic writing, and because of this, they saw academic writing as more constraining. Claire explained, "My elders see my academic writing and judge it, so I keep it simple yet significant, but when they aren't there to judge negatively, I express." She continued, "There is a huge division of expression/impression in my writing and it is definitely obvious in the academic sense." Similarly, Dylan described his internet expression as "artistry," "casual," and "the base humanity of authored content," but when moving into descriptions of more formal and academic writing, he used phrases like "tool of restraint," "power dynamics," and "stifles our communal creative flow." As a teacher of expository writing and a social media user myself, I sympathize with the descriptions Claire and Dylan provide for these two types of writing. With these descriptions they illustrate—as many of the other students in the course articulated implicitly—that different types of writing provide different experiences for writers and involve different expectations. Students can understand how these experiences and expectations shift as they move from social media to academic writing by connecting the medium they write with to their process of writing. As students indicate in

quotations I am about to share, a change in the medium indicates a change in connection, engagement, and experience, both for the reader and the writer.

ENG 240 students recognized that the way they connect with others shifts when they move from medium to medium; this is the third principle of students' social media knowledge. Madison demonstrated this awareness back in my discussion of Principle 1 when she explained that the purpose for communicating shifts from social media site to social media site because of audience expectations and how the media invites users to compose. But just as importantly, ENG 240 students recognized that moving among media marks a shift in connection. In a reflection about common modes found on social media sites (such as "liking" a post), Michelle noted, "[O]utside of the internet, where the context is different, of course if we did the same things, it would be weird; but OL where those actions are a part of the setting and situation, it is normal to do." Michelle continued to explain that online writing does not always transfer to face-to-face communications and vice-versa; to treat the contexts in the same way—or to attempt to communicate in the same way—would result in ineffective communication.

As ENG 240 students explored how experiences shifted when they chose different media, they began to realize that media require different approaches in order for communication to be effective. Students began articulating why some media would allow them to engage with audiences more clearly than others, and that some media were better suited for certain uses of modes. When students were asked to analyze their academic writing and style, Camila responded,

> I have also thought about how easy it would be to add an emoji to an academic paper…instead of looking for certain words to describe my feelings. Emojis

> definitely make communication online better because they can be replaced for certain face to face expressions you don't get in these kinds of conversations.

Later in the semester, Camila also noted how social media provided immediate connections between groups of people who might not normally interact. She argued that sites like Facebook are one of the few places where such interaction can occur. Camila wrote,

> Facebook is an essential tool for many organizations participating in activism because of its ability to produce instant online connections. It takes one click of a button to invite thousands of people to an event. That small action already created thousands of immediate connections. … Events after events are made where people are able to see the information and decide if they will attend and no one ever talks to each other face-to-face. It would be much harder to go and speak to thousands of people persuading them to attend your event.

Camila used her analysis of the media and modes to realize that the kind of engagement granted on Facebook would not be the same as an oral campaign. Just as students acknowledged above, when a writer understands how material choices affect how a message is received, they can better tailor what they want to say—by choosing the most effective medium for their intended audience and purpose.

When students begin developing an awareness of how shifts in media can create shifts in connection and engagement, they will also notice a shift in their own writerly experiences. Dylan expressed, "[W]riting online is a process in which very raw thoughts and feels are presented without much buildup, writing for school is a process in which I try to bring the reader to my thought/feel step by step. Line upon line. Online I get to just spout out my feel, but in school I have to justify my feel." It is only when Ethan explained

how this disconnect relates to media and audience expectations that students moved into theorizing why academic writing felt so distanced from the daily, social writing that they felt so comfortable with:

> In a way, the writing we do in the educational and professional world may be result of the disconnect some feel with writing in a structured and proper manner on social media. Writing of this nature takes a lot of thought, time, and concentration. For some it would be exhausting to write in this manner all the time, especially in their leisure time. With the emphasis put on proper writing in school, it starts to feel like work and becomes impersonal.

As Ethan explained, because academic writing often requires more time and complex mental focus, it can feel like a much different experience than social media writing. The students above have already demonstrated that writing academic essays is a different experience for them: They feel alone, they are not allowed to write with emotion or as individuals, and they feel judged, as though certain kinds of writing are not deemed meaningful. Like Madison admitted, "When you write something for school, there is an assumption that you have to know what you are writing about and that you can present your ideas in an intellectual way." The difference between ENG 240 students' social media agency and their academic agency is drastic. When students develop an awareness of how connection and engagement shift depending on the medium and modes, they should use that to continually dissect—and potentially push against—the academic conventions and expectations that seem too distant from their social media writing.

Principle 4: Purposeful use of media requires connecting modes with a message's purpose and the future circulation of that message.

That last principle is the connection between purpose and circulation. To move students beyond their personal writing, I asked them to consider several contexts where social media was employed for purposes other than entertainment: We examined events like Arab Spring or the Black Lives Matter hashtag movement and explored how YouTube is employed to transmit educational information by non-profit groups. Before such class activities and assignments, very few students had considered the use of social media beyond their own purposes (despite thinking at length about the role of their audiences). When we removed the focus from their own messages, however, students observed that the speed and accessibility of posting on social media allow for easy sharing and allow texts to be produced at a rapid rate.

Students began to observe that writing on social media meant delivering a message to an immediate audience and understanding that the same message might be circulated or viewed in different contexts or at different times. As Miranda affirmed, "Social media represents both the present and the past." For students, this concept was both exciting and terrifying. Miranda continued,

> When you make a post online on Facebook or Twitter, it will stay around and as people go through their newsfeeds they can be informed on what you posted, though it may have already become part of the past for you the other person that stumbles onto your post will be faced with the present and be impacted by what they see.

Social media appeals to many users because they can share information more rapidly than when face-to-face; Miranda's reflection about the circulation of posting demonstrates that social media sites also allow users to communicate over time, even if they have physically moved on to different subjects or contexts. Addy found this layering of time and contexts "terrifying": "[I]n the future people I don't even know may use the things I publish to glean an image of who I am… The accumulation of everything I post adds up to give people an image of who I am."

The phenomena of rapid interaction and constant circulation is one reason that students think about their social media writing so differently than their academic writing. Online, audiences have the ability to respond and interact with each other: Clarifications can be made, ideas can be expanded, and a user can learn expectations of their audiences for future posts. Academic print essays—like those written in a FYC course—lack this kind of immediacy of response, audience, and rapid contextual shifting. Students often have to imagine their audiences based upon ideas or assumptions, previous essays they wrote, or from the responses of peers. As Dylan and Ethan note in Principle 3, academic essay writing is a much slower process than posting on social media. Students must learn to recognize how a print medium is also a (re)active, rhetorical text—to actually see an essay as a medium with rhetorical potential.

As I state later in this chapter, I believe future FYC students can develop similar guiding principles of medium and mode. These principles help students see that medium is at the forefront of both analysis and production, which will inform their approach to and understanding of other rhetorical considerations. But as I am about to present in the

section below, the theory and language found in rhetoric and composition scholarship can sometimes be too vague or complex to transfer directly into classroom instruction.

What Theory Can Contribute to Students' Understanding

Keeping the principles outlined above in mind, in this section I examine why the language and definitions used in scholarship is not always accessible to students, and I also examine the theories that can help students develop awareness of the materiality of all texts, including academic print essays.

Several multimodal and new media scholars have noted that one trend of incoming first-year students in the composition classroom is their tendency to view texts—most often print, but also those in digital forms—as transparent. In *The Electronic Word*, Richard Lanham presents a distinction between looking "at" a text or looking "through" a text: Looking *through* a text implies the text is transparent and that the reader is not aware of the materiality; looking *at* a text implies that a reader has an awareness of the surface pattern and design (43). Students do not always look "at" texts or recognize the texts they write as tangible materials. Many students in my FYC courses admit that when they are taught to write essays in high school, the instruction often focuses on the content of their writing rather than on how such writing takes shape. Some writing scholars might argue that 'form' is considered in composition instruction, or what George Hillocks Jr. refers to as "the parts of the paragraphs, the parts of the essays, the structure of sentences, the elements of style, and so forth" (238). What Hillocks really references is writing structure, however, rather than the medium and modes used to compose a text. But, as I have been

arguing, if students do not discuss their media and modes, they can struggle to use media with rhetorical awareness.

Of course, my argument raises the difficulty of deciding how to discuss these nuanced terms with students. And, as I highlight in this chapter, students often come to an awareness of the material potentials in digital technologies much more easily then in non-digital texts. In this section, I examine various definitions and approaches of media and modes found in contemporary composition scholarship and scholarship about multimodal composing. This research includes scholars who theorize about media, modes, and interfaces; scholars who work to integrate multimodal texts into the classroom; and scholars whose work bridges the theory and practice of the two previous groups and who aim for students to realize that all composed texts, no matter the materials, are multimodal. My critique in the following pages is not about the language that scholars enact in scholarship, but that in circulating these terms among ourselves, we neglect to also offer terms and theories that grant students access to these ideas. Not all scholars have pedagogical intentions. But when we integrate those scholars' terminology into our discussions about writing instruction, we must make sure that we are not neglecting how to transfer theory into practice.

My teaching experiences have helped me learn the importance of definitions and how they contribute to students' understanding of rhetorical concepts. Just as I do in this section, my textbook analysis later illustrates how definitions can shape the kinds of instruction possible—and how vague or simplistic terms can limit students' development of media awareness. Of course, defining complex concepts is not an easy task, which is perhaps why so many scholars have contributed to defining a term like medium. In a 2012

webtext, Claire Lauer addresses the challenge of working with multiple definitions of media, new media, multimodal, and digital from well-known scholars. Defining the words we use in scholarship is important, Lauer argues, because definitions help "us discover what we value and where we stand in relation to what has been said and done before. It positions us in the conversation, exposes our assumptions, announces our intentions, and helps us explain to ourselves and others who we are and what we believe" (Developing Definitions). Unpacking words and what they suggest for our scholarship and pedagogies is crucial for improving instruction about media and modes for the FYC classroom. In this project, I argue that students should gain a material awareness of the media and modes that they compose with, but students cannot do this without tangible ideas of what I ask them to observe or analyze.

I begin by examining definitions of medium and mode. As evidenced above and in the following chapters, many ENG 240 students report purposefully choosing a medium and employing modes within that medium with rhetorical objectives. According to Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, in *Multimodal Discourse*, when a composer chooses a medium, they have distinctly connected the form of their composition to the content. This "design" of a text is inherently rhetorical, as it is "a deliberateness about choosing the modes for representation, and the framing for that representation" (45). Kress and van Leeuwen also bring attention to the materiality of texts and explain that, "material qualities relate to social practices of transforming materials" (69). That is, materials have inherent qualities for use, but how they are socially used influences how agreed-upon practices develop with such materials. This means a writer can expect to compose a message according to the established expectations of a certain medium. Each medium has its own

available modes, expectations, and constraints, and these factors therefore influence how users' messages are composed and received.

Kress and van Leeuwen offer useful theory that students could use to gain a sense of how and why writing is influenced because of social and material practices, but their definitions of medium and mode overlap, making the concepts difficult to explain. The authors even admit themselves, "Sometimes design and production, mode and medium, are hard to separate" (7). Media are defined as "the material resources used in the production of semiotic products and events, including both the tools and the materials used" (22). For Kress and van Leeuwen, media make use of the body, voice, or tools to communicate expression. However, modes are closely related to media and include expressions like speech, music, pictures, or type. Modes are how discourse is formulated or realized within media. Kress and van Leeuwen argue that a medium can become a mode and vice versa when "the particular medium gains in social importance" and "more abstract modes of regulation ('grammars') develop" (22). By "grammars," Kress and van Leeuwen refer to habits of a mode, whether informal rules or more formal distinctions like habits of genre. ENG 240 students' definition of mode has similar qualities: modes are the methods of communication within a medium, and modes suggest norms and expectations of a medium. But as student Nina admitted: "Finding out that media and medium were essentially the same word was when I had to accept the fact that this term was going to take me a while to memorize and critically understand." The nuance and language of Kress and van Leeuwen's theory, therefore, might be overwhelming for students, especially if they are inexperienced at recognizing and articulating their observations about media and modes.

Many other scholars follow the path of Kress and van Leeuwen: They offer a clear argument that media and modes are rhetorical, but their language remains highly theoretical and would not easily transfer into FYC for students who are just beginning to observe the materiality of texts. This is especially clear in scholarship about multimodal composition, where scholars regularly argue for more attention to the way texts circulate, how writers and others are positioned, and how meaning is communicated. While multimodal composition scholars make sure to define the framework of modes they are referencing, these definitions often come at the expense of students: the language promoted in multimodal theory and scholarship is not language that novice scholars have access to, nor language that ENG 240 students used to describe their own multimodal writing.

For example, the New London Group (a group of several scholars) convincingly argue that university education and instructors must create pedagogies that respond to students' public, professional, and private lives. But the authors refer to media in multiple ways, such as "mass media, multi-media, and…electronic media" (64), and modes can range from "vocabulary" to "music" to "feelings and affect," among many others. While these terms seem to align with other multimodal scholarship, the New London Group argues that "Teachers and students…need a *metalanguage*—a language for talking about language, images, texts, and meaning-making interactions" (77). Their theory of multiliteracies includes "Designs of Meaning" (77) and five different "Modes of Meaning" that further breakdown into various design elements. Words like "hybridity" and "intertextuality" are offered to examine "established practices and conventions within and between different modes of meaning" or how meaning is "constituted through relationships to other texts"

(82). While students would certainly recognize some of the design elements as modes that they regularly use to compose, the New London Group's theory becomes increasingly complex for first-year undergraduate students because of the amount of new terms offered, few which would seem intuitive to use for FYC students when describing their writing.

Scholars often have a tendency to define media and modes in relation to "semiotic resources," a phrase that is useful in scholarship for its layered meaning but a term that is challenging to unpack with students in the classroom. In an oft-cited article about aurality and multimodal composing in the composition classroom, Cynthia Selfe frequently references modes and modalities, and a footnote distinguishes that Selfe is using the New London Group's definition of multimodal. In the footnote, Selfe describes modalities as "printed words, still and moving images, sound, speech, and music, color" (138). Selfe argues that a single focus on print hinders students' full composing capabilities and that instructors should "develop an increasingly thoughtful understanding of a whole range of modalities and semiotic resources in their assignments" so that students have "the opportunities of developing expertise with *all available means* of persuasion and expression" (114, original italics). In *A Composition Made Whole*, Jody Shipka employs a variety of language is to describe the materiality of texts, including "resources" (102), "tools" (103), "representational systems" (105), "semiotic resources," "sounds, video, still images, animation, textures, scents, and so on," and "affordances and constraints" (107). Even in scholarship about media scholarship, Cheryl Ball describes modes with the same kind of overlap as Kress and van Leeuwen: "the semiotic elements such as video, graphics, written text, audio, and so on that a designer uses to compose multimodal or new media texts" (405). Kara Poe Alexander describes "affordances" (which she sometimes

interchanges with "modes") as, "[T]he representational qualities of a semiotic mode that make it distinctive. They both enable and constrain and offer potentials and limitations" ("Material"). With this definition, however, it is difficult to parse out the difference between media affordances and modal affordances; is it that media afford certain modes, while modes afford certain potentials and limitations? Kress and van Leeuwen similarly complicate the issue by asking, "Is affordance more to do with the materiality of the medium in which the mode is constituted, or is it more a matter of the word of a particular culture with a medium over time, or is it a combination of both, sometimes more the one, sometimes more the other? It is a question which is in need of more exploration" (125). Scholars move closer to defining modes in tangible ways for students when they list familiar media and modes as examples, but as Kress and van Leeuwen highlight, there remains ambiguity between what is a medium and what is a mode (and why distinguishing between the two matters as students learn to recognize the material choices that they make when composing.)

I next examine the word "interface," which I encounter frequently in scholarship about writing with computers or technology in the classroom. Some scholars invite students to analyze media interfaces, perhaps as a more tangible approach so that students avoid treating media as transparent materials. In his reframing of the rhetorical canons, Collin Brooke argues that analysis of the interface (and beyond the interface) can lead students to learn to see "texts emerging from an ongoing process of reading, thinking, and writing" (25). Brooke writes, "Rather than viewing the interface as the boundary or contact point between people and machines, I follow W.J. Mitchell (1995) in suggesting instead that interfaces are those 'ever-elastic middles' that include, incorporate, and indeed constitute

their 'outside' " (24). Similarly, Teena A.M. Carnegie argues that observing and analyzing the interface one composes within can lead users to understand more about who created the interface and how they are situated by those creators to compose. Beyond including the *Oxford Dictionary* definition, Carnegie describes that an interface "facilitates and defines interaction," and "is a place of interaction" (165). Often the interface is defined as a layering of or interaction among things, people, and technologies.

Working with interfaces in the FYC classroom requires students to approach texts with an adept comprehension of media awareness. Such theory neglects to address that the interfaces of non-digital texts are much more difficult to analyze for students because they have been transparent for such a long time. Students can easily recognize Facebook's interface because the company occasionally calls attention to it by introducing new features to the Newsfeed, but they have much more difficulty in identifying the interface of a printed book. And when asked what the interface of a bulletin board is, for example, it becomes a complex task for students to distinguish between the medium and the interface: does it have something to do with the place where the cork ends and the board begins? What are considered materials, and where do they go about searching for the layers of interaction?

To help ENG 240 students grasp the concept of interface, I asked them to read "The Stories Digital Tools Tell" by Tarleton Gillespie. In this chapter, Gillespie argues that tools and technology are social artifacts and are therefore political. The students handled the reading assignment well—dissecting concepts like "technological determinism," "artifacts," and "intuitive metaphors" with as much aplomb as novice scholars could—but not many were able to apply Gillespie's article to interfaces beyond the examples provided in the

chapter. I chose Gillespie's article because he describes that, "affordances shape, urge, and constrain particular uses," and that they "have a double life; even as they organize behavior, they also install a worldview by which behavior they encourage or erase" (114). Students were beginning to analyze how and why they used certain modes in their social media writing, and so I thought that this theory would advance how they understand modes such as hashtags, images, and even long text-based posts. Instead, students—and even students who put forth a lot of effort into their daily assignments—found Gillespie's theory difficult to access. Jillian's homework assignment is most telling; she attempts to translate Gillespie's definition of the interface affordances while offering a wry reflection of her own homework effort: "Gillespie says we have to interpret the tool itself but we're still untrained to do such a thing. We see the world as 'a series of things to be driven into a bunch of other things' (114) which sounds like a definition I would type up and send in to be honest."

Interface is not a concept that ENG 240 students expressed organically to describe their composing habits on social media. Some students use the word in their reflections and analyses because they were exposed to it from Gillespie (and class discussion), but I found that most students had difficulties distinguishing between medium and interface. This is partly because the concept of interface can be difficult to describe in practice; what functions as a clear, tangible description of an interface for digital media does not necessarily transfer to a clear description for non-digital media.

Ultimately at the base of these theories is a common belief that students should develop awareness of the media with which they choose to compose and the effects of those choices. Scholars have been making arguments like this for more than a decade. In a

2004 *College Composition and Communication* article, Kathleen Blake Yancey describes a revised composition curriculum that takes into consideration circulation, the act of public writing, and how students can transfer writing from one context to another. Yancey's pedagogy invites students to gain awareness of the materiality of texts by paying attention "to ways that writing gets made, both individually and culturally" (315). But Yancey's call focused primarily on digital texts, and it neglected to call attention to the non-digital media that students regularly engage with that also require rhetorical awareness.

In *Writing New Media*, Anne Wysocki includes the non-digital in her definition of new media, which calls for an attention to the materiality of texts. Wysocki writes, "[W]hat is important is that whoever produces the text and whoever consumes it understand—because the text asks them to, in one way or another—that the various materialities of a text contribute to how it, like its producers and consumers, is read and understood" (15). Wysocki's argument of materiality asks readers and composers to understand that every choice has meaning and shapes a text's delivery. She takes umbrage with Kress and van Leeuwen, who make a distinction between medium and mode, because she argues that, "our media are really modes" (13). Wysocki highlights the importance of composing decisions in a new media text, arguing that awareness arises when writers "see how agency and materiality are entwined" (6). Building on Wysocki's scholarship and voicing concern with the conflation of multimodal and digital, Jody Shipka argues, "[W]hat is crucial is that students leave their courses exhibiting a more nuanced awareness of the various choices they make, or even fail to make, throughout the process of producing a text and to carefully consider the effect those choices might have on others" (85). Wysocki and Shipka's

arguments that students should consider the materiality, circulation, and layered process of composing are echoed in the pages of this project.

Students did not enter ENG 240 with an explicit rhetorical awareness or complex language to discuss their social media writing, but when asked to develop a discursive process—to observe, analyze, and reflect on the composing choices they make—students were able to move toward the complex layers of composing that Wysocki and Shipka describe. As Shipka notes, "Importantly, as the work students *might want to do* with their texts will be impacted by the texts they have on hand, students must attend to the kinds of work these mediational means *will actually allow them to do*" (91, original italics). In order for students to achieve this awareness and clarity for all media—not just digital media—they need language that is easily accessible, and as I argue in this project, language that parallels the intuitive understandings about writing they already have when they enter the classroom.

The scholarship and theory cited in this section demonstrate the nuance that develops with definitions over time, but because of this, terms like media and mode can sometimes seem abstract, unclear in application, or require writers to approach texts with a complex comprehension of interfaces. This scholarship is beneficial for articulating what we want students to learn, but the theory does not always translate directly or easily into composition instruction. ENG 240 students demonstrate in this chapter (and in the consecutive chapters) that allowing students to use their intuitive understanding of media and modes provides them with relevant and useful language to analyze the materiality of texts in a FYC classroom. As indicated in the principles above, students in ENG 240 were able to articulate a complex, rhetorical understanding of medium without the language of

complex media theory. FYC instructors should draw from what students already know about medium and modes to define these concepts: beginning with the knowledge and application students enter the classroom with will lead instructors to develop applicable, useful definitions that are less ambiguous than what current scholarship offers students.

What Textbook Instruction Offers (Or Doesn't Offer) For Students

So far I have established that students enter the FYC classroom with innate knowledge about how and why they write on social media, and so instructors should ensure that current composition and rhetorical instruction builds off of this knowledge. In this section, I examine how FYC textbook instruction approach and define medium. As I illustrated above, the theory and language circulated in scholarship about medium is often difficult to translate into the classroom. Yet as I will demonstrate in this section, the language found in FYC textbooks is often lacking nuanced definitions that I believe students are capable of understanding—as demonstrated with student quotations in the four principles above.

I analyze the pedagogical approaches found in five leading rhetoric textbooks: *Everyone's an Author*, *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, *The St Martin's Guide to Writing*, *Writing Today*, and *They Say / I Say*. The authors of the five textbooks acknowledge how various media can impact the composing process—both explicitly and implicitly—and several advise that choosing different media can even change the way a text will be composed. I highlight instruction that calls upon and draws from the smart, sophisticated moves many students make with their social media writing. But as my analysis demonstrates, helping students create a process of writing from their knowledge of social

media seems more productive than giving them (sometimes seemingly random) writing tips that change from genre to genre.

Everyone's An Author

In *Everyone's An Author*, Andrea Lunsford et al. position students as internet users (specifically social media users) who not only consume writing daily but who also produce writing daily. The authors created the textbook so that students at a variety of institutions with a variety of socio-economic and educational backgrounds could approach academic, genre-based writing with a rhetorical awareness. In the "Preface" the authors note,

> When we began teaching… our students wrote traditional academic essays by hand—or sometimes typed them on typewriters… Today the writing scene has changed radically. Now students write, text, tweet, and post to everything from *Facebook* to *Blackboard* to *YouTube* at home, in the library, on the bus, while crossing the street. Writing is ubiquitous—they barely even notice it. (vii)

Lunsford et al. acknowledge that this shift in literacy—for example, how distinctly multimedial, collaborative, and widely circulated today's writing is—has impacted the instruction found in their textbook.

Thorough discussions of media in *Everyone's An Author* come late in the text in the "Design and Delivery" chapter. Lunsford et al. ask students to consider medium as a choice they can make to engage their audience and further their purpose. The authors define medium as "the form in which the audience receives it" and include "print, oral, or digital" as different media (752). Medium and mode are connected, and *mode* is defined as "what makes up the message and communicates its meaning: words, sounds, gestures, still and

moving images, or some combination of those" (752). These definitions are clear and straightforward, and they mirror the most simplistic versions of ENG 240 students' definitions of medium and mode.

As I mentioned earlier, these chapters about medium, mode, and multimodality appear two-thirds into the book, after instruction about most academic genres of writing. However, Lunsford et al. make more explicit in earlier chapters the importance of choosing a medium from the beginning of the composing process. In the chapter about argumentation, they write,

> [K]eep in mind that the medium you're using affects the kind of evidence you choose and the way you present it. In a print text, any evidence has to be in the text itself; in a digital medium, you can link directly to statistics, images, and other information. In a spoken text, any evidence needs to be said or show on a slide or a handout… (400)

Encouraging students to thinking rhetorically about media choices is found throughout chapters like this in *Everyone's An Author*, but what is missing is a process for students to figure out what seem like unstated rules and expectations about these media choices: when do they learn what modes are expected to be employed in which medium?

Often 'unstated rules' of composing (or seemingly random rules like using handouts during speeches) have a deeper theory connected to them. For example, the 'rule' is not that students are never allowed to use slang in academic essays, but that different rhetorical considerations create these expectations, such as how academic writing circulates to scholars in different regions who might not understand colloquialisms and that writing can be shared over long periods of time. Students in ENG 240 became aware of

social media expectations by examining which media and modes were best suited for certain contexts of writing. But for students to think about media in the way Lunsford et al. encourage, both in their chapters about employing modes and argumentation, students first need a process for observing and analyzing the rhetorical features of modes.

The Norton Field Guide to Writing

The Norton Field Guide to Writing is written for both new teachers and new writers as they learn to navigate the most common writing genres assigned in the university. Richard Bullock et al. begin by introducing students to "Academic Literacies": "habits of mind" that encourage them to think and read carefully, ethically, complexly, and dialogically. The authors give advice that seems tailored to traditional first-year college students, including how to stay engaged in coursework that might not excite them, developing responsibility, and learning to open themselves to the value of new perspectives. But the authors also strategically place writerly habits of mind within this chapter, such as reflection, invention, and approaching texts rhetorically.

Bullock et al. provide instruction for transferring writing practices within differing university contexts, and they also include instruction in each chapter that encourages students to consider their rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation found in this textbook is comprised of purpose, audience, stance, genre, and medium/design. Bullock et al. define medium as "a way for information to be conveyed from one person to another," and each medium "has unique characteristics that influence both what and how we communicate" (68). The authors present content as situational: It is dependent on the audience and the purpose and also on the context in which it is presented. Thus, certain

content is expected by audiences to be presented with(in) certain media; they give the example of how unusual it would be to whisper lines from a history book to someone in a dark room. When discussing how the media situates the writer and in turn how the writer can use the media, ENG 240 students make similar observations about their own social media writing, remarking that certain modes would be out of place in certain contexts.

Bullock et al. invite students to recognize modes that accompany texts, like the paper that a note is written on, font decisions, or visuals. In a chapter specifically about media and design, the authors include numerous generative questions for students to ask of their texts in order to decide what medium and what design features they should consider. As with the generative questions found in *Everyone's An Author*, I feel that students are missing out on a key process of observation and analysis that is first required in order to apply these questions. For example, Bullock et al. write, "How does your medium affect your language? Some print documents require a more formal voice than spoken media; email and texting often invite greater informality" (69). This is the same issue I raise with the *Everyone's An Author* advice above: how do students learn these 'rules' of medium, genre, audience, and context? Bullock et al. align media and mode with rhetorical considerations, but I believe that there is missing instruction for students to understand that they are writing within complex, rhetorical understandings of a medium. The ENG 240 students above wrote with more rhetorical awareness when they were able to develop a sense of how the medium invited them to compose, including complex notions of audience and purpose. Without a process for understanding the medium they write with, students not only lose rhetorical agency, but they might also struggle to navigate within unfamiliar writing contexts.

The St. Martin's Guide to Writing

Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper approach writing in *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* with genre-focused instruction. The authors use an "Active Learning" design throughout the textbook which include "color-coded highlighting and annotations [to] *show* students the techniques writers use to communicate effectively with their readers" and "integrated sentence strategies" which function similar to the templates found in *They Say / I Say* (xii, original italics). Writing, Axelrod and Cooper advise students, can lead to better thinking, deeper learning, connections with others, and intellectual and professional success. The rhetorical situation found in the *St. Martin's* textbook includes purpose, audience, genre, and medium. Genre is described as the "type of text" written while medium is described as how the "text will be read" (2). The authors make the clarification that texts within genres can be very different from each other, but there are patterns and predictability that make writing easier. They write, "Genres are simply ways of categorizing texts… Each genre has a set of conventions or basic features readers expect texts in that genre to use" (2).

Medium is included in the authors' rhetorical situation, but attention to medium is largely missing in the body of the textbook—students appear to write with print media from the beginning of a project. The authors very briefly mention that the media one writes with has an effect on the content of the writing, yet the only examples they provide are about adding modes to a text. In analyzing one's rhetorical situation for a research essay, for instance, the students are not instructed to consider how rhetorical considerations might affect what medium they choose or how choosing a medium might affect the content

of their essay. While the research essay genre might traditionally suggest a print, academic essay, the lack of transparency in discussing medium might hinder students from seeing print media as visible materials for writing.

Writing Today

In *Writing Today*, Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine also offer genre-focused instruction, noting that they include a process for students to learn to read critically, think analytically, and approach writing. Johnson-Sheehan and Paine emphasize that students will learn transferable writing skills for both college and their careers, and they inform instructors that guidance to teach this transfer is included in their flexibly-ordered chapters. The authors place weight on understanding genre, explaining that genres "help readers and writers communicate" and "interpret complex situations and respond to them successfully" (1). Johnson-Sheehan and Paine define genres as both the way interactions are structured and as "meeting places" and "meaning places," or patterns of how people communicate with each other, constantly evolving over time. The rhetorical situation presented in the textbook includes a topic, an angle, the context, the readers, and the purpose for writing (11). Students are instructed to use their understanding of the rhetorical situation to think about which genre would be best suited for their writing.

In the "Readers, Contexts, and Rhetorical Situations" chapter, the authors define medium for students as "the technology that your readers will use to interact with your document" (27). The breakdown of potential media is difficult to separate from genre: print, electronic, presentations, podcasts, or videos (27). The authors situate choices of medium as integral for context, explaining to students how media contribute to how an audience

understands, is influenced by, and reacts to writing. The descriptions of the media included are generalized according to major habits of usage (following the authors' genre definition). For instance, Johnson-Sheehan and Paine instruct: "Paper documents are often read more closely than on-screen documents… When people read text on a screen, as on a Web site or a blog, they usually 'raid' it, reading selectively for the information they need. They tend to be impatient with a long document, and they generally avoid reading lengthy paragraphs" (27). Other generalizations are made about the modes found in these genres/media, such as how visuals are utilized for aesthetic purposes or to guide readers through a text more fluidly.

Johnson-Sheehan Paine reference an understanding about media that students in ENG 240 articulated: a shift in media indicates a shift in the experience the writer and readers have with the text. It is accurate, for example, that when one holds a book they often have expectations for longer paragraphs and spending time engaging with the text because a book symbolizes the event of reading; when shifting media to a smartphones, someone surfing the web is not always expecting to experience a reading commitment for hours at a time. While Johnson-Sheehan and Paine's advice in this section stems from physical accuracy about engagement, they choose to break media into genre-specific advice for students. (i.e. Different instruction for each genre.) ENG 240 students observed that experience and engagement with a medium is often connected to the circulation of the medium. So while Sheehan and Paine offer genre-specific instruction to teach expectations of texts, ENG 240 students highlight that certain media suggest certain expectations once a writer understands how writing can be shared with audiences. The ENG 240 students offer

a process for composing with media that is based less on the 'rules' of genres and more dependent on the fluctuation among media and rhetorical considerations.

They Say / I Say

Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst frame the writing instruction in *They Say / I Say* to help students engage with complexities of academic discourse. The authors offer template instruction for research, argumentative, and persuasive writing. Because the authors believe that writing is a social act, one of their goals of the templates is for students to "enter the conversations" of academic discourse through "practical strategies" and "a user-friendly model of writing" (xiii). Much of the instruction found in *They Say* includes literal templates for students to set up sentence constructions. For example, the authors offer students templates like, "Although I grant that the book is poorly organized, I still maintain that it raises an important issue" (89, original underlines). Graff et al. refer to templates as commonplaces, hoping that students will learn the explicit rhetorical move each template encourages and will eventually modify them to serve their own purpose (xxiv). They write that templates "focus writers' attention not just on what is being said, but on the *forms* that structure what is being said. In other words, they make students more conscious of the rhetorical patterns that are key to academic success but often pass under the classroom radar" (xxi, original italics). Beyond writing structure, Graff et al. also emphasize the social aspect of communication in academic assignments: "For us, the underlying structure of effective academic writing—and of responsible public discourse—resides not just in stating our own ideas but in listening closely to others around us, summarizing their views in a way that they will recognize, and responding with

our own ideas in kind" (3). Thus, *They Say / I Say* aims for quick entry into both the writing and critical thought required of academic discourse.

In a 2016 *College Composition and Communication* article, Zak Lancaster critiques *They Say / I Say*, ultimately arguing that the textbook "misses important interpersonal meanings that recur in academic writing" (460). Lancaster argues that students are often taught to approach sources with "combative language" (457) and this creates a problem with how students practice writing: they struggle to "carefully listen to, mirror, and validate others' views," "give room for others to ask questions and express concerns," and "be fair, respectful, and open-minded" (458). However, Lancaster's critique seems to neglect what Graff et al. suggest they want for students: to elaborate and extend the thoughts that stem from use of a template. For example, Lancaster refers to a template example in which students are meant to concede to an idea before countering with their own stance. Lancaster argues that a more "considered" (459), "qualified counter" (458) should be what students are aiming for.

Instead of continuing this line of thought, I want to point out that both templates and Lancaster's critique of the templates neglect to reveal to students why they have to write in certain ways for academic audiences in the first place. As ENG 240 student Jordan already noted above, "While Facebook gives me more space to articulate myself and ground my material, Twitter you have to be mindful that what you're hitting your cues rather quickly due to the affordances you're allowed in single doses." Jordan knows he can explain himself more on Facebook than Twitter because he the medium provides him with more space to compose and because writing more text on Facebook is generally accepted by his audience. If Jordan and other students had this same analysis and process for choosing

media and modes in academic genres, I believe they would have a much clearer sense of what they were trying to accomplish with their writing (and would not necessarily need such prescriptive templates to guide them). Templates are limiting for students, but so is writing in a medium without having a process to understand the expectations of that medium. Giving students a process for observing and analyzing expectations within a medium can lead them to observe how certain expectations of writing develop. Academic habits of writing can then appear less like rigid templates and more like patterns based on the use of certain modes and how writers employ them.

They Say / I Say, like the textbooks I analyze before it, aims to help students recognize the different expectations of writing for different contexts. Several textbooks above are genre-focused, which results in conflation of medium and genre and generalizations about media expectations. The language used to define and discuss medium in the textbooks is often simplistic and based on unexplained rules for students to memorize. As I show with ENG 240 student quotations in the four principles above, students were able to offer more complex definitions of medium than the FYC textbooks. Furthermore, when students became aware of the materiality of texts, they understood that different media have different expectations for writing. When instructors foreground medium as part of the composing process, students can learn how their media choices affect the rest of their rhetorical decisions. In the next section, I suggest how FYC instructors can approach the complex terms of medium and mode with accessible language without losing the nuance developed in theory and scholarship.

Expanding Medium

To help future students articulate similar guiding principles of media and modes as ENG 240 students, and to help students understand each principle more deeply, students must have a method for observing the materials they write with, including what often appear as transparent materials. Developing this awareness encourages students to approach medium as an influential, rhetorical element of composing. Kress and Van Leeuwen suggest asking the question, "What mode for what purpose?" when designing a composition as a reminder to align the form of a composition with the purpose of a composition (46). However, I believe that students who think rhetorically are faced with the challenge of asking several other complex questions when choosing a medium:

- What medium do I choose in relation to my purpose?
- What modes does this medium offer?
- What do the modes suggest about the way people communicate messages within in this medium?
- How can I employ these medium and modes in relation to my potential audiences, the contexts of writing, and the way the medium is already working to situating me?

To choose an effective medium for composing, students will need to analyze the available modes within a medium and how those modes contribute to rhetorical communication. In order to do this well, they need to have a way to approach any medium, even those that seem transparent.

In this section, given the issues I described earlier with theory and textbooks, I provide students with a process to recognize media and modes, and a process to think

about the media as an active constituent in the composing process. I offer two methods—*invitations* and *interplay*—for students to apply their social media knowledge of medium and modes to other writing contexts like academic writing assignments. Invitations and interplay draw from the four principles that define ENG 240 students' knowledge of media awareness and rhetorical composing strategies, and they encourage students to move beyond their intuitive understanding of media and modes to arrive at more complex analysis about the production, consumption, and circulation of texts. Invitations are the places where purposeful choices can be made within a medium. Invitations provide students with opportunities to analyze the medium and produce within the medium. For example, when students acknowledge what modes are offered and how they (or others) might make use of the medium so that the text might circulate to broader contexts, students are becoming aware of media invitations.

Interplay is recognizing how invitations affect rhetorical considerations, which involves developing an active awareness of what modes can be used for what purpose and in which medium. Students must also understand that moving from medium to medium will result in different ways of connecting or engaging with others, as well as experiencing a message differently. While invitations and interplay should not only be defined in simplified terms, a student could think about invitations as places where texts invite them to make purposeful choices, and when those invitations interact to create rhetorical consequences, a student is then looking at the interplay among those considerations.

Invitations

Learning to recognize invitations is crucial for students' ability to gain awareness of their rhetorical agency as writers, including attentiveness to how their writing has the ability to circulate to others. In the aforementioned chapter about new media theory, Wysocki defines "openings" as "new possibilities for seeing selves that are connected within and to new structures" (16). Wysocki's theory of new media requires composers to "stay alert to *how* and *why*" materials are chosen for composing (19, original italics). Invitations are similar to Wysocki's "openings" because they are locations within media where purposeful choices can be made. Wysocki argues that composers and consumers of texts must be aware of how materials of the text contribute to its production and consumption; without a process to observe the ways that media 'invite' users to compose and consume, however, students may find it difficult to become aware of this materiality. Invitations encourage students to become aware of the materials that they write with and how they write with those materials.

Invitations are distinct from modes, even though both indicate the possible ways writers can communicate within media. Asking students to think about the available modes of a medium does not require them to think about why that mode might be used by a writer. Asking students to think about media invitations requires them to think about available modes for composing within a medium *and* what those modes suggest about the expectations and values associated with that medium. Unlike simply generating a list of available modes, invitations importantly ask students to think about the invitations they do not receive, including thinking about why they are not invited to compose in certain ways and what that means for the expectations and values associated with a medium. Observing

and analyzing invitations allows students to navigate a medium before they compose and can bring more visibility to unfamiliar texts.

Once students begin observing media as sites of invitation, rather than passive places to write or read, they will be in a better position to ask questions about how users are situated by media for both interaction and reaction:

- How much space do you have to compose?
- Where are you asked to compose?
- Are you compelled to compose in any way? (Is there a status box, a blinking cursor, or a certain way to hold the materials in your hand?)
- How could you write a message? Think about all the potential modes.
- What do these modes tell you about the way people communicate with this medium? (Do they mostly use pictures, or is it combination of text and graphics, is there any color, etc.)

Students can also observe ways that media do not invite them to compose: the ways of writing that are not intuitive or suggested by a medium. For example, on Microsoft Word, students might explore the modes of the Formatting Palette; or when picking up their Chemistry textbook, students might consider the arrangement of the text by examining the book from back to front. Even on sites like Facebook there are elements of the medium that remain transparent, like the algorithms that order what a user sees in their newsfeed. This sort of awareness is difficult to achieve—it involves seeing what often cannot be seen—but it leads toward the awareness that Wysocki argues for: learning that texts carry with them values and behaviors, and how media situate writers can reflect those values and behaviors (13).

To encourage ENG 240 students draw from their knowledge of composing on social media, I asked them to carefully analyze and observe the six social media sites that they agreed upon using the most: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Reddit, and MySpace.[7] (You will find a detailed in-class activity and assignment in the "Pedagogical Application" section below.) In class, students spent time in groups thinking and writing about the kind of writing that characterizes these social sites, including what is 'expected' of users. For homework, students were asked over multiple assignments to analyze and reflect on the way they write on certain sites. Students were prompted in each activity and assignment with instructions like "Explain not just *what* you do...but also *why* you do it" and "SHOW, don't tell." These assignments led students to observe the various invitations of social media sites, as well as how they responded to such invitations for composing.

For example, in a partner activity, Dylan and Jordan demonstrated that observing their own writing could lead to acknowledging the many ways they respond to invitations, as well as the implications of those invitations:

[7] A majority of the class did not use MySpace, but 4 out of 5 students in one group reported fondly using MySpace years ago and analyzed their profiles using the *WayBack Machine*.

Figure 1: Invitations on Facebook[8]

In his break down of the post, Dylan wrote:

> Jordan's Facebook post shown here uses the following cues for delivery
>
> - Shows excitement through the use of all-caps and several exclamation points
> - Uses status information (eating) and tags to indicate the actions taking place and the people they were taking place with. Shows full context of the scene without having to elaborate or repeat self.
> - Link to map-location shows name of the restaurant so that it doesn't have to be used in the text-post

[8] Facebook's "reactions" were not yet implemented at this time.

- Tagging the location also cues the restaurant that they (Jordan and co.) had a great time, and eliminates the need to fill out or survey or something.
- It asked for a rating, giving them immediate feedback
- And doubled as recommendation for friends

Dylan identified how Jordan composed with multiple invitations in a single post about eating: the places where Jordan felt compelled to compose, based on the available modes and the best ways to use the media to communicate his purpose. In this class activity, Jordan articulated how Facebook offers the ability for his message to circulate more rapidly than simply telling his friends about the lunch spot face-to-face: "What is gained OL is being able to reach more people with the click of a button versus having to constantly repeat myself over and over again as opposed to real-life, where I would have to do that." Jordan also mentioned that the "sense of excitement" that he was able to communicate online "would dwindle after repeating over and over again" in face-to-face settings. Asking students to analyze their own social media writing gives them the opportunity to observe the invitations of the media, or the ways they purposefully communicate (sometimes without thinking this discursively about it). When asked to reflect on this writing, students can develop awareness of the decisions they make as writers and how the medium they choose to write with can affect those decisions.

For a teacher or scholar who is aware of the media they both produce and consume, this advice for observing invitations might seem simplistic. But I have taught a handful of digital rhetoric and multimodal writing courses where students admit that they have never thought about the media and modes that they write with, whether Microsoft Word or social

media or the pencils they use to jot notes with in class. In ENG 240, students often reflected on the bizarre nature of becoming aware of this new language and rhetoric. Camila, for example, wrote a long explanation for why she follows certain 'rules' on social media sites and interjected with, "It's so weird to think about all of this." Invitations provide students with a method for seeing and understanding media, something that many students have never been asked to do before.

Interplay

Interplay asks students to first observe and analyze the invitations of a medium, and then to think about how they can 'play' with those invitations in order to compose with rhetorical effectiveness. In *A New Culture of Learning*, John Seely Brown and Douglas Thomas define play as "the tension between the rules of the game and the freedom to act within those rules" (18). Thus, play involves a "structured environment" but also the ability to experiment freely (19). Interplay offers students a method to analyze and produce within media that seem to invite composing according to specific expectations. This includes media that might appear more transparent to students than digital sites of composing. While I am not going to discuss context, audience, ethos, or purpose until future chapters of this text, it is important that students think about medium as deeply connected to these considerations; as ENG 240 students noted in Principle 3, a change in medium denotes a change in connection, engagement, and experience.

In Principle 3, ENG 240 students articulated the different experiences of writing on social media than writing academic essays with print media. From their comparisons and reflections, it was clear that students felt social media provided invitations that allowed for

more creative or playful writing than academic essays. While students are provided vast agency in both kinds of media—the ability to employ multiple modes within a singular text to express their message—without awareness of how all available invitations can be employed for rhetorical effectiveness, students might feel that they are left with limited options for composing.

On social media, the importance of the media in relation to other rhetorical considerations is much more visible to students because of invitations. ENG 240 student Addy described a Facebook post that described her frustration about a parking ticket:

> Facebook also enables a user to describe the mood they're feeling alongside an emoji... It's expected that we use words to describe information and if required, our opinion. On social media where rules aren't as rigid [as professional writing], it's completely acceptable and normal to include emojis. It's easier to show a picture of how we're feeling than it is to describe how we're feeling.

In Addy's analysis, she described that Facebook invites users to compose with words, and she calls upon other ways that she might use Facebook invitations to compose when her rhetorical situation requires it. In this instance, she wanted to include an emoji with her post because it more effectively demonstrated her emotional state.

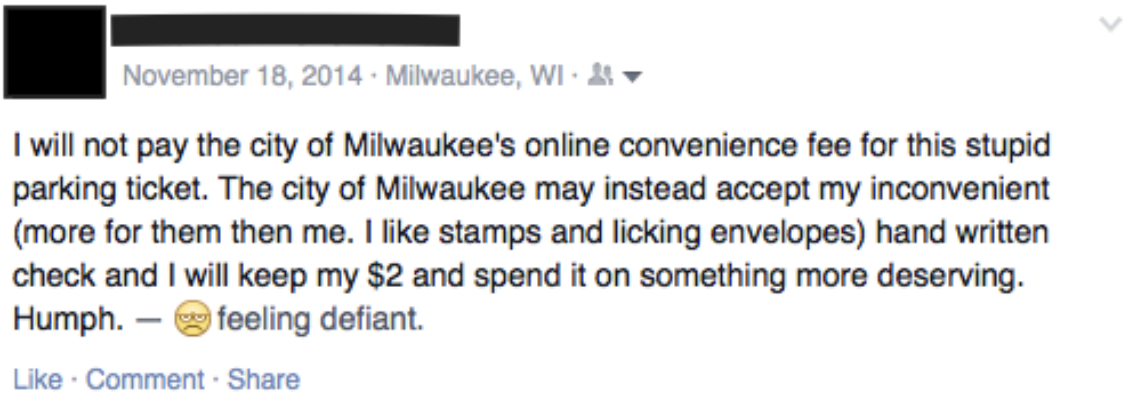

Figure 2: Interplay on Facebook

Addy's post demonstrates play in action: the text status implies multiple feelings (anger, frustration, sarcasm), and the emoji status functions to clarify the mood of this message to her audience. Interplay requires an awareness of rhetorical considerations, and Addy concludes in her analysis above that her audience will gain more understanding of her feelings from an emoji than through a long-form written post.

Interplay cannot occur, however, if students have difficulties navigating the invitations of a particular medium. Take, for example, how much students struggle in the following assignment from one ENG 240 class. In class, I asked a group to create a dating profile for Leonardo DiCaprio using only Microsoft Word (and whatever resources they needed from the internet).[9] After 15 minutes, I checked back with the group; they had paragraphs and paragraphs of biography, but nothing else that even slightly resembled a dating profile. After verifying that they all were paying attention when we analyzed various dating profiles during class discussion—and hearing them state that they all used or had friends who used the dating site *Tinder*—I asked where DiCaprio's picture was located on the profile that they were creating. Lucía was incredulous and asked, "You can add pictures in Microsoft Word?" I was incredulous too: This group of students had no awareness of the material abilities of Microsoft Word beyond text features and a few formatting options.

If Lucía's group had been able to actively search for invitations, they could have chosen modes that more closely aligned with their purpose for writing or their intended audience. In this class activity, I wanted students to explore the interplay of medium and

[9] The subject matter of this activity developed organically in class, as students' discussion returned again and again that day to what they considered to be a 'complex' example of *ethos*: Dicaprio's dating history (often young supermodels), his recent film choices (Oscar-winning dramas), and his environmentalist platform.

modes and how various modes of Microsoft Word could create the same experience of a dating profile, and I thought this activity would allow them to call upon their creative, inventive, and playful agency. That day in class, I left Lucía's group reflecting on ideas about medium and expectation: If students are not openly invited to compose with images, symbols, charts, or objects, what is it that the creators and users of Microsoft Word privilege? What can happen if students compose with a medium in unexpected ways? Interplay is crucial for students to become aware of the multiple ways they can compose within a medium and to actively examine places where they can put such invitations to rhetorical use.

Pedagogical Application

In this section, I offer a sequence of activities to help students gain a discursive understanding of the purposeful choices they make within various media. I continue Wysocki's inclusion of "openings that allow and encourage us to shift what we do in our thinking and classes so that we do not forget, so that we make actively present in our practices, how writing is continually changing material activity that shapes just who we can be and what we can do" (3). These assignments ask students to explore—deeply and critically—the materials and media with which they produce and consume.

The assignments below ask students to consider how their composing media affect how they write, and in turn, students can learn that media are influencing both their writing and rhetorical processes. I begin by asking students to examine their own social media writing; as ENG 240 students demonstrate above, social media environments allow students to recognize how media are used rhetorically, including often transparent aspects

of composing such as circulation and genre expectations. Foregrounding the choices students make on social media—and then asking students to examine, analyze, and understand their understandings that some writing is more appropriate for certain sites than other—can lead to a more discursive composing process. Once students gain rhetorical awareness on social media, they are then asked to consider how this rhetorical process can be applied or extended to academic contexts. Students are invited to use their awareness of media to compose, rather than relying on assumptions, habits, or un-theorized traditions.

To promote transfer among writing contexts, the assignments below ask students to engage in reflection during in-class activities and homework assignments. Katherine Fredlund underscores the importance of this requirement:

> By asking students to reflect on the writing choices they make on social media in short written assignments, they begin to understand that their daily social media practices have helped them develop rhetorical abilities… this recognition leads to confidence in their writing skills while also preparing them to attempt to transfer their rhetorical skills from one situation to another. (103)

Similarly, Linda Adler-Kassner et al. argue that reflection is an essential component when students transfer knowledge and practices to new or different writing contexts. They explain, "[R]eflection becomes a practice that enables writers to recall, reframe, and relocate their thinking, understanding, and processes about writing and link prior knowledge with new knowledge, as they develop as writers able to transfer knowledge and practices to new writing situations" (30). Below I offer assignments that suggest how

students can learn to observe, analyze, and reflect on their social media writing to gain awareness of media and modes, and I also demonstrate how students can reflect on their knowledge of media and modes before transferring it to other writing contexts, particularly the media required for academic writing.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 1

This assignment encourages students to become more aware of their social media writing by examining the media invitations: the places where they are 'compelled' or 'invited' to compose. I designed this assignment so that students gain practice articulating and analyzing the choices they make on social media; students are asked to identify how they compose, and they are asked to reflect on why they make such composing decisions, all while thinking about the medium and modes. Not only will students practice identifying invitations on social media sites in this assignment, but they will also have the opportunity to discuss what expectations of each medium results from such invitations.

This assignment comes out of my awareness that students have rich composing strategies on social media, but that they need help develop these strategies into a rhetorical, discursive process. In ENG 240, students emphasized that they made particular composing decisions from social media site to social media site, but they often needed extra guidance to articulate why they made those decisions. When given activities like the ones below, ENG 240 students wrote smart, reflective descriptions about their social media writing, and they were led to think more discursively about their media and modes decisions. This assignment aims for students to become aware of the choices they make on social media, and it also challenges them to think about medium, mode, and rhetorical considerations in two other communicative contexts (oral and academic). Because students will explore media invitations outside of social media, instructors have the opportunity to observe what concepts are difficult for students to transfer when they compose in different contexts.

ASSIGNMENT 1

Goals and Purpose

You will practice identifying social media invitations. In observing your own writing on social media, you will become more aware of how you are situated as a writer and how you can more effectively use the media for your rhetorical needs.

In-Class Instructions

Have you ever thought about how much writing you do every day? If you kept a writing log, how many times would you pause to record the writing you've done? Each time you send a text or email, post on Facebook, caption a snap, complete an assignment for school, or make a to-do list, you're writing. Of course, the way you write for each of these tasks varies: making a grocery list, for example, is a much different writing process than writing a two-page response paper.

In this activity, you will reflect on your daily social media writing. In groups of two, you will focus on one site of writing and create a post in the designated discussion forum. Consider addressing the following in your response:

- What characterizes your social media writing?
- What are the language and style that you choose to use on this site? Why?
- How does this site invite you to compose?
- The previous question leads into: what modes comprise a typical post for you on this site? Why do you employ those modes?
- How do other people frequently post on this site?
- What are invitations that no one on this site ever uses? Why do you think that is?

Make sure to explain not just what you do...but also why you do it. Finally, make sure that you SHOW, rather than just tell. Include pictures, screen captures, or quotations to help your classmates understand your thinking.

Homework Instructions

In class today, you analyzed your social media writing, including how you interact given the different ways the media invites you to compose. Now you'll extend that thinking to other contexts: face-to-face communication and academic writing. Follow the steps below.

Step 1

Find an example from your social media postings where you employ several modes in a single post. A great example would be a Facebook post that includes a text post, several photos, an emoji, a hashtag, and a check-in at a location. In a Word Document, include a picture, screen capture, or a detailed description of this post.

Step 2

Just as we did in class today, describe why you employed each mode in this post.

Step 3
Now imagine that you were going to deliver this message in real life. How would you compose this message? Describe how you would translate each choice you made in the original post, as well as any applicable elements like variation of voice, enunciation, body language, speed of speech, gestures, pauses, additional information, circulation, etc.

Discuss the difference between delivering this message on social media and delivering this message face-to-face. How does the change in medium (social media to oral speech) affect how you think about composing this message?

Step 4
Now imagine that you were going to deliver this same message in an Office 365 email. How would you compose this message? Describe how you would translate each choice you made in the original post. (Head to your Office 365 email and examine the potential invitations to help with this.)

Discuss the difference between delivering this message on social media and delivering this message via email. How does the change in medium (and the change in expectations of writing an email) affect how you think about composing this message? What email expectations did you think about as you composed, given the invitations you discovered on Office 365 email?

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 2

This assignment continues the goals of assignment 1 so that students can continue to build connections between invitations, modes, and rhetorical considerations (like context, audience, purpose, and circulation). In assignment 1, students learned to observe the media and to see it as an important constituent in the composing process. This assignment is designed so that students gain practice examining and analyzing what happens when invitations are utilized: how modes influence rhetorical communication, or the interplay of available invitations.

This assignment focuses on academic media, both students' own writing and a selection compiled by the instructor. For part 2, instructors should aim to compile a variety of media from authors who purposefully employ various modes. The goal of this assignment is to help students identify more possibilities with their own academic writing, but also for students to begin connecting rhetorical considerations with media choices; where textbooks often seem to give students arbitrary genre distinctions, this activity gives students a chance to connect ways of composing with tangible media and specific rhetorical situations.

ASSIGNMENT 2

Goals and Purpose

These activities ask you to draw upon your ability to recognize modes in a variety of media. You will then go beyond observation to analyze the interplay of such modes, examining how such choices can affect rhetorical considerations (like audience, purpose, and circulation).

In-Class Instructions

Part 1

You all should have brought examples of your academic writing from a variety of courses, including homework assignments, projects, and essays.

In your pods, make a list of different modes you employ in each different medium. For each mode, explain how it helps you communicate rhetorically:

- Express your purpose
- Connect with your audience
- Construct your ethos
- Develop or draw from context

Include a variety of examples from your own academic writing to support your post, and make sure to thoroughly explain each example.

Part 2

At the front of the room I have a pile of academic texts, including books, academic articles, and conference proceedings.

In your pods, examine a handful of materials. Make a list of any new modes you see these authors employing within each medium. For each mode, explain how it helps a writer communicate rhetorically:

- Express a purpose
- Connect with an audience
- Construct an ethos
- Develop or draw from context

Part 3

In an individual reflection, write about what you learned from this activity. Reflect on any ways that your thinking and writing have been challenged or that your understanding of academic writing is shifting. Finally, note if there are any new modes that you want to employ in of your academic writing.

Homework Instructions

Find three examples of different media that you encounter during your studies between now and our next class meeting. In a Word document, analyze the three different media: what invitations do you observe? How did you encounter or find each medium? Who was this medium intended for? How do you know?

To foster your thinking, think about the lessons we've learned in class:

- Invitations as places where the media compels a writer to compose
- Changes in media also shift how we connect, engage, and experience texts
- How form and content work together to communicate a purpose
- How form and content indicate how a text is delivered and circulated

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 3

This assignment moves students from analysis into production, as they are asked to compose in a variety of media and are charged with different rhetorical situations. I designed this assignment so that students can demonstrate their awareness of interplay—for example, which modes should be used in which media, given rhetorical considerations—but I also wanted to give students the chance to 'play' with their composing: students must demonstrate which modes are most effective for their purpose, but also can experiment with composing.

This assignment builds off of the practices found in assignment 1 and 2. To complete this assignment, students would need to have confidence in identifying invitations in (un)familiar media and have a clear notion of the rhetorical considerations found in later chapters of this text. The in-class reflection assignment is flexible, as are the media chosen for the homework assignment. (I only choose media that students have free access to, so for ENG 240 it would be media within the Office 365 suite.) Whatever media chosen, the goals of the assignment should remain the same: students should demonstrate an awareness of media, modes, and the interplay of both given their rhetorical considerations.

ASSIGNMENT 3

Goals and Purpose

This assignment asks you to produce three texts in different media, which will require you to examine how each medium invites you to compose and how you can make the most effective use of each medium given your rhetorical considerations. This assignment encourages you to be aware of interplay: how each decision of composing—each mode you include—has a rhetorical effect.

In-Class Instructions

In the next 30 minutes, you will write an in-class reflection. Here is your prompt:

Write an essay describing to future ENG 101 students what they can learn about writing from their social media use.

Homework Instructions

Using your in-class reflection (the letter to future ENG 101 students), explain how you could translate this essay into three different media:

- A series of tweets or a series of social media posts (whichever social media you use most frequently) for your friends
- A presentation using PowerPoint for the Dean of the College
- A 10-page essay provided as supplemental material at orientation for next year's incoming class

What modes should you use in order to communication effectively? What modes should you employ in order to communicate rhetorically? (Maybe you'll want to think if those are the same thing.)

You might want to begin by examining the invitations of the three media: the social media site you choose; PowerPoint; and Microsoft Word (unless you choose a different medium for your essay...). Given the invitations of these media, what composing choices can you make?

Chapter 2: Context

"I had never considered that there are different layers of context to a piece of writing."

- Emilie

"To look at someone's tweets or posts after the fact makes gathering what was happening in order to prompt the post much harder. Whereas, looking through an academic article that gives background information about the purpose of the writing makes navigating what caused the author to write in a certain form and about certain things far easier and more clear." – Anna

I love context. I love using it as an all-encompassing word during conversation when I need more information, better descriptions, or situational background. I love creating context in writing and establishing a specific problem within a specific place at a specific time. I love helping students narrow down the context of their research essays in FYC courses so that they can both manage the mounds of academic scholarship they encounter in databases and productively position their own purpose within that mass of scholarship. I love context because of its muchness: the robust amount of information that is addressed when contextual understanding is achieved. But realizing that my love of context includes no less than a handful of definitions, I also believe that maybe I do not understand context all that well... because how can a term encompass so much nuance? And how can FYC instructors possibly approach teaching novice scholars *and* novice university writers in

FYC such a complex concept which, depending on the definition, is reliant on deep critical thought, exploration through reading, and (really) ample knowledge about a topic?

This chapter begins like the previous chapter: I begin by illustrating the class period where students started to expand their rhetorical understanding of context. In Chapter 1, I showed how students demonstrated an intuitive awareness of the media and modes they wrote with on social media, but they required help to become aware of those understandings and to articulate how choices of medium and mode could be rhetorically effective. In the introduction of this chapter, the student anecdotes illustrate their shrewd comprehension of context on social media. Thus, after a brief introduction to students' understanding of context, I move on to rhetoric and composition scholars' approach to the concept. While scholars present thorough, rich discussions of "context" through models of ecological theory, I argue that these definitions and discussions are not translating to FYC instruction. I analyze FYC textbooks to demonstrate my argument; I argue that FYC textbooks hint at the theory offered in scholarship but that instruction never quite seems to trust that students can handle the complexity of "context." At the end of the chapter, I respond to this issue of instruction and return to ENG 240 students' work in order to suggest two expanded approaches to context for the FYC classroom.

I now will share a story from Section 2 of ENG 240. Context is a word that I daily use while teaching—and a word that I freely use, as demonstrated above—often in the form of a question for students, "In what context was the author writing this text?" or "In what context do you want to situate your own argument?" Students respond with a difficult challenge of their own: "Wait. What is context?" Early in my teaching, I know my answers to

this question were unconstructive[10]. Before this project, I struggled to find a definition of "context" that students could grasp. The term invites students to think conceptually, although they often desire a hard and straight definition. I teach students that context is an accumulation and circulation of information, events, knowledge, histories, and backgrounds of topics. Still, despite the colorful infographics that I make to accompany lectures about rhetorical terms, "accumulation of backgrounds" is definitely not a phrase that students use in daily conversations.

In Section 2 of ENG 240, I had the added benefit (or the added fatigue?) of the presidential election to help describe what I meant by the "layers" of context, and it was from using social media examples that students were able to develop their own understanding about context in their social media writing. In a class activity that introduced context, I asked, "Who knows the Shaq shimmy meme?" Almost every student raised their hand or made some sort of grunt, nod, or blink of affirmation. My question referenced an animated GIF (a graphics interchange format file extension) of former professional basketball player Shaquille O'Neal, who—in the animation—smiles conspiratorially with pursed lips while shaking his shoulders rapidly back and forth. The GIF is taken from a Gold Bond commercial, where the star sprays the product down his shirt and gives a quick, satisfied shimmy. Seeing that students were familiar with the GIF, I queued an hour-long video on YouTube that displayed a cat wiggling its butt, Shaq shimmying, and Hillary Clinton appearing to 'wiggle and giggle' from the Sept. 26th, 2016

[10] I probably looked up context in the dictionary, memorized it, and regurgitated it with no further elaboration. This sounds like I had very little teacher training. I had plenty. But I like to recall these terrible days of instruction because they remind me of how difficult such concepts can be for students who encounter terms like "context" anew. Building a rhetorical vocabulary takes time, and dictionary definitions do not help develop nuance.

presidential debate. The clips of the three characters only show for three seconds, and then the GIF repeats for an hour. I played this for the students for a long while; after hearing a dozen uncomfortable laughs, I asked them, "Can you explain why this exists?" During group discussion, many students agreed that the video existed to be funny. "But why is it funny?" I pressed.

"Because it's Shaq?"

"Because basketball players are usually huge and intimidating?"

"Because it's Hillary Clinton?"

"Because politicians are supposed to be serious."

"Also, people on the internet like cats."

"It's just absurd!"

The students then explored why it is funny to see Shaq move with rhythm or to see a presidential candidate giggle/wiggle, and why it is even funnier (absurd, they really thought) to pair both figures with a cat, who looks like it is about to pounce on catnip. I am not going to pretend that I led students through a deep conversation about all of the information, events, knowledge, histories, and backgrounds that they took into account in order to understand the shimmy video. But students had talked through expectations of both O'Neal and Clinton according to their professions, the original events that spurred the 'shimmies,' where the GIF would most likely be viewed and why, how GIFs are typically used on various social media sites, and who might not find this video humorous (and why).

"So it's only funny," I concluded for the students, "if you understand the context of the GIF."

This lesson seemed like a sufficient first approach to context, and when I showed them a follow-up "Shimmy if you're with her" GIF that was currently circulating online, they were immediately able to analyze the context, given our previous discussion.

Figure 3: “Shimmy If You’re With Her” GIF (VanderPloeg)

One student reflected in her homework after the lesson about context,

> Though I feel I understand the general concept of context, I find myself stammering for an answer when asked, 'what is the context of this picture or post?' Perhaps my struggle derives from the broadness of context... In class when we were shown Hillary Clinton doing the ‘Shaq Wiggle’ and being told that this is only funny because of context was the ah-ha moment for me.

Students' knowledge of a single meme gave them the ability to unpack multiple texts (even if they had never encountered those other texts before) and observe how context accumulates and to observe that texts can circulate to new audiences who bring new understandings to the texts.

In this chapter, I highlight three Rhetoric and Social Media students who offered a 'revisioning' of the rhetorical concept "context" for their final essay.[11] In a collaboratively written essay, Emilie, Anna, and Matt argued that—because they can always remember composing with(in) technologies like social media—they approach writing situations differently than the standard academic instruction they have encountered in writing classrooms. These students argued that the amount of time they spend on social media has allowed them to gain new, creative approaches to writing. But they also argued that their ways of writing on social media make it difficult to transition into formal, academic writing—not because the rhetorical knowledge is so distinct, but because they are not learning how to use this knowledge for other forms of writing. Emilie argued, "Millennials can have a hard time learning how to write academically because of the casual everyday writing on social media, however, they do understand concepts like context more than they [instructors] think." Anna demonstrated this awareness, which I clarify later in the chapter: "In academic writing, the context is embedded within; in posting on social media the context is situational and comes and goes." Thus, social media users have an awareness of how to read situational, ephemeral context on social media and so they are well equipped

[11] Emilie, Anna, and Matt are quoted individually according to what they physically typed in their final essay, but because of the collaborative nature of the project, credit should be attributed among the three students as they helped each other think through and shape such ideas.

to perform the same analysis in other media—even if that media provides more context or context in a different form.

Following the same structure as the chapter before, I examine how context manifests in composition theory and textbooks before offering an expanded term—drawing from students' social media knowledge—to improve FYC pedagogical instruction. Contemporary composition scholars approach context in terms of ecological models, and they see the interplay of actors, events, histories, and knowledges as a complex web of interaction. First-year composition (FYC) textbooks offer the metaphor of 'entering the conversation' for students as they begin the difficult contextual work necessary to write about a topic. What ENG 240 students demonstrated is that both ecological theory and FYC textbook instruction fail to address how to observe the expectations and norms that accompany media, especially since these expectations affect the creation, delivery, and circulation of texts. I describe the social media knowledge of students in this chapter and offer an approach to context that draws from their awareness of the complex layers of interaction that constitute a message. I argue that FYC instruction would benefit from a two-fold definition of "context" that allows students to further develop the practices they draw from in their daily, social writing: I offer *presumed context* so that students can observe how they are situated within the media they use, including the way that modes suggest conventions and norms of composing, and I suggest *academic lurking* so that students can navigate contextual shifts within a medium over time and as texts circulate. While "context" is present and nuanced in composition theory and textbooks, often *how* to teach a term like context is absent; the last section in this chapter offers classroom activities and assignments to guide students through the theory and practice of context.

What Theory Can Contribute to Students' Understanding

In my study of "context," I found that very few writing scholars in the past 20 years have written explicitly about the concept. In fact, I see context used only in passing or in titles of scholarly texts: while numerous texts discuss 'writing in the context of ...' or 'writing in online contexts,' few scholars take up a sustained conversation about the kind of context referenced in FYC textbooks and classrooms. In his article about the assessment of context in multimodal texts, Chris Gallagher explains that while consensus dictates that "context matters" in writing studies and for writing assessment scholars (1), the "bewildering complexity of multiple, overlapping contexts is particularly confounding" (2). In other words, knowing which contexts matter—or even which contexts are being referenced or how—is often unclear.

While in-depth conversations about context are lacking, writing studies scholarship often addresses the concept through ecology theory. Although Marilyn Cooper clearly asserts, "The term *ecological* is not, however, simply the newest way to say 'contextual'" (367), many scholars define ecology as a web of intermingling factors that contribute to the production, reception, and understanding of a text. As I examine in further detail below, these definitions are not entirely unfamiliar to the discussions of context found in several FYC textbooks. For example, *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* and *Everyone's An Author* define context as "conditions affecting the text such as what else has been said about a topic; social, economic, and other factors" (G/I-10, A34 respectively). But just as with his take on the multiplicities of context, Gallagher similarly challenges ecological theory: despite its dynamic intricacies, Gallagher believes ecology "may function as a substitute

god-term" for context (4). Gallagher continues, "[E]cology is meant to be all-encompassing, to explain everything" (4). In this section, I approach ecology as a more sophisticated version of context. I focus on various ecological models with different approaches to examine if Gallagher's claim about ecology as a “god term” is warranted, and to see how ecology asks us to approach context. I ultimately argue that ecology theory is a complex theory for FYC students but that several theories can offer students productive approaches for developing an awareness of their media choices.

I begin with Marilyn Cooper's "The Ecology of Writing," which is oft cited as a foundational text that moved the examination of context beyond local spaces and situations and into how social systems construct and are constructed by writers and writing. Cooper begins with a critique of cognitive process models of writing, which shifted the focus of writing instruction from form to content. Her issue is not the process of this instruction but rather how it positions the writer: as a solitary author. Activities that encourage group work and include personal, public, or business writing move away from this model because, Cooper argues, such activities address the social nature of writing.

Cooper states that ecology is not just a new way to talk about context—although the scholars I quote below complicate her stance—and that ecology is a different theory all together: "What I would like to propose is an ecological model of writing, whose fundamental tenet is that writing is an activity through which a person is continually engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems" (367). She explains that previous contextual models (such as those proposed by contemporary rhetoricians Kenneth Burke and Lloyd Bitzer) looked at the situations that surrounded the writer and the topic at hand rather than the entire system "of all the other writers and writings in the systems" (368). In

these systems, writers regulate and create constitutive purposes, and the system, cultural norms, and writing styles are in continual flux. As Cooper emphasizes, "[T]he systems are entirely interwoven in their effects" (369) so that "anything that affects one strand of the web vibrates throughout the whole" (370). Cooper suggested that this social awareness of writing would lead students to better awareness of those they are writing and responding to, even in classroom situations when students read each others' writing.

Scholars after Cooper have critiqued and expanded this theory of ecology. In general, the scholars who come after Cooper agree that writing ecologies include more factors than the relationships among writers, readers, and texts. A decade and a half later, Cooper even critiques herself, admitting that she once viewed the ecology theory of writing as only a metaphor rather than the discussion of an actualized ecological system. Although the scholarship has advanced since Cooper's initial essay, she still challenges those drawing from ecology theory:

> [I]t is still a struggle to see relationships as primary, rather than focusing on—especially on—the human actors relating to human and nonhuman others, and even harder to see writing as part of a whole, interrelated, ceaselessly changing environment rather than as a social system through which humans act on and make conscious choices about the nonsocial other system, the natural environment. (xiv)

The endeavor to focus on more than human interaction within a writing ecology is what drives Christian Weisser and Sidney Dobrin's collection, *Ecocomposition*.

In his essay "Writing Takes Place," Dobrin writes that ecocomposition is “the study of the relationship between discourse, nature, environment, location, place, and the ways in

which these categories get mapped, written codified, defined, and in turn, the way in which nature and environment affects discourse" (14). Dobrin reflects that rhetoric and composition discusses and theorizes about place and space, but does not talk about environment. Thus, ecocomposition functions as a theory to explore where writing happens, whether natural, physical, digital, or textual. As Dobrin argues, the boundaries of such spaces "blend" (16) and so ecocomposition extends beyond the social and physical relationships of readers and writers to include "relationships with other texts, discourses, other organisms, environments, and locations…the total relations of discourse both to its organic and inorganic environment" (20). This understanding of environment is what establishes ecocomposition from context. One of the epigraphs of Dobrin's essay includes the Webster's definition of context, with the word "environment" in all capital letters. But as Dobrin later explains, context is how words are situated and how words provide meaning. Dobrin continues, "Context is, quite literally…the interrelationship between words that give meaning to text" (19). It is necessary to look beyond the meaning that the words and text give and to examine the environments in which the words and texts are situated.

Despite their efforts to separate ecology theory from definitions of "context," Cooper and Dobrin make clear that it is necessary to look beyond the understandings that audiences glean from words and text and to examine the systems and environments in which the words and texts are situated. This approach to context lends itself to a writing process where medium is at the forefront of analysis and production—but where students still need help to see the materials they compose with as rhetorical. For instance, in *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition*, Margaret Syverson continues Cooper's self-

critique to theorize a writing ecology that has “no boundaries between writing and the other interlocked, cycling systems of our world" ("Foreword," xiv). Syverson defines an ecology as a set of complex systems that not only has internal agents that affect one another, but also is responsive to and shaped by environmental structures *and* other complex systems. Syverson explains,

> I would argue that writers, readers, and texts form just such a complex system of self-organizing, adaptive, and dynamic interactions. But even beyond this level of complexity, they are actually situated in an ecology, a larger system that includes environmental structures, such as pens, paper, computers, books...and other natural and human-constructed features, as well as other complex systems operating at various levels of scale, such as families, global economies, publishing systems, theoretical frames, academic disciplines, and language itself. (5)

In Syverson's ecology theory, complex systems cannot be clearly defined because they are in continual flux—reacting to the social and environmental "structures that both powerfully constrain and also enable what writers are able to think, feel, and write" (9). Similar to Cooper, Syverson describes this as a reciprocal action, where the environments affect writers and writers affect change in the environment. Syverson labels this "enaction," which is "the principle that knowledge is the result of an ongoing interpretation that emerges through *activities* and *experiences* situated in specific environments" (13). With such an awareness of environmental factors and complex systems, Syverson argues that "text and reader arise codependently" (17).

M. Jimmie Killingsworth and John Krajicek demonstrate as much in their book chapter "Ecology, Alienation, and Literacy" by articulating how the process of collaborative writing invites independent interpretations of reading and writing about the same texts and ideas. The authors conclude, "When we retreat to our studies to face the blank page, to write the wordy texts that our companions in literacy will ultimately help us make more sociable... The movement inward and outward, from solitude to society and back again, is the very motion of literacy" (54). Even while working on the same project, their text was always affected by the other writer/reader in their own environment, who would approach the text with their individual encounters and experiences in mind.

Thus, this contribution to ecology theory suggests that students might also need to consider circulation as an aspect of context to learn how varying levels of contextual understandings develop within a text over time, even if an author believes to be communicating a singular argument clearly: Students would consider how texts are circulated to other readers and repurposed by other writers, all who are affected by environmental factors and their own experiences within those environments.

The varied ways texts are understood over time leads Jacques Derrida to argue that context is destabilized in writing because writing can always be reproduced in new contexts. In "Signature Event Context," Derrida explains that a text must function to communicate even if the author is not present or is no longer living. Written signs, he concludes, "[P]ossess the characteristic of being readable even if the moment of its production is irrevocably lost and even if I do not know what its alleged author-scriptor consciously intended to say at the moment he wrote it" (9). Because context has the ability to be destabilized in this fashion, texts become situational and momentary. Derrida

continues, “Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written...in a small or large unit, can be cited, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable” (12). Derrida’s argument points to a need for writing ecologies to look at the circulation and potentialities of texts. Writing ecologies demonstrate the overlap of the active and reactive nature of all writing acts. But Derrida explains that the context of these acts are destabilized because writing can—for the most part—be read, understood, and removed from the environment where it was created. Thus, understanding a text must be more about how it is situated through time; writing ecologies must consider how a text has gathered meanings as it has transcended contexts, as well as consider potential future environments where texts might be circulated.

Continuing the call for circulation as a constituent of context, Jenny Edbauer's framework of rhetorical ecologies aims to take up considerations of circulation by placing public rhetorics into a "circulating ecology of effects, enactments, and events," and focusing on the spread of each of these (9). Edbauer focuses on the social production of writing and emphasizes specifically that public writing is circulated, is received, and is transformed. Because writing cannot be located within a rhetorical situation, Edbauer argues that it must be considered "in the radius of their neighboring events” (20). Edbauer reasons that, "the rhetorical situation is...an ongoing social flux" whose elements "*bleed*" (9, original italics). The problem with the 'rhetorical situation,' Edbauer asserts, is that it stalls rhetorical action—it gives writing a location, a place, and situates it. But, Edbauer continues, "[W]riting is distributed across a range of processes and encounters: the event of using a keyboard, the encounter of a writing body within a space of dis/comfort, the events of

writing in an apathetic/energetic/distant/close group" (13). Acts of writing cannot be viewed as distinct; change occurs through these processes.

Nathaniel Rivers and Ryan Weber also focus on this interwoven complexity of social writing in "Ecological, Pedagogical, and Public Rhetoric." Rivers and Weber describe public rhetoric as an "ecology of texts, writers, readers, institutions, objects, and history" (188). Similar to Cooper, the authors argue that when making change it cannot be done through a single text (or a single writer), but rather through the connection of "many mundane documents that target various audiences" (188). Rivers and Weber continue, "[W]e wish to emphasize that most changes proposed by advocates occur through concrete modifications to the institutional structures of government offices, courts, schools, corporations, and religious and community organizations" (188). This ecological model requires students to go beyond situating their essay within a context or rhetorical situation; instead, students must understand how each document they encounter affects various audiences and incites change. Like Edbauer's ecological model, if a student is only situating their argument, they are not necessarily asked to consider the network of history, or the way this history has led to or will lead to complicated situations. But if students are to perform public writing—performing as if they are entering an ongoing conversation with others, as analyzed in the textbook theory section below—then Rivers and Weber believe their ecological approach with a focus on mundane documents invites students to engage in "rhetorically robust work" (190).

At this point, the ecological theory presented here would require students to be aware of how texts take shape—authorial intentions, social influences, physical environments, systematic influences and constraints—as well as how texts circulate and

are understood by others. Rivers and Weber add to that list: They give particular attention to texts themselves in order to learn how documents affect audiences as they circulate to or through various places. Gallagher believes ecology metaphors often move context away from the text itself, and therefore neglect to address how fundamental texts are to the ecologies in which they exist. With multimodal texts in particular, Gallagher proposes that context be dependent on the interface and how "multimodal texts *perform* contexts" (3, original italics). This involves awareness of how the text's users' (composers, readers, viewers, etc.) and the text interact, which he calls "encounters" (3). Gallagher's describes his theory as a "context that refuses to think of context as prior to and outside of texts but rather positions texts and contexts as mutually constitutive" (11). This theory of context adds an additional layer to Rivers and Weber's ecological theory, as it would ask students to consider how the media itself contributes to the rest of the ecology.

In order to gain awareness of how media is a contributing factor within an ecology, students would need to understand what knowledge and norms are suggested, utilized, and received when they interact with a particular medium. For example, what is required when writing a white paper? What is required when quoting from an article in an academic essay? Anis Bawarshi—whose genre theory is also discussed in chapter 1—argues that when communicators write within genres, "they are interpreting and enacting the social motives (embedded rhetorically within it) that sustain an environment and make it meaningful" (78). This contributes to not only the text that is created, but also toward the context, expectations, and identity of the communicators. Bawarshi proposes that genres are ecological, comprised of "rhetorical habits as well as social habitats" (73). In this way, genres are both enacted and a place for action. Bawarshi advocates,

> [A] writer and his or her rhetorical environment are always in the process of reproducing one another, so that 'environment' is not some vague backdrop against which writers enact their rhetorical actions; instead, the environment becomes in critical ways part of the very rhetorical action that writers enact. (70)

According to Bawarshi, genres are ecological because communicators shape them as they reproduce texts (create variations of texts) and writers are in turn shaped by the texts that they create within rhetorical environments.

To summarize, specific movements have emerged from ecology scholarship that offer a complex definition (or what Dobrin would prefer to call a description) of what it means to look at writing and the writing process through an ecological framework: that social factors influence how writers construct texts and how readers interpret texts; that environments not only situate texts but give meaning to all elements within a writing ecology; that circulation of texts affects environments and the varied, complex systems that comprise those environments; and that the texts and media of ecologies are shaped by and contribute to the other elements within the ecology.

Although not always a comprehensive, discursive process (and in much more informal words), several students in ENG 240 reported that they write on social media and think about the various elements that constitute a writing ecology. As I demonstrate in this project, students reported that they think about how the media influences composing choices, how their audiences will receive and respond to those messages, and how the message might be circulated or reproduced. I describe the process of Emilie, Anna, and Matt in more detail below and describe how these initial observations about the layered,

circulatory features of social media context can be transformed into a more rhetorical, discursive process of writing. While social media offered an environment for students to develop awareness of how medium influenced their own composing choices (when framed within rhetorical discussions and reflection), it was more difficult for students to articulate why modes carried with them certain expectations, especially as they circulated to different contexts. As Anna states at the beginning of this chapter, "context comes and goes." In other words, students could pick apart elements of a writing ecology, but they had more difficulty seeing how the elements vibrated within the web. In the following section I discuss how FYC textbooks instruction about context seems to hint at larger systematic webs of knowledge and connections: FYC's oft-recurring them of "entering the conversation" acts as a simplified approach to ecological frameworks of writing. This instruction is most helpful (and complex) when it integrates an integral aspect of context: the circulation of texts.

What Textbook Instruction Offers (Or Doesn't Offer) For Students

In this section, I show how FYC textbook instruction aims for students to develop the same kind of complex awareness about the topics they write about as ecology scholars argue for: topics have histories; topics are connected to political, cultural, economic, and social considerations; and topics involve many perspectives. However, I argue that the textbooks sometimes undermine their goal by offering too many definitions, including narrow descriptions of students' rhetorical considerations.

I begin by introducing several definitions of "context" found across several textbooks. Perhaps one reason that instructors use FYC textbooks is because textbooks

describe context in various ways, and some authors consistently repeat the idea with different definitions as their rhetorical instruction accumulates in order to remind students that others are involved in the thinking and writing process. For example, in *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, Richard Bullock et al. do not provide "context" with its own chapter as part of the rhetorical situation, but students are repeatedly reminded of the concept as they are introduced to various writing genres throughout the course of the textbook. Bullock et al. remind students that "texts don't exist in isolation" (110), that "visual texts are part of larger conversations with other texts that have dealt with the same topic or used similar imagery" (117); students are also reminded to "provide background information at the start of your [literacy] narrative" (89) and to analyze texts "as part of some larger context—as part of a certain time or place in history or as an expression of a certain culture...as one of many other texts like it, a representative of a genre" (212). In *Everyone's An Author*, Andrea Lunsford et al. provide the same definition of context as found in the *Norton* textbook: "conditions affecting the text such as what else has been said about a topic; social, economic, and other factors; and any constraints such as due date and length" (A34). Lunsford et al. explain to students that each rhetorical situation is different, and in order to think rhetorically, students must "put that close analysis [that they learned in high school English] into a larger context—historical, political, or cultural, for example—to recognize and consider where the analysis is 'coming from'" (9). While I appreciate the complexity these authors develop as they build the concept of "context" throughout their textbooks, I wonder if students find this definition confusing. Students might ask: How does a concept like "context" help a writer?

To encourage students to approach context conceptually, some textbook discussions provide students with initial introductory definitions of context that suggest taking an ecological view: students must look outward and take into consideration how the whole topic affects their writing. But when the textbooks move into more specific, semi-prescriptive advice, they tend to lose the interconnection developed with initial definitions of context and turn back to focusing solely on the student's ideas. Once again, the textbooks demonstrate how immensely complicated teaching context is: While definitions can express the theory and intent, putting it into practice in FYC first requires a process that helps students both acquire the kind of holistic thinking required of an ecological framework and also function as novice college writers. For example, in the section titled, "Starting Your Research," Lunsford et al. offer students a list of questions to consider their rhetorical situation as they begin a research project. The first questions related to context, however, are not about various perspectives related to a topic or the histories surrounding a topic; rather, context is referred to as length requirements and due dates of the assignment (451). Such elements of a writing assignment are practical, but when referred to as the context of a writer's rhetorical situation, they seemed incredibly removed from the social, public context that the authors later have students address in their essays.

Of course, practical moments referring to assignment expectations are not as frequent as discussions that invite students to move beyond the constraints of a writing classroom. One common approach that the FYC textbooks in this study employ to move students into the mindset of considering other perspectives related to their essay topics includes the metaphor to "enter the conversation." This advice is fairly common from the textbook authors, who wish for students to see their writing as part of a larger academic

conversation, calling upon Kenneth Burke's parlor metaphor[12]. The *Norton* authors, who continually remind students to think about outward influences, advise students accordingly:

> [Y]ou can better make your point and achieve your purpose by showing your readers why your topic is important and why they should care about it... One good way of doing that is to present your ideas as a response to what others have said about your topic—to begin by quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing what others have said and then to agree, disagree, or both. (4)

Drawing from others' writing invites students to move from editorializing their own thoughts to positioning their ideas within an ongoing collection of research. Just as Lunsford et al. encourage students to identify local contexts by having them consider the personal constraints of their writing situation, here Bullock et al. move students toward writing with other voices in mind. This essentially helps students achieve contextual awareness: As previously mentioned, Bullock et al. and Lunsford et al. both define context partially as "what else has been said about a topic" (G/I-10, A34).

The instruction for students to "enter the conversation" of a topic that they write about reflects ecological theory; in textbooks, students are essentially asked to situate their own purpose, stance, or argument within already existing purposes, stances, and arguments. For novice scholars approaching new rhetorical situations, this is a task that requires an incredible amount of critical engagement, and often includes navigating

[12] "Imagine that you enter a parlor...When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar…" (Burke 110).

unfamiliar texts and discourses. In *Writing Today*, Charles Paine and Richard Johnson-Sheehan encourage students, "Pay attention to the social trends that are influencing you, your topic, and your readers... What are the larger social trends that will influence how people in the near and distant future understand this topic?" (27). I recognize the value in asking students these questions because they invite students to become thoughtful, critical thinkers about the various influences (or influencers) within a writing situation. But I also think these questions must be really difficult to answer for students writing about topics that that they do not know much about, especially with unknown contexts that they are simply unaware exist; it must be difficult to even *find* where those perspectives exist. As Emilie reflected early in ENG 240, she often has to perform internet research to figure out why an academic piece of writing is relevant or why a meme is popular. (And before she developed a more discursive theory of context to apply to writing situations, she also asked me, "How do you know why a meme is popular? How can you tell why someone is tweeting something RIGHT NOW?")

Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper, authors of the *St. Martin's* textbook, provide students with a method for accessing such unfamiliar contexts, but this instruction does not come until a section about visual images. Axelrod and Cooper ask students to consider how visuals contribute to the social and cultural knowledge of the message/purpose of a text. This includes asking students, "Does the visual refer to other historical images, figures, events, or stories that the audience would recognize?" (629). They encourage students to consider the intertextuality of an image to learn how it might "connect, relate to, or contrast with any other significant texts, visual or otherwise" (629). Just as Rivers and Weber argue for students to create "multiple, intertextual documents" (190), with Axelrod

and Cooper's instructions, students can learn to see how ideas, objects, and texts are affected by multiple influences and that the layers of meaning involved are expansive and complex.

When students work with print texts, understanding how texts are shaped in such ways, with a variety of audiences, discourses, and purposes still is difficult. The entire focus of the textbook *They Say/I Say* is to guide students through this process as they enter unfamiliar academic discourses. Templates are provided for students to easily integrate others' voices into their writing. Because some templates directly integrate alternative ideas, students address other perspectives, even if it is just to argue against them or agree with them. Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst introduce these templates so that students consider how various perspectives can and have influenced the topic that they write about in order to achieve a 'social situatedness' within their essay.

Many of the students I worked with in ENG 240 did not seem to have difficulties holding various perspectives in their heads or understanding how others might affect their own presentation of purpose—when they were writing on social media. On sites like Twitter and Facebook, these students regularly enter conversations and consider how other viewpoints might affect their message. Take this example that Emilie used from her own writing on Twitter: "[T]his summer, I went on a total Twitter rant about how awful getting an IUD was, and how I wanted all of my followers to know what it was really like — totally breaking the TMI rule…. I'm sure I lost followers over it, but my female followers really appreciated it." On Twitter, knowing the expectations and norms of a specific group that Emilie writes to helps her know if her posts will be effective or not, and so she knows how her writing fits into and contributes to certain ongoing conversations that group

members are having or might be interested in having. Emilie further explained her choice to self-disclose:

> Additionally, I feel like most of the 'popular' accounts that I follow are people that definitely do not mind discussing 'uncomfortable' topics, which in 2016 are things like race, feminism, and the presidential election. By avoiding censoring themselves, they do not have to worry about seeming authentic: the authenticity is just natural. I have noticed that a trend today is to 'overshare' to make yourself seem more authentic and relatable.

In her social media writing, Emilie situated her purpose given what she knows about the expectations of topics she can address, but in her academic writing she depicted her writing as thesis-driven. In Emilie's pre-law courses, for instance, she reported being primarily focused on expressing her own thoughts rather than thinking about the reader's needs. Here is how she responded when asked to describe her academic style of writing case briefs and news stories in a "Law and Policy" course: "My clear theses in all of my writing drew the reader in, provided context for my opinion in the paragraphs to come, and tied the story to my own personal beliefs." Emilie's academic writing could use the same influence of voices that "entering the conversation" metaphors in textbooks aim to achieve. The gap between Emilie's writing process on Twitter and that in her academic writing demonstrates a lack of contextual awareness in the latter setting, particularly how she might use expectations and norms of the audience to inform her academic writing.

One way to help students develop awareness of the complexity of the context of the topics that they choose to write about is to have them analyze the media they write with and how it circulates to various audiences and locations over time. I return to the idea that

FYC definitions of context aim to suggest the same complexities as some ecological theories—albeit on a much smaller scale. Of course, one flaw in this instruction is that it is sometimes still difficult to decipher the complex accumulation of context when encountering entirely unfamiliar ideas, objects, and texts. There are times when it is not easy for students to gather context, even when it seems like there are connections, histories, or knowledge at work. In the next section, I build upon the useful approaches found in the aforementioned ecological theories and the FYC textbook notion of "entering the conversation." I present a method for students to explore the complexities of context in order to help them analyze and compose with a variety of media.

Expanding Context

The environments in which writing exists are more complex than can be described in the limited pages of a context chapter found in a FYC textbook. What the students of ENG 240 present in this chapter is that they use the media *invitations* to analyze posts on social media. By using the media and modes to understand context, I believe they can gain a bit more familiarity with even completely unknown contexts. This moves context away from solely content-based knowledge (i.e. something like historical background) and creates an approach to context that can be understood as active, present, and circulated. With this approach, students can learn to "enter the conversation" while also learning why the conversation takes shape the way it does.

The students I mentioned earlier who focused on context in ENG 240— Emilie, Anna, and Matt—proposed the idea of "presumed context" and "academic lurking" as methods to help other students approach context when writing academic essays. In this section, I

expand on their methods in order to strengthen FYC instruction. I describe how "presumed context" is situational and indicates the content knowledge of a particular group; this involves analyzing media invitations to extend awareness of presumed context. I then move on to academic lurking, an action that, when paired with presumed context, allows students to gather information about both the content of a topic and how media circulation influences shifts and changes over time.

Presumed Context

Presumed context includes the modes that indicate the agreed upon norms for composing within a medium and how the circulation of a text creates certain expectations for composing. This context is not assumed, or based on assumptions; instead, this context is presumed, or synthesized from the patterns students see developing across texts—the same ideas, objects, knowledges, etc. that they recognize developing over various texts, for various audiences, and within different systems of thought. When students learn to analyze presumed context and apply what they learn, they can better understand how their own ideas fit within the multiple texts and voices that are continually shifting and changing, and they can also learn how to compose—both in words and through media—in order to situate their texts.

In the introduction to this chapter, Anna stated that context is "embedded" within the writing for academic essays but is situational on social media. Emilie explains: "[A]ny piece of writing posted online needs to be pertinent enough to an immediate local context that everyone will immediately recognize; it is rare for casual writing on social media to have clearly stated context." These recognizable bits—whether within a visual, a text, or a

different mode—communicate the message and establish context for the receiver; this is what the group coins “presumed context.” The students also refer to their definition of presumed context as "common knowledge." Matt elaborated on this definition in their final project:

> Academic papers targeted towards peers often do not explain terms or concepts within their realm of expertise. A physicist generally does not waste their time writing and explaining Newton’s Law in a peer-viewed paper that is going to be shared amongst each other. In this example, Newton’s Law is considered 'common knowledge' amongst physicist and therefore does not to be explicitly cited or explained.

To further illustrate what can be interpreted as common knowledge, the students provide examples of visual memes in their essay. The group referred to an example that I will call "Thanksgiving Grandma" in order to point out how presumed context is applied in memes. Emilie, Matt, and Anna considered presumed context to be vital because there is always some sort of underlying knowledge at play when one encounters or composes a text. This means that even though some of the same content or the same modes might be used in a social media post, the meaning of the post can change completely. If the receiver of the message cannot draw from common knowledge, the message will not be communicated effectively.

Anna provided background information for the meme: "[R]ecently, a video has surfaced of a preacher naming different kinds of foods. Social media users grabbed a hold of this video and have run with it, creating numerous memes and giving it a life of its own." Screen captures of the reproduced meme that the students provided for examples included

captions about what was being cooked for Thanksgiving dinner or what activities were completed in college courses. Anna continued in the essay,

> If someone that does not spend enough time on social media to have seen the video—such as, someone from an older generation—saw this second example, they would be confused as to why an elderly black woman pointing is funny, or why the meme is so popular. It looks like someone is just simply giving a speech.

Anna believed it was necessary to spend a lot of time on social media in order to understand the Thanksgiving Grandma meme and makes the generalization that younger people would find the meme more relevant or funny than older generations. What Anna suggested with such a comment is that social media users like her are often on sites like Twitter, so they encounter enough memes to understand reproduced memes, like the Thanksgiving Grandma. This is common knowledge, except instead of physicists and Newton's Law it is Twitter users and Thanksgiving Grandma. Thus, Anna argued that unfamiliarity "with the original video renders the caption, and entire tweet itself, humorless."

The context group made several claims in their essay about age discrepancies. For example, Matt wrote, "Our daily forms of writing are much more informal than those of our parents, etc. This often translates in our academic writing forms, as students of this generation struggle with writing in a formal, academic way than those of previous generations." I believe this mentality, paired with Anna's comment about age in the above paragraph, reflects more about audience and circulation than an informed analysis of generational habits. As I examine in chapter 3, students have difficulties writing to abstract

audiences. However, I propose that relying on presumed context can be the first step in identifying the expectations of a writing situation for students, which can also strengthen how they situate their writing for specific audiences.

The students' definition of presumed context is heavily content-focused. Presumed context for them is knowledge: it is what one knows and can rely on others knowing. As Matt described, "Presumed context in both social media and academia are very similar in that both are usually for groups of people who share similar background knowledge on a particular idea." Matt explained that if physicists create memes about Newton's Laws in their Facebook group, the theory of presumed context would carry over and no one would need to explain scientific laws for the memes to be funny to the physicists.

These students clearly grasped a basic idea of knowledge communities, and they even complicate the idea by acknowledging that not everyone has access to presumed context. In other words, sometimes the context is not so "presumed." Emilie conceded, "Whether you measure success in likes, views, or shares, context collapse is crucial to understand because while one group of friends may know exactly what the context of your post is, another may not." But if posting is situational, how can one know what presumed context to call upon, whether when composing or when receiving a message? It is a question of practicality: while I appreciate the theory, putting it into practice is a bit more difficult.

To apply the theory of presumed context, then, I propose that students analyze modes to understand how circulation can create both expectations for composing a message and situational content knowledge for receiving a message. Earlier in the semester, the students seemed to pick up on similar ideas. Although Matt stated that common

knowledge functions similarly from medium to medium, in early class discussions he clearly articulated awareness of how shifts in media can alter the context of a message. As part of the Information Science and Technology program, such awareness of media was apparent in many of his responses. Below is Matt's reflection on the question, "What does writing do?":

> Writing goes beyond what is actually being written down—how we write sometimes portrays an even bigger message than the text itself. There is a reason why we format our writing the way we do. From children's books to scholarly articles, each form of media is meant to represent a particular style, atmosphere, and expectation.

Here, Matt suggested that switching media would require a shift in how one writes in order to create a different impression. If Matt were to consider how a physicist would create a "particular style, atmosphere, and expectation" while writing about Newton's Law in an academic essay verses a "Memes for Physicist" Facebook page, would he still think the theory of presumed context was as fluid as he suggests? Or would there be other considerations for the physicists to take into consideration as they compose, like how to gain a handle on what is expected in each medium and how that affects what is *presumed*? Similarly, earlier in the semester Anna reflected on how the media itself is a crucial element of the composing process, especially depending on the content of one's post:

> I think the biggest reason that Facebook is a better place to make a detailed stance about something is because you can as little or as much as you'd like or you feel necessary. On Twitter, whatever you're gonna say must be 140 character or less. For some that may not be an issue but for others, they're

> going to need and want more space to thoroughly explain how they feel and why.

I wish I could further hear Anna's view on how the space of such sites—the media itself—might affect how one decides what context needs to be included in a message, or even how one is able to include such message (in the form of modes). It is clear that Anna understood that academic essays offer writers a chance to 'embed' context within—most likely in the form of text, description, sources, and background information—but I believe it is only because Anna understood that there is more space in academic writing to perform such contextual tasks. In order for students to grasp a sense of how context is presented, they must also become aware of how the modes available for composing affect how context is presented, for how long, and for whom.

Academic Lurking

Academic lurking can provide students with an awareness of circulation so that they can navigate various contexts over time and media. Through presumed context, students analyze a medium so that they learn the norms for composing within that medium, and when paired with the concept of 'lurking,' they can gain an idea of how a text might have been circulated, will be circulated, and what content knowledge is necessary to situate their text. Anna described the act of social media lurking and how it is actually an act of gaining context for a post:

> It may take looking back through posts or information on one's social media profile to really gain a clear understanding of the situation to which they were referring in their posts. This act of searching someone's profile has become to

known has 'lurking.' While lurking on someone's profile and digging for personal information may have a negative connotation, it is beneficial for the student writer.

While academic lurking does suggest a negative connotation, perhaps of someone who hides in the shadows posing a threat, the online connotation is more aligned with a user who reads internet forums or profile pages but does not contribute. In other words, because I frequently read my friends' posts on Facebook but rarely comment on them or react to them, I am mostly likely considered a Facebook lurker. When lurking is given a negative label, it is because value is placed on the constant interaction between social media users. In order to avoid 'lurking,' one must demonstrate their presence to others. However, I find that—just as with face-to-face interaction—observation, listening, and reflection are crucial for meaningful dialogue. I therefore offer students a new way to approach lurking, an activity that many of the ENG 240 students reported regularly engaging in on social media. Academic lurking, whether on social media or within academic texts, is to be present within a text and its variations, to observe without taking action, and to make meaning of patterns through history. As Anna noted, lurking helps one "gain a clear understanding."

While students most often describe lurking on social media to find information about their friends, acquaintances, or unfamiliar users, Anna described how students are already lurking in their academic work: students usually begin by performing Google searches about authors or scholars in order to find information about them. She continued, "Students are often asked to fact check or to check the credibility of the sources being used in a paper... Fact check or lurk, two different names but the same concept." But this 'fact

checking' is not only about truth-driven information; Anna went on to describe academic lurking as an act that is required to learn about an author, their positions about an issue, the author's potential biases, and the author's past writing. Looking into this history, Anna argued, provides students with a sense of context. She explained, "When reading an academic or scholarly essay, gathering context requires gathering all the pieces of the writing: the time in which it was written, the purpose for what it was written, by whom it was written, and for what audience." When students academically lurk, they do not have to make inferences about a single text—they begin looking into the larger body of writing, thinking, and history that is connected to that author and the text.

Academic lurking is not merely researching about an author with a Google search, however. Academic lurking requires active meaning-making of the various elements a student comes across while they lurk, and this includes using analysis gained from presumed context to make such meaning. Students can be introduced to academic lurking by acknowledging that they perform such actions when they enter FYC classrooms. For example, when students enter a new class with a new instructor and classmates, they often do not know the expectations for speaking and writing. When viewing the classroom itself as an ecology, Jon Smidt argues that the social elements of writing are revealed, including contracts between student-teacher, student-assignment, teacher-assignment, and teacher-student-sociocultural norms. Focusing on such ecologies of the writing classroom, Smidt questions, "How do student writers interpret the tasks and norms of writing and their own selves in the writing process?" (416). When I assign writing in the discussion boards of the university's learning management system, I can leave all posts viewable or I can create settings so that students must contribute their own post first before gaining access to other

classmates' posts. Some students in Section 2 reported that they preferred being able to read others' posts before writing their own; they wanted to read a variety of ideas, to see how other students were approaching the homework assignment, and to see how or if I responded to others' posts. In this way, they were using presumed context to understand how others created posts and what such posts entailed, and they used academic lurking to achieve such knowledge.

While it could potentially be a productive critical task for students to grapple with unknown writing formats or to take risks with their thinking and presentation of such thoughts, there is no reason that they should have to make up such formats, expectations, or practices. My assignment prompts try to be clear about what I want from students in their discussion forum posts, but I find that students often take additional action to ensure that they are truly aware of the presumed context, both in the classroom and that of the medium/genre of their assignment. Spending time academic lurking is crucial for students' writerly agency, even when I articulate assignment parameters: when students academically lurk, they can gain awareness of what effect writerly choices have within different media. For example, students in Section 2 often wrote text-only discussion board posts, despite my request in the assignment instructions to include photos, GIFs, or other modes to make their arguments. To help students learn more about the expectations for the assignments and to help them create norms in the discussion forums according to their own practices (because their audience for discussion board posts were each other), I began having them write discussion board posts during class activities. In groups of 2-6, students would answer questions like, "What do you notice about the users on Twitter? What do they talk about? What do they like? How do they keep each other in line? How do they

challenge each other? Challenge expectations? How do you know all of this? SHOW, don't tell." Students called upon their own experiences in initial posts, but they relied on academic lurking to gain a sense of what the other students in class were discussing and to create a sense of expectations among themselves for how to post.

Students can learn about presumed context by academically lurking on texts. But even before this, Andrea Lunsford believes that writers draw from prior experiences when they approach a new writing task, including knowledge, events, and conversations they have experienced (54). This includes calling upon features of texts they have written or learned about in the past. Lunsford addresses both the advantage and challenge of calling upon such prior knowledge (and why I believe lurking is crucial for students in any writing situation): "When writers can identify how elements of one writing situation are similar to elements of another, their prior knowledge helps them out in analyzing the current rhetorical situation. But when they simply rely on a strategy or genre or convention out of habit, that prior knowledge may not be helpful at all" (55). Jette Hansen describes how calling on such prior knowledge becomes even more complex for students in writing classrooms who speak English as a second language (ESL). Hansen notes, "[T]o resolve these [rhetorical] conflicts, a student may choose to write for the instructor, concentrating on rhetorical and grammatical conventions to receive a passing grade. This is clearly writing for the instructor's discourse community and expectations, rather than the students' " (47). I see this as a problem for many students in FYC courses or courses that focus primarily on learning academic writing, but Hansen points out that ESL students face a "double burden" because they are attempting to acquire multiple literacies, both academic conventions and language-based (31). Homework assigned in the classroom is a

constrained example of how students can use academic lurking because the rhetorical situation is already partially defined for them. Academic lurking is crucial for students to apply in instances where presumed context is difficult to identify—or even in instances where it seems obvious or taken for granted.

For example, students will encounter multiple kinds of news articles on social media and in FYC classrooms. In response to Facebook's announcement that they will attempt to label fake news stories, Emilie reacted to the difference between identifying fake print news and fake online news: papers like *The National Enquirer* are known for being outlandish and suspect, while news stories circulating online with shocking headlines are more difficult to dismiss. Emilie commented, "Although the story itself is just as false as articles published in the National Enquirer, the online publisher looks legitimate." At the end of the group's final essay, she offered a call-to-action for instructors about the issue of fake news: "The most beneficial way to stop the spread of misinformation is for readers to dissect the context of news stories for themselves." But Emilie's earlier observation about fake news presents a need for more than just content-based analysis; the importance of media within such analysis demonstrates why *The National Enquirer* is easily identified as fake news, but why websites look credible. If students are not spending enough time academically lurking within all the media they encounter, their awareness of the norms and expectations of unfamiliar media will be lacking. It is important, then, that students develop academic lurking habits that help them navigate across media and through various kinds of texts, especially those that circulate rapidly. Students are perhaps used to spending time with academic texts, knowing that they will need to engage deeply with the subject matter in order to respond thoughtfully, thoroughly, and with relevant or applicable ideas. Their

responses must contain the kind of context that Anna described—embedded within—and that Emilie argued must be "easy to identify for the piece of writing to be relevant and interesting."

But on social media, such norms are not always present: social media sharing and reacting can be as quick as a click of a button. For example, a Facebook user would not even need to read a news article that a friend shared before re-circulating it to his or her own followers. And because the Facebook algorithms are programmed to show users news that is similar to the posts they often react to (Mosseri), it grants users access to perspectives that they are already inclined to believe or react to, rather than a variety of sources that require thoughtful, thorough engagement. Students might not be realizing that the way they approach the reading and writing in FYC can improve their social media writing—not because they will be more 'credible,' but because they will gain awareness of their agency when posting instead of merely falling into the habit of using the most visible modes.

The influx of attention to fake news has been high since the 2016 Presidential election and the evidence that so many fake news stories were spread online, particularly on social media sites. I have already seen numerous syllabi online for entire courses that aim to teach students skills to tackle fake news online. I have also seen other outlets that provide support to citizens to learn about fake news. For example, my neighborhood library has flyers posted like wallpaper with eight steps for analyzing news sources. The flyer provides information for someone who might not know how to verify if an article is credible or not. In fact, it invites readers to perform some of the basic academic lurking skills that ENG students suggest: looking for an author's background information, looking

at what information is cited, and checking one's own biases. (This is also similar to the advice found in the FYC textbook examined in sections about researching online sources.)

Figure 4. "How To Spot Fake News" by the IFLA

I want students to approach such texts by examining the *interplay* of media and rhetorical considerations like context and purpose so that they already have a sense of why such questions need to be asked of a social media post. If students analyze how the media creates invitations for composing, they might realize that clickbait headlines invite them to rapidly share sources, rather than to share news-based information or reports. Similarly, when students examine the modes used in posts, they can develop a sense of the presumed context: thinking about who typically uses such modes, for what purpose, and how they can

sometimes be circulated or reused. Finally, students will most likely perform academic lurking on articles that are shared: who else liked this article? Who initially shared this article? But academic lurking invites them to observe and make patterns that are deeper—in their long-form reading and writing, they spend more time learning about the article's context to determine if it is relevant. So while advice like the IFLA suggest a variety of steps to learn if an article is fake or not, students can always initially use the media to make initial assumptions before immediately clicking.

Students, like Anna in this chapter, might think that academic articles include relevant context within the writing, but even in long-form essays there is still context that is 'presumed' and therefore sometimes difficult to understand. (I believe that is why students often find academic articles confusing or why they have to read them multiple times to piece together the argument.) In the assignments below, I demonstrate how to move students through observation, analysis, and reflection of social media and academic writing in order to help them navigate presumed context across media, including print texts. Just as interplay and invitations encourage students to make meaning of the media they encounter, academic lurking invites students to make meaning of the expectations and norms that modes suggest. When students gain an understanding that the modes within a medium can affect the way others are writing, they also gain a better sense of how writing is situated and can be circulated—even if students are unaware of the topics or ideas that they encounter.

Pedagogical Application

In the assignments below, I demonstrate how students can develop an understanding of context that allows them to approach both known and unknown topics, whether in digital form or in print media. The assignments ask students to observe how certain practices and interactions with media can lead to the development of norms and expectations for writers. Once students learn to spend time observing and making meaning of the norms and expectations that they see, they are encouraged to discuss how such elements contribute to the meaning of texts. For example, students consider how the slow production of their academic essays might change the way that they think and write about a topic. This includes understanding how contexts can change and be reproduced over time. Students consider how circulation affects the meaning of messages as well as how they must learn to compose themselves.

I continue Anne Wysocki's inclusion of "openings that allow and encourage us to shift what we do in our thinking and classes so that we do not forget, so that we make actively present in our practices, how writing is continually changing material activity that shapes just who we can be and what we can do" (3). These assignments ask students to explore—deeply and critically—the materials and media with which they produce and consume. In her pivotal book, *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, Erika Lindemann uses the phrases "knowing how" and "knowing that" to distinguish between theoretical and practical approaches. Gilbert Ryle describes the "operations" of life as the "knowing how" while the "truths" that are learned are attributed to "knowing that" (28). Here I also use this distinction to separate activities that help students gain an understanding of *how* the media they write within functions as part of the context of a text, as well as an

understanding *that* such norms and expectations develop more complex histories over time as texts circulate.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 1

This assignment encourages students to develop a sense of presumed context: how a medium invites certain ways of writing, which suggest norms of composing within that medium. I designed this assignment so that students would interrogate the objects that they compose with and to see how modes can communicate very different meanings within a medium. By asking students to examine modes across social media sites, I hope they begin to recognize that all media have different expectations, that presumed context is a complex concept, and that many variables factor into the effective communication of a message.

In the ENG 240 courses, I frequently frustrated students by constantly asking them "why" questions; for example, a student would make a grand claim about how a certain mode on social media was used and I would respond, "Why is it used that way?" This kind of question was horribly frustrating for students. This assignment moves away from such difficult theoretical prodding and instead creates reflective space for students to carefully look at their own social media posts and come to tentative hypotheses.

Finally, this assignment is an example of how students might perform *academic lurking* as they analyze and reflect on their own writing: to observe, to recognize patterns, to make meaning from observations, and to create connections about the medium they choose to write with and the way that medium influences how they situate messages.

ASSIGNMENT 1

Goals and Purpose

You'll begin thinking about how a person composes according to the media they use, including how invitations for composing suggest conventions and norms. The information a person communicates and how they communicate that information is what we call the *presumed context* of a text.

In-Class Instructions

In groups of two, compile different modes for writing on social media sites. Then, in the various D2L discussion forums (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tumblr), identify and describe *how* social media users write with one particular mode. Include screenshots or examples from your own social media posts to demonstrate how this style of writing might function.

For each mode you identify, spend time analyzing how it functions in relation to the site. That is, hypothesize the 'so what': why does this mode matter to users of this social media site? How does it help to create more effective posts on this site? How does the social media site invite users to compose with this mode?

Finally, spend some time reflecting: how can a user learn to use this mode…or how do *you* know how to use this mode?

Homework Instructions

In class today, we identified several modes across social media sites. For your discussion forum post, focus on one of these modes (or choose one that you didn't get a chance to think about) and discuss the following questions:

- What does this mode invite you to do as a composer?
- Does the function of this mode shift from social media site to social media site? Be specific here and include several examples.
- What kinds of posts does this mode help you create? In other words, describe the various ways that you have used this mode.
- How do you know how to use this mode? Be specific and detailed with your answer, and use examples from your own posts if possible.
- If you didn't address this when answering the last question, in what ways would you not use this mode? Why wouldn't you use it that way?
- When people share your posts, does the use of your mode change in any way? Does it change the initial meaning of your post? Give an example of how this has (or could) happen.

Homework Example: The Prepositional 'Because'

The prepositional *because* relies on a "because-noun" construction. It's informal and forces the reader to 'fill in the blanks.' In some ways, it functions like Aristotle's enthymemes: Aristotle used enthymemes as highly logical examples—so logical that the audience could

follow along the line of reasoning without needing all lines of the premise. But the *because* preposition is NOT a foregone conclusion! For example, "Eating two breakfasts because bacon" is not a direct conclusion. In order for the 'because-noun' to be meaningful, a writer must align the noun in such a way that his or her audience understands not only what is unsaid but also why it is phrased in that way. In other words, it suggests some sort of unwritten information (i.e. the *presumed context*). If my audience doesn't have the same history, references, or knowledge that I do, the message might not be communicated effectively.

Figure 5: "I love fall because PAJAMAS."

In the example above, I use the picture of my dog to communicate *presumed context*. The picture communicates, "I put pajamas on my dog. I think dogs in pajamas are really cute, like this picture of my dog." With text-only 'because' statements, the reader has to do a lot of assuming to make meaning of the writer's post. But the writer can include a picture to clarify such a statement, or they can even include a hashtag to clarify some of the presumed context. For example, I might write that "Fall is my favorite time of year because PAJAMAS. #dogsinclothes" in order to communicate that I love dogs wearing clothes, especially pajamas.

I see this way of writing mostly used on Twitter. Being able to indicate to the audience something unexpected, amusing, a wry remark, emphasis, or a common feeling/observation while leaving words out is crucial when there is a limited character count. If I were writing in an academic essay, I wouldn't use this kind of phrasing. Essays are more formal, but the available modes of print texts don't really allow me to communicate 'because-noun' statements very well: most social media posts are quick little blurbs where I can connect hashtags and photos with my text; academic essays are longer and allow me to explain my thoughts, but they also make it more difficult for modes like photos to be connected directly with a sentence.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 2

This assignment asks students to unpack the layers of context surrounding a topic by observing and analyzing the interaction, history, and knowledge associated with a hashtag activist movement. In observing the interplay of media and rhetorical considerations, students will gain a sense of how the various modes of social media sites are pivotal in creating and circulating messages. With this assignment, students will can gain a sense of the depth and breadth of context that surrounds a topic as well as how they might begin the process of academic lurking within potentially unwieldy topics.

I designed this assignment to help students navigate how contexts shift with time and as texts circulate. Students analyze and reflect on digital media texts to observe how topics are discussed and in what variations, given the media and modes utilized. To be 'successful,' students must spend time performing academic lurking so that they can make meaning of the multiple interactions surrounding their topic. Academic lurking allows each group member to present a different perspective on the movement, which provides each group a sense of the breadth surrounding their topic. To move students toward individual awareness, I ask them to apply what they learn from the group's discussion in to theorize *presumed context* about the hashtag activist movements. This builds on students' awareness of media expectations from Assignment 1. I hope that in their reflections, students develop a holistic rhetorical understanding: the questions guide them to consider the potential audiences and purposes of their topic as it circulates and is repurposed.

ASSIGNMENT 2

Goals and Purpose

Reflect on our lessons from class about circulation as you explore where hashtag movements originated, how both people and organizations have shared the hashtags, and how social media users have remixed or repurposed the hashtags for new contexts.

In-Class Instructions

In groups, perform *academic lurking* for one of the hashtag movements listed below.
Black Lives Matter #blacklivesmatter
Women's Sexual Assault #notokay
Dakota Access Pipeline #DAPL
Diversity in Entertainment #StarringJohnCho

Discuss the following questions with your group members:

- What is the purpose for this movement?
- What was the exigence for this movement? How do you know?
- What must be known in order to gain a sense of this movement?
- How does social media affect this movement? How do the modes affect how the purpose is communicated?

Homework Instructions

In a D2L discussion board post, discuss the following:

- Describe the process of academic lurking from class. If you were unfamiliar with the movement, explain how you made sense of the information you encountered.
- Who is active in this movement? Does the way that the media is used tell you anything about the people involved with the movement?
- Who are these people trying to reach with their purpose?
- How do people seem to be talking about this movement in their posts? Be specific and reference word choice, modes, references, etc.
- Is the purpose shared or does it take on new meaning? Can you give examples of when this happens?
- How has circulation of the movement affected it, whether in terms of purpose, exigence, or audience?

You should write to your classmates in your D2L post. Consider what information they might need you to explain if they have never heard of the activist movement. Write according to the *presumed context* of the course D2L site; for clarity, refer to discussion forum post about the expectations and norms we agreed upon for writing on D2L for our class.

Chapter 3: Audience

"[E]ven though academic writing and social media writing offer seemingly different affordances, these affordances are used for the same differences. They are used to create emotion, a personal connection, emphasis, a sense of style and a sense of belonging. As writers, we need to manipulate these affordances in order to convey more thorough pieces of writings." - Riley

"Why is it okay to use emojis on social media, but not in academia? Why is it taboo to have perfect grammar and formatting on Twitter, but it is the expectation in all academic writing?" - Riley

In chapter 1, I argue that students can learn to approach media as a rhetorical element of composing by observing and analyzing the materials and modes available for writing. In chapter 2, I argue that students can use this awareness of media to gain an understanding of context, which is partially suggested from the expectations, values, and potential circulation of the media and modes. In this chapter, I tackle the following question: If writing instructors are not able to remove the abstraction of audience in writing, how can students be offered a theory of audience for composing in both print writing and with other media? As with the chapters that come before it, this chapter begins with an anecdote to introduce ENG 240 students' audience awareness. Unlike the chapters before, however, in this introduction I present the struggles students have when approaching audience. As I move into theory and textbook analysis, I continue to explore

the difficulties of the concept, whether in theory or in practice. When the chapter returns to ENG 240, I explore the thinking and writing of one students' audience awareness and offer an expanded approach to audience that aims to satisfy the complexity of the concept.

My initial activities about audience with ENG 240 students demonstrated a gap between their social media knowledge and the ability to write to audiences in other forms of writing, such as longer, print-based media. While these students were able to analyze and reflect on their social media audiences, I found that they were at a loss for approaching the audiences of long-form essays or academic assignments. One day in ENG 240, I asked students about the previous night's assignment: "Who was your audience for your summary strong-response papers that were due today?" I heard groans and a lot of smirk-like smiles. After a few minutes of discussion, I asked the whole class, "Who wrote to me as their audience?" Two students' hands shot up, and the rest of the students looked at each other for input, perhaps wondering if this was, in fact, the correct response. Slowly, a half dozen hands went into the air. "Who did you write to then, if not me?" I asked the rest of the class. Students continued to glance at each other with uncomfortable looks, as if I was asking a trick question.

After a few murmurs, students eventually agreed: We did not write to anyone.

I kept pressing: "But how did you know how to write the assignment, like what it should sound like, or if you should write in paragraphs or complete sentences? How did you know if you should put in pictures or charts or other images? Because some of you included those." I hoped the students could at least identify what—or whose—expectations they called upon while writing.

Leah raised her hand: “On the rubric [assignment sheet] you gave us, it said to write to someone who hasn’t read the article before.”

I responded with a smile, “So that would be someone other than me, right?”

“Yes,” several students responded.

“Who is that, then? Who did you write to?” It was a rhetorical question, and the students looked baffled.

Breaking them into groups, I asked students to discuss *how* they wrote the assignment and *why* they knew to write it that way. When I walked over to Riley and Emma, Riley reported that they “tried to sound smart.” When I pressed her to explain why they aspire toward that when writing assignments, she had a difficult time explaining who or what influenced this desire. And when I asked Riley and Emma if they try to “sound smart” in their Instagram posts, Riley responded that there is not really a need because “it’s just pictures.”

At a table across the room, Maya listened as Tessa discussed the experience of writing to a professor, classmates, or to past versions of writing or her writerly self. Tessa said she might not think about an audience, but she thinks about previous audiences’ reactions to her writing and responds accordingly in new writing assignments. Maya then described a paper she wrote about equal rights for all genders. She reported writing the paper for the professor entirely because she thought that he was neglecting the topic’s complexities in the course. When I asked if the process of integrating all of the research and trying to position her own voice within that research affected her notion of audience, she said no. When I asked if she thought maybe writing with such a purpose—to affect the curriculum of the course—could have a larger audience than just the professor, she said

she did not think so. While I could easily perceive Maya's writing encompassing several conversations and affecting multiple stakeholders, she only saw the person who would physically *hold* her paper as the audience.

As I made my way around the room, I heard a different group arguing that academic essays have a large amount of expectations that the students adhere to for no real reason (or at least that they could articulate). Their conversation was particularly interesting because they discussed how academic writing is stressful, difficult, and unapproachable, but that their social media writing has much lower stakes, is familiar, and is easy. This was one reason it was so difficult for students to imagine any sort of audience attached to the texts they wrote for class: They did not have a process to think about the creation, production, circulation, and history of the texts they were being asked to create, which made them seem like arhetorical assignments.

To help students learn how to approach other forms of media with the same analysis, reflection, and ease that they report feeling when they write on social media, they can begin by recognizing that audiences on social media are often just as abstract as some of the audiences for the assignments they encounter in their university courses—yet students have developed a process for managing this abstraction in their social media writing. In this chapter, I highlight the thinking and writing of Riley (the student from above who wanted to sound "smart") because she continually addressed the complexity of audience throughout the semester. Riley's thinking and writing leads me to present the pedagogical theory of *audience defined* (AD) and *audience intended* (AI) later in this chapter: In her final essay for class, Riley claimed that writers define an audience based upon the media they write with, but the intended audience is based upon the way writers

choose to position themselves within that media. Riley's homework shows careful thought and attention to the complexities of audience, including their media expectations, but I also highlight Riley because she demonstrates my own struggles to teach audience to students in ENG 240. As I illustrate below, despite Riley's ability to theorize about audience for academic purposes, she nonetheless had trouble putting her theory into practice.

This chapter unfolds similarly to the ones before it, with analysis and exploration of the approaches to audience found in rhetoric and composition theory and instruction. I first examine definitions of audience found in composition scholarship and then consider how five FYC textbooks approach the term in writing instruction. I situate what I learned from ENG 240 students in conversation with scholarship and textbooks to explore how the abstraction of audience could be made more approachable for students as they move across media and writing situations. At the end of the chapter, I suggest how to move students from their understandings of audience on social media to an understanding of audience in other writing contexts. As presented in chapter 1, students can better navigate their rhetorical situations—including when their audiences are both known and unknown—if a shift is made in the writing classroom that brings medium to the forefront of both analysis and production. Adding to *presumed context* from chapter 2, I argue that by applying the theories of AD and AI, students can identify what modes specifically suggest about audience, as well as how to situate their writing so that it meets certain expectations of an audience, even if they do not have an exact idea of who that may be. With AD, students gain a better perception of audience by examining how media and audiences are active constituents in the composing process; with AI, students can better situate their writing through the expectations and norms suggested by the modes they choose for composing.

AD/AI provides students opportunities to expand their understanding of the rhetorical concept of audience, moving from 'audience-as-people' to 'audience-as-expectations.' By bringing medium to the forefront of FYC writing processes, I position audience as a relationship among the writer, the expectations of a medium, and the context that accompanies a text. I end the chapter by demonstrating how the theory of AD/AI can be taught in writing classrooms where students write to both tangible audiences and abstract audiences.

What Theory Can Contribute to Students' Understanding

In this section, I examine definitions of audience found in rhetoric and composition scholarship, particularly in texts with a focus on FYC pedagogical instruction. The primary focus of this analysis includes articles from 2000-2016 in composition's flagship journal, *College Composition and Communication*, as well as another leading English studies journal, *College English*. I also examine the leading journal for digital writing, *Computers and Composition*. Similar to the approach that Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes take with new media, the articles included in this chapter illustrate developments in students' writing environments in the past 20 years and how they affect approaches to audience. As Alexander and Rhodes explain in their book *On Multimodality*,

> [T]aking a broad and high-level view of major publications in the field—publications that continue to be cited and have exerted a significant influence on our understanding of writing technologies and new media—offers us a telling set of insights into how our field has understood, incorporated, and in some ways attempted to colonize new media. (31)

In this chapter, I examine how such developments shift the way rhetoric and composition scholars theorize about audience and what kind(s) of instruction students require in order to achieve a rhetorically complex awareness of who their texts might reach.

Not all scholarly texts in composition studies include a precise definition of audience, as if authors assume it is a well-known concept that needs little explanation. (Even Aristotle, who has a significant influence on contemporary rhetorical theory, does not define the concept of audience in *On Rhetoric* beyond "someone addressed" [1.3.1, 47].) Embedded across scholarship about audience is the notion that the words and texts created in FYC classrooms communicate to others, whether in communities, in local or global contexts, or in online spaces. Specifically in the past decade, instructors have grappled with how students should approach audiences in online environments while still maintaining the same composing practices valued with print essays, such as invention, revision, and reflection. It is within the discussions of these contexts that scholars highlight the occasional burden of audience instruction in writing classrooms. I understand this struggle as a composition instructor *and* a scholar *and* a writer who is aware of the various writing contexts that I—and students—navigate daily. At the heart of the scholarship examined below is an understanding that students encounter robust writing environments outside of the writing classroom, and that students write to live audiences who regularly provide visible and rapid feedback to their writing. Instructors might struggle, however, to provide students this same sort of audience engagement in writing classrooms, where students write in longer forms and with different media.

One struggle of audience instruction in FYC—and the question that propels the inquiry of this chapter—is how to teach writing while acknowledging that the abstraction

of audience can never be completely removed for writers. With both 'Addressed' and 'Invoked' audiences, theorized by Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford more than 30 years ago, students at multiple points during the composing process must imagine, construct, or assume characteristics of their audience. An "Audience Addressed" is an audience treated as 'real,' concrete, and analyzable, while an "Audience Invoked" is imagined or constructed and then written into being. Ede and Lunsford consider both methods to be problematic:

> [N]o matter how much feedback writers may receive after they have written something (or in breaks while they write), as they compose writers must rely in large part upon their own vision of the reader, which they create, as readers do their vision of writers, according to their own experiences and expectations. ("AA/AI" 158)

As Ede and Lunsford point out, invoking an audience involves students thinking about demographics of certain groups or empathizing with readers, but students are merely imagining the stakes and potential reactions of a reader. Ede and Lunsford make note of the potential problems with writers imagining audiences in their 1996 response to "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked": "AA/AI sets the scene—but then fails to explore—the ways in which audiences can not only enable but also silence writers and readers" ("Representing" 170). The authors realize that audiences hold a complex agency in texts, although this does not make writing to them any more concrete.

Managing this abstraction of writing appears regularly throughout audience scholarship, as instructors attempt to move classroom assignments into public spaces to offer students physical or visible interaction with their writing. For instance, Alison Regan and John Zuern write about students completing a service-learning project at a public

housing complex, which provides students with the ability to write for audiences who would otherwise remain abstract in the classroom. The authors describe the results of service learning, emphasizing the 'realness' of such a set-up: "For almost all students who participated in the community-service learning project, confronting a *real* audience with *real* and considerably varied needs and demands led to greater preparedness, clarity, and organization in both written and spoken communication" (187, emphasis mine). Regan and Zuern see these students immersed with physical, concrete audiences, which they believe leads to more productive writing. Similarly, Matthew Johnson believes students perform civic participation in digital realms through computer games. Johnson argues, "Gaming environments are enabling spaces that create an opportunity for their participants to write publicly to real, responsive audiences to establish communities that can ultimately have a significant effect on games and those who produce them" (282). Again, the presumed benefit for students comes from writing to audiences who can provide interaction, which gives them the ability to directly acknowledge the effects of their writing.

Journal articles about audience in the last decade continue to promote the belief that writing environments beyond the FYC classroom offer students opportunities to engage with audiences beyond those confined to the writing classroom. In Susanne Nobels and Laura Paganucci's 2015 study, for example, the ability to directly engage with online audiences encouraged students to approach their writing processes differently than in writing classrooms—despite the fact that they often receive direct engagement with audiences in writing courses as well, maybe just at a slower rate or in another form. Nobels and Paganucci asked students to reflect about online writing composed on blogs and Google sites, which revealed that students include audience as part of the composing

process online. Nobels and Paganucci suggest that the students' responses align with previous scholarship, which argues "that online writing creates an authentic audience" (27). But some studies and anecdotes reveal that students have difficulties understanding how writing environments like blogs share similarities with the kind of writing done in the classroom. Kate Pantelides describes student reflections about posting in the discussion forums of the learning management system for a course and how the overlap of online and physical interaction complicated students' writing:

> [I]f students wrote a boring or what they deemed as a 'bad' post, they couldn't pretend that their audience didn't exist somewhere in cyberspace; their audience existed both digitally on Blackboard and in the physical space of the classroom: an audience duality that further complicated the rhetorical situation. (274)

Pantelides ultimately argues that online spaces like discussion boards can blur rhetorical approaches for students, so instructors should not teach as if writing contexts are fluid; in other words, while writing instructors move writing online or into different environments so that students can interact with audiences, such instruction does not appear to be providing them with a process for writing to audiences for when they return to academic essays or writing in the classroom.

Some instructors make efforts for students to gain a sense of rhetorical flexibility between writing environments, including the way students understand the audiences they write to. These scholars see the writing students do online, particularly on social media, as worthy of integration into the FYC classroom. Ryan Shepherd argues that, when prompted, students can articulate a sophisticated awareness of audience on Facebook. He describes,

"If a student perceived a group as viewing their content often, they were more likely to have that same group in mind when posting content. That is to say that the audience addressed was often the same as the audience invoked" (92). Shepherd argues that when students see social media writing as rhetorical, they will transfer it into the writing classroom. Lindsay Sabatino argues that the Facebook game *Mafia Wars* provides students with a parallel between the game and print audiences in the composition classroom because it requires them to do the kind of audience construction that Ede and Lunsford and Shepherd discuss: *Mafia Wars* players must "take into account how much the audience knows about their topic as well as the best ways they can engage their audience and prove their point" (49). Sabatino argues the skills of reaching an audience in this game transfers into writing. Samuel Head also argues that students' writing on Facebook can be transferred into the FYC classroom by teaching students about formal audience appeals and Kenneth Burke's identification process (32). Ann Amicucci also believes that Facebook can promote students' audience awareness; Amicucci's study demonstrated that one Facebook user was "defining her own rules for effective participation" while "simultaneously defining the parameters of her imagined networked publics' behavior" (47). Amacucci argues that when students reflect on the choices that they make for Facebook audiences, it can inform the way they make rhetorical choices when writing to academic audiences.

In the scholarship described above, students repeatedly report grasping in various and multiple ways how audiences can be affected in online environments. However, even when students write in online environments, these audiences are either partially unknown or imagined; assuming that all online audiences are responsive is useful if the writing is

finished and audiences can provide feedback, but this assumption does not necessarily provide students with an immediate, specific idea of the audience to which they write to during the composing process. The scholars above report that students recognize audiences online and on social media, but there is little discussion about how students learn to analyze or recognize the expectations of these audiences. The student in Amicucci's study demonstrates an implicit awareness of social media modes, including a novice understanding of how a site's circulation and interface might affect participation and affirmations. Amicucci's analysis relies on theories of imagined audiences to explain this student's "self-motivated learning process" (47). As I learned from the students in ENG 240, they often relied on the media and modes of social media sites to navigate rhetorical considerations when their audiences where potentially unknown. But in the scholarship above, I wonder how the media and modes of *Mafia Wars* and Facebook afford students with the communicative capabilities necessary to make continual adjustments to their audiences' needs. Such a question arises from my own argument in this chapter, but I also believe overlooking medium as part of these conversations neglects the scholarship that demonstrates how students use media analysis to learn about and manage audiences online.

Abby Dubisar and Jason Palmeri argue that some students consider certain media aspects as they compose, like delivery and circulation (87). Dubisar and Palmeri note that the students in their study thought about audience by thinking about the expectations of YouTube users. Similarly, Mark Santos and Mark H. Leahy encourage students to be aware of the community they are writing within and how that community uses various media to discuss a topic, including factors of circulation, accessibility, and interaction. Santos and

Leahy ask "students to search for and identify a community in which to write, complete some basic evaluation of that community, and explore some approaches conducive to web writing" (88). In understanding 'community' as people *or* sites, students create an audience that is "a concrete network of responsive people" (89). The focus on medium allows Santos and Leahy to argue that web writing offers more opportunity for students than they might realize by writing traditional texts:

> Popularity [of a blog] does not necessarily signal strong writing, but providing evidence that a student's work has attracted non-captive, non-academic audiences necessarily transforms the exigency of the writing classroom, and presents a credible and useful challenge to the instructor's monolithic position as arbiter of what is and is not desirable in writing. (91)

Similar to Regan and Zuern above, Santos and Leahy believe that because students write within media that offers visible and rapid feedback, they are able to engage with outside readers who access their writing and give visible feedback.

Santos and Leahy's pedagogy, however, seems to neglect that print texts and other non-digital media found in the classroom also belong within writing communities, even if such texts require a different understanding of the circulation, accessibility, and interaction that occurs between author and community. This is a gap in contemporary scholarship about audience: how to move the thoughtful rhetorical awareness that students develop online or in digital environments back into the writing classroom. Helping students gain an expanded notion of audience online can improve their rhetorical thinking, but this approach should also be able to benefit students in multiple media and contexts—including the FYC classroom where they often are writing to their peers, to the professor, to an

academic audience, or their own intended audience. In my continued analysis of FYC textbooks in the next section, it is clear that textbooks aim for students to develop a complex understanding of how to situate their writing given the audiences they write to, but the actual instruction for students still relies heavily on imagining people.

What Textbook Instruction Offers (Or Doesn't Offer) For Students

In the five FYC textbooks examined for this study, instruction suggests that students often write to audiences with both known and unknown characteristics, expectations, or needs. Because of the unknown elements, students are encouraged to achieve as close of an understanding of their audience as possible, often by imagining what the audiences might value, want, or need. Andrea Lunsford et al. in *Everyone's An Author*, for example, instruct students to analyze the demographics, emotional connections, and intellectual values of an audience when crafting an argument. The authors ask students, "Do you know anything about what they [the intended audience] value, about what goals and aspirations they have?... Consider especially how any of your audience's goals or commitments relate to the argument you are constructing" (82). In his 1992 critique of audience heuristics, James Porter rejects this very type of audience analysis by questioning, "But where, exactly, *is* this audience that the writer should consider? What exactly does 'consider' mean? And how does 'considering' audience lead to better communication?" (3). Porter suggests that audience analysis requiring students to imagine audiences is counter-intuitive and unproductive because it asks students to assert answers that they need help generating in the first place. For example, even after spending a week discussing ways to analyze and approach audiences on social media and academic writing, Riley explained, "I often times

find myself now rereading content I am about to post on social media and think about all of my different audiences. In my academic writing, I now try to write for everyone." Students need a better way to understand audiences in tangible, specific ways, even when their audiences are not tangible or specific.

In examining approaches to audience in the FYC textbooks analyzed, I found that audience analysis is still the most prevalent form of instruction. This means that students operate under what Porter calls "an imaginative construction" of audience (5). While Porter and I both agree that writing with any awareness of audience in mind—imagined or not—encourages students to regard audience as an influential aspect of their writing context, I believe that asking students to imagine or construct an audience speaks to the complex issue of audience abstraction that instructors encounter when teaching FYC. Real audiences are complex and nuanced; they not only react to a text, but in certain circumstances they can also influence a writer's purpose for communicating. Imagining or constructing this kind of rhetorical situation is only possible at a superficial level; the nuances and complexity are underdeveloped when one can only imagine an audience because there is no feedback or interaction, and there are already predetermined roles for both the writer and the audience.

But, as previously conceded, imagining an audience is often the reality of writing, even if writers have an idea of who will be on the receiving end of their texts. On social media, for example, I have to imagine my audience, despite having a specific list of followers or friends who read my posts; just because I know who follows me does not always mean I know what they expect from my posts (or even who will encounter my posts in their timelines or newsfeeds.) danah boyd suggests that because of these unknowns,

"participants in networked publics often turned to imagined audience, to assess whether or not they believe their behavior is socially appropriate, interesting, or relevant" (50).[13] Conceptualizing an audience is a struggle in many writing contexts, yet writers must have some kind of process for composing if they want others to receive and respond to their messages.

The authors in the five textbooks analyzed below encourage students to think about how their words can influence others, and through this students learn to position themselves as writers in various rhetorical contexts. I highlight areas in the textbooks that offer students useful advice for navigating audiences during the composing process. But I also bring Riley's voice into this section to demonstrate her awareness of the reciprocal engagement among writer, reader, and media that she developed, which allowed her to theorize an expanded notion of audience. Riley's theory of audience was not as reliant on imagining specific people, but was specifically grounded in each medium she wrote with and the expectations of the users within each medium. Using Riley's thinking and writing for support, I demonstrate that including such an awareness in textbooks' audience instruction can offer students a process for navigating multiple media and writing contexts with a less abstract notion of who they are writing to, including when writing academic essays.

One tension found in the FYC textbooks is the multiple tasks that students must navigate while writing essays: The rhetorical process for these assignments begins by defining a topic, angle, and purpose, but students must also remain aware of the requirements of the class and the writing assignment. For example, in Richard Johnson-

[13] boyd prefers lower-case capitalization for her name.

Sheehan and Charles Paine's textbook *Writing Today,* the audience of an argument essay might be the [abstract] group of people who disagree with the student's stance. But writing while considering this imaginary construction of audience becomes complicated, as the authors occasionally drop subtle cues to remind students that instructors are the ones reading their writing. For instance, Johnson-Sheehan and Paine write that, "page numbers… are helpful when discussing your argument with other students or the professor" (195). The advice provided for the argument essay invites students to engage with an audience by analyzing demographics, but because students are also engaging with the instructor, they have the complicated task of analyzing an audience's expectations while writing to a instructor with another set of expectations for the assignment. As Riley explained in a homework assignment, "In academic writing, the assumed audience is the professor and students, but the audience is also who the essay effects [sic]." I believe students struggle without a clear process for how to write to two audiences at the same time, both with different needs.

When students are told to write with their instructor's preferences in mind, they still learn valuable writing skills and disciplinary concepts. Writing directly to the instructor is realistic advice, and advice that students most likely appreciate, especially since the instructor often creates many assignments and assigns the final grade. Advice like this is found in *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* by Richard Bullock et al.: "When you are a student, your audience is most often your teachers, so you need to be aware of their expectations and know the conventions (rules, often unstated) for writing in specific academic fields" (57). What this advice still demonstrates, however, is a conflation of 'teacher' and 'academic conventions'—that all instructors require students to abide by the

academic conventions of a certain discipline. When these "often unstated" rules are not clearly outlined for students, knowing exactly how to write for the instructor-as-audience is still vague. For example, I assigned a reflective essay in Section 2 and asked students to treat me as the audience. Riley included this line in her reflection: "Something I noticed at the end of the entire project was that it felt like at times, no one was reading and utilizing the feedback Ash Evans was giving us." Before reading this line, I thought Riley had been addressing me in her writing. But after reading this line, I realized her audience was perhaps some vague idea of an academic audience. (And I also realized that it must be miserable for students to write personal reflections without a clear idea of who will read them!)

Writing with the instructor as the audience does not align with the genre-based approaches found in many of the textbooks analyzed, which require students to write essays that enact change, argue a stance, or write reviews. Such genres are dependent on external audiences that require students to engage in imagined dialogic exchanges. When students are faced with needing to write to audiences for such genres, the textbooks often turn to what Ede and Lunsford termed "audience addressed," where students analyze demographics to determine how to rhetorically address their intended audience. Authors resort to a standard list of questions—'standard' because similar questions circulate in many of the textbooks analyzed—about audience demographics. For example, to learn about an audience, advice in the "Rhetorical Situations" chapter of *Everyone's An Author* encourages students to "consider demographics such as age, gender, religion, income, education, occupation, or political attitudes" (21). Approaching audience through demographics can be traced back to ancient Greece and Aristotle's discussion of *ethos*. In

book two of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle addresses various demographics of Athenian men that contribute to speakers' understanding of the nature of their audiences, like economic factors, personalities or dispositions, and class or rank. While the context of these chapters is no longer relevant to a contemporary audience, it is interesting to note how several contemporary FYC textbooks ask students to think about audiences with the same approach: Demographics like age, income, occupation, or education are believed to be useful assumptions to address an abstract group of people. But this one-way interaction with an audience is what Porter describes when he says students are only learning *about* audiences, not *from* them (18). When writers learn from an audience in this way, a shift occurs in the composing process. I further describe how this shift can occur in the discussion of AD/AI below.

Even when students must attempt to analyze audience demographics, I wonder if there are actually two considerations that students are thinking about when writing this way: first, that they must imagine an audience that they are not actually interacting with; and second, that they must write within the "unstated" rules of scholarly discourse (Bullock et al., 57). In Riley's final project, for example, she identified the audience of academic texts three times as "professors." Yet Riley's process of analyzing social media demographics was more complex than her academic process. Riley suggested that a writer must think about what has been written before and how that contributes to how a text should be composed.[14] In her analysis of the media, she explained,

> On social media, it is normal to see slang like 'lol', 'brb', and 'gtg' but it is taboo

[14] Here I believe Riley meant 'what has been written before' broadly as the collection of texts that contributes to understanding genre conventions. In chapter 2, I more specifically discuss how 'what has been written before' can also refer to the context a student writes within, which includes an awareness of the media.

> is academia. Social media is a livestream; it moves fast and is constantly being updated. Knowing audiences are used to the fast pace social media, we as writers shorten our content with abbreviations and post content more consistently.

Instead of describing her writing style according to assumptions about demographics—stereotypes like 'on social media I want to sound casual' or 'people on social media have short attention spans'—Riley articulated a grounded analysis of this writerly choice that is based on the actions of her Twitter audience and how she interacts with Twitter's material characteristics. Riley continued, "When Twitter users start to construct their tweets in this way, that is when the readers go from 'ideal readers' to a 'community.'" Riley extracted the *presumed context* of her Twitter audience, or the agreed upon expectations for composing, based upon how her message will circulate to various audiences. Would Riley have been able to apply a similar process to the essays she wrote in class if she had help using her media awareness to analyze audience, content, and the materials of print, academic essays?

Riley offered an important aspect of audience analysis and audience instruction for students: She repeatedly connected *what* she writes with *how* she writes. Riley realized that her social media audiences expect her to write about certain topics while using certain modes, which is dependent on the medium she chooses for writing and how that medium invites her to compose. The textbooks I analyzed reference medium or genre in relation to audience, but it is often supplementary, rather than a factor that contributes to the way a student would compose a text. In the "Rhetorical Situations" chapter of *Everyone's an Author*, Lunsford et al. ask, "If you have a choice of medium, which one(s) would best reach your intended audience?" (21). Johnson-Sheehan and Paine instruct students, "Once you

know the genre of your document, you can make decisions about how it should be designed and what would make it more readable in a specific place" (26). Early in *The St. Martin's* textbook, Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper note that in an argument essay, the student should consider the beliefs of their audience to better frame their own argument. Axelrod and Cooper include medium as an important factor of the rhetorical situation, although the step to consider design elements (what substitutes for medium) is only after students have composed entire drafts of their essays.

Writing instruction can easily fall into treating print texts as transparent media, and even when textbooks make a purposeful effort to move students toward thinking about how the media and modes affect their writing, there still is little discussion of the print essay itself and the expectations that are connected to it. Riley's reflections from coursework underscore my own difficulties in helping students make such connections. While I could lead Riley to observe and analyze what the modes of print essays lend to composing, she did not quite seem to articulate how print essays invite engagement with audiences. For instance, in a post asking her about her academic writing and style she wrote,

> An affordance that I employ in academic writing is the use of digital media. By using digital media, it could show the stance on an argument and relay the purpose of the academic writing. By using a graph, it often shows a statistic that is looking for a call to action. It can relay why the academic writing is being created in the first place.

In an earlier assignment asking students to reflect on the available modes of print texts, Riley had declared, "With visual elements, the text is 'dumbed down.' I do not particularly

believe in this but this is why almost no visual elements are used in academic writings. Instead it is just pages of perfectly aligned black and white writing." While not contrary in her beliefs about visuals, I remember feeling confused as an instructor and wondering how to help Riley understand texts with a better rhetorical approach. Without discussion of the expectations of a medium, students were writing with generalizations about audience and context, like Riley's desire to "sound smart" and the fact that students felt like there are "unstated" rules to follow in academic writing (Bullock et al. 57). But this is the rub of textbook instruction too: there is little discussion about how the expectations of print media are explicitly linked to audiences.

Some textbooks make attempts to discuss expectations and norms of certain contexts, such as when they instruct students about writing academic research essays. Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst in *They Say / I Say* introduce templates that require students to actively respond to scholarly writing. One way that students are asked to conceive abstract audiences is through dialogic exchanges with the ideas and words found in scholarly texts. To do so, the authors present students with the metaphor of 'entering the conversation.' The authors explain to students,

> For us, the underlying structure of effective academic writing—and of responsible public discourse—resides not just in stating our own ideas but in listening closely to others around us, summarizing their views in a way that they will recognize, and responding with our own ideas in kind…You need to enter a conversation, using what others say (or might say) as a launching pad or sounding board for your own views. (3)

For Graff et al., engaging with what others have previously said is a way to understand audience, and they treat audience as a deep positioning within an ongoing [textual] conversation. Templates function as a first step of academic writing for students: they provide students with sentence-level language to integrate scholarship into their own writing. What the templates of *They Say* fail to do, however, is provide students with a process to learn about the conventions or expectations of an audience or medium. Rather than grasping a clear sense of the context they are entering—the habits of practice, the expectations, and how writers interact with various media or modes to communicate—these templates offer a 'quick fix' for quoting and responding to academic writing but they do not necessarily encourage students to understand why they must present their writing to audiences in such forms in the first place.

As Emilie, Anna, and Matt supported my arguments in the "Context" chapter, writing on social media involves complex layers of interaction among media, writer, and reader. Although Riley's final project focused mostly on examining if social media modes could be utilized in academic writing, she also hinted that audiences on social media were active constituents in the rhetorical process. As Riley noted earlier, she finds that expectations of the media (rather than having a specific group of people in mind) are informative when writing to audiences. As part of this reflection, she also mentioned that, "the audience that is gather[ed] on social media is all based on the author or creator's previous choices." In this way, the audience is not a static figure for Riley, but made up of multiple constituents who are continually responsive to her composing.

Composition process pedagogy often involves writing multiple drafts, engaging in peer review, and workshopping with classmates, writing center tutors, and the class

instructor. Learning about the needs of readers allows students to shape their ideas and words to better express their purposes and to demonstrate that they are aware of various perspectives about a topic in order to be more informed, ethical researchers and writers. However, 'writing to readers' and 'writing to an audience' are separate tasks. These can become conflated in FYC, where logistical constraints of a semester-long course might force students to write to imagined audiences and then use the instructor or classmates as a stand-in for those audiences. Although the textbooks I analyzed urge students to value and acknowledge others' ideas in their writing, none of the composition courses proposed in these textbooks are structured with regular, daily writing feedback from students' intended audiences; the heuristics found in these textbooks do not offer a process for analyzing or communicating with physical groups of audiences. For example, learning about the specific, varied "personal beliefs" (*Writing Today*, 24) of a particular audience is most feasible through a survey or interviews or analysis of primary sources, which are infrequently included as the process of audience analysis. To make up for this lack of audience interaction, the student depends on the instructor's response, who can churn out feedback only as quickly as time constraints allow. This makes for a slow process of feedback and response, a definitive lag in understanding the effectiveness of how one writes, and might perpetuate the idea of writing for the teacher.

Expanding Audience

As I explore above, FYC instruction most frequently invites students to think about audience as the people they intend to encounter their writing. For instance, the definition of audience found in *Everyone's An Author* and *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* refers to

the physical interaction of audience and text: "Those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text" (A31 and G/I-5, respectively). In Dan Melzer's analysis of 2,100 writing assignments in various disciplines at universities nation-wide, students wrote directly to the professor for a grade in 64% of the assignments. Only 7% of the assignments—142 out of 2,100—were written with "wider audiences" in mind, involving "a rhetorical situation and a genre with a social context beyond the student writing to the teacher-as-examiner" (251). My own questioning about audience certainly aligns with these findings: I wonder if students often neglect the concept of audience in assignments because it is too abstract. (But I also wonder if instructors have a difficult time constructing assignments with rhetorical situations that seem authentic to students.) As Melzer argues, "Instructors who assign only writing to the teacher… neglect to provide students with the kind of meaning rhetorical purposes and social contexts found in assignments aimed at wider audiences" (251). Paula Rosinski similarly argues that "students understand that the stakes are higher when writing for real people with real informational needs, which in turn suggests that if we want students to experience and analyze writing purposes in rhetorically complex ways, then we need to create real writing contexts in our classrooms, with real audiences" (262). Yet I argue that it is possible for students to learn about audiences in situations when they are not able to write to actual or physical audiences; just because an audience can be identified does not mean that the expectations for writing become immediately clarified.

According to my FYC textbook analysis, students do not currently have instruction that helps them see how the media they compose with directly influences the expectations of specific audiences. As Riley's reflections and contemporary composition scholars

highlight, some students take into consideration how both the audience and media are active, reactive constituents in digital environments. FYC approaches to audience should not neglect this awareness: how the audience—and the media—position students before they begin composing. Students can write to audiences more productively if they move away from processes that ask them to do difficult or impossible imagining (such as analyzing demographics or attempting to theorize about an entire group's personal beliefs). Instead, as Riley demonstrated in ENG 240, students need additional audience instruction in order to regard the text itself as an element of audience construction. Students often need help seeing the relationship among rhetorical constituents as a discursive process, however, as the scholarship demonstrates above, students seem to be lacking a process for using this rhetorical knowledge when moving from digital environments to academic writing.

Providing students with an audience heuristic that is grounded in media awareness will allow students to analyze tangible elements of their rhetorical situation in digital or print contexts, even when their audiences remain abstract or unfamiliar. This means that students can gain an expanded understanding of audience that is less reliant on the notion of 'people' and is instead constructed around the *presumed context* (the agreed upon norms for composing) that develops because of the modes available. In the sections below, I describe how to move students toward an awareness of audience that involves an understanding of their own positions as writers, what the presumed context suggests about norms for composing, and what modes can reveal about audience expectations. Through audience defined (AD), students learn to regard the media and audience as active in the composing process; then, through audience intended (AI), students learn to situate their

own writing by utilizing the modes available within the media. AD requires students to understand what the media and audience expects from them, and AI invites students to see writing as a reciprocal act: students can also use the media and modes to react and respond to audiences, so they should think about the norms and expectations for composing. With these two terms working in tandem, students have a theory of audience that allows them to analyze and produce within a variety of media, including media that are unfamiliar and for situations with complicated, vague, or abstract audiences who students must communicate with.

Audience Defined

Students can approach any writing situation by considering the AD: moving beyond definitions of audiences as people and instead identifying the traits that define those groups of people. Rather than define these audiences traits in terms of demographics, however, AD requires students to examine how modes suggest norms or expectations of writing associated with groups of people or with certain uses of media; this in turn compels students to be responsive to the contexts they write within in order to be relevant, contributing composers for their audiences—a goal writ large for FYC scholars, instructors, and textbooks. Shifting audience away from the people one is writing to and toward the expectations of writing within certain media contexts is one way to ameliorate the difficulty of identifying a specific audience. Porter believes that approaching audience as a real group of people is problematic, and he suggests that students write within a discourse community, "a local and temporary constraining system, defined by a body of texts (or more generally, practices) that are unified by a common focus" (106). In regarding

audience as a "field of already established practices," Porter believes that writers can begin to analyze audience as the elements that accompany a community. Similar to presumed context, the strength of Porter's discourse communities comes from the notion that the writer must situate a text within practices, rather than writing to imagined people or groups. What Porter's discourse community heuristic lacks, however, is engagement with choices of medium, and there is no discussion in his theory about how community practices are influenced by the media itself. Porter regards discourse communities as rhetorical constructs, but medium is missing as one of the 'rhetorical features' that define discourse communities. AD therefore moves away from the idea of discourse communities and focuses instead on learning to recognize how the media affect practices that lead to a creation of a text.

As evidenced by the aforementioned scholarship and from the ENG 240 courses, students can develop the ability to analyze and reflect on their social media writing that demonstrates how they make purposeful rhetorical decisions. Even in contexts where students cannot articulate who exactly their audiences are, students find ways to productively deliver their messages. Effective social media writers use presumed context to navigate audiences; effective writers not only consider how to compose within the media, but they also use the circulation of posts to learn about context and audiences. For example, Riley described the process of sending messages to parents and acquaintances verses sending messages to close relatives and friends: in the former context, she does not use slang and makes sure that there are no errors; in the latter context, she feels comfortable using slang, spelling shortcuts, and emojis. While the media offers her the invitation to write however she wants, she chooses to apply certain choices given her audience's

expectations of how writing and visuals should be employed within that particular medium, whether for decorative purposes, to express a specific tone, or to communicate additional information without words. She emphasized, "The experience of the messages is also different."

But when Riley discussed writing situations with larger, broader, less known audiences, she lost that careful and concrete media awareness. For instance, Riley noted how limiting it can be when writers generalize about audiences on social media:

> When an audience becomes defined, it causes limitations when writing. For example, many Facebook pages have specific topics and formats they stick to. One that is focused on presenting fashion and life style material might lose many followers if that page were to post about a sports game. The audience is there for the fashion content, not sports content.

Although Riley explained that social media is "fast pace" which requires users to "post content more consistently," she would gain a deeper understanding from treating the audience as an influential aspect of the writing situation. I believe that thinking too broadly about audience can hinder students from expanding their notions of audience. When students focus too much on assumptions about an audience without exploring what media norms and expectations have led to defining that audience, they risk composing with limited understandings. For instance, in Riley's example of the themed Facebook pages, she would benefit from applying an understanding of presumed context, which encourages students to synthesize patterns they see among posts and of how users respond and share. Once students learn that they write in response to the expectations that are created from the way audiences read and respond within media, they will have more tangible reasons

for making certain writerly choices and become more aware of the decisions they make when composing.

When composing for print assignments, students often struggle to understand how the media suggest audience expectations, partly because many print texts do not involve the rapid circulation of social media. But when students' only option is to make broad generalizations about audience based on content, they often rely on stereotypes or assumptions, much like they might do if asked to analyze audience demographics. In trying to define an academic audience in her final project, Riley asserted:

> When writing an academic paper, the writer knows that the audience is expecting a higher level of style, language and grammar. An example of this could be adding a quote from a scholarly article to further prove a statement… In academia, writers are expected to write with academic terms because the audience are professors/those studying the specific topic.

Riley demonstrated a narrowed awareness of her audience. I try to explain to students that I am a professor, but when they write essays for their Biology professor, he/she probably has a very different teaching style and very different expectations. I ask students to think about the best academic article we read in class that semester and the hardest academic article we read in class that semester. Students know that they are different, and they know that all professors or "those studying the specific topic" probably cannot be grouped together. In Riley's example above, she does not seem to have the language to explain what an "academic term" is or who creates it.

AD moves students beyond group identification of people and moves them toward observing how certain groups of people employ media and modes to create definitions of

identity; students careful to perform *academic lurking* will realize that academic texts carry with them a variety of expectations, given their different audiences, media, and contexts. Inviting students to think about AD means they begin to learn the way they can compose within a particular media and context without forming assumptions or stereotypes, even if they do not specifically know their audience. In the assignments below, I suggest how students can develop a rhetorical awareness of audience from social media and use that process to gain a sense of audiences in their academic writing, even when those audiences might only be abstract ideas.

Audience Intended

AD is how students can become aware of their audience through the observation and analysis of media norms and expectations, and AI is how students then use the media (they have just observed) to position themselves to engage with their audience. AI builds on AD by granting students the ability to draw on their agency as communicators as they learn to make purposeful writerly choices in order to position their own writing for audiences. Riley stressed, "I am very present on social media and I do intentionally do certain things and use certain affordances to appease my audience." AI is a process so that students like Riley can feel "present" in their academic writing and so that they can purposefully make choices in response to audience expectations. When there is not a connection developed between AD and AI, students risk writing to abstract audiences with vague expectations in mind. For instance, Riley's final project demonstrated smart theorizing about how her social media knowledge transferred to her academic writing, but she had a difficult time including examples and an even harder time putting her theory into

practice. While Riley had identified an academic audience because of the media expectations (10+ pages, a methodological approach to reflection, analytical and rhetorical explanations), I did not feel like she understood how to think more specifically about positioning her own writing within those expectations.

Anna, from chapter 2, gave an excellent example of AI in practice: in the class discussion that I highlight at the very beginning of this chapter, Anna was the only student who admitted to writing directly to me in her homework assignment (despite the instructions). I overheard her reporting to her group members, "I wrote to Ash, and I added personal details and tried to be sort of funny so that she would like it more." Anna's homework response still had a formal tone to it and had engaged astutely with the scholarly text that was assigned, but she had clearly positioned her writing perfectly: I found her response to be one of the most engaging that night.

AI focuses on certain norms for delivering a message, even when the presumed context gives them a multitude of ways to engage with the media. For instance, students who analyze academic articles will quickly realize that articles in different journals use modes differently and seem to abide by various writerly expectations. AI asks students to think about their own positioning as writers: given what they know about their audience, how do they want to position themselves and why? Returning to agency, AI invites students to develop awareness of how their words take action, rather than only serving as reactions. In Riley's reflection above, she admitted, "I now try to write for everyone instead of just trying to appease my professor." But there are no references in her reflective essay that point to a specific audience; in fact, Riley's reflection was what led me to realize how

confusing and abstract academic audiences are for students, even when they can speak so comprehensively about their social media writing.

Although I have been primarily focused on highlighting Riley in this chapter, I also want to introduce Addy, another student from ENG 240. Addy demonstrated a simplistic example of AD/AI, but one that (with more time) I would have liked students to expand. In one of the last discussion forum posts of the semester, Addy wrote, "Social change doesn't happen quickly, so it is not always easy to notice when it is happening. #nofilter My grandparents are racist." The inclusion of a hashtag does not serve a practical function in this discussion forum post, because the forums do not allow for hashtags to be aggregated into feeds. But I believe Addy's decision to include "#nofilter" reflects two purposeful decisions. First, the hashtag's connotative meaning is applied to the sentence about her grandparents. When this hashtag is employed on the social site Instagram, it means the user has not edited the uploaded post in any way. I believe Addy intended for her sentence to be viewed similarly while also maintaining the denotative meaning of filter: she's not changing or softening this sentence for her audience. Secondly, I believe Addy's use of "#nofilter" demonstrated an ability to draw from the presumed context by calling upon expectations her peers would understand in ENG 240. This awareness exhibits AD and AI: the use of the hashtag is not only meaningful to her audience of avid social media users, but it is also an act that further situates her message. Despite the learning management system's inability to create actual hashtags, she included the hashtag to communicate differently than writing a sentence that says, "I'm going to be frank: My grandparents are racist." Addy's inclusion of the hashtag demonstrated her writerly agency, as she has aligned the media and content in a purposeful, rhetorical way.

Pedagogical Application

In the assignments below, I demonstrate how students can develop an awareness of audience, including in a medium where students struggle with identifying known and unknown audiences: long form, academic essays. The assignments are designed so that students build upon their knowledge of context: once students observe how certain interactions with media suggest agreed upon norms for composing, they then begin thinking about positioning their own texts within these media expectations. Instead of composing with assumptions about people in mind, students define their audience according to their awareness of the media. In turn, students learn how the media is an active constituent in audience considerations.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 1

This assignment prompts students to see social media *invitations* as important elements in their composing process, especially when it comes to communicating messages in a certain way and to particular audiences. I argue in this chapter that students need help developing an awareness of audience when audiences are unknown, and I further argue that students should learn how the media and audience expectations (often through context analysis) situate them before they even begin communicating. With this assignment, students become more aware and observant of the invitations on social media sites and how those invitations contribute to communicating messages to audiences.

The in-class activity and homework assignment build on each other so that students can move toward expanded definitions of audience; similarly, the homework extends the pedagogical application found in the Context chapter by asking students to consider the norms of composing when they think about audience. This assignment aims for students to consider definitions of audience that are less reliant on people and instead take into consideration how media and modes can contribute toward audience expectations; in doing so, students create an *audience defined* that is responsive to the media. This insight will be valuable for students during Assignment 2, where they write to a variety of audiences in multiple media, including academic texts.

ASSIGNMENT 1

Goals and Purpose

This assignment asks you to observe how the invitations on various social media sites contribute to the meaning of messages. You will be asked to think about how you write to audiences and why you write to them. In this analysis, you will hopefully challenge your current definition of audience, coming to new ideas about what it means to write to, for, or with others.

In-Class Instructions

Step 1: Observation

In the past few weeks, you and your classmates have submitted and shared various social media posts to our online class discussion forum. Today in class, we will concentrate on analyzing the modes you use to communicate in these posts.

With a partner, browse through the social media posts on D2L. (A good place to start would be the forums dedicated to each site. You posted in those during our Context unit.) Take notes on a separate sheet of paper about any patterns you notice. Then, focus directly on your own writing, and consider the following:

- What delivery cues are present in your posts?
- What modes do you use to communicate the message in your post?
- What cues do you give your audience(s)? Make a list and describe their various functions. (Think about communication cues that we give off IRL: variation of voice, enunciation, body language, speed of speech, gestures, pauses, etc.)

Step 2: Analysis

Next, head to the "Delivery" discussion forum on D2L. Choose one or two modes that you spent time examining and describe how you see them used by your classmates and/or how you use them to deliver a message. When possible, use quotations or screenshots for examples. In your response, explain why you think users employ these modes, and what they help to communicate to others.

Step 3: Rapid Reflection

How frequently do you think about your audience when you compose on social media? After today's activity, how do you think about audience? Or better: how could you start thinking about audience on social media?

Homework Instructions

In class today, you described *how* you post on social media sites; now you will try to describe *why* you write in such ways on these sites, particularly with a focus on your audience. Your prompt is below.

Who are you writing to in your social media posts? How do you know how to post on certain sites, in ways that your audience will like? What media invitations contribute to your understanding of audience? Be specific with your analysis.

You can talk about multiple social media sites, but be sure to answer these questions individually for each site. Do not make generalizations about all social media sites! Think about context: taking into consideration the context of each social media site means analyzing how the norms for composing affect the audience.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 2

This assignment provides students with an opportunity to apply the rhetorical awareness they started developing from Assignment 1. Students are asked to analyze audiences for three different contexts, and then they must think about how best to integrate their writing, given their understanding of those audiences. This requires students to develop a sense of *interplay*: how the media, audience expectations, context, and their own motivation for writing are associated. To help students gain an awareness of their writerly agency within this relationship, they are asked to reflect on their understanding of the *audience intended*: how can they fulfill their own motivations for writing while acknowledging the already established expectations or 'enter the conversation'?

I argue in this chapter that students often write to unknown or broad audiences, and because of this, students might rely on stereotypes or assumptions about these audiences, particularly in their academic writing. I also argue that students gain a better sense of audience for academic texts by becoming aware of the media and modes available, observing norms for composing within the media, and thinking about how circulation affects composing choices—all concepts students think about frequently when composing on social media. In Assignment 1, students started to develop a discursive process regarding media and audience; as students begin to transfer this awareness to other media, Assignment 2 asks students to apply their knowledge to a variety of contexts, even if audiences are unclear or unknown. This assignment can be developed in tandem with the "Engagement Plan" found in the assignments of the Purpose chapter.

ASSIGNMENT 2

Goals and Purpose

This assignment aims for you to gain a sense of your writerly agency as you discuss how you might compose in a variety of media for differing audiences, including your academic research essay. You will articulate how the media and modes contribute to your learning about audience expectations. In reflection, you will think about how your own writing can be situated within your chosen medium (relying on your analysis of the medium rather than stereotypes of assumptions).

In-Class Instructions

In your last assignment, you answered the question, "How do you know how to post on certain sites, in ways that your audience will like?" Discuss your answer to that question in groups. Take time to talk through the different writing contexts (and different media) that you each focused on to answer this question.

When you have thoroughly discussed, debated, and dissected everyone's answer, develop a process for analyzing an audience. Your process can be for a single medium, a group of media (like social media or print media), or a general theory about audience. Write your process down in detail, provide plenty of examples (put your theory into practice), and be prepared to share with other groups.

Homework Instructions

In class we've spend time thinking about essay ideas, and you should now have an idea of what you want to research. The steps below ask you to discuss your audience, what your audience might expect from you, and how you can present your ideas in a satisfying way.

1. List three media you are considering for your academic essay. One of these should have a 'traditional' academic audience.

2. For each media, list your audience. This should be focused and narrowed. For example:

   Not: readers of an academic journal
   Yes: readers of the journal *Young Scholars in Writing*

   Not: people who care about animal 'no kill' shelters
   Yes: celebrities who promote the hashtag #adoptdontshop

3. For each media, make a list of the available modes to compose with in that media. Next, describe in detail what those modes can inform you about your audience (with the help of a little academic lurking).

4. After making these lists, write a reflection that responds to the following:

- First, analyze each media individually: what do you notice about this media and the invitations? What do those invitations seem to suggest about the audience?
- Second, what patterns do you recognize among your lists, if any? What might be the cause for connection (or distinction)?
- Finally, now that you have "defined" the audiences and the media, think about how you want to position your own writing. For each media, discuss how you plan on entering this conversation. How might you simultaneously keep your audience's expectations in mind while advancing your own intended message?

Chapter 4: Ethos

"We take for granted in real life our mannerisms, body language, and personality are easily portrayed; online, you have to carefully translate those aspects in how you present yourself." – Cameron

"The actual audience also has a say in shaping someone's ethos." - Alexandra

In chapter 1, I argue that an awareness of the media and modes with which one writes offers students an expanded rhetorical approach to composing. In chapters 2 and 3, I extend this media awareness to context by offering a theory that takes into account the norms of composing within a particular medium, which in turn helps students navigate the expectations of both defined and intended audiences. In this chapter, I address the following questions: How do the media with which students write, the audiences to whom students write, and the contexts within which they write position them as composers? How can we offer a theory of ethos in FYC that helps students address these questions while also satisfying their own needs as communicators? Following a familiar structure, I begin with several student anecdotes that contribute to this chapter's arguments. I spend time with these anecdotes before moving into analysis of contemporary theory and FYC textbooks in order to develop what I see as a disconnect among personal, public, and academic writing, both for students and for my own instruction. Later in the chapter, I expand the rhetorical term "ethos" so that students can learn to satisfy their writerly needs no matter the media or context.

When I ask FYC students to define “ethos,” at least one student always shouts out “ETHICS!” This connection is probably easy for students to remember: “eth” sort of sounds like “ethics.” (Although I’m not sure that “A STATISTIC!” sounds like “logos,” which is often shouted out for that rhetorical appeal.) When I first began teaching writing, defining “ethos” as ethical writing seemed sufficient: if a student in class cited sources and wrote with a firm purpose, that demonstrated an ethos that was authoritative, ethical, and predictable. Once I began studying rhetoric—and once I acknowledged that students actually exist as writers outside of (as well as inside of) research essays—it became clear that constructing an ethos is a much more complex process than merely citing sources, and so I also realized that my teaching was not providing students with support to fully develop ethoi for various writing contexts.

Some of my favorite writing during my undergraduate studies took place for the campus newspaper, where— as opinion/editorial editor—I wrote with a snarky, take-no-prisoners approach to criticizing campus issues, from the administration's hush-hush attitude to campus sexual assault to the sudden burst of engagements among the senior class. I wish, at some point during my college writing career, someone had introduced the concept of ethos to me in the same way that one of the ENG 240 students, Dylan, discussed it with his own writing. After reflecting about his future on social media, Dylan said, "I came to understand ethos as both how you present yourself as well as what your persona is... What’s my reputation, what’s my brand, what do people think of when they think of me." Looking back, I realize no one had asked me in college, "Are you considering your ethos?" While some of my editorials touched on consequential campus topics, I realize now that a

few of my columns were merely the writings of a news media troll who was given column space in the paper.

When I wrote editorials on behalf of the newspaper's name, however, it was much easier to abide by an idea of a 'reputation' or 'brand': The newspaper's editorial voice was written in third-person point of view, and it had to sound authoritative, credible, and knowledgeable. This ethos was easy to slip into as a writer; after all, it was the same way that I would write all the rest of my academic papers. But Dylan's definition of ethos goes beyond constructing this kind of formal, academic ethos. On social media, for example, he suggested that his writing constructs his ethos as a "socially aware wordy goofnugget." Again, as an undergraduate fledgling writer, if I had heard someone describe their own writing in this way—and not just one piece of writing, but a continuously emerging body of work—I might have more deeply perceived my own writerly self. Instead of writing merely for content, I might have actually been rhetorical (and a better journalist): What Dylan described in his definition of ethos is a developing construction of a self that is consciously aware of what others think when they read his writing. As my own understanding of ethos was limited upon graduation, it is not surprising that I went on to teach writing during my first years of graduate school with a constrained rhetorical approach. All I really understood about ethos was what my academic writing sounded like, which was really just trying to imitate some sort of authoritarian air, mostly by using unnecessary clauses and the Microsoft Word thesaurus tool.

What is so odd to me about this time is that I was also becoming wildly obsessed with Twitter, the social media platform that only allows users to write with 140 characters. (At that time, the site did not allow many additional modes; to even add a picture to a tweet,

users had to link to third-party sites.) When people asked why I enjoyed Twitter, I would gush about how funny, relevant, and poignant some of the writing was or about how the site made me feel in-the-know because users had to be aware of certain contextual information to understand conversations and tweets. But these characteristics of writing never quite made it into my head when it came time to develop lesson plans during my early days of teaching FYC. Instead, I taught students a very formal approach to ethos. An actual line from one of my early lectures reads, "If you're journaling for class, you need to make me believe you and that involves developing your ethos, or giving me reason to trust what you are saying. I appeal to ethos by being knowledgeable on this subject so you all believe me, right?" While the concepts of credibility and knowledge are not entirely removed from the ethos Dylan discusses above about a "reputation," my lessons clearly reflected students getting their facts and checking them twice. In other words, I was teaching the same kind of ethos I left college understanding: developing authority and credibility, hyper-focused on how a writer was perceived, and related to formal contexts.

Just like my undergraduate self, students in both sections of ENG 240 used "authoritative" or "thesis statement" when asked to describe an academic ethos. But very few used these words when they were asked to describe their ethoi on social media. Instead they used "excited," "funny," "entertaining," "creative," and "structured, yet whimsical." One student even reported a conscious awareness of "expression/impression" when she moves from social media writing to academic writing. Many students mentioned that some of their social media writing is spontaneous but that they put a good amount of planning into most of their posts. These reflections, which occurred throughout the

semester, made me feel I was failing students by not understanding their identities as writers or acknowledging what rhetorical instruction they might be prepared to receive.

After I asked them to analyze and reflect on their writing, students articulated approaches to ethos that involved a complex construction of self that changes from site to site, is dependent on what modes the site affords them, and is partially reliant on what their audience expects from them. For example, Cameron emphasized the role that audience reaction plays in contributing to a social media profile: “All of the actions and non-actions we take on Facebook (and any social media site) helps to create our online ethos. What we post, what our profile picture is, who our ‘friends’ are, and how we interact with others play a vital role in defining our online ethos.” When asked to consider academic essays, however, Cameron described his writing as "professional" and included citations and background information about his topic. Often when students would describe their academic ethoi, it would similarly refer to the presentation of the content rather than on how their audience might perceive them. Students frequently described their process for academic writing in terms of formatting: have a thesis, include sources and citations, and sound formal. In other words, the reciprocal audience interaction that they report occurring on social media is not mentioned in their academic writing. But Cameron declared that his social media ethos is reliant on the interaction between his audience and all of the modes that construct his presence on social media. It is only when switching to print media for academic essays that he seemed to lose this holistic approach to ethos.

Along with audience involvement, other students also demonstrated the same kind of conscious awareness of how the media influenced their construction of ethos. Students reflected on how they knew what to post from site to site in order to be effective

communicators. Dylan (with the "goofnugget" ethos) considered his ethos as in flux, as multiple, as developing; he referred to them as his "ethoses" among social media sites. Dylan explained early in the semester, "I would think about identity in terms of profile and performance in terms of the content related in the profile. I find I have different identities depending on what I'm using and who I'm speaking to." Many ENG 240 students paid particular attention to the form of their messages, like Dylan: He linked the content of his post to the media and modes available for composing.

Dylan's reflections helped him gain a discursive, rhetorical awareness of his social media choices, and he was therefore able to offer a sophisticated approach to ethos construction that was partially reliant on his audience and the available modes of social media. The student voices that appear in this chapter—Dylan, Cameron, and Alexandra—highlight pivotal concepts that support an expansion of how to approach ethos in FYC: that ethos is a reciprocal construction; that ethos is partially dependent on and reactive to audience expectations and norms; and that effective ethos construction requires a writer to be responsive to the modes available in each medium. This expanded definition also offers FYC a new framework to discuss academic writing in order to move students away from limiting conceptions of ethos that might stem from certain buzzwords, like authority or credibility. While students can develop a scholarly writing ethos that is credible and knowledgeable, there is a much broader application of ethos available to them if these lessons are framed as rhetorical choices, given the audience and the media involved. In a 1982 article in *Rhetoric Review*, Michael Halloran urges that ethos should be taught in writing classrooms and suggests that teaching students to rhetorically construct an ethos grants composition instructors the ability to help students shape their characters. As

Halloran points out, "In directing students to write this way rather than that, we tell them in effect to be this sort of character rather than that" (61). According to Halloran's argument, many composition instructors who use FYC textbooks are guiding students' characters to form as credible and authoritative writers. Certainly, many instructors would present no qualms if students left their FYC classrooms as confident writers who are careful to back up their writing with support or evidence (in whatever form that might appear). I want students who leave the FYC classroom to gain these same qualities, but I also want them to have a choice in developing this ethos.

When students enter FYC classrooms, they should learn to be aware of their agency over the texts they create and within the contexts they create them. As discussed in the Introduction chapter to this project, I define agency as the ability to have awareness about each writerly choice made and to know when to employ such choices (Shapiro et al., 2016); such agency is dependent on action and reflection. As I illustrate later in this chapter, when ethos instruction focuses too much on authority or credibility, students lose their ability to develop awareness and to take action in order to construct other crucial aspects of their ethos, given their rhetorical needs.

In this chapter, I argue that instructors can expand the teaching of ethos in FYC by allowing students to develop an awareness of how they *self-present*: Students are granted agency to construct their ethos through the use of media and modes, creating a rhetorical positioning among audience, context, and media. I begin by demonstrating how ethos originated and developed as a social, reciprocal construct in select classical and contemporary theory. I place these understandings of ethos—along with students' approaches of ethos construction on social media—in conversation with FYC textbooks to

show how FYC instruction abides by a narrow definition of ethos, one that is particularly authority-driven and academic-related. In my analysis, I examine how limiting this approach is when compared to students' understanding of a writerly ethos as reciprocal, reactive, and dependent on the available medium and modes. To build on the argument of chapter 1, I explain how students can analyze the use of modes to understand how they are already positioned as writers before they begin composing and how this helps them self-present, and I will continue the arguments of chapter 2 and 3 to explain that students can use *presumed context*—including media expectations and habits—to construct their ethoi both in and out of the classroom. At the end of the chapter, I offer classroom approaches to move students through the theory and praxis of ethos in a FYC classroom.

What Theory Can Contribute to Students' Understanding

Philip Eubanks and John D. Schaeffer assert, "[W]riting is inseparable from the context in which it arises—and thus from the manipulations of self that contexts foist upon us all" (385). As I came to understand in ENG 240, students' writing on social media is partially dependent on the modes available to them and how their messages can—and might—be delivered depending on the circulation to various audiences. Thus, as Dylan, Cameron, and Alexandra demonstrate in this chapter, they are aware of the crucial relationship among self, audience, and media—an ethos that is co-constructed by multiple constituents. In this section I interpret select theories in order to highlight reciprocal, social approaches to ethos. In the next section, I will analyze how FYC textbooks limit their interpretations of these theories, which in turn threatens to restrict students' application of ethos.

In *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle states that ethos is a vital element of how a speaker connects with an audience, and it is not just the content of one's speech that is important: "But since rhetoric is concerned with making a judgment...it is necessary not only to look to the argument, that it may be demonstrative and persuasive but also [for the speaker] to construct a view of himself as a certain kind of person" (2.1.2, 120, brackets Kennedy's). In Aristotle's theory of ethos, a speaker must demonstrate that their character aligns with the words they are speaking. Ethos is therefore demonstrated in the moment of interacting; ideally, if the speaker presents their character effectively through the delivery, style, and content of a speech, the audience will be persuaded.

Aristotle's position in *The Nicomachean Ethics* should be considered with the theories found in the *Rhetoric*, as it requires speakers to develop habits of character in order to align with the content of their speech. In *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle describes virtue ("arete" or excellence) as the efficient function of a thing. He explains, "[T]he proper excellence or virtue of man will be the habit or trained faculty that makes a man good and makes him perform his function well" (32). Aristotle's virtue ethics must be understood differently than one might think about them today; rather than a set of rules to live by (as one might consider religious virtues, for example), Aristotle writes that "moral excellence is the result of habit or custom (*ethos*)" (25). The virtues that Aristotle describes were relative to Athenian society, like virtues related to manhood or being a warrior. These virtues were defined by the Athenian people—based upon the community doxa—so that

one's habits would be relevant according to the agreed upon characteristics important to them.[15]

Aristotle believes that awareness and purposefulness must exist within these acts of virtue; for example, one could perform a brave act, but that does not mean that they embody bravery. But when someone purposefully, repeatedly performs an activity (thereby creating a habit), a person can develop the virtue, and therefore develop his or her character. Aristotle elaborates:

> But in the case of the virtues, a man is not said to act justly or temperately if what he does merely be of a certain sort—he must also be in a certain state of mind when he does it; i.e., first of all, he must know what he is doing; secondly, he must choose it, and choose it for itself; and, thirdly, his act must be the expression of a formed and stable character (30).

Arthur B. Miller argues that the translations and etymologies of ethos in Aristotle's texts suggests a close relationship between habit (εθος) and character (ηθος), and that one's habits are indicative of their disposition. Miller concludes, "Aristotle sees character as reflecting neither accidental nor isolated behavior, but habitual behavior… He does not view habitual behavior as occurring spontaneously, but through deliberation, selection, and desire" (315). This is how character is formed: through deliberate choice and repeated behavior. As one's habits change, so does one's character. Aristotle's ethos requires speakers to demonstrate their virtues through words and actions, and it is difficult to fake this because it is difficult to construct effectively in the first place. Habitual acts cannot easily be falsely portrayed to an audience. This is perhaps why Aristotle, when defining

[15] Dale Sullivan describes doxa as "a stock of unspoken assumptions" (226). Refer to the Context chapter for what Matt—an ENG 240 student—describes as common knowledge or "presumed context."

ethos, notes, “[There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence” (*On Rhetoric*, 1.2.4, 38). The most effective demonstration of ethos would align one's virtues—the acts that construct their character—with the content of their speech.

What Aristotle also notes as significant in his theory of ethos is the audience's role. To move an audience to trust, a speaker should employ appeals of pathos to predispose their audience to be in the correct mood or to set the tone before arguing their case. As Aristotle describes: "[F]or it makes much difference in regard to persuasion…that the speaker seem to be a certain kind of person and that his hearers suppose him to be disposed toward them in a certain way and in addition if they, too, happen to be disposed in a certain way" (2.1.2-3, 120). The audience is an active constituent in the construction of a speech because speakers must take into account who they are speaking to in order to more effectively position themselves. Speakers must then create a speech that not only causes the audience to feel a certain way—in accordance with the speaker's intended outcome—but that also positions them favorably within the audience's emotional state. Christopher Carey argues that employment of pathos prepares the audience "so that the projection of the appropriate character achieves more subtly the effect sought by explicit appeals for a favorable hearing” (406). In this way, the act of persuasion is based upon the construction of an individual's character *and* the integration of the audience's expectations and reactions.

Thus, constructing an ethos is dependent on the context of a situation, which includes the audience and expectations of what is to be delivered. Michael Halloran notes that, "to have *ethos* is to manifest the virtues most valued by the culture to and for which

one speaks" (60). As just previously discussed, this entails understanding how the audience is predisposed; but more specifically, Halloran describes ethos as a demonstration of one's personal character and reflective of agreed upon characteristics by a group. He explains with an example:

> [I]t makes equally good sense to speak of the *ethos* of a particular type of person, of a professional group, or a culture, or an era in history. If at an academic conference or colloquium I speak so with some authority, it is partly because I manage to look and sound the way professors are supposed to look and sound. (62)

Because virtues must be habitual, Halloran reasons that such acts suggest the agreed upon notions of a group while at the same time create such notions. James Kinneavy and Susan Warshauer similarly argue that ethos is an act requiring a speaker to learn community expectations and to address such expectations in one's speech:

> To be convincing, a speaker must exhibit that quality of character that culture, and not the individual, defines as a virtue. In fact *ethos* itself, derived from Greek words meaning 'custom,' 'habit,' 'usage,' and 'character,' is similarly connected to social values. The effectiveness of an ethical appeal thus depends on one's ability to gauge society's values and to display them—indeed, to affirm them—in one's speech. (175)

Kinneavy and Warshauer interpret Aristotle's ethos as a combination of understanding community expectations and manipulating them: while a speaker addresses the audience's common knowledge, he or she builds from such knowledge to serve their own purposes.

The theory of ethos that I suggest for students in this chapter aligns closely with these interpretations: To create an ethos, a writer must address the context of a writing situation, but at the same time can develop or shift a group's expectations through habitual acts delivered to an audience. The only difference is that my suggestions for students invite a more thorough discussion of medium into the theory; where Aristotle connected the form of a speech with the content of the speech, 21st century students now need to consider how the materiality of a text affects what can be said.

Our daily, face-to-face interactions do mimic the reciprocal process theorized by Aristotle, and Erving Goffman presents a contemporary theory for such social interaction. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman argues that social interaction is constructed of orientations and adjustments that a communicator impresses on others. Goffman argues that because a speaker does not know the outcome of an interaction but has an intended role for the other participants, a speaker "tends to employ substitutes—cues, tests, hints, expressive gestures, status symbols, etc.—as predictive devices" (249). These impressions communicate how others should interpret and respond, and thus, create a "presentation of self" for the speaker: an ethos that is successful when based upon understood, agreed-upon norms during the interaction at hand. Though Goffman's theory was intended for face-to-face interaction, such impressions can take form in all media, including the cues, hints, gestures, and invitations that are communicated through a variety of modes.

Similar to Aristotle's suggestion to dispose the audience in a certain way, Goffman argues that a speaker can influence the situation "by expressing himself in such a way as to give them [those spoken to] the kind of impression that will lead them to act involuntarily

in accordance with his own plan" (4). Goffman regards the 'presentation of self' as communally defined and dependent on norms and expectations. Individuals must be aware of social complexities in order to present themselves in a variety of situations, but Goffman argues that no one can be prepared for every moment. People "learn enough pieces of expression to be able to 'fill in' and manage, more or less, any part that he is likely to be given" (73). Also in accordance with Aristotle, Goffman argues that no individual embodies any inherent characteristics or identities, but that they learn such social cues, gestures, and roles and then perform accordingly. An individual expresses a presentation of self, and then the others accept or reject various aspects of that self and respond accordingly. For Goffman, an ethos is momentary and created between the speaker and audience. For Aristotle, an ethos is also momentary and created between speaker and audience; only the character of the speaker has perpetually been developing through their habits and acts. But both theories are important to consider when composing with multiple media, including digital contexts.

Robert J. Holt adds digital complexity to these theories by arguing that a writer's ethos is continually created over time and that actions and words contribute to current and future rhetorical acts. Holt argues that due to the affordances of social media interfaces in particular, audiences have access to writers' previous rhetorical acts, which most likely factors into ethos evaluation. Similarly, when encountering someone face-to-face, this social media presence will be taken into account. Holt cites an important example for students to consider: how employers might consider an interviewee's wild Facebook photos during an interview, even if the interviewee appears to be prepared and professional in person. Holt writes, "First, because the audience can (and likely will) assess

a rhetor's credibility based on the rhetor's online presence, social media should be considered by the rhetor as an element in the perpetual project of constructing ethos" (77). When a person's online presence and "other rhetorical performances" do not match, Holt implies that they will appear untrustworthy or misleading. Holt's theory again suggests the requirement of habit and consistency in developing an ethos.

Also important to consider when writing in digital contexts that afford rapid interaction and reactions is Colin Brooke's rhetorical approach to new media. In *Lingua Fracta*, Brooke reconstitutes the canons of classical rhetoric as an ecology of practice; this vision to reframing rhetoric requires reading a text's interface. Brooke shifts the classical rhetorical canon of *style* to "perspective," offering a theory that brings together the actions and interactions of users, objects, and interfaces. Brooke suggests an extension of Richard Lanham's at/through distinction that adds "from, " inviting the user to look *from* different perspectives. This concept should lead users to become more aware of the various reactions—both human and non-human—that result from their actions online. Brooke also revises the canon of memory to "persistence," explaining, "Persistence is the practice of retaining particular ideas, keywords, or concepts across multiple texts, be they websites, journal articles, or chapters of the same book" (157). Brooke calls upon Scott Lloyd DeWitt's (2001) notion of "cognitive fabric," the weaving together of multiple strands of information, to argue that people consume information almost constantly but only become aware of it when they connect that information to a pattern. For example, when a user posts on Facebook, they should be considering the reactions they will receive. (Cameron, in a quote above, mentioned that such reactions directly affect his ethos on Facebook.) These reactions are most easily quantified in the number of literal "reactions" to a post.

Intentional social media users utilize such reactions (which can form patterns) to learn what is effective with audiences, and it is then through persistence of posting that they are able to create a habitual ethos.

This is where the notion of habit is crucial for ethos. In his writing about virtue ethics, Aristotle presents ethos as momentary because the rhetor has to be persuasive enough during a speech to convince the audience that their virtues are true. Yet Aristotle's theory suggests that a speaker cannot have a reputation 'speak' for them; they have to demonstrate that reputation through the speech and their actions. Theoretically, someone can prove that they are of excellent virtue despite previous lapses in character, but Holt is correct—this most likely will not happen during a moment like a job interview because the interview does not provide sufficient time for someone to demonstrate their character through habitual action. It is questionable if habitual change can be presented on social media profiles. For example, a handful of offensive, bigoted tweets made by Trevor Noah were brought to light after the announcement that he would replace Jon Stewart as host of *The Daily Show* (Dewey, "In Defense"). For some audiences, these tweets might be enough to tarnish Noah's ethos. For others, six old tweets are not enough to contribute to the ethos that Noah perpetually constructs on both Twitter (10K+ tweets) and his commentary on *The Daily Show*. Thus, while a single tweet can communicate a user's intentions at a particular moment in time, there is also the perpetual ethos construction that must be considered: the habitual, purposeful acts that contribute to the perception of the user's ethos.

In Aristotelian terms, ethos translates as "good character," but having a good character today means something very different than in the context of Athenian society.

Online, excellent character could mean refraining from posting offensive or harmful posts or it could mean posting cute videos of cats that regularly go viral, or it could mean both. Ethos must be understood in relation to the context in which a writer is positioned; the presumed context (including the audience's expectations and habits) informs the writer of habits that are agreed upon as "good."

In academic contexts, there are several habits that are agreed upon as "good" and are required by writers, both novice and expert. The problem is that students are often not aware of their agency to notice these habits and take action accordingly, but rather are told that they must assume a particular ethos in order to satisfy their audience. In the section below, I illustrate how five FYC textbooks approach ethos instruction, stressing the focus on academic writing. Throughout my analysis I demonstrate how this approach prepares students to construct a very particular academic ethos but does little to help them navigate unfamiliar writing contexts or audiences. I pay particular attention to what seems to be lost in the translation from theory to practice: how to develop habits that are responsive to the context, audience, and media in which students write.

What Textbook Instruction Offers (Or Doesn't Offer) For Students

The students profiled in this chapter were able to articulate how they consciously create personalized ethoi that are responsive to the expectations of each social media site. After I helped students analyze and reflect on this process, they were further able to observe how actions and reactions contribute to their social media ethoi. Dylan, who described above having variations of a persona or multiple ethoi, adds, "When it comes to building identity… it's really about trying to project the self that best appeals to the people I

like most." FYC textbook instruction similarly moves students toward an academic ethos based on an audience's needs, but the textbooks often lack instruction for how students can position themselves given that audience. In the analysis of textbooks below, I examine how authors introduce the concept of ethos construction to students in FYC. In doing so, I demonstrate how authors encourage students to develop academic writing habits, like credibility, but often forgo instruction about the influence of context and audience in developing those habits.

FYC textbook treatment of ethos invites students to consider how their words are perceived and to consider their presence as writers based upon authority, credibility, and knowledge. The ethos instruction in these textbooks assumes that students entering FYC are not yet scholars and that they need instruction to position their writing within already existing scholarly dialogues. Many of the textbooks analyzed for this study focus exclusively on academic genres, and students are therefore frequently encouraged to take the following steps when drafting essays:

1) Make sure they are knowledgeable enough to write about a topic

2) Read and respond to what others have previously written about the topic

3) Position their purpose in a way that satisfies their [academic] audience

This advice is useful for students considering rhetorical concepts like audience or context for the first time. In *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, Richard Bullock et al. urge students to build their credibility and to gain the reader's trust. The authors write:

> For your argument to be convincing, you need to establish your own credibility with readers—to demonstrate your knowledge about your topic, to show that you and your readers share some common ground, and to show yourself to be

> evenhanded in the way you present your argument. (367)

In the argument chapter, Bullock et al. build from Aristotelian persuasive appeals to explain key features of arguments: Students should offer reasoning and evidence (logos), appeal to emotions and common values (pathos), and develop a "trustworthy tone" (ethos) to demonstrate that they are "fair" and "honest" (170). Similarly, Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine in *Writing Today* teach an ethos directly from Aristotle's work that advises students to call upon various virtues like personal experience, good character, or pathos. But these characteristics are couched in a description to "build your authority and reputation" (321). For some students, this might be the first time they consider how their arguments or opinions affect others, which moves them into rhetorical considerations of audience.

Many FYC students have not had much practice with academic writing when they enter the university, and so these FYC textbooks inform students that their academic writing must be credible. As Patricia Bizzell declares in "The Ethos of Academic Discourse":

> Whatever his or her background, the student who is attempting to master academic discourse is attempting to pass for a member of a particular cultural group who shares this 'common stock' of knowledge. I know that failure to share it is one of the most salient ways a student destroys his or her ethos in the world of college intellectual life. (354)

Two important expectations of academic scholars, after all, are to develop knowledge and to ethically demonstrate how that knowledge is situated to relevant bodies of work. (Academic publications requirements make clear that these are necessary components of

scholarly writing.) But ENG 240 student Alexandra argued that placing too much stress on certain characteristics of an ethos—like credibility or authority—hinders writerly agency:

> Young scholars tend to have the ethos constructed for them that they are disengaged and low in credibility when they try to enter any kind of rhetoric in higher education institutions.... This kind of set back can not benefit any student, as there will be no room for them to grow as scholars in their fields of work that they would like to be thoughtful and have rhetorical discussions within.

What I learned from students' reflections about ethos construction is that many students can skillfully navigate the relationship among individual writer, audience, and media. But when students enter FYC, I wonder if this complex relationship is threatened because of the intense focus on building credibility. As discussed below, textbook instruction ultimately aims for a dialogic relationship between audience and author. But the repeated focus on credibility might make students feel like they have to work incredibly hard to write worthwhile material and present their ideas. To further Alexandra's critique above, without an explanation of how or why students should consider writing with such an ethos, they might feel as if engagement is inauthentic or forced.[16]

Because students navigate the expectations of academic scholarship when they are only novice writers, FYC textbook ethos instruction offers a common beginning step: gaining credibility through the act of citing sources. For example, Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper in *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* define ethos as an "appeal to readers' perception of the writer's credibility and fairness" (247). Here, credibility entails "considering whether

[16] See chapter 5, Purpose, where I address this issue directly.

writers represent different points of view fairly and know what they are writing about" (521). Axelrod and Cooper list characteristics of academic writing, noting ways that writers can establish their credibility: using the proper sources, finding common ground with the audience, and acknowledging counterarguments fairly (281). Andrea Lunsford et al. in *Everyone's an Author* also establishes the idea that citing sources or including evidence evokes credibility. They instruct: "Acknowledging the work of others will help build your own ethos, showing that you have done your homework and also that you want to acknowledge those who have influenced you" (12). FYC textbook instruction encourages students to consider how their writing is a response to others' words and ideas, and through the process of writing, students will then learn how their own words are entangled in this academic conversation.

Several textbook authors argue that developing an ethos requires students to become contributing members of the academic community. Similar to the aforementioned textbooks, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein in *They Say / I Say* encourage students to contextualize research for the academic audiences to whom they write: "For us, the underlying structure of effective academic writing—and of responsible public discourse—resides not just in stating our own ideas but in listening closely to others around us, summarizing their views in a way that they will recognize, and responding with our own ideas in kind" (3). This understanding of ethos found in FYC textbooks encourages students to enter the 'conversation,' referring to Burke's parlor metaphor.[17] Although Graff and Birkenstein do not use "ethos" in their text, *They Say* aims for students to position themselves in scholarly discourse by gaining knowledge about a topic, observing

[17] The parlor metaphor is more thoroughly detailed in chapter 2.

community expectations, and then offering their own message. Instructing students to follow this process offers an ethos construction that is first about learning about the audience and secondly about communicating one's own purpose.

The one commonality of FYC textbook instruction is that the authors encourage students to demonstrate habitual practices of reading texts and citing them in their own essays, which can lead students to develop an awareness of other perspectives and ideas. While students are taught that citation practices can contribute to scholarly authority, such practices do not construct a scholarly ethos unless students habitually, deliberately develop such a character. Miller explains why Aristotle finds men in the prime of life to have an ideal ethos: It is more difficult for young speakers to persuade audiences, not because of age, but because they have not lived long enough to establish qualified characters demonstrated through [relevant] habits. That is why, according to Miller, "a younger speaker addressing an older audience would do well to cite a sufficient number of authorities consisting of persons of virtuous habits and of respected experience" (313). With this interpretation of ethos, Miller might as well be giving advice in a FYC textbook about establishing credibility in academic writing. Because the constraints of a FYC classroom (time constraints, single-semester courses, writing about unfamiliar topics, very little circulation or publication of their writing), students might accept that sources lead to a credible essay but not that citations contribute toward an authentic scholarly ethos. As Miller writes, "[I]t would seem essential to point out the voluntary nature of repetitive behavior in order to prove it to be habitual and not compulsory behavior. Voluntary actions involve choice" (312). Miller makes clear that habit and character are both active

conditions; a character must be habitually practiced and projected, not just be performed as part of a writing assignment in one class.

Given all I have written so far in this dissertation, I believe that ethos instruction in FYC textbooks is most promising when ethos is less about citing sources and more about the nuances that accompany citing those sources. As I showed in the previous paragraphs, some textbook instruction mentions finding common ground or acknowledging how outside influences affect the student's position. Rather than focusing on authority and credibility, students can grasp a better sense of why they might need to create such habits (like citing sources) based upon the context within which they are writing together with audience expectations. Similarly, in their focus to help students learn that other perspectives exist, the authors of these FYC textbooks have frequently overlooked that students also need to understand their own rhetorical agency as communicators—not so that they can argue opinions without considering other perspectives, but so that they can truly understand how audiences and writers engage in a give-and-take relationship.

To clarify my points, I want to return to what I understand about students' construction of ethos on social media. The students I cite in this chapter create an individual sense of self while contributing to audience expectations on social media. Alexandra literally makes this statement in a homework assignment, "It is incredibly important to take into account how our ethos is created not only by ourselves, but also how others (and specifically those reading the writer's work) perceive our ethos." (And as Alexandra illustrates below, she also considered how certain media and modes could contribute to ethos construction.) While FYC textbooks encourage students to acknowledge other perspectives and to cite those references as a way to create this kind of reciprocal

ethos construction, the instructional practice does not clearly demonstrate to students how such acts situate students as relevant, contributing members in academic discourse.[18] Rather than students understanding these moves as necessary because of audience, context, or even the media with which they write, citing sources often comes across as an action that is merely a requirement of an academic essay assignment. Providing a more thorough discussion of the reciprocal nature of ethos could strengthen students' understanding about using sources as a way to respond to their audience and context—for example, thinking about the circulation of an academic article and how that affects the content included—and could also simultaneously serve as a powerful action to further students' purposes for writing.

In order for students to be effective writers on social media, they have to care about how their own posts are situated for the audiences to whom they write. Earlier, Dylan was quoted describing his identity formation on social media as relative to the people to whom he wants to appeal. He wrote that he feels "the most successful when people who I've come to respect/like the most like things of mine." But this does not mean he caters solely to his audiences' needs; instead, he actively constructed an ethos that would satisfy himself and this audience: "It's finding those parts of me that people can engage with." On social media, students must have a careful awareness of audience if they want to be successful, and their individual ethos must position them as relevant, participating members within these groups—the same ethos goals as in FYC academic writing.

[18] As I have already discussed, part of the difficultly of helping students realize that their writing matters is that they might not have audiences to write to other than the teacher. Chapter 5, Purpose, discusses potential solutions to ameliorate these rhetorical issues.

It is through analysis of the media and modes that I see students gaining a better sense of how they are expected to self-present to others. The ethos presented in many FYC textbooks relies heavily on the content students provide in their essays—knowledge based on evidence, credibility through citations, presenting counterarguments—but there is little discussion about why audiences expect this information. Dylan reflected on how he interprets communicating throughout the day: "If we have a medium to communicate with each other, we use whatever advantages that medium has to offer. We merge into the norms of the settings we enter, and are constantly switching between highly variant environments on a daily basis." Dylan believed this constant switching leads to different behaviors and norms, and requires what he earlier described as shifting ethoi. Because Dylan was able to understand that different expectations are required in various communicative contexts, he could adjust his ethos accordingly. This means that Dylan analyzed how modes on Twitter or Tumblr invited him to compose as a "wordy goofnugget," but yet he did not feel that he received the same invitations from Microsoft Word to compose in such a way. Similarly, Alexandra stated, "I believe audience changes from platform to platform, therefore how one tailors their ethos would also change from platform to platform." Instructing students to write certain ways (i.e. cite sources in academic essays to be credible) does not help students understand the explicit connections between the content they write and media they choose to communicate that content, especially when considering other rhetorical factors like audience or context. To provide students with the ability to compose in all media, for all contexts, they need to develop an awareness of why certain writing choices are made—how they are situated as writers—given the media and modes they choose for composing.

Expanding Ethos

To provide students with a more productive process for ethos construction in FYC, instructors can expand their approaches to ethos in writing instruction. Currently, FYC textbooks place appropriate focus on the role of academic audience expectations in ethos construction, but they neglect to ask students think about how and why these expectations immediately position them as writers. Similarly, continuing the argument made in chapter 3, ethos instruction should lead students to identify how the media in which they compose also contribute to the development of audience expectations. If instruction expands to focus on the reciprocal influences among individual, audience, and media, I believe ethos instruction can provide students with a more robust approach that satisfies writing contexts academic and broader.

From my experiences teaching ENG 240, I learned that students often do not realize that they can use their processes of social media ethos construction to help them develop an academic ethos. Because the language they encounter in FYC writing instruction is so distinctly different from how they talk about their social writing, it is difficult to make connections between the processes that they engage with between the media. Rather than instructing students to create strict ethoi dependent on credibility, authority, and knowledge, FYC instructors could instead help students develop their ethoi based upon *self-presentation*. As Sullivan notes, discourse communities are constructed around doxa (unspoken knowledge), which indicates majority beliefs and views (226). Asking students to join academic communities without granting them the ability or agency to actually join

these communities is an impossible task. Self-presentation offers students a method to construct writerly ethoi for academic writing.

Self-Presentation

FYC textbooks offer students ethos instruction that is suited for argumentative writing or academic genres, and because of this, they often encourage students to position their writing as authoritative. Often students enter FYC classrooms believing academic writing must assume this sort of tone. I am referring to the "tortuous syntax" (467) that David Bartholomae critiques in "Inventing the University" and that makes itself apparent when students attempt to enter academic conversations without really understanding what this entails. Rather than writing with an understanding of academic language, genre, necessary contexts, communal knowledges, etc., Bartholomae concludes that students' writing "becomes more a matter of imitation or parody than a matter of invention and discovery" (461). Bizzell references similar "rhetorical postures" that students make in argumentative writing, including claims of unsupported or non-researched opinions (353). Eubanks and Schaffer describe students' subversion of academic writing in which they do "all that is asked, except to be sincere—about the content of the writing and about his or her presentation of self" (386). The students they reference hold disregard for the truth and are disengaged from learning, whether academically or for self-discovery.

Instead of encouraging students to consider 'academic voice' as depending only and completely on credibility and authority—qualities novice writers in FYC must often mimic or base upon false assumptions—instructors can encourage students to think about how in addition they want to *self-present* in their academic writing. Self-presentation is a method

of constructing an ethos that takes into account the layers of context influencing an ethos, the audience expectations, and media choices. As I have illustrated in previous chapters, to navigate expectations of an audience, an experienced social media writer will rely on presumed context: analyzing media and modes to learn about agreed upon norms of composing within certain contexts and examining how the circulation of a text (to various audiences and contexts) can create expectations for composing, both with form and with content. Similarly, Goffman argues that people interact based upon the norms and expectations of given audiences and situations and that people self-present according to what groups decide for them. It is not enough to present yourself a certain way, Goffman maintains, but to present yourself according to how the group will respond. These expectations are distinct, complex, and cultural from group to group. What presumed context offers Goffman's theory is an additional awareness of how the media is an active constituent in creating the norms and expectations of these communicative situations. As I argue in chapters 2 and 3, because no one can be prepared to communicate with every single audience—sometimes expectations are unclear or unfamiliar—students can turn to media analysis for hints about what is expected. With an awareness of the media, students can recognize how they are situated as writers before they begin to construct an ethos by self-presenting.

Applying Goffman's theory to face-to-face interaction, people rely on cues from each other in order to learn about expectations, like cadences in speech, changes in tone, facial and body gestures, or the performance of certain actions related to specific situations. Goffman gives an example that connects the content of one's speech with their actions: To judge a guest's true feelings, a host does not rely on what the guest says about how

delicious dinner is but will take note of how quickly the guest is eating, how much food is left on the plate, or if they ask for a second serving. When moving online, these interactions become partially constructed through the modes and media with which one writes. Dylan points out,

> [W]e have the 'like' button to replace real-time social-approval-indicators like a look of approval, smile, or applause. Or as another example, we often feel the need to simulate physical interaction in order to indicate sympathy or emotion, like saying '*hugs*' or using emoticons like ':'(' or, more recently, animated gifs.

Not only do ENG 240 students make clear that they often consider the available modes of composing as part of their self-presentation, but they also recognize that the audience influences this construction as well. Consider, for example, how a student might construct their Facebook wall: While a student might carefully manage a Facebook profile in order to portray a certain presentation—a profile picture, bio, and details of an "About" me section—their Facebook friends could share or post something on their wall that adds to or alters the habits of self-presentation that they have previously constructed. Cameron described the notion of self-presentation on Twitter, and his profile is based off of the expectations his audience has of him:

> [O]n Twitter my followers know me as the guy who randomly shares humorous personal moments, sports related content (Brewers, Bucks, Packers), and occasionally moderate political tweets. That is how my followers identify me, and it would be unorthodox if I suddenly used my Twitter in a business-like [fashion].

Alexandra also acknowledged that she consciously self-presents on Tumblr. Her posting on Tumblr is nuanced, shows an awareness of the available modes for communicating, and creates a distinct individual profile. She admitted, "I want people to know my Tumblr URL and recognize me around Tumblr. I want people to associate me with certain things." Alexandra's posts repeatedly center around the same topics: aesthetics, humor, and social justice. Habitual posts related to these topics create her Tumblr profile, what she deliberately calls her "brand," or what Aristotle would refer to as deliberate choices that contribute to how others interpret her character. Alexandra responded to how others write and post on the site and observed how her followers respond to her own writing; she conceded that Tumblr "feels like a big community that I like conforming to." Her presentation of self is therefore reliant on how her followers present themselves and how they expect her to present herself. In this way, it is reciprocal: norms and expectations for posting are created from the presumed context. As Alexandra admitted above, she likes conforming to her Tumblr audience, but she also likes to construct a very distinct ethos that reflects her individual character. Because of this, self-presenting according to her audience's expectations and the context of the site—ways of writing, specific topics to address, and using the available modes—are not seen as constraints.

When shifting into older or more traditional media, however, I find that students have a much more difficult time thinking about the reciprocal relationship among media, audience, and self-presentation. For example, students often write me very strange emails. They are either inappropriately informal, as if Office 365 is an instant message, or they are inappropriately formal, as if students have never met me before. For instance, students who regularly call me "Ash" and make jokes with me in class will address me as "Professor

Evans" in an email and explain every situation in excruciating detail with business language. As Dylan remarked about campus email: "It feels unnatural/jaggedy/something to me, as an interface. I find myself putting off/not at all contacting teachers about things just because I don't feel at home/natural on the campus e-mail." I interpret students' issues with campus email as a problem of ethos: These students struggle with presenting themselves through this media. If students could analyze how the media contributes to their self-presentation, they could also gain awareness about how the modes available provide them agency over unfamiliar or perhaps uncomfortable writing contexts.

Students in ENG 240 were often close to making such connections between content and form on their own, both about social media and academic writing. In a response about the physicality of online writing, Dylan concluded, “Formality and properness are tools used for order and organization, but they are also used for separation.” He argued that the decision to forgo proper grammar, like in online message boards, could purposefully communicate a casual conversation. If Dylan considered this connection while writing an academic essay, I would hope that he would think about what sort of expectations and norms his audience had in addition to what kind of self-presentation he would be offering. If Dylan wanted to communicate casually to an academic audience, I believe he should be allowed to consider that choice—as long as he was able to communicate why such action needed to be taken for his self-presentation, given his audience and context.

As I showed through my analysis of FYC textbook instruction, academic writing can quickly become focused on the content without considering how such content takes shape. For example, when describing his academic writing, Cameron noted, “My style is very professional, I research and cite my sources, and I give plenty of background on whatever it

is I am writing about." Students should also have the ability to articulate why print media allows them to self-present in such a way: What modes in word processing programs, for example, communicate "professional"? Who are students' defined and intended audiences? (And have they performed *academic lurking* to learn about them?) How are texts like this circulated or shared, and what does such information teach students about how they should think about composing? Self-presentation encourages students to construct ethoi that are purposeful and context-dependent, rather than creating ethoi based upon assumptions about genres of writing.

Self-presentation asks students to become aware of their habitual, purposeful acts of writing within media in order to communicate certain impressions to audiences (who then respond). For students to self-present in academic essays, they would want to write with habitual, purposeful choices that suggest ideas about themselves to their audience. Alexandra already knew that writers develop themselves according to their audience: "Depending on who will be watching, looking at, or reading the writers' work, they [writers] will change how they want to present themselves." This FYC version of self-presentation is a different act than merely creating an idea for the audience to believe, however. For instance, many FYC students can perform the act of citing sources, illustrated (for example) by Nigel Harwood and Bojana Petric's study of two graduate student writers who "perform" certain academic moves, like citing large amounts of sources to indicate that they are well-read or to imply rigorous research. The authors reveal that students perform certain tasks, even if they have not fulfilled them to the point of learning, such as citing a book even if they have not read it in its entirety or for comprehension. FYC textbooks similarly connect certain writerly choices, like citing sources, to audience expectations. But

students currently lack a process for developing an ethos that can be responsive to and independent of such audience expectations. The move to cite sources—even if it is a performance and not a sincere demonstration of learning—signals that students are aware that their audiences have expectations. But when students only cater to these expectations, their writerly choices can be purposeless for both themselves and for their audiences. In order for students to understand that certain habits of academic writing have rhetorical purpose—like that using reliable, relevant citations throughout a research essay communicates purposeful context to those who are reading the essay—ethos instruction must provide students with a method for understanding *why* they must make certain writerly choices.

As I said above, students should not create self-presentations that are only fabrications. Instead, students should have the agency to decide for themselves what kind of scholars they want to be, especially because there are many habitual, purposeful choices to be made in writing that communicate ideas to audiences. Self-expression does not always have to equate to *only* trustworthiness; in 21st century writing contexts, there are multiple forms of self-expression, especially given the media available to students. I believe students have the ability to comprehend the rhetorical sophistication of ethos: Students both respond to an audience's expectations and self-present by situating their purpose within the available media and modes.

For an example of how media can be used as self-presentation, consider Alexandra's analysis of the webtext "A Girl Can Dream" by Rebecca Hersher, which (blending voiceovers, music, videos, still images, text, and GIFs) tells the stories of several Afghan girls attending school. Alexandra argued that the rhetorical use of media could be used to

self-present *or* to present the ethos of others; she argued that self-presentation can make academic writing more interesting, since it often is "written out on a piece of paper with a lot of words and minimal imagery."

Figure 6: “A Girl Can Dream” Screen Shot

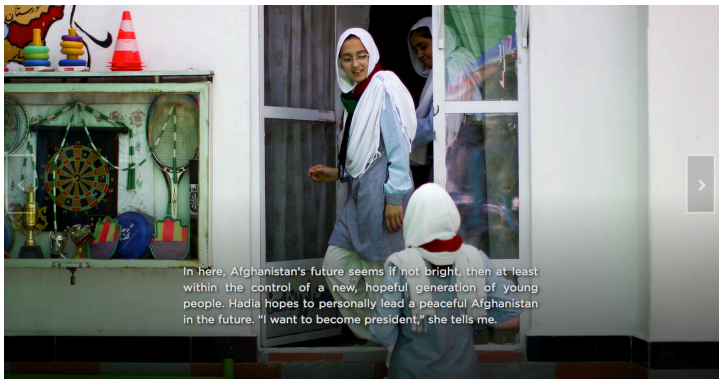

Figure 7: “A Girl Can Dream” Screen Shot with Text

I cite Alexandra’s analysis at length here, because she also discussed how presumed context is part of what makes the ethos presentation possible:

> As the reader clicks through the different photos, Hersher highlights the dreams of these children... The children, most obviously, are having their ethos created through the presentation style Hersher chose. This is due to the fact that it shows a more personal perspective. The reader is actually seeing the

> children, therefore, they become more relatable to the ethos that we see of children anywhere around the globe – which is generally seen as thoughtful, fun, creative, and full of aspirations. To show these children in Afghanistan through photos, videos, and interviews show that they also have this same ethos that are preconceived for children, which tugs at the reader's feelings and sense of familiarity. Imagine if the same children were highlighted in a written article – would it have the same relatable effect on the children's ethos? It most likely would not feel as real or familiar.

Alexandra suggested that the children's ethoi are constructed through the modes of the webtext, which is not a correct understanding of authorial ethos. Alexandra applied her understanding of ethos more effectively, however, when she argued that Hersher uses the media and modes to present the Afghani children according to her own needs and purpose. Alexandra attributed some of the effectiveness of Hersher's webtext to the presumed context of the audience: how the audience might already be positioned to think about young, school-aged children. In the section below, I provide assignments that demonstrate how students can learn about self-presentation as they move from social media writing to academic essays.

Pedagogical Application

These assignments ask students to explore—deeply and critically—the materials and media with which they produce and consume. In her pivotal book, *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, Erika Lindemann uses the phrases "knowing how" and "knowing that" to distinguish between theoretical and practical approaches. Gilbert Ryle describes the

"operations" of life as the "knowing how" while the "truths" that are learned are attributed to "knowing that" (28). Here I also use this distinction to separate activities that help students gain an understanding of *how* self-presentation can be applied along with an understanding *that* this theory can be interpreted very differently depending on the context and media one writes within.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 1

This homework assignment asks students to reflect on how and why they use certain modes on social media, and then moves them toward thinking about how and why certain modes may or may not be employed in their academic essays. This assignment is an opening for students to recognize how media and modes can be employed rhetorically to both construct an ethos and to respond to the requirements of a writing context.

The in-class activity asks students to identify the invitations found on various social media sites, and to analyze how social media users employ these invitations to self-present. The prompt encourages students to perform rhetorical analysis: students will begin to see the *interplay* between the purposeful choices that writers make in conjunction with other rhetorical considerations like audience, context, and media. By focusing on a single writer/user on social media, students are also offered the opportunity to observe writerly habits that contribute to that writer's self-presentation. The homework assignment grows out of this activity, building on the practice students gain in class of observing, analyzing, and reflecting on how invitations are present in different media, this time placing particular focus on academic writing.

ASSIGNMENT 1

Goals and Purpose

This activity asks you to observe, analyze, and reflect on the choices writers make as they self-present: what are the habitual, purposeful choices that a writer makes in response to their audience's expectations and the modes they write with? You will also transition these reflections into academic writing, as you think about why some modes are used in certain contexts and not others.

In-Class Instructions

Step 1

Consider the following questions:

Who do you particularly like following on social media? Choose one user. What do you like about their posts, specifically? If you were going to emulate them, how would you write about and what modes would you include in your posts?

Step 2

Compose a discussion forum post that responds to the following:

1. Briefly describe and summarize the ethos of the user you focused on, including what specific ways—modes, habits of posting, responses to others—that this user self-presents.

2. Explain why you think the author writes this way. This might require you to perform some academic lurking: to spend time within this user's writing, including the ways it manifests as it circulates, to learn how different audiences and contexts might affect the expectations for the way this user must compose. What norms does this user appear to abide by in their writing, and where do those norms seem to have come from?

3. Show, don't tell. Include screen shots, quotations, and descriptions if possible. (Also consider how <u>you</u> can rhetorically use the media and modes of the discussion forum to communicate and self-present!)

Homework Instructions

For this assignment, you will continue the work completed in class today. This time, you will analyze and reflect on your own social media self-presentation. In the chart below, you are asked to identify what modes you use in your social media writing, why you use those modes, and who or what invites you to use those modes, and how those modes might manifest in academic writing. There are no right or wrong answers to the modes you supply in the chart! Instead, you are only required to think critically and rhetorically about your writing. A sample is provided for you.

Modes you use on social media to self-present	What using this mode suggests … according to what expectations	If you used this mode in academic writing it would suggest _____ because…
Emojis on Twitter	That you are conveying emotion or a physical gesture, often without the use of words (i.e. more informal communication of emotion) …my followers often use emojis as reflective statements in the tweet, like a sarcastic remark or to clarify the content of their message, so emojis are expected to be used this way, rather than just stand alone (like in texts)	You love Microsoft Word clip art? Because there's generally enough space to write out an emotional feeling. Similarly, including a 'gesture' isn't really academic style because gestures are more socially related, like to convey sarcasm or laughter (tone shifts which aren't often in methodological essays)

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 2

This activity continues to promote students' developing awareness of media and modes as they move toward articulating a reflective, discursive understanding of how and why modes are used on social media and in academic writing. This assignment grows out of a need for students to practice identifying expectations for composing: students are given an opportunity to gain awareness about how they might analyze the norms of a writing context, a particular media, or a certain audience. Through this practice, students will begin to see how self-presentation is tangled in various rhetorical considerations—and that ethos is not only an individual desire to self-present, but also a response to various rhetorical expectations.

The in-class assignment is a loose prompt meant to stimulate discussion among students; they can call upon their writing from Assignment 1 or instructors can use students' homework responses as examples to spur discussion. The assignment extends students learning from Assignment 1 and the in-class activity to present the complexity of self-presentation, particularly in terms of context and circulation. The homework assignment calls upon FYC textbook instruction that closely connects ethos with citation practices and credibility. Rather than instructing students that their academic ethoi must be credible through citations, this activity is provided in order to guide them to more complex conclusions about self-presentation. By employing *academic lurking*, students can analyze how circulation affects the perception of their writing, which in turn requires them to (re)consider how they employ the media and modes. Ultimately, this assignment is meant to complicate self-presentation for students by reminding them that ethos is constructed through actions and reactions among several constituents. This homework

assignment can also be revised so that students focus on a specific form of self-presentation: what does humor sound/look like in each of these media? What does 'professional' sound/look like in each of these media?

ASSIGNMENT 2

Goals and Purpose

This activity invites you to reflect on your previous homework assignment as you continue to analyze how media and modes contribute to self-presentation in multiple contexts. The goal of this assignment is think about the interplay among rhetorical considerations like audience, context, media, and ethos.

In-Class Instructions

Step 1

In your groups, choose one mode of a social media site and explain what it indicates about a user's self-presentation. Include a variety of examples to support your understanding of this mode, and make sure to explain each example.

Step 2

Next, choose one mode that is employed in academic writing and explain how it allows a writer to develop a self-presentation. Include a variety of examples from your own academic writing to support your discussion of this mode, and make sure to explain each example.

Step 3

Finally, think about these modes in relation to each other. Would you ever employ the social media mode in your academic writing to self-present? What about using the academic writing mode in a social media post? Discuss in what contexts—if any—or for what audiences you would consider using such modes.

Homework Instructions

Pick three different media that you write in regularly. (For example, I might choose Office 365, a scholarly essay, and Twitter.) Answer the following questions about each media you chose, using examples, screen captures, or direct quotations to support your discussion:

1) What does a 'citation' look like in this medium? A citation is a reference or quote from another text.
2) When do you include citations in this medium? How do you know that a citation is warranted?
3) How do you think the expectations of citations developed this way for this medium?
4) What kinds of context do you post with these citations? Is there certain contextual information required or do you have to include additional information with these citations?
5) What happens when you can't cite in this medium, whether because of medium constraints or because of content restraints? (For example, you know there are about 30 articles and books on your paper topic, and you also know you won't have time to read all of them. You also know there's not space in your 7-page paper to cite all of them any way. What do you do?)

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 3

In this assignment, students will apply what they have learned about self-presentation in a variety of media. Students are provided a prompt and are required to perform complex rhetorical tasks—considering media and modes, audiences, and contexts—as they decide how to self-present for each instance. This assignment invites purpose into students' awareness of self-presentation. One goal of this assignment is to help students observe how a purpose for writing might need to shift when various rhetorical expectations of writing shift. For example, students might observe that they self-present differently on Facebook than they do in a composition essay; at the same time, they might learn that they can use similar elements of self-presentation for writing on Facebook as they do in a public service campaign. My hope is that students will recognize why these commonalities, overlaps, or distinctions exist, given the interplay of context, audience, and medium—a rhetorical awareness that they have been building since Assignment 1.

To strengthen this activity, instructors can alter the prompt so that it relates to students' own research projects. For example, as I discuss in the "Expanding Purpose" section of chapter 5, students should be provided opportunities for engagements in their assignments. Instead of creating artificial prompts (like this assignment), students could write their own prompt, such as an abstract of their research proposal. The media categories for this assignment could be the sites of engagement they intend for composing, and then the assignment could be used to articulate how students want to self-present.

ASSIGNMENT 3

Goals and Purpose

In this activity, you will apply what you've learned about ethos and self-presentation in multiple media to a variety of audiences. You are asked to compose and reflect on your hypothetical composing decisions. The goal of this assignment is to help you think through a process of self-presentation, including what media must be analyzed or what rhetorical expectations must be taken into account before you begin composing.

In-Class Instructions

In your pods/groups, discuss the following prompt. Each student should write their own responses, to be turned in at the end of class:

You recently attended a major music festival in the foothills of the Oregon Cascade Mountains. Over the course of three days, you met a community of artists, promoters, and activists who share the same musical vision as you. The festival profoundly affected you, so much that you want to change your major to Music Business/Management.

Like most news-worthy life events, you want to share this experience with others. This is the start of a new stage in your life, so think about how you want to construct your ethos and what modes you might use to self-present, given the following contexts and media:

1. Twitter
2. Facebook
3. Email to a family member
4. Your academic advisor
5. Text message to your best friend
6. Exploratory research essay for composition class
7. A public awareness campaign

For each bullet point above, create and/or describe the text you would create to share your experience at the music festival. Describe the modes that you would employ to self-present and how you believe those modes would help to develop your ethos. You will need to describe the expectations of the audience(s) that you are responding to, as well as the presumed context your text is situated within.

Homework Instructions

Your homework is a variation of the prompt you completed in class today. Now you should consider how your responses would shift, given the different context and purpose. For this assignment, think about how you want to self-present in each of the media listed. This assignment requires you to think deeply and rhetorically about audience, context, media, and ethos.

Prompt

You recently attended a major music festival in the foothills of the Oregon Cascade Mountains for the second year in a row.

This year your experience was a bit different: you're the manager of the band *So-Called Autocorrect* who played on a small stage right before the headline act. After talking to several other band managers, you realized that there is a pay disparity between all-female performers (like yours) and male performers. Your band tells you to leave the issue alone, so that they aren't ostracized in the music scene, but you can't let this issue slide.

Like most news-worthy life events, you want to share this experience with others. Think about how your role as a Music Business/Management major and *So-Called AutoCorrect*'s manager might influence what sort of modes you might use to self-present within the following contexts and media:

1. Twitter
2. Facebook
3. Email to a family member
4. Your academic advisor
5. Text message to your best friend
6. Exploratory research essay for composition class
7. A public awareness campaign

For each bullet point above, create and/or describe the text you would create to share what you discovered at the music festival. Describe the modes that you would employ to self-present and how you believe they would affect or develop your ethos. You will need to describe how the expectations of the audience(s) affect your texts, as well as the presumed context your text is situated within.

Chapter 5: Purpose

"The way in which I use Facebook allows me to empower myself, and others while also supporting different fights around the world." -Maya

"Last semester I wrote a research paper that addressed the economic inequality between men and women, because the class did a piss poor job of it and took a very uneducated and patriarchal stance during the short class discussion. I wrote a paper, but the value of it, in the long run, had very little effect. I did not get much of a chance to argue my points in the class discussion, nor had any opportunity for dialog." - Maya

In this chapter, I offer students opportunities to enact the expanded rhetorical definitions offered in the previous chapters. In order for students to approach academic writing with a rhetorical awareness of media, I argue that they deserve authentic engagement when writing in the FYC classroom; for this engagement to occur, instructors must provide students with the kinds of affirmations (a comment, like, share, retweet, or favorite) that propel them to write, share, and gain agency on social media.[19] This chapter highlights the thinking and writing of Maya and her passion for writing on social media, and I show how this passion is often connected to affirmations that allow her to continually post well-received messages and engage in dialogue. Yet Maya claimed that she writes

[19] In her final reflection for class, ENG 240 student Maya discussed multiple ways that university instructors could help students develop stakes in their writing. She described her favorite assignment: a reading assignment that required students to "follow up [with] something new from outside of class." It is from Maya's discussion of this assignment that I define "authentic engagement." Instructors can provide students with opportunities for authentic engagement by helping them develop personal stakes in their writing and finding a purpose for that writing outside of the academic classroom.

without the same sense of fulfillment in academic writing because it is not well-received and because there is no sense of external stakes attached to it. To illustrate how students can analyze the personal and external stakes in their academic writing through engagement and affirmations, I argue that FYC instruction about purpose must move away from teaching only a "thesis statement" with "exigence." I examine how limiting FYC textbooks can be if they treat purpose as a uniting the theme of an essay (thesis statement, purpose statement, a product to be achieved) rather than rhetorically salient purposes reliant on dialogic engagement. Through such engagement, students can achieve the complexity of critical thought and scholarly engagement that comprises many FYC and academic essay assignments. At the end of the chapter, I demonstrate how engagement and affirmations can be employed in the FYC classroom to help students regard purpose development as a process rather than as a product. Before examining scholarship and textbook instruction, I begin with a brief anecdote to describe one reason why students' value their writing on social media, particularly in terms of purpose.

Discussions about purpose in Section 1 began with "Meme of the Day," an exercise where I presented students with a video, multimodal text, or social media post that had recently been circulating around the internet. The students viewed the (oft-familiar) Meme of the Day, and then I asked, "Why does this exist?" I showed students memes like "Spider Dog," a series of video clips where a dog dressed in a spider outfit would frighten people who entered elevators, or a picture of "the dress," a highly debatable and massively viral picture of a dress that some people saw as blue and black and others saw as white and gold. Students' initial reactions to these memes were simple: "It's funny" or "Young people like talking about this stuff." As time went on in the course—and as students gained language to

discuss concepts like audience, context, media, and modes—students' explanations became more thorough. Suddenly, Harry Potter cosplay videos remixed to Billboard Chart number one songs made more sense. Suddenly, political tweets referencing early 2000s TV show characters became more obvious. The class had a steep learning curve: They discussed the layers of context required to find a video amusing; they referenced contemporary events and how they affected understanding; they discussed circulation; they eventually referenced scholarly theories of virality; etc.

Meanwhile, students were also performing weekly analyses and reflections about their personal social media writing, and I observed clear differences between the Meme of the Day examples and the examples that students provided of their own writing. Students did not compose on Twitter or Facebook or Tumblr in order to 'go viral.' Memes were something they shared as a way to contribute to their self-presentation, but memes did not make up a majority of students' online profiles. Instead, students articulated a desire to satisfy their audiences. For example, Addy explained, "Sometimes, I want to make my friends laugh. Sometimes I want to make them understand why I care about a cause and to join in on it." I quickly realized that students might not mind having their post go viral, but they more often articulated desires to create appropriate content for each site, given their audiences.

Meme of the Day continued in Section 2, but I used it mostly for students to observe and analyze rhetorical concepts related to media, audience, purpose, and context. I still wanted to answer my initial question: if students do not compose on social media in order for viral fame, what is their purpose for composing messages on sites like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram? It was only through asking students to reflect on their academic

writing in Section 2 that I was able to glean the purpose for many students' social media writing: Posts are meant to gather affirmations, and this allows students to know if they are situated as a relevant, contributing member within a given social media community. I also quickly learned that affirmations are not superficial; instead, students regard them as ways to explain that they 'agree,' 'appreciate,' 'hear,' or 'understand' what another user has posted. In academic writing, however, students explained purpose much more traditionally: it is the thesis statement of an essay. There was little discussion about what the thesis statement might entail (i.e. the reason for writing, the end goal, the genre, or the process of composing). Once students began analyzing their purposes for writing in university courses, it became clear that their academic writing lost the dialogic interaction that made their social media writing so gratifying.

In this chapter, I spend time reflecting on and responding to these complications of purpose. I call upon the observations and analyses of ENG 240 students' social media writing to demonstrate how they construct rhetorically salient purposes by analyzing how their purposes for writing are situated within the site's audience and context. The reflections of one student in particular, Maya, leads me to argue that FYC assignments should provide students with better opportunities to engage with authentic rhetorical situations and to receive affirmations to adjust their purposes accordingly. Maya discusses her desire for her writing to be "liked," both in academia and on social media, but she also makes clear that thoughtful, thorough dialogue is just as important for her learning. Social media writing and academic writing do not provide the same experience for students, but through engagement and affirmations, I believe that students can begin learning habits of

scholars—careful analysis, critical thinking, and thoughtful response—that they will find useful in their daily, social writing contexts.

What Theory Can Contribute to Students' Understanding

Previous rhetorical theory has been less concerned with how students form purposes for writing and more conceptually focused on how and why rhetors have purposes for communicating in the first place. The scholars I discuss in this section explore contributions to the communicative act and the formation of purpose; beginning with Lloyd Bitzer's work in 1968, the "rhetorical situation" has concerned scholars as they debated how speaker/rhetor, audience, and subject influenced one another. In this section, I briefly revive these arguments so that I can explore how such theories influence FYC textbook pedagogies in the next section; many scholars before me have given attention to these texts, so I will not spend time discussing their theories in great length. Instead, I will highlight how (or to whom) these scholars assign agency in their rhetorical situations, and I will examine which, if any, of these theories infiltrate FYC textbook instruction. Next, I include theories from Mikhail Bakhtin to present what I see as an important connection between rhetorical situation arguments and FYC textbook instruction.

In his foundational text on the rhetorical situation, Bitzer argues that, "rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to situation" (5). Just because a speech has a certain genre of discourse (like a deliberative speech, for example) or might have a "rhetorical method and discourse" does not make it part of a rhetorical situation (2). A rhetorical situation must invite discourse that leads to change. An exigence calls the writing into being, as it is "an imperfection marked by urgency," "something waiting to be done," or

a requirement of the moment (6). Bitzer believes that a rhetorical situation is comprised of an exigence, an audience, and constraints; audiences are influenced to change or act, but constraints can effect the situation or exigence. Bitzer argues, "The clearest instances of rhetorical speaking and writing are strongly invited—often required" (8). In this theory, rhetorical situations come into being and the rhetor acts upon them through discourse.

Arthur Miller complicates Bitzer's theory by arguing that exigence is "perceived," and any given situation can have multiple outcomes (112). Miller reasons that the speaker will have her own set of constraints and gives the audience some say in the situation: They too will have their own set of constraints. Because both set of constraints affect how the exigence is perceived, Miller argues, "The rhetor must know the constraints of his hearers before he exercises any option in attempting to harmonize his and the hearers' constraints" (118). Without this awareness, they are operating under different rhetorical situations.

Thus, Richard Vatz takes the complication of exigence in rhetorical situations and prescribes greater agency back to the rhetor. He argues that rhetorical situations do not exist with inherent meaning, but that rhetors assign them meaning and give them importance (157). Vatz reasons, "The very choice of what facts or events are relevant is a matter of pure arbitration. Once the choice is communicated, the event is imbued with *salience*" (157, original italics). Vatz argues that salience can even be created by the use of an "evocative term" (160). This gives the rhetor agency and responsibility as a communicator because the rhetor "must assume responsibility for the salience he has *created*" (158). Vatz's argument veers dangerously close to confirming Bitzer's when he argues that, "choices will be seen as purposeful acts for discernible reasons. They are *decisions* to make salient or not" (158). Just as Bitzer believes, there are certain moments

that an effective rhetor will want to act upon, whether one refers to as exigence or as a moment for purposeful communication.

Next in the conversation are scholars who (re)assign importance to the audience in the rhetorical situation. Barbara Biesecker regards audiences as unstable and believes that they have the ability to form new identities. Her issue with previous rhetorical situation scholarship is that, "in most cases, audience is simply named, identified as the target of discursive practice, and then dropped" (122). Biesecker employs Jacques Derrida's *différance*, which suggests identities are continually shifting—an effect of *différance*—which means that subjectivity is also shifting and gaining meaning (125). Biesecker argues that through *différance*, "we would see the rhetorical situation as an event that makes possible the production of identities and social relations" (126). While Bitzer and Vatz make the rhetorical situation seem like it is a singular event (despite Bitzer's claim that constraints exist and can affect the situation), Biesecker's theory complicates this by arguing that a situation can take numerous forms, like Miller's.

To continue the decentering of the rhetor in the rhetorical situation, Mary Garret and Xiaosui Xiao argue that the audience deeply influences the rhetorical exigence, constraints of a situation, and the rhetor herself. In their research on the Opium Wars, the authors cite Biesecker's influence, which can be heard in their own arguments: "[T]he rhetorical situation is an ever-changing spiral of interactions among entities and groups which shift roles and shape each other even when in opposition" (39). Garret and Xiao remove some of the agency that Vatz assigned to the rhetor:

> It is true that those within a discourse tradition may well **feel** the freedom Vatz attributes to rhetors to characterize a situation at will, to 'make salient' what,

> when, and as they please. But we would argue that this freedom is inherently limited, that no rhetor can completely break free of the fundamental values and presuppositions of his or her discourse community and tradition (38, original emphasis).

Thus, rhetors must be aware of the expectations and ways of communicating that control or limit the situation. And because such expectations can shift and change with time, Garret and Xiao argue that scholars and theory should be "placing much greater stress on the interactive, organic nature of the rhetorical situation" (31).

Identifying an exigence matters in the sense that where, how, and why texts are created is important for students' understanding; but texts, when circulated and inserted into different contexts, can be understood differently by audiences and contribute to new exigencies. This is, for instance, how scholars continually (re)interpret theory as they apply it to new situations and within new contexts. Literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin would argue there is no single meaning, author, or moment that calls discourse into being because he believes that every "speaker is a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. He is not, after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe" (69). Bakhtin can productively extend Garret and Xiao's call to treat rhetorical situations as "interactive and organic." To Bakhtin, all texts or situations are continuously unfolding; every interaction with an active listener means a response will occur and behavior will be affected. Bakhtin does not mean that—every time someone actively listens to what another says—the listener will blindly believe or act according to the speaker's words. Instead, he believes that no interaction goes without leaving a mark: "Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (69). If language and meaning do build with

every interaction, then writers must be aware of how they are already situated before they begin and how their purpose contributes to ongoing, continually shifting contexts.

Scholarship about the rhetorical situation evolves over time to establish constituents that influence each other: Audiences, speakers/writers, and exigencies have a reciprocal responsibility in forming and affecting communicative acts. Similarly, all interaction is dialogic for Bakhtin. He argues, "No one utterance can be either the first or the last. Each is only a link in the chain, and none can be studied outside this chain" (136). Meaning, therefore, must be understood from what came before, just as one's words will affect what is produced after. Bakhtin continues, "I live in a world of others' words. And my entire life is an orientation in this world, a reaction to others' word" (143). To live in such a world means to be exposed to speech and culture, to be constantly influenced by others in various contexts. This way of communication is not momentary—parsed together by singular situations of exigency—but an ongoing experience that requires one to be continually present, aware, and active. I once asked students if they were constantly being persuasive in their daily lives. One student immediately fired back, "Well, are we constantly being rhetorical in our daily lives?" Bakhtin's theory provides reason to argue that a communicator who is aware and responsive to how they are composing (and, more importantly, why they are composing that way) is always rhetorical.

Bakhtin reasons that we copy what we hear, and that our language mirrors what we experience (78). As Bakhtin notes, "Even understanding itself is dialogic" (121). Students in ENG 240 quickly observed that their writing in a variety of contexts was influenced by many outside factors, such as their audiences or the media and modes. Students realized that they often construct reactive and communal purposes rather than individualistic and

finalized posts. Students can learn to imbue their academic writing with this same kind of rhetorical awareness they have on social media (i.e. aware of audiences, contexts, and media) that leads to reactions from their audiences through affirmations, dialogue, and shares. But when it is difficult for them to find purposes for writing that are fulfilling it can render the rhetorical situation inauthentic or forced. Students must be provided with writing assignments that allow them to understand how their writing is a response within many ongoing constituents: audiences, contexts, exigencies, and media. In the next section, I examine how FYC textbook pedagogies offer instruction (or struggle to offer instruction) for students to find meaningful purposes for writing. I highlight the textbooks' inclusion of the rhetorical situation, finding that authors frequently use metaphors of "entering the conversation" to help students think complexly about the rhetorical requirements of creating a purpose. I finish by examining the use of thesis and purpose statements as a means to achieve such a complex purpose.

What Textbook Instruction Offers (Or Doesn't Offer) For Students

As ENG 240 students cited in previous chapters have made clear, their writing experiences on social media can be drastically different than their experiences in academic classrooms. Constraints found in FYC—including the lack of feedback from students' audiences, long periods of drafting and revising, impartiality or disengagement with their writing, and a looming grade—all contribute to students' writing experiences in the classroom. Unlike their social writing online, what students frequently lack in the writing classroom are authentic exigencies for communication. As my analysis of FYC textbooks reveals, not one rhetorical situation explicitly states the word "exigence." Despite this shift

from the field's rhetorical theory, the textbook instruction still moves students toward developing a purpose through the act of joining ongoing dialogues. Students are encouraged to engage with scholars and audiences through interactive process of reading, thinking, and writing. Once students consider the multitude of voices to respond to, they are then asked to focus on implementing their own motivation for writing. This motivation for writing often appears as a thesis statement or as a clear manifestation of the essay genre or essay prompt.

FYC textbooks' notion of the rhetorical situation has expanded since the rhetorical situation debates referenced above; in fact, most of the rhetorical situations found in the textbooks include at least a handful of constituents for students to be aware of as they compose: genre, audience, context, purpose, medium/design, stance, or topic. Although "exigence" is not explicitly present in the rhetorical situations of these textbooks, the theory behind the concept is: Textbook authors translate the concept when they instruct students to 'enter the conversation.' For instance, in *Everyone's an Author*, Andrea Lunsford et al. do not use "exigence," but they use the same language of Bitzer in a section titled "Put in your Oar." Referring to Burke's parlor metaphor, Lunsford et al. inform students that, "rhetorical thinking involves certain habits of mind that can and should lead to something—often to an action, to making something happen" (16).[20] Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper in *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* use similar language: "You write to influence how your readers think and feel about a subject and, depending on the genre, perhaps also to inspire them to action" (2). This is how I perceive textbook instruction simplifying the complicated notion of exigence: it becomes putting in an oar—entering a

[20] I discuss Kenneth Burke's parlor metaphor in more depth in the textbook section of Chapter 2.

conversation—as an awareness of and reaction to situations that occur, and students are taught to respond thoughtfully and rhetorically.

As I similarly discuss in the previous chapters, many of the FYC textbooks analyzed share a common metaphor of "entering the conversation" in their writing instruction. Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst in *They Say / I Say* explain, "In our experience, students best discover what they want to say not by thinking about a subject in an isolation booth, but by reading texts, listening closely to what other writers say, and looking for an opening through which they can enter the conversation" (xxii). When students enter an ongoing conversation, they must take into account the context and multitude of stances surrounding their topic. Lunsford et al. suggest a similar process: "Thinking rhetorically begins with listening, with being willing to hear the words of others in an open and understanding way. It means paying attention to what others say before and even *as a way* of making your own contributions to a conversation" (8, original italics). These instructions from Graff et al. and Lunsford et al. encourage students to 'listen' to others in theory, but in practice this means reading carefully, thinking critically about others' ideas, and thoughtfully responding through writing. The metaphor of entering a conversation provides action and interaction in the writing process, as students are encouraged to think about engaging with their audiences.

While some textbooks try to present purpose creation as an organic process, other textbooks directly address how FYC classroom limitations might affect students' thinking. For Graff et al., a student's purpose for writing develops once they have grasped the context that surrounds a topic; students gain an exigence for writing as they find a place in the ongoing conversation to situate their own ideas. Teaching purpose this way assumes that

students will acquire the habits of successful academic scholars: writing for others who are studying the same topic, so that the 'conversation' is truly an ongoing dialogue. Other textbook authors are more forthcoming about the reality that not all students in FYC have immediate desires to situate themselves as scholars (and those who do are only novices at the process) and that they are writing with a grade at stake. Several textbooks make transparent that one reason students write in the first place is because they have been assigned an essay by their instructor. Lunsford et al. write, "As a student, you'll sometimes be assigned to write a position paper on a particular topic; in those cases, you may have to find ways to make the topic interesting for you, as the writer, although you can assume the topic matters to the person who assigned it." In *Writing Today*, Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine make clear, "Your purpose is what you want to accomplish" (14). But they are also quick to inform students, "Your professor may have already identified a purpose for your paper in the assignment, so check there first" (14). In *The Norton* textbook, Richard Bullock et al. first inform students to respond to rhetorical considerations, but they make sure to remind students their purpose formation is part of an assignment:

> When you get an assignment or see a need to write, ask yourself what the primary purpose of the writing task is: to entertain? to inform? to persuade? to demonstrate your knowledge or your writing ability? What are your own goals? What are your audience's expectations, and do they affect the way you define your purpose? (56).

In a chapter about the writing process later in the textbook, Bullock et al. remind students again, "If you're writing for an assignment, what are the requirements of the assignment, and does your draft meet those requirements?" (302). These texts directly address how

complicated purpose becomes in the FYC classroom because students must consider much more than their own ideas; not only are they considering the thoughts and ideas of others and situating their ideas within contexts for those audiences, but they also have to consider how to write within assignment constraints and for another audience: the instructor.

Forming a rhetorical purpose requires students to think about complex abstractions like audience and context, and FYC textbook instruction does not shy away from informing students of what they should be thinking about during the composing process. This includes forming a purpose from their own goals or motivation, thinking about the assignment or instructor's expectations, the genre requirements, and media decisions. After students have a grasp on the context they plan to 'enter,' students then move into thinking about what they want to say. The textbooks take differing approaches, but all of them slowly move students back to thinking about where they stand within the 'conversation.' Lunsford et al. invite students to think about their motivation and goals for composing; even if their motivation is merely to complete an assignment, they still might have goals to accomplish within the task, like persuading an audience (23). Bullock et al. offer similar instruction, but advise students to focus on only one task. In open-ended assignments, Johnson-Sheehan and Paine have students start with personal purposes: "[A]sk yourself what you believe and what you would like to prove about your topic" (14). Graff et al. continue to remind students that if an "argument doesn't identify with the 'they say' that you're responding to, it probably won't make sense" (4). Because one characteristic of most writing includes clear communication, it is no surprise that all of the textbook authors have students focus on a singular task when it comes time to actually form a purpose in writing.

It would be an immense writing task to reconcile all of the elements of purpose listed above—personal motivations, assignment requirements, rhetorical considerations, genre and medium expectations—and thus often students are instead instructed to write thesis statements or purpose statements. The textbooks analyzed give varied reasons for including thesis statements in an assignment, which perhaps reflects the extent of what students are asked to do in their writing. Graff et al. claim that the templates in *They Say / I Say* are useful for both students "who are unsure about what to say" and for students who compose with "ill-considered, subjective opinions" (xxvi). Bullock et al. explain to students, "Even though our purposes may be many, knowing our primary reason for writing can help us shape that writing and understand how to proceed with it" (56). Axelrod and Cooper similarly instruct students to focus on "the most important general idea" (546) in their writing or "the main point of any argument" they make (608); this focus is meant to guide the readers through the writing. Instruction that asks students to form a single statement or purpose that focuses on one main idea assumes that students will keep in mind previous texts and contexts that they have encountered, so that their thesis or purpose will "enter the conversation." Lunsford et al. discuss the difficulty of doing this with students, and they do not shy away from stating how much effort students must put into forming a thesis or purpose:

> Remember that persuasion is always about connecting with an audience, meeting them where they are, and helping them see why your position is one they should take seriously or even adopt. To achieve that goal, you have to convey your position in a medium your audience will be receptive to—and can access. Different media serve different purposes, and you will want to consider

your own goals as well as your audience's expectations" (119).

This instruction points out the layers required in composing a purpose; in these three sentences, Lunsford et al. communicate to students that it takes quite a bit of rhetorical, comprehensive thinking. Because there is little instruction that moves students through this messiness beyond generative questions, it is assumed that instructors will address these concepts in the classroom.

These texts suggest that students will have purposes for writing in mind before they begin thinking about genre or medium (a notion which I have tried to complicate in the previous chapters of this project). As Lunsford et al. hint at above, some textbook authors provide students with generative questions about how genre and media affect what should be said or what can be done in a text. Several texts offer suggestions for students to connect their purpose for writing with the genre or media they choose. Axelrod and Cooper ask students to think about context and audience when thinking about their purpose and that those decisions will influence design choices. They explain, "design does far more than add visual interest: It actually directs how we read and, to a certain extent, determines the meaning we derive from texts" (641). Bullock et al. state similar instruction and remind students that design and medium work in tandem, and a medium must function to communicate a purpose effectively. However, instruction about medium or design is often found as the last consideration of the rhetorical situation or as a chapter late in the textbooks, after the academic-focused genres have been discussed.

The instruction found in textbooks examined above provides students with a rhetorical understanding of how a writer's purpose must be responsive to an audience, certain contexts, and genre or media expectations. The textbook authors aim for students

to identify exigencies for writing—to respond rhetorically to ongoing conversations—and to construct their own salient purposes for writing at the same time. But the instruction for actually forming such purposes remains vague. Other than *They Say / I Say*, which provides actual templates for students to respond in a certain format, the rest of the textbooks leave students with generalized notion of an essay's purpose; students are often led to form a statement around a main idea, and this is offered as advice that to fulfill the assignment (but not necessarily the rhetorical situation). Treating purpose as only a thesis or purpose statement seems to negate the movement to 'enter the conversations' and to approach writing as a carefully situated act among others and the media.

In the section below, I discuss the constraints of a writing classroom and how inadequate instruction regarding purpose can create frustration for students. I highlight the thinking and writing of Maya, who reflected on her experiences forming various purposes over multiple media in and out of the university. I examine how social media allows for dialogic engagement that is currently not found in FYC theory or textbook pedagogies. By integrating the way students' interact on social media into the process of teaching purpose, I argue that we can reconcile pedagogical aims with classroom constraints.

Expanding Purpose

FYC textbook instruction about purpose hovers among rhetorical situation theories: The authors want students to respond to ongoing conversations, but they also want students to develop ideas that spur discussion and response. The limits of this instruction have little to do with students' ability to achieve complex purposes—students can both

respond to multiple constituents and create salient purposes in a single essay—and more to do with how current theory and instruction neglects the other possibilities for helping students form purposes.

The previous chapters of this project demonstrate that students' writing on social media is an intricate rhetorical process requiring awareness of others, media influences, and context. Certain modes found on social media sites, like shares, affirmations, and comments, allow students to understand how their posts are received. Students can then implement this feedback (or lack thereof) to adjust how they are posting. It is through the rapidity of posting and responses, the continual feedback from others, and the way their posts circulate that students learn which posts are effective and how to adjust the way they compose on each social site. For instance, ENG 240 student Maya reported thinking about multiple audiences (her *audience defined* and *audience intended*) when posting on Facebook:

> When I am writing or sharing content on social media I am targeting two different audiences. When I post political stuff I am posting for both those who have similar views as I do so that I can educate and distribute information as well as those who don't agree with my views as I am trying to provide them with a different viewpoint and persuade them to see things policies, debates etc. in a different light.

The way audiences respond to posts (affirmations and dialogue) informed the way Maya developed her purpose. Inherent to Maya's posting on Facebook is dialogic engagement; she later reflected that political or activist posts are meant to "cultivate dialogue" rather than simply receive likes.

On social media, an effective purpose is not solely content-based; instead a purpose takes into account how the media is an important constituent in the dialogic exchange. In this section, I include Maya's reflections about social media and academic writing to support my argument that FYC instruction should integrate a rhetorical use of various media to inform how students form purposes during the writing process. Students can use their awareness of media and modes to understand how they are situated before they begin writing, and they can more effectively situate their purpose given those considerations. For instance, I suggest *engagements* to offer students tangible outlets for scholarly engagement, in and out of the classroom. To turn purpose development into an active process of reading, thinking, and writing, I suggest *affirmations*. Affirmations expand students' rhetorical awareness as they address reactive audiences and a variety of rhetorical situations and they grant students agency as they engage in rapid dialogic exchanges. Ultimately, I argue that FYC instruction can expand the way students understand writing for all contexts by helping students gain a process for situating a rhetorically salient purpose given the context and audience(s).

Engagement

From my observation of Maya in ENG 240 over the course of the semester, I learned that she had a general sense of disillusionment with academia—she regularly noted that writing about her interests and passions in coursework seemed fruitless. To describe how she felt about academic writing she said, "We are basically writing a long thought-out post with your opinions and facts to back them up just to have a teacher read it and grade it." In contrast to that apparent disappointment, the descriptions of her Facebook presence were detailed and they demonstrated careful construction of a nuanced ethos; on Facebook,

Maya reports finding a responsive audience for both her emotional needs and her activist passions. As I discuss below, instructors often hold the power over students' ability to construct the same kinds of salient purposes in their academic writing. Maya's reflections of her university writing and her social media writing establish the critical role that instructors hold when creating in-class activities, lessons, and assignments. In the previous chapters of this project, I argue that students can apply their awareness of medium, context, audience, and ethos from social media to their academic writing. But in order to do this, students need to be able to effectively engage with assignments in the classroom. Creating a discursive rhetorical awareness of their social media writing is only useful if students feel that they are also provided with opportunities to develop writerly agency in their academic work.

On social media, students construct purposes that take into account their motivation for writing while simultaneously considering how that purpose has been situated and shaped by their audience, their context, and the medium they are composing with. But in the university classroom, students like Maya feel that their purpose for writing is much less complex because the instructor controls the media that is chosen and taught. The loss of agency—the purposeful awareness that accompanies each decision of composing—can render media choices as un-rhetorical or transparent. As Maya argued, "How something is written is just as important as what is written. Text provides a reference point for a piece of work, it provides a tone, a feeling, an attitude, a theme, even a time and place."

To build on their awareness of media in the classroom, instructors should create assignments for students that address what media students will be writing with: why a certain medium is required, how media invite users to compose, and acknowledging the

interplay of media and rhetorical considerations of writing, like audience and ethos. Discussing media as a fundamental aspect of a student's purpose for writing transforms the concept of purpose from a content-based focused (a thesis statement, for instance) and to a discussion about the decisions that motivate how people communicate (thinking about how a message is received based upon rhetorical constituents). If instructors do not help students think through these factors of composing, then assignments suggest certain assumptions about writing. I believe this is why many of the ENG 240 students had such initial difficulty analyzing texts written in Microsoft Word: They had never been asked to think about the materials they wrote with for school, nor had they ever thought about questioning why they were asked to write in Times New Roman 12-point font. When Maya was asked to think about her academic writing, she questioned, "We give more validation to some modes of expression then we do others, i.e. black Times New Roman text... But why is this?" Her answer for such a quandary included "social conditioning of power and privilege" and "schooling mechanisms." Obviously not all students think like Maya and are able to articulate how history, political, and social influences can constrain or control how we communicate. But I think a lot of students are aware that someone in power is making decisions about their writing choices, as evidenced by the group of students who believed "the government" was in charge of Microsoft Word. Maya also suggested that students are taught that, "there is only one correct answer." She argued, "[I]f you create the curriculum and teach in this manner you can choose what the one correct answer is and that one answer will often be the answer that reinforces the current power dynamic." It seems crucial that students gain the ability to observe, analyze, and gain agency over the media they write with in the university—just as they have the ability to do with their social media

writing. Awareness of why students write a certain way in a certain medium creates better rhetoricans; students will gain more complete awareness of the expectations of the medium, how the audience is situated in the medium, and how they can effectively communicate given their own purpose.

If the first step for instructors is to create assignments that invite students to think about how they compose, the second step is to make sure students also have a reason for writing—to connect the 'how' of composing with the 'why' of composing. For the final project, Maya and four other classmates argued for more rhetorically significant writing assignments in university courses. In Maya's final reflection, she said, "One of my favorite lines that I wrote in the paper was that 'a prompt is not a purpose.' A prompt gives you a what but not a why… [T]eachers aren't giving their students a why other then the implied to get a good grade." Maya similarly opened her group's final paper by posing the question, "[H]ow often do teachers give students an assignment other than to just make sure they have an understanding of the curriculum?" Maya and her group made clear their frustrations about university assignments that seem written solely for the instructor: It is not that they disliked the amount of effort required for long writing assignments, but more that they were unaware of their purpose for putting in that effort. As Maya noted, "Purpose is directly correlated to stake." Instructors must consider what they suggest and enforce when they give students writing assignments, and this includes how students are situated as writers with stakes. On social media, students are able to negotiate their awareness of the media, audience's needs, and their own needs. Without carefully written assignments, instructors risk asking students to write with purposes that are divorced from any sense of stakes or authentic engagement.

Affirmations

If FYC instructors continue to encourage students with metaphors about dialogic engagement, like entering a conversation, then they must offer students opportunities to approach that as an authentic act. Once students have discussed the 'how' and 'why' of a writing assignment (and not "just because YOLO," as Maya joked), instructors should help students think about the writing process as a continual engagement with rhetorical considerations. However, the removed contexts (perhaps not returning to their writing for days), slow speed (writing an essay over weeks or months), and length of the text (developing various ideas over multiple pages) can make the rhetorical situation of academic writing seem forced or confusing. In contrast, students on social media can almost instantaneously comment, like, share, retweet, or favorite others' posts to explain that they 'agree,' 'appreciate,' 'hear,' or 'understand' what another user has posted. In her 2015 webtext, Elisabeth Buck employs surveys, interviews, and classroom activities to ascertain how first-year writing students make rhetorical decisions when deciding what kind of material to post on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Pinterest. Calling upon Bitzer's definition of exigence, Buck concludes: "When asked to discuss the exigencies for social media usage—in other words, their reasons for writing or posting—many of the participants specifically indicated a desire to receive (positive) feedback and engage with other users" (Interviews). While Buck clarifies that, for her students, this feedback and engagement might only take form as "tacit approval" such as a 'like,' the students in ENG 240—specifically Maya, as her thinking and writing make clear in this chapter—hope that affirmations suggest more than "approval." When Maya writes posts about her personal life,

she reported that she expects to receive feedback from her friends and family: "When they comment on those posts I know that I have that support if I need it even if I am too busy to reach out. These comments let me know that those networks are still there even if I haven't had the time to put into those networks or relationships." For the students in ENG 240, the exigence for writing on social media is often to incite feedback and engagement with others. But in a FYC classroom, it is difficult for these students to see how the feedback to their writing takes shape, since it often only comes from the instructor and comes several days or even weeks after they complete their writing assignments.

If FYC pedagogy wants to continue to treat writing as engagement and dialogue with others—as "entering a conversation"—then instructors should provide students with the type of agency-building affirmations that are found on social media. It is through the exchange of ideas and affirmations that students gain agency on social media, and by building such affirmations into the writing process, instructors can ensure that they are helping students gain rhetorical awareness as they compose. Many FYC classrooms already practice dialogic exchanges: group discussions, peer review of essays, instructor feedback, or even writing for public spaces like blogs or zines.[21] I believe it is difficult for students to regard a singular exchange with a classmate as the same as 100 reactions on Facebook, for instance, or similar to a stream of comments on a social media post. Students write essays over the course of weeks (or even months), and feedback might occur during the next class through peer review or feedback might occur the following week when the instructor responds to the writing assignment. Instructors can create opportunities for dialogue outside of class so that students engage more with their writing assignments during these

[21] I discuss instructors' use of public writing in more length in the theory section of the Audience chapter.

long periods—so that students receive interaction from more than a classmate and the instructor—which turns the student into a stakeholder for their writing. For example, students can engage in a variety of forms of dialogue in a variety of media to receive affirmations: Students might tweet questions to scholars about articles they recently read, enter discussion forums on websites or in Facebook groups, join online chat groups related to their topics, perform community surveys, or join listservs and engage in email conversations.

In FYC textbook instruction, suggested interaction with others is minimal during the writing process, even when peer review is mentioned or present. For instance, one issue with peer review and instructor grading that Maya presented is that reading others' ideas does not mean a student has become part of the conversation; students must acknowledge others and receive acknowledgement from others in order to have engaged in dialogue. For example, Maya explained of her Facebook activist postings,

> When I post about struggle and resilience and people like it those likes feel like pats on the back. I think that I value likes but for most of my posts I would rather get comments because a lot of my posts are trying to get people to think about social issues thus I want to cultivate dialog not just get pats on the back.

Paul Muhlhauser and Andrea Campbell argue that 'Disliking' on Facebook is a tangible metric: "When users see a post or content that they don't like, many simply choose to not click the 'Like' button or comment or generate any type of response. Users could interpret this silence like they are pressing a 'Dislike' button, but they could also interpret it as complicity or even absence" ("Silence"). For Maya, effective interaction on Facebook

requires others to not only demonstrate their presence with her post—they 'hear' her with likes—but to also respond back to further the conversation she has started.

If I replaced "grade" for "likes" in Maya's comment above, I could easily make the argument that a grade is not the ultimate endgame for her in the university either. In fact, she questions this comparison herself when she writes, "One of the articles we read during class was about the lack of commenting and discourse on social media and how that takes away from the experience. But is that not the same case when students are writing academic papers?" In other words, Maya seemed equally underwhelmed with academic "pats on the back." Although students enjoy receiving high grades on their essays, I believe many of them dislike spending weeks writing an essay only to be assigned a grade.

After working with students and hearing their reflections about a "writing viral video" assignment, Daniel Wuebeen believes that "due to the increasingly multimodal and participatory nature of media production and composition, *all* of our writing and sign-making gestures matter" (66). Wuebeen questions, "Is 3000 views on YouTube or 100 hearts on a blog post a more effective way to build a young writer's confidence than marginal comments and letter grade?" (76). He suggests that students share their finished work online for the purposes of going viral (77). I argue that—by inviting affirmations into the classroom—instructors can make engagement a pivotal aspect of the process of writing, rather than a metric that students use to judge their final product. Receiving affirmations during the process stage of writing not only allows students to engage in authentic conversations, but it also allows them to learn that the rhetorical situation is in continual flux, given their audience, context, purpose, ethos, and media decisions. As Wuebeen points out, "[T]he number of likes a text receives on YouTube or Facebook may have a spurious

connection to its scholarly value or how we use the text, but it is increasingly rare to have an [sic] digital reading experience shorn of share buttons and approval metrics" (69). While Wuebeen is wary of this development, I invite affirmations into the classroom. As the rhetorical situation debate demonstrates above, meaningful situations can arise among texts, writers, and audiences at any time. As students gain an understanding of the media within which they write, they also gain a sense of how sharing, commenting, and 'liking' creates engagement with new audiences; texts can circulate within new contexts for which they were not originally intended, spurring the creation of new rhetorical situations as they create new interactions among writers, audiences, and media.

To see if they are creating salient and rhetorical purposes, students can rely on affirmations during the writing process. In Assignment 3 below, I offer a description of what this might look like in practice. By reading, thinking, and responding with others in mind, students create multiple access points to "enter the conversation" about a topic. And as long as they are gaining a sense of media awareness, including how the media within which they write affect rhetorical considerations, students can be prepared to write in a variety of contexts, even if they are new or unfamiliar. The constraints of a writing classroom—time between lessons, long revision periods, slow or brief feedback from the instructor—can be partially alleviated by creating multiple ways for students to learn how their ideas are received by others.

Instructors can include affirmations to improve how students think about the writing process as a long-term effort: in the FYC textbooks analyzed above, purpose is often viewed as a uniting theme of an essay (thesis statement, purpose statement, etc.) or as a product to be achieved (a genre-based assignment). This concept of purpose contributed to

Maya's disillusionment with academic writing: "Writing a research paper that argues for or against a policy or takes a stance on a local issue simply teaches us to research an issue and write about it. I by no means agree that that teaches us civic engagement." If purpose is approached as part of the writing process, however, students can complexly think about situating their purpose—as FYC textbook instruction strives for—and actually produce writing while thinking through this complexity. In other words, a purpose that addresses the complexity of a rhetorical framework will most likely be longer than a single, argumentative sentence. One reason instructors might have students write an argument paper like the one Maya called into question is to provide them with an assignment that requires reading academic scholarship, critical thinking, and space for long-form explanations. I argue that instructors should integrate affirmations into the process of creating a purpose, so that students have the opportunity to form even more complex, thought-out, and researched purpose statements. Not only are students still engaging with long-form academic writing, but they are also engaging with multiple audiences, over multiple media, and within a variety of contexts. Dialogue with and affirmations from these audiences can improve the students' ultimate purpose for writing because students are provided space to gain agency over their ideas while understanding what is at stake for multiple audiences. In the next section, I provide assignments that describe what affirmations can look like in FYC classroom.

Pedagogical Application

In the assignments below, I demonstrate how students can learn to analyze the personal and external stakes in their academic writing through engagement and

affirmations. Students can use their awareness of media and modes—as well as the rhetorical considerations that accompany shifts in media—to develop an expanded process of developing a purpose in the composition classroom. Frequently FYC classroom constraints can hinder students from creating salient purposes: limiting assignments, specific genres, disengagement with topics, or pressure about grades. By altering the process of composing to include engagements and affirmations, students gain new potential to avoid the complex or boring constraints that deter them from creating rhetorically salient purposes while completing assignment requirements. These assignments invite students to employ their expanded awareness of media, context, audience, and ethos, as developed in previous chapters of this project.

The assignments are intended to encourage writing instructors to think carefully about how students can engage in meaningful rhetorical thinking and writing. Successful academic writers compose for audiences who are immersed and aware of the about which topics they write; this creates a community of writers who exchange information in what feels like an authentic conversation of ideas and scholarship. Students entering FYC might not have the desire to become scholars or might require more time than 10 to 15 weeks to find topics and issues about which they care deeply. It seems prudent, therefore, that assignments in FYC classrooms do not aim to create scholars but aim instead to instill scholarly habits associated with developing a process for long-form writing: close or careful reading, critical thinking, and thoughtful response. These are three habits that FYC textbook authors—and I—agree that students can employ to begin "entering the academic conversation." The assignments below demonstrate how instructors can help students gain these skills in a variety of contexts, over multiple media.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 1

This assignment encourages students to observe, analyze, and reflect on their social media presence in order to move them toward a more discursive writing process. Students are asked to articulate how they form purposes for writing, given their analysis of the media and modes. I designed this assignment for students to gain an awareness of how and why they make certain composing decisions on social media sites. Although students are given prompts to compose from, the way those prompts manifest is their choice; this assignment is tailored so that they must begin thinking critically and discursively about such decisions. As students explain why they make composing choices, they will have to explain how other rhetorical considerations affect these decisions; this assignment encourages students to see the interplay among the media and modes, the expectations of audience, the layers of context required for audiences to appreciate such a post, and their own self-presentation on each site.

Assignments like this prepare students for Assignment 3, which includes longer, more in-depth writing tasks. In order for students to compose in multiple media with a variety of purposes, they will need the ability to think through rhetorical considerations of audience, context, and media; this assignment functions as an exercise for students to analyze such features of writing in relation to their purpose. Once they move on to Assignment 2 and 3, they will engage in similar tasks, although with more expansive rhetorical situations.

ASSIGNMENT 1

Goals and Purpose

This activity asks you to think critically and rhetorically about your purposes for writing on social media. You will compose, analyze, and reflect on the purposeful choices you make as a writer. Thinking about *why* you compose will help you gain an awareness of media and modes, and articulating *how* you compose will lead you to articulate your awareness of audience, context, and ethos on each social site.

In-Class Instructions

Prompt (Situation)

1. Picture: your adorable niece/nephew
2. Situation: your English instructor assigns 30 pages of reading and a 5 page essay on the first day
3. Experience: participating in a protest in downtown Milwaukee
4. Reaction: you just discovered that they test your shampoo on beagles (and heck, you own a beagle)

Compose

1. For each prompt above, compose a social media post: which site would you post on, and what would you post?
2. Go into detail: sketch, describe, or actually compose each post

Reflect (In Pods)

1. Why did you post certain material on certain sites?
2. *How* did you post on certain sites? What modes of each site did you use to express your purpose?
3. Why post on one site and not another?
4. What do certain sites invite you to do that others don't, and how does that affect where you post and what you can post?

Homework Instructions

Continue your reflection from today's class. In your response, discuss the questions below:

1. Explain your process of posting on social media, using the examples from class today and the discussion your group had.
2. Try to explain how you know to post certain material on certain social media sites and not others.
3. Try to explain how you know when a post *won't be effective* on a certain site…and why it won't be effective.
4. If you had to write an academic essay about the three prompts I gave you, would that change your purpose and how you wrote your message? What would change, and why? Use specific examples in your explanation.

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 2

This in-class activity moves students toward articulating how purposes might manifest in various genres for a variety of contexts. This activity invites students to see the complexities of purpose: there are a multitude of ways one can compose, given their media, purpose, and context. Although audience is not stated in the chart, students are asked to later reflect upon their decisions given various audiences. The activity is not meant to provide student with prescriptive instructions for composing in certain genres with particular media, nor is it meant to provide them with precise understandings of genre, media, context, and purpose. Instead, this activity builds upon the habits forming from Assignment 1: students learn to think through the complexity of purpose, given multiple media and rhetorical expectations.

The students' homework assignment asks them to apply the same practices as the in-class activity while performing actual writing tasks: students are asked to prepare an outline that describes potential engagements. Although they will already have a topic for research, now students will prepare an "Engagement Plan" to turn their topic into a purpose for writing. Students might spend time in class or across several homework assignments using their *academic lurking* skills (see chapter 2, "Context) in order to learn about the rhetorical considerations of potential engagements: the Engagement Plan asks students to detail which audiences they will initially engage with, the contexts they will enter, how they will self-present, what modes they might employ, and how the media affects these considerations. Once formed, the Engagement Plan can be reviewed during a workshop in class to ensure that students are thinking through all rhetorical considerations. Once students begin interacting with their audiences, they should then use

the affirmations they receive—comments, dialogues, likes, shares, upvotes, etc.—to determine how well their ideas and thoughts are received among certain communities. In analyzing affirmations (see the Affirmation Journal instructions), students can revise their research and better situate their purpose for composing.

ASSIGNMENT 2

Goals and Purpose

This assignment asks you to examine the rhetorical complexity of purpose, given various genres, media, contexts, and audiences. You will begin thinking about what engagements will benefit your research, and you will construct an Engagement Plan for workshop that details the rhetorical expectations of each interaction. To consider how your engagements affect your thinking and research, you'll keep an Affirmations Journal that summarizes your interactions. The goal of this assignment is to view purposes for composing as multi-faceted, continually shifting, and as part of a process of writing (rather than a single sentence).

In-Class Instructions

Group Work

In groups, try to complete as many variations on the chart below as you can. You might want to narrow your focus on one or two genres of writing (jokes on social media; notes to your professor; research report).

Genre	Type of media	Purpose	Context of purpose	How the purpose is communicated	Modes used
Resume	Print	Sell yourself	Job improvement	Design of text Tight writing	Fonts White space Arrangement Grammar
Resume	Electronic	Sell yourself	Job improvement	Tight writing Graphic design	Fonts White space Images QR code/links

Group Reflection

1. Based on your chart above, why do you think certain writing topics might manifest in different genres? Why?
2. How do you know which modes to use? (Be specific!)
3. How do you know the ways a purpose gets communicated for each context? (Be specific!)
4. Focus on one horizontal line of the chart. Explain how you knew what to write for each category. You will want to explain choices in relation to each other (for example, how genre relates to context and how both of those relate to media), and you will want to consider other rhetorical concepts if you haven't yet, like audience and ethos.

Individual Reflection
As we continue to analyze rhetorical situations and our composing decisions, it seems that *every* choice we make actually has a purpose! It can be overwhelming at times, and it can be especially difficult to break it down when we write out of context (like we did in the class activity today). Spend a few moments and think about the last time you wrote something to an actual audience. Using the chart above, try to break down your communication and your own rhetorical decisions for writing.

Homework Instructions

Engagement Plan
During the past few weeks, you've been brainstorming potential topics and forming various questions to explore about that topic. Now is the time to think about *how* you can begin exploring your questions. In this assignment, you will draft an "Engagement Plan": a series of descriptive vignettes detailing what audiences you will address, what medium you will choose for composing, the contexts you will enter, what modes will best help you respond to your audience and context(s), how you will self-present and why, and how your purpose for interaction will respond to all of that. In short, your Engagement Plan illustrates how, where, and why you will engage with others about your research. In detail, your Engagement Plan outlines the rhetorical process of researching, including how you will develop your purpose for writing a research essay.

Affirmation Journal
You should include entries for pertinent engagements in your Affirmation journal. For each entry, include:

- A brief summary of the engagement (what you wrote, where, how)
- Who your Audience Intended was
- A brief summary of all affirmations received
- A detailed summary of important affirmations received
- Based upon affirmations, who you determine as your audience
- What you gleaned from this engagement
- How your research or purpose has shifted or evolved, given these affirmations

INTRODUCTION TO ASSIGNMENT 3

This assignment is a culmination of students' learning over the course of a semester. In this substantial writing assignment, students are asked to apply their rhetorical knowledge over a variety of media, for a multitude of audiences and contexts. This assignment invites students to think about how the same purpose for writing must shift as rhetorical expectations shifts; this awareness will hopefully be continuously developed from the engagements in their Engagement Plans from Assignment 2. What I hope will be most promising for students in composing for Assignment 3 is that they will see writing as a continual process: all of the media students will compose with for this assignment afford affirmations, which will provide ways for students to continue the 'conversation' they have started about their research topics.

This assignment grows out of ENG 240 students' reflections about academic writing. As discussed in this chapter and previous chapters, students often approach academic writing without the same rhetorical complexity that they offer their social media writing. I argue that students need a rhetorical awareness of media that can be expanded to their university writing so that they can navigate the complexity of academia; however, I believe that students also need scaffolding through various media contexts (and within media that circulate in very different ways) in order to learn how rhetorical considerations shift as media and modes shift. This assignment aims to help students navigate the interplay of media and rhetorical considerations, while also giving them (what I hope are) prompts that allow for salient purpose construction.

ASSIGNMENT 3

Goals and Purpose

Your goal for this assignment is to construct salient purposes for writing while composing within a variety of media. You should aim to engage audiences with your purpose(s) through an awareness of context, your self-presentation, and your choices of medium and modes.

Instructions

Final Writing Assignment

During the past few weeks, you've been exploring your research topic through various engagements. Using the knowledge you've gained from these engagements—and the knowledge you've gained through affirmations—it's time to begin forming rhetorical purposes for communicating your research.

You should aim to compose rhetorically salient purposes, given the various media below. Use your awareness of each media and the interplay among context, audience, and your own self-presentation. Think about situating your purpose given these rhetorical considerations, so that your research is presented most effectively in each media.

1. Communicate research on Twitter
2. Communicate research on Facebook
3. Communicate research for class blog post
4. Communicate research in 30 second to 1-minute YouTube video
5. Communicate research as a draft of undergraduate scholarly article for publication submission

Final Reflection

Earlier in the semester, you composed an Engagement Plan that described the rhetorical decision process leading up to your interactions. In your final reflection, you will complete similar writing vignettes about your final writing assignment. For each writing task (1 through 5 above), include a brief discussion that describes the rhetorical process behind your composition. Your reflection should include specific choices you made as a writer (in terms of media and modes), and it should analyze *why* you made those decisions in relation to rhetorical considerations. For example, a tweet might only include one sentence and a photograph, but there is a long process of rhetorical thought that accompanies that regarding audience, context, ethos, media, modes, and your purpose. Use specific examples—quote yourself when necessary—to help discuss your composing decisions in better detail.

Conclusion

In this project, I argue that both the materiality of posts and the rapid speed of response on social media allow students to more quickly and easily grasp complex rhetorical situations than with less visible, slower-circulating media like print texts. As I argue in each chapter, FYC textbook instruction does not always offer a methodological approach to rhetoric that allows students to apply concepts like medium, context, audience, ethos, or purpose to writing contexts outside of academic genres. This project demonstrates that students have an intuitive knowledge about the writing they do on social media, and—when they are asked to analyze and reflect upon this knowledge—they can gain a discursive, rhetorical process for their writing and writing choices. Further, by supplying students with language shaped from their existing knowledge to talk about the media, modes, and rhetorical considerations of writing, students can productively transfer their rhetorical awareness to other writing contexts, including what formerly seemed like vague, transparent, or rhetorically removed writing contexts. I believe three areas require further attention if we are to continue expanding the arguments and pedagogical suggestions found in these pages: extending studies of transfer, issues of access, and how textbooks are developed.

Extending Studies of Transfer

In this project, I describe how students can begin to transfer their social media knowledge to other media, particularly print academic essays. The focus of this dissertation was not to study transfer, which leaves opportunity for future research and studies to expand on the results of ENG 240 students' thinking. Particular attention should be paid to

current studies that address how students transfer rhetorical awareness from their social media interactions to academic tasks. By building on these studies, scholars can explore the complex requirements of this kind of academic transfer, such as how social media rhetoric influences students long-form composing processes or revision strategies. Future research with social media and transfer should continue to address how students transfer knowledge into various media in order to continue expanding rhetorical approaches and to make adjustments when needed.

In a 2017 book, *Bad Ideas About Writing*, Ellen C. Carillo adds 'easy transfer of writing knowledge' to the list of bad ideas. Carillo emphasizes that, "research corroborates that students don't automatically transfer what they have learned about writing from one class into the next… Transfer is not impossible, but it shouldn't be taken for granted" (34). Instructors should continue to study how students transfer knowledge to various writing courses throughout the university, including studies about how students use their social media rhetorical awareness in academic contexts. Previous studies have demonstrated that students "had far fewer rhetorical ways of explaining when their academic writing was effective" than they do for social media effectiveness (Rosinski 264). In continuing with the suggestions I make about transfer in this dissertation, researchers and instructors should continue to examine the shifts, changes, and innovation in students' social media knowledge and understandings.

Finally, the ideas found in this project have potential to extend to composition studies more broadly. Specifically, I refer to the discussions about dialogic and interactive writing, as well as how writers gain awareness of their agency. Many times during this project, I was isolated at my computer in my office, feeling confused and overwhelmed and

unconvinced. Aspects of the pedagogy I propose in these pages could be complicated and extended to benefit advanced undergraduate and graduate students as they begin to "enter the conversation" of academic scholarship, gain awareness of their own agency as scholars, and learn how to find engagements and affirmations to propel and sustain their long-term research and writing projects.

Access

A pedagogy that assumes all students have the same access to digital technologies is dangerous. While every student in ENG 240 self-reported having a smartphone, I did not ask more personal questions about what kinds of access they had on their phones, such as the data plans they had. To be fair to all students in class, we should ask about their access. For instance, how do the students who access social media throughout the day from their phone experience social media interaction differently than students who must have access to a computer and an internet connection?

In an effort to grant students with access to social media sites, even if they were not members on each site, I assigned numerous in-class group activities that invited students to share and post about their own social media writing in the class discussion forums. Because of this, students who were not active on social media had examples of social media writing to look at when they completed homework assignments. Yet despite this planning, I also required students to have an account on at least one social media site during the course; while only one student in Section 1 and one student in Section 2 did not have any social media accounts, the rest of the students had at least one profile on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Tumblr.

I relied on computer labs and a computer-mediated classroom with a laptop cart for our classes' daily activities. Many of the in-class activities suggested in the Pedagogical Application sections similarly rely on students' ability to actually see the writing that they are asked to discuss; academic writing can often be printed for class discussion, but printing various social media posts each day for class is not useful for the activities planned, which require observing patterns, analyzing modes as they circulate to a variety of contexts, etc. As I continue to develop these ideas and activities, I must consider how both student and classroom access can affect the way students are asked to observe and analyze writing on social media.

Textbook Development

In returning to the epigraphs of my "Introduction," I want to draw attention to students' beliefs that good instruction is both relevant in the classroom and relevant beyond the classroom. A lot of time is spent critiquing FYC textbooks in this project, not because helping students learn to approach academic writing is invaluable, but because many FYC students do not find it valuable (even if instructors know it is, or even if students later come to regret their indifference). Dylan writes in the opening epigraph: "The way teaching and learning functions is by using the familiar to explain the new." In contemporary teaching of academic writing, I am unsure that there is much familiarity for students to connect with as they enter the university.

Upon completing this dissertation, I intend to propose a FYC textbook that offers a semester-long approach for how instructors can transfer students' rhetorical knowledge from social media to various print and media contexts, including long-form essays. The

chapters above demonstrate how students can make their intuitive knowledge of writing on social media discursive, develop rhetorical awareness, and begin thinking about how to transfer that knowledge to other writing contexts. By layering the knowledge that students bring to the classroom with existing rhetorical theory, I have extended rhetorical concepts often used in FYC instruction: medium, context, audience, ethos, and purpose. These extended concepts build upon students' knowledge rather than ask them to learn what seems like new or unfamiliar academic terms. For instance, students are encouraged to perform "academic lurking," similar to the online "lurking" that they perform when investigating social media profiles, in order to explore the layers of context surrounding a topic, author, or idea. In this dissertation, I am "using the familiar to explain the new": The rhetorical terms introduced in this dissertation present students with accessible terms that help them think about transferring their social media knowledge to any other media, not only primarily academic essays. I would like to see more textbook instruction work to remove some of the alienation and confusion that students feel when composing in a new context or in an unfamiliar medium by providing them with a rhetorical process that can transfer from medium to medium.

Some instructors have the ability (whether the time or program flexibility) to teach courses that invite students to experiment with rhetorical concepts. These instructors—those most frequently already reading scholarship about multimodality, new media, and computers in the classroom—are not the only intended audiences for this pedagogical implementation. Instructors who do not plan courses with their own FYC agendas in mind (digital/multimodal; service learning; themed-courses; programmatically-driven; etc.) might borrow from textbooks to alleviate the burden of gathering and scaffolding teaching

materials, assignments, lessons, in-class activities, and readings. I think it is important that both populations—those who are already teaching with their own rhetoric and those who teach with textbook rhetorics—do not miss an opportunity to expand how they approach increasingly complex rhetorical concepts in the FYC classroom.

Finally, I believe that a variety of media must be employed in the FYC classroom, both for analysis and for production. The pedagogy found in these pages is meant to provide students with a process for composing, an accessible rhetoric for communicating, and an ability to navigate a variety of media, no matter the context. As Claire suggests in the opening epigraph, "I think it is important to have education be fluid into our lives. It should be work, but more than anything I believe that learning and education should be ongoing. If you use social media in education, chances are education will be used in social media**."** The activities and assignments included in the proposed FYC classroom are meant to have ongoing use for students, both during their time at the university and in their public, social, and professional lives in the years to come.

Appendix A: ENG 240 Course Descriptions and Goals

Section 1 Course Description and Goals

In Rhetoric and Social Media you will analyze a wide range of social media genres, examining the writing methods, rhetorical situations, and interfaces found on each site. Your studies will focus on trends of actions and the patterns of those trends as you attempt to understand the expectations of writing, communicating, and connecting in these spaces. In class discussion we will explore how a rhetorical approach can often help gauge what is at stake and to whom and why. In your readings you will learn of various rhetorical theories to guide and challenge your thinking: what do 'writing,' 'audience,' and 'purpose' mean in these ever-shifting social media environments? How might we need to rethink or reconsider rhetorical fundamentals (audience, form, ethos, delivery, etc.) to explain the way we write in these spaces? Our analyses will ultimately lead to your larger project in which you will enact, perform, or complete your own social media "rhetorical act," grounding your project in rhetorical theory, a contextual understanding of the 'text,' and your investigations of what it means to be a 'successful' rhetorical communicator in your chosen social media realm.

- Analyze elements of various social media sites, including behaviors, effects, patterns, privacy, genre expectations, and social/cultural implications of both users and technologies
- Develop a theoretical approach to understanding the interactions of audiences, users, and technologies
- Think meaningfully and thoughtfully about the writing and various rhetorical situations of social media and what it means for you, users, and society
- To participate *and* produce
- To analyze as means toward more effective production within theorized contexts
- Become [hyper-] aware of your social media presence

Section 2 Course Description and Goals

In Rhetoric and Social Media you will work toward a discursive understanding of your rhetorical situation on social media to develop richer composing processes in all media and for all contexts, digital and non-digital. Your studies will lead you to analyze a wide range of social media genres, examining the writing methods, rhetorical situations, and interfaces found on each site. Each student will practice, observe, and analyze both individual and others' social media use; as a class, we will then transfer what is learned from composing on social media to help develop a more expansive rhetorical perspective within academic, print contexts. In class discussion we will challenge both classical and contemporary rhetorical notions: How might we need to reconsider or revise rhetorical fundamentals (audience, ethos, purpose, and context) to explain the way we write on social media? Readings, discussion, and assignments will guide you toward complex and nuanced understandings of how media, modes, circulation, and delivery affect communication on social media. Your production and analysis on social media will ultimately lead to a larger project in which you will 'revise' a rhetorical concept for print, academic writing—grounding your project in rhetorical theory, an awareness of rhetorical transfer, and your investigations of what it means to be a 'successful' rhetorical communicator.

- To analyze *and* produce—writing, theory, and new perspectives
- Think meaningfully and thoughtfully about various rhetorical situations of social media and test potential ways to transfer this knowledge into print, academic writing
- Develop a discursive understanding of the interaction between writers, audiences, and technologies
- Collaborate with peers to revise and transform key rhetorical concepts for digital, print, and academic contexts

Works Cited

Adler-Kassner, Linda, et al. "Assembling Knowledge: The Role of Threshold Concepts in Facilitating Transfer." *Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, edited by Chris M. Anson and Jessie L. Moore, The WAC Clearinghouse, 2017, pp. 17-47, https://wac.colostate.edu/books/ansonmoore/.

Alexander, Jonathan, and Jacqueline Rhodes. *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies*. National Council of Teachers of English, 2014.

Alexander, Kara Poe. "Material Affordances: The Potential of Scrapbooks in the Composition Classroom." *Composition Forum*, vol. 27, 2013, http://compositionforum.com/issue/27/material-affordances.php.

Amicucci, Ann M. "Rhetorical Choices in Facebook Discourse: Constructing Voice and Persona." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 44, 2017, pp. 36-51.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by F.H. Peters, Barnes and Noble Publishing, 2004.

- - -. *On Rhetoric*, edited by George A. Kennedy, Oxford University Press, 1991.

Axelrod, Rise B., and Charles R. Cooper. *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. 10th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1986.

Ball, Cheryl. "Show, Not Tell: The Value of New Media Scholarship." *Computers and Writing*, vol. 21, 2004, pp. 403-25.

Balzhiser, Deborah, et al. "The Facebook Papers." *Kairos*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2011, http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/16.1/praxis/balzhiser-et-al/index.html.

Bartholomae, David. “Inventing the University.” *Engaging Inquiry: Research and Writing in the Disciplines*, edited by Judy Kirscht and Mark Schlenz, Longman, 2002, pp. 455-471.

Bawarshi, Anis. "The Ecology of Genre." *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches*, edited by Christian R. Weisser and Sidney I. Dobrin, State University of New York Press, 2001, pp. 69-80.

Biesecker, Barbara A. “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of ‘Différence.’” *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1989, pp. 110-130.

Bitzer, Lloyd. “The Rhetorical Situation.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1992, pp. 1-14.

Bizzell, Patricia L. "The Ethos of Academic Discourse." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1978, pp. 351-355.

boyd, danah. “Social Network Sites as Networked Publics: Affordances, Dynamics, and Implications.” *Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*, edited by Zizi Papacharissi, Routledge, 2010, pp. 39-58.

Brooke, Collin Gifford. *Lingua Fracta*. Hampton, 2009.

Brown, John Seely, and Douglas Thomas. *A New Culture of Learning: Cultivating the Imagination for a World of Constant Change*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011.

Buck, Elisabeth. “Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Oh My! Assessing the Efficacy of the Rhetorical Composing Situation with FYC Students as Advanced Social Media Practitioners.” *Kairos*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2015, http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/19.3/praxis/buck/interviews.html.

Bullock, Richard, et al. *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*. 4th ed., W.W. Norton, 2016.

Burke, Kenneth. *The Philosophy of Literary Form*. 3rd ed., University of California, 1973.

Carillio, Ellen C. "Writing Knowledge Transfers Easily." *Bad Ideas About Writing*, edited by Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe, Digital Publishing Institute, 2017, 34-37, https://textbooks.lib.wvu.edu/badideas/index.html.

Carnegie, Teena A.M. "Interface as Exordium: The Rhetoric of Interactivity." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 26, 2009, pp. 164-173.

Clark, J. Elizabeth. "The Digital Imperative: Making the Case for a 21st Century Pedagogy." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 27, 2010, pp. 27-35.

Coad, David. "Developing Critical Literacy and Critical Thinking through Facebook." *Kairos*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2013, http://praxis.technorhetoric.net/tiki-index.php?page=Developing_Critical_Literacy_and_Critical_Thinking_through_Facebook.

Cooper, Marilyn M. "Agency as Emergent and Enacted." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 62, no. 3, 2011, pp. 420-449.

- - -. "Foreword: The Truth is Out There." *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches*, edited by Christian R. Weisser and Sidney I. Dobrin, State University of New York Press, 2001, pp. xi-xviii.

- - -. "The Ecology of Writing." *College English*, vol. 48, no. 4, 1986, pp. 364-375.

DePalma, Michael-John. "Tracing Transfer across Media: Investigating Writers' Perceptions of Cross-Contextual and Rhetorical Reshaping in Processes of Remediation." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 66, no. 4, 2015, pp. 615-642.

Derrida, Jacques. *Limited Inc*. Northwestern UP, 1988.

Dewey, Caitlin. "In defense of Trevor Noah's stupid, tasteless tweets." *The Washington Post*, 31 Mar. 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2015/03/31/in-defense-of-trevor-noahs-stupid-tasteless-tweets/?utm_term=.1fe4b2e71c32. Accessed 30 Dec. 2016.

Dobrin, Sidney I. "Writing Takes Place." *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches*, edited by Christian R. Weisser and Sidney I. Dobrin, State University of New York Press, 2001, pp. 11-25.

Dubisar, Abby M. and Jason Palmeri. "Palin/Pathos/Peter Griffin: Political Video Remix and Composition Pedaogy." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 27, 2010, pp. 77-93.

Edbauer, Jenny. "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2005, pp. 5-24.

Ede, Lisa, and Andrea Lunsford. "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1984, pp. 155-171.

Eubanks, Philip, and John D. Schaeffer. "A Kind Word for Bullshit: The Problem of Academic Writing." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2008, pp. 372-388.

Fredlund, Katherine. "Social Media and the Rhetorical Situation: Finding Common Ground Between Students' Lives and Writing Courses." *Engaging 21st Century Writers with Social Media*, edited by Kendra N. Bryant, IGI Global, 2016, pp. 96-115.

Frost, Erin A. "Why Teachers Must Learn: Student Innovation as a Driving Factor in the Future of the Web." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 28, 2011, pp. 269-275.

Gallagher, Chris W. "Staging Encounters: Assessing the Performance of Context in Students' Multimodal Writing." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 31, 2014, pp. 1-12.

Garret, Mary, and Xiaosui Xiao. “The Rhetorical Situation Revisited.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1993, pp. 30-40.

Gerben, Christopher. *Expanding Conversations: Cultivating an Analytical Approach to Collaborative Composition in Social Online Spaces*. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2012.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. DoubleDay, 1959.

Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst. *They Say / I Say*. 3rd ed., W.W. Norton, 2015.

Halloran, Michael. "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or If Not His Somebody Else's." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1982, pp. 58-63.

Hansen, Jette G. “Interactional Conflicts Among Audience, Purpose, and Content Knowledge in the Acquisition of Academic Literacy in an EAP Course.” *Written Communication*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2000, pp. 27-52.

Harrell, Brian. “Using Twitter to Scaffold English Composition.” *Engaging 21st Century Writers with Social Media*, edited by Kendra N. Bryant, IGI Global, 2016, pp. 32-50.

Harris, Joseph. *A Teaching Subject: Composition Since 1966*. Prentice-Hall, 1997.

Harwood, Nigel, and Bojana Petric. "Performance in the Citing Behavior of Two Student Writers." *Written Communication*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2012, pp. 55-103.

Hawisher, Gail E., and Cynthia L. Selfe. “Studying Literacy in Digital Contexts: Computers and Composition Studies.” *Exploring Composition Studies: Sites, Issues, and Perspectives*, edited by Kelly Ritter and Paul Kei Matsuda, Utah State UP, 2012, pp. 188-198.

Head, Samuel L. “Teaching Grounded Audiences: Burke’s Identification in Facebook and Composition.” *Computers and Composition*, vol. 39, 2016, pp. 27-40.

Hersher, Rebecca. *Look at This: A Girl Can Dream*. National Public Radio, 15 Jul. 2015, http://apps.npr.org/lookatthis/posts/afghan-teens/. Accessed 28 Dec. 2016.

Holt, Robert J. “Social Media and the ‘Perpetual Project’ of Ethos Construction.” *Young Scholars in Writing*, vol. 10, 2012, pp. 72-80, http://cas.umkc.edu/english/publications/youngscholarsinwriting/vol10.asp.

“How To Spot Fake News.” *IFLA Blogs: Library Policy and Advocacy Blog*, 27 Jan. 2017, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, http://blogs.ifla.org/lpa/2017/01/27/alternative-facts-and-fake-news-verifiability-in-the-information-society/. Accessed 1 Mar. 2017.

Johnson, Matthew S.S. “Public Writing in Gaming Spaces.” *Computers and Composition*, vol. 25, 2008, pp. 270-283.

Johnson-Sheehan, Richard, and Charles Paine. *Writing Today*. 3rd ed., Pearson, 2016.

Killingsworth, M. Jimmie, and John Krajicek. "Ecology, Alienation, and Literacy." *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches*, edited by Christian R. Weisser and Sidney I. Dobrin, State University of New York Press, 2001, pp. 39-56.

Kinneavy, James, and Warshauer, Susan C. “From Aristotle to Madison Avenue: Ethos and the Ethics of Argument.” *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical And Critical Theory*, edited by James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin, Southern Methodist University Press, 1994, pp. 171-190.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. Oxford UP, 2001.

Lancaster, Zak. “Do Academics Really Write This Way? A Corpus Investigation of Moves and Templates in ‘They Say / I Say.’” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 67, no. 3, 2016, pp. 437-464.

Lanham, Richard A. *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts*. University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Lauer, Claire. “What’s in a Name? The Anatomy of Defining New/Multi/Modal/Digital/Media Texts.” *Kairos*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2012, http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/17.1/inventio/lauer/index.html.

Lenhart, Amanda, et al. “Teens, Social Media & Technology Overview 2015.” *Pew Research Center*, 9 Apr. 2015, http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015. Accessed 15 Mar. 2016.

Lunsford, Andrea A. "Writing is Informed by Prior Experience." *Naming What We Know*, edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, University Press of Colorado, 2015, pp. 54-55.

Lunsford, Andrea A., and Lisa Ede. “Representing Audience: ‘Successful’ Discourse and Disciplinary Critique.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 47, no. 2, 1996, pp. 167-179.

Lunsford, Andrea, et al. *Everyone’s an Author*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2013.

Maranto, Gina, and Matt Barton. “Paradox and Promise: MySpace, Facebook, and the Sociopolitics of Social Networking in the Writing Classroom.” *Computers and Composition*, vol. 27, 2010, pp. 36-47.

Marwick, Alice E., and danah boyd. "I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience." *New Media Society*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2010, pp. 114-133.

Melzer, Dan. "Writing Assignments Across the Curriculum: A National Study of College Writing." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2009, pp. 240-261.

Miller, Arthur B. "Rhetorical Exigence." *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1972, pp. 111-118.

Miller, Jessie, Shanna Gilkeson, and Lisa Pignotti. "Hey @students! #Letschat: Using Social Media to Facilitate Research and Public Engagement." *Kairos*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2015, http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/praxis/tiki-index.php?page=PraxisWiki%3A_%3ASocial+Media+for+Digital+Engagement.

Moller, Marilyn. "A quick query." Received by Charles Schuster, 6 May 2015.

Monty, Randall W. "Everyday Borders of Transnational Students: Composing Place and Space with Mobile Technology, Social Media, and Multimodality." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 38, 2015, pp. 126-139.

Mosseri, Adam. "Building a Better News Feed for You." *Facebook Newsroom*, 29 Jun. 2016, https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2016/06/building-a-better-news-feed-for-you/. Accessed 9 Aug. 2017.

Muhlhauser, Paul, and Andrea Campbell. "Like Me, Like Me Not." *Harlot*, vol. 8, 2012, http://www.harlotofthearts.org/index.php/harlot/article/view/122/114.

Nahon, Karine and Jeff Hemsley. "What Makes Something Viral II: What is everyone looking at?" *Going Viral*, Polity Press, 2013, pp. 60-80.

New London Group. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures." *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 66, no. 1, 1996, pp. 60-92.

Nobles, Susanne, and Laura Paganucci. "Do Digital Writing Tools Deliver? Student Perceptions of Writing Quality Using Digital Tools and Online Writing Environments." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 38, 2015, pp. 16-31.

Nowacek, Rebecca S. *Agents of Integration: Understanding Transfer as a Rhetorical Act*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2011.

Pantelides, Kate. Negotiating What's at Stake in Informal Writing in the Writing Center." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 29, 2012, pp. 269-279.

Porter, James. *Audience and Rhetoric*. Prentice-Hall, 1992.

Regan, Alison E., and John D. Zuern. "Community-Service Learning and Computer-Mediated Advanced Composition: The Going to Class, Getting Online, and Giving Back Project." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 17, 2000, pp. 177-195.

Rivers, Nathaniel A., and Ryan P. Weber. "Ecological, Pedagogical, Public Rhetoric." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2011, pp. 187-218.

Rosinski, Paula. "The Transfer of Rhetorical Knowledge Between Digital Self-Sponsored Writing and Academic Writing: The Importance of Authentic Contexts and Reflection." *Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, edited by Chris M. Anson and Jessie L. Moore, The WAC Clearinghouse, 2017, pp. 247-271, https://wac.colostate.edu/books/ansonmoore/.

Sabatino, Lindsay. "Improving Writing Literacies through Digital Gaming Literacies: Facebook Gaming in the Composition Classroom." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 32, 2014, pp. 41-53.

Santos, Mark, and Mark H. Leahy. “Postpedagogy and Web Writing.” *Computers and Composition*, vol. 32, 2014, pp. 84-95.

Selfe, Cynthia L. “The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing.” *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 60, 2009, pp. 616-63.

Shapiro, Shawna, et al. “Teaching for Agency: From Appreciating Linguistic Diversity to Empowering Student Writers.” *Composition Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2016, pp. 31-52.

Shepherd, Ryan. “FB in FYC: Facebook Use Among First-Year Composition Students.” *Computers and Composition*, vol. 35, 2015, pp. 85-107.

Shipka, Jody. *Toward a Composition Made Whole*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwm/detail.action?docID=2039340.

Smidt, Jon. "Double Histories in Multivocal Classrooms: Notes Toward an Ecological Account of Writing." *Written Communication*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2002, pp. 414-443.

Sullivan, Dale L. "Displaying Disciplinarity." *Written Communication*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1996, pp. 221-250.

Swartz, Jennifer. “MySpace, Facebook, and Multimodal Literacy in the Writing Classroom.” *Kairos*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2011, http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/praxis/tiki-index.php?page=Multimodal_Literacy.

Syverson, Margaret A. *The Wealth of Reality: An Ecology of Composition*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1999.

Takayoshi, Pamela. “Short-form Writing: Studying Process in the Context of Contemporary Composing Technologies.” *Computers and Composition*, vol. 37, 2015, pp. 1-13.

VanderPloeg, Libby. “Shimmy If You’re With Her.” *GIPHY*, 29 Sept. 2016, http://gph.is/2dvqAwX. Accessed 23 Jan. 2017.

Vatz, Richard. "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1973, pp. 154-161.

Vie, Stephanie. "Digital Divide 2.0: 'Generation M' and Online Social Networking Sites in the Composition Classroom." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 25, 2008, pp. 9-23.

Williams, Bronwyn. *Shimmering Literacies: Popular Culture & Reading & Writing Online*. Peter Lang, 2009.

Wuebeen, Daniel. "Getting Likes, Going Viral, and the Intersections Between Popularity Metrics and Digital Composition." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 42, 2016, pp. 66-79.

Wysocki, Anne Frances. "Openings and Justifications." *Writing New Media: Theory and Application for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*, edited by Anne Frances Wysocki, Utah State University Press, 2004, pp. 1-41.

- - -, and Julia Jasken. "What should be an unforgettable face…" *Computers and Writing*, vol. 21, 2004, pp. 29-48.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2004, pp. 297-328.

Curriculum Vitae

Education

M.A., Ohio University (OU), 2012
English—Rhetoric and Composition

B.A., Wartburg College, 2010
English—Literature
Communication Arts—Print Media

Dissertation

Expanding Composition Pedagogies: A New Rhetoric From Social Media
Chair: Anne Frances Wysocki

Peer Reviewed Publications

Evans, Ash. "Stance and Identity in Twitter Users' Hashtags." *Language@Internet*, vol. 13, no. 1, Mar. 2016, http://www.languageatinternet.org/articles/2016/evans.

National Conference Presentations

"Medium, Mode, and the Shift of Rhetorical Considerations on Social Media," *Rhetoric Society of America*, Atlanta, GA, 2016

"From Theory to Practice: What Social Media Has Taught Me About Audience (A List)," *Computers and Writing* (*C&W*), Rochester, NY, 2016

"Out with the Old: (Re)Inventing Classical Rhetoric for Digital Contexts," *Conference on College Composition and Communication* (*CCCC*), Tampa, FL, 2015

"Moving Forward by Looking Back: The Changing Definition of 'Writing,'" *C&W*, Menomonie, WI, 2015

"Unsuspected Identities and Rhetoric for New Media," *CCCC*, Indianapolis, IN, 2014

"Blurring Social and Academic Literacies: Visual Plagiarism, the Sharing Culture of the Internet, and the Net Generation," *CCCC*, Las Vegas, NV, 2013

"140 Characters or Bust: The Effect of Twitter on Generation Y and Formal Composition Methods," *CCCC*, St. Louis, MO, 2012

Administrative Employment

Writing Program Administration (WPA), First-Year Composition Program, UWM 2014-16

Online Composition Coordinator, WPA, First-Year Composition Program, UWM, 2014-16

Graduate Teaching Experience, 2012-2016

ENG 306: Women & Writing
ENG 240: Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture
ENG 215: Introduction to English Studies
ENG 151: Writing & Rhetoric
ENG 102: College Writing and Research (Traditional and Online)
ENG 101: Intro to College Writing (Traditional, Online, and Hybrid)

Awards

Teaching Excellence Award, Finalist, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) English Department, 2014

James A. Sappenfield Fellowship, UWM English Department, 2014

Chancellor's Graduate Student Award, UWM, 2012-16

Outstanding Teaching Associate, Nominee, OU, 2011

Professional and University Service

Textbook Pilot Stage Reviewer, *Cengage Learning*, 2016

Manuscript Reviewer, *College Composition and Communication*, 2014

Composition Advisory Committee Member, UWM, 2014-16

Composition Program Assessment Committee, UWM, 2013-15

Critical Thinking and Written Communication Assessment Committee, Center for Instructional and Professional Development, UWM, 2013-14