COMMUNICATIVE COMPOSITION


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## DEDICATION

For Skyler, thank you for hearing me.

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to synthesize a working theory of composition for
the enhancement of communication literacy. Communicative Composition was built on
the four pillars of personal, process, collaborative, and creative. These guidelines are then
married with a synthesized definition of communication literacy and Bloom's Revised
Taxonomy to create a working list of learning objectives for contemporary composition
classrooms.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPOSITION

*Everyone, in the entire world, is communicating*. Starting an essay like this in

academic writing is one of the first things we as composition instructors have to warn

students against, because the chances that "everyone" in the entire "anywhere" is doing

anything feels unlikely. However, with this specific statement, it's true. Everyone is

communicating in one way or another, or, more likely, in many ways at once.

The following research is gathered in pursuit of a viable, new theory of

composition, which I have called Communicative Composition. Defined later in greater

detail, Communicative composition is composition for the contemporary world as it

becomes more public, procedural, collaborative, and creatively communicative.

Communicative Composition is built on four pillars: personal, process, collaborative, and

creative in pursuit of a flexible skill-set that can evolve with the society it serves, and

could prove to be a valuable resource in equipping today's students with the ability to

participate in a multitude of conversations. There will not be a study in these pages of

Communicative Composition in action; instead this research is intended to equip

interested parties with the necessary information to continue this exploration in the

future.

I was drawn to this study through my professional experiences as a writer, a

teacher, and a corporate communications strategist. The skills I used every day in these

professions were all built on the foundational skills acquired in general education. However, these foundational skills alone weren't sufficient to prepare me for any of these areas. The ability to express my own voice with creative writing, a rhetorical awareness which facilitates educating, and the competence to navigate communication in these professional environments weren't introduced during my general education experiences. These various experiences in creative writing, education, and business led me to the scaffolding of Communicative Composition presented in this dissertation. Together the 'pillars' of Communicative Composition are designed to enhance communication literacy, which we will discover in the following pages is a missing piece in contemporary composition.

As a communicator both in creative writing and as an employee in corporate communications I can see that composition, as currently conceived, may not have served me as well as it could have. In my most recent personal experiences, business has demanded skillful collaboration to be successful. Those less familiar with good corporate structure may assume my experience as an employee of a company valued at 1.9 billion dollars would be isolating. The floors upon floors of cubicles where workers quietly while away the hours that make up many workplaces are a classic trope from television to the Sunday morning comics. True, there are people all around me who I don't work with on a day to day basis, and there are people on my team I've never communicated with in person, but accomplishing my goals would be impossible without them so we are constantly communicating across multiple technologies.

Further, it has been a difficult climb in learning how-to become more than another empty voice in the workplace and society. The first area listed above is creative writing because the first area outside of general education wherein I explored my ability to communicate with my own voice was in a Master of Fine Arts program for creative writing. During my time in this program I discovered the joys of personal expression, which I had been hurried away from in undergraduate composition. It was an epiphany to have my personal message validated and my continued education driven towards the purpose of relaying that message. In my adult life, having something valuable to say has often been the determining factor in whether or not I was allowed to speak. It was not enough to know how-to speak; I also needed something to say. In other words, I was being asked what I thought and wanted to say about the world *while* I was being taught how-to say it. At the undergraduate level, where this could have been the mandate it was the exception.

It wasn't for lack of opportunity that the collaborative and personal missing pieces described above were absent from my general education. In fact, corporate structure on the smallest level begins in a similar way to the classroom small group structure. Groups gather for a select purpose and one of them is entrusted with communicating with the representatives of other groups—this is called the line-and-staff structure. Of course with a large company, this simple process is multiplied many times over and usually develops into one of three classic structures:

Functional Structure- In a functional structure, positions are grouped based on the type of work they do and the skills required to complete that work. Organizations

employing this kind of structure divide themselves into functional areas like marketing, engineering, and accounting. Each functional area is usually led by an administrator with expertise in that field. The strengths of the functional structure include fostering, supervising, and efficiently utilizing specialized resources.

Divisional Structure- In a divisional structure, an organization divides itself not into functional areas but into divisions. These divisions, which can be created around product lines, markets, or geographic region, usually are given more independence and sometimes even act like separate companies. This structure is usually employed by businesses whose growth into new products, markets, or regions makes the functional structure too complex and cumbersome. By creating these pseudo-sovereign divisions, decisions can be made more quickly and employees can specialize in the unique aspects of the division in which they work, providing for a more efficient use of resources. (Guzman, n.d.)

Navigating these different areas requires superior communication skills. From collaborating across distances in divisional structures to communicating up the corporate ladder in functional structures, successful corporate communication demands a breadth of abilities. A problem with communication not only causes the structure to become ineffective, the individual employee will experience the negative consequences of first being aimless and then becoming obsolete from being out of the loop. With well-over half of employment opportunities ("Occupational Employment Statistics", 2017) existing in a corporate structure the day-to-day realities of working as part of such a large

organization mean those hiring are looking specifically for collaborative communication skills.

According to a report released by the GMAT exam team, the skills composition classes are responsible for teaching students are by far the most valuable. Their survey lists 25 of the top skills separated into five categories: communications, teamwork, leadership, technical, and managerial. Out of these five categories, managerial is by far the least favored with technical and leadership mixing in somewhere in the middle. However, communication including "oral communication," "listening skills," "written communication," and presentation skills top the results with teamwork's "adaptability," "ability to value opinions of others," "cross-cultural sensitivity," and "ability to follow a leader" come in at fifth, seventh, ninth, and tenth place respectively ("Employers Want Communication Skills in New Hires," 2014). The importance of the foundation composition should offer students is difficult to over-sell. At the top of this list are the skills accessed when someone participates in collaboration. Although the examples I've given here are from corporate environments, these structures are visible throughout all our lives from the organization of religion to government.

Communicative composition abilities are a necessity in the contemporary world. It is this theme that tied all of those missing pieces described above together. We all need these skills to be successful. Understanding our own message, engaging with the process of sharing information, and collaborating with others are all parts of successful communication. They are all elements of communication literacy. **This is why we're having this conversation**. The question of how composition does and should include

communication literacy begins with an explanation of how things have been, how they are now, and how different scholars think they should be.

Only when I became a teacher of composition, could I see why the experience I needed finding my voice and the practice I desperately needed collaborating weren't a part of my general education. Having learned about the foundational theories/history of the discipline and put them into practice. For example, the composition classroom still relies heavily on the formulaic prose of the past like the five-paragraph form. David Gooblar recently wrote for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* about why this is, and acknowledged that college educators weren't entirely to blame. He wrote, "[Students] rely on the received wisdom they learned in high school—the pinnacle of the five paragraph-essay, with its first-X-then-Y-then-Z thesis and a conclusion from main points" (2018, p. 5). Gooblar continues by pointing out that there are rhetorical structures often used in academic writing that appear in otherwise-disparate genres. For example, the classic introduction template of moving from a larger, generalized concept (similar to the introduction above) to the smaller, more specific statement is visible in movie trailers.

Movie trailers are intended to entice potential viewers, give an indication of the tone, and preview the theme of the movie. After a conversation exploring the purpose of movie trailer devices, students are not asking themselves how to fit their subject into a templated introduction. Instead, they are searching their own purpose to pull a potential reader into their work and give them the information they will need to read it (Gooblar, 2018). This is educating students from the perspective that communication is driven by

purpose rather than form. This article and those like it are evidence that teaching students multiple ways to express ideas are already valued in many composition classrooms.

However, we should not be lulled into believing because a handful of people are talking about it that this sort of pedagogical innovation has been popularly adopted. Some classrooms may be open to the idea of searching across modes for purpose-driven communication, but as Gooblar wrote, the *received wisdom* of high school will be followed unless students are otherwise instructed. Whether or not to bring these methods into the contemporary composition classroom is optional. Communicative Composition is different because it *requires* the personal, or purpose-driven, approach both from the educator and the student, which can refocus the meaning of the many different parts of informative communication and equip students with skills that are useful beyond their experiences in college.

However, when I began teaching, I discovered knowing that communicating personal ideas related to purpose wasn't enough to explain to others how-to move from having a purposeful message to communicating that message. Both the study and facilitation of education required an understanding of process, or the bringing-to-bear knowledge of how we learn and how we communicate. To many, listening to clearly communicated ideas is the path to understanding how-to communicate an idea clearly. This theory is a parallel to the practice of reading well-written ideas to learn how-to be a good writer. In practice, this is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition.

Consider the example above: everyone in Gooblar's classroom was familiar with the movie trailer device, and still, before he framed the trailer as an introduction to the

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movie, there was no productive take-away from having viewed so many trailers. The trailers students viewed in the past didn't automatically translate into understanding introductions, because they had not been framed in this way before. Had he stopped at *how* the movie trailer was structured, students may have been able to recognize the pattern and reproduce it with some success in their own essays, but that is ultimately another version of a formula. In the end, the sufficient condition for familiarizing students with how-to compose an introduction without forcing them into a preordained format was met when he asked them to think about *why* the trailer was structured in this way. Attempting to parse an author's process gives students the insight they need to develop their own process.

To create a viable theory of Communicative Composition able to enhance communication literacy, we must review the history of composition to understand how it has come to be practiced and how we can offer a better alternative to the discipline which fit into the existing system.

## A Brief History of Composition

The design of America's first universities did not include English courses as we know them today. Sharon Crowley outlines the time after the civil war when the number of applications to American universities doubled. Before this influx of applicants universities relied on oral examinations to determine eligibility, but this time consuming process couldn't be maintained with so many applicants. Entrance examinations replaced the less standardized formal interview in the mid-19th century. Originally, these entrance examinations were focused on a student's ability to recite the rules of English grammar.

However, by 1870 Harvard began including a portion of the examination wherein applicants were required to read English aloud (Crowley, 1998). Over the course of the next few years the oral examinations were replaced with written examinations, and by 1873 students were required to compose "themes" for considered before admission. (At the time, themes were what we would now call a traditional academic essay.) Applicant performance on the written examination was poor. In 1879 only half of the students who took the exam passed. Interestingly, the prompt for the exam is very similar to contemporary assessment prompts. The prompt from 1879 read:

> Write a short composition upon one of the subjects given below. Before beginning to write, consider what you have to say on the subject selected, and arrange your thoughts in logical order. Aim at quality rather than quantity of work. Carefully revise your composition, correcting all errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, and division by paragraphs, and expression and making each sentence as clear and forcible as possible. If time permits, make a clean copy of the revised work (Crowley, 1998, p. 67).

Crowley speculates that the expectations of Hill, the head of the English department at Harvard during this time, were focused on two parts included in the prompt: a familiarity with classic literature and grammatical correctness. Because less-than-satisfactory performance in either category could result in a failing test the overall numbers of successful candidates remained understandably consistent during Hill's reign (Crowley, 1998).

Until Hill was no longer the guiding force behind these examinations, it is easy to understand why Harvard faculty didn't realize their testers weren't simply failing to a lack of literary knowledge. The startlingly conclusion that students were "imperfectly prepared (…) to write in their mother tongue with ease and correctness" (Crowley, 1998, p. 68) was made clear in the 1890's when 25% of students tested solely on their ability to compose in English were not able to perform satisfactorily.

Similarly, Stanford University began offering a sophomore entrance examination to the same results. This was a sophomore exam because it was designed to assess students before they were admitted to the English major. However, instead of refusing those who failed admittance into English studies, Stanford built the missing skills into their freshman curriculum hoping the next batch would perform better. This was not a required freshman composition course. Rather, those concerned with their chances to become English majors elected to take this course. However, after two years of offering the course, Stanford faculty members bemoaned the constant review of "freshman themes" and the class was taken out of rotation. Harvard went the other way. Harvard moved English to a required freshman course for those who failed the English portion of their entrance exam (Crowley, 1998). This is how the use of standardized entrance testing and half a decade of pressure to require grammar and composition classes first American literacy crisis was subdued (Connors, 1991). However, as the classes improved student results, it seemed the literacy crisis had passed, and composition programs became more difficult to justify.

By the turn of the 19th century, if composition classes existed they needed to be consistently justified. Specifically, composition needed to offer a reason for its existence in programs which did not later offer final examinations in English like those at Yale. In answer to those concerns, the discipline evolved and connected English composition studies with "bourgeois project of self-improvement, just as English-language literary study did" (Crowley, 1998, p. 77). To move focus from composition for the purpose of English-grammar to composition for the purpose of self-improvement courses needed a theoretical platform which differentiated it from literature, but didn't complete remove it from association with English-language literary studies. To do this, composition courses in the early 20th century used literary models to teach quality composition. This method, employed in textbooks throughout the first two thirds of the 20th century is what is now commonly referred to as *current-traditional rhetoric*. Judith Harris (1999) wrote of the most popular textbook at the time:

> In *The Principles of Rhetoric and Their Application (1878),* the first and most popular of his six textbooks, Hill emphasizes features that have come to be identified with current-traditional rhetoric: formal correctness, elegance of style, and the modes of discourse: description, narration, exposition, and argument. Persuasion, for Hill, becomes only a useful adjunct to argument, invention only a system of 'management' in a rhetoric devoted to arrangement and style (p. 18).

The push to teach grammar in the name of literacy decades earlier evolved into a belief that with the right set of language a thought or sense could be communicated to an audience clearly. Interestingly, even the areas of composition which would appear to be

products of a poetic theory—style and arrangement—served a practical purpose: "arrangement so that the order of experience is correctly recorded, and style so that clarity is achieved and class affiliation established" (Berlin, 1987, p. 26). While composition benefited from its relationship with literature, the association also had the negative effect of relegating composition to its reputation as a service discipline. It seems the attempt to define the purpose of composition clearly also had the consequence of limiting its purpose. With the lesser of tasks in English studies, composition was relegated to graduate students to teach. This action kept costs down but created a need for a *teacher-proof textbook* (Connors, 1991). Over the next few decades these textbooks continually provided new ways to allow students to teach themselves with templates, fight the above definition of illiteracy by drilling, and give new teachers not yet respected as scholars in their own right the unenviable position as glorified proctors. Textbook publishers became the guiding force of composition shaping it into a field of professional editing on the sentence level (Berlin, 1987).

Here, in the first quarter of the 20th century, thoughts turned towards answering the question of how English could help students live socially which could, in theory, garner the discipline respect outside of its relationship with literature. However, this had to be accomplished while still tackling the original problem of poor literacy, as we can see in preface to this 1910 college textbook *English Composition and Essay Writing*:

> The recent reports from the University Examiners reveal the fact that the very important subject of English Composition presents serious difficulties to candidates; the standard of marks attained is very low. It is the subject by which

the results of sound teaching may be most effectively tested, and the power of

thought and expression by the student be exhibited (Miller, 1910, p. v).

To accomplish both the primary goal of increasing literacy and the development of social

skills, current-traditional rhetoric was "designed to provide the new middle-class

professionals with the tools to avoid embarrassing themselves in print," and the rhetoric

of liberal culture focused on "courses in writing about literature," (Berlin, 1987, p. 65).

Finally, *Experience teaching* (Connors, 1991) "emphasized writing as training for

participation in the democratic process—a rhetoric of public discourse" were favored and

experimented with in different parts of the country (Berlin, 1987, p. 66).

While a rhetorical approach, as defined by Berlin above, sees deduction as the

way to arrive at truth, the poetic theory approaches contemplation for the sake of the text

itself (Berlin, 1987). Here it becomes necessary to understand the many uses of the term

*rhetoric*. Rhetorical theory, as defined first above, is an alpha category which branches

into current-traditional rhetoric, the rhetoric of liberal culture, and experience teaching.

Although this is not a complete list of the many often-overlapping divisions of rhetorical

theory, these three methods once again show us the unifying characteristic of rhetorical

theory in composition which is to meet practical ends. Briefly, I intend to look at each of

these movements and uncover their objectives.

The 1937 *Teaching Composition and Literature* is a prime example of the still

popular current-traditional rhetoric. Arranged into two parts, the text focuses on "Written

and Oral English" and "Literature Reading and Study." Part One consists of several

sections on vocabulary, letter writing, and speech. Most telling however is this advice

from the subsection "Grading Themes[1]":

> In teaching composition your greatest effort should be expended in developing
>
> your pupils' ability to think clearly. You try to make them realize what qualities
>
> in writing make writing excellent. You stress clarity, logical sequence, emphasis
>
> (Mirriellees, 1937, p. 50).

In this succinct advice we can see the model of current-traditional rhetoric not only in its

tell-tale pursuit of logic, but in the rhetorical theory's belief that clear thought and

excellent writing together produce understanding.

    The rhetoric of liberal culture can also be found in the 1910 textbook above,

*English Composition and Essay Writing*. Although arranged with many of those same

illiteracy fighting lessons like Definitions, Words, The Sentence, The Paragraph, and The

Whole Composition, this text first takes aim at literary composition reading:

> Literary Composition is the art of putting our thoughts into correct and graceful
>
> language, so as to convey them to others clearly and pleasingly. Three conditions,
>
> it is evident, are here necessary:-- 1. We must have ideas to express. 2. We must
>
> express them by means of the correct words. 3. We must arrange our words, our
>
> sentences, and our paragraphs in the right order (Miller, 1910, p. ix).

However, where the current-traditional text separates literature from composition, the

liberal culture text prioritizes it. First, the language must be correct but it must also be

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[1] *Themes* are the term of the time for what we might now call compositions, essays, assignments or stories

graceful. In addition, the introduction makes certain to point out that topics for compositions should not come from the composition classroom but from *literature* and *other reading*. Finally, the liberal culture rhetoric's focus on genius is apparent in the text's warning that writing is not easy and while some skills can be taught "the power of Macaulay, the eloquence of Burke—cannot be taught. These are the personal and incommunicable gifts of individuals" (Miller, 1910, p. xii). In other words, they could teach you to write correctly, but your work was unlikely to rise to the level of art. Finally, we take a look at the so-called *experience teaching*. Though Berlin recognizes its smaller-Midwestern region, he places experience teaching alongside current-traditional rhetoric and liberal culture. However, review of the primary text from the movement, *The New Composition-Rhetoric* (1911), reveals that the authors Fred Newton Scott and Joseph Villiers Denney may open their text with a nod to the relationship between multiple disciplines and professions in regards to their transitive skill-sets, but the instructions for students are still founded in the teaching of an essay template *for the purpose of clear communication*. Where liberal culture rhetoric is set apart by its expectations, experience teaching seems more like a subset of current-traditional rhetoric with a focus on audience than a new branch all together. Perhaps this is why the concept's popularity lived strong for a while then suddenly collapsed before WWII.

During WWII, the English establishment was faced with the task of defining *American* education and born out of this desire came *general education*. General Education reimagined everything about liberal arts and found the best way moving forward would be the reintegration of speech into composition creating a

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Communications course (Connors, 1991). Oddly, the academy's acceptance of the general education program came after its implementation at Harvard where the major feature of the general education program, the communications course, wasn't instituted.

Semantics, linguistics, and other communication related studies flourished in public universities around the country but none so well as the General Semantics movement (Berlin, 1987):

> In general, the discipline of general semantics analyzes how man perceives reality and how man structures his perceptions and relates to the real world through symbols. General semantics attempts to relate three areas of human development: man's thought processes, his language function, and his behavioral responses (Bruner & Pettit, 1973, p. 2).

For the purposes of understanding this movement's importance in the history of composition, we must look at how it was used. First, propaganda analysis was taught with general semantics' tools. Then, following World War II, a main idea of general semantics—the "relation of language to object" (Berlin, 1987)—was a common tool in language, speech, composition, and communication courses. Berlin argues that this practice of trying to teach the *right* word to draw the *right* thought into a reader's mind was still strongly positivistic, but points out that general semantics evolved "to a phenomenological and transactional epistemology" (p. 95). He wrote: "Herbert Hackett argued that general semantics had become the 'middleman for the transmission of ideas from anthropology, sociology, psychology, biology, mathematics, and other disciplines" (p. 96). General semantics worked its way into composition courses when

communications courses became a part of general education. Then, as general semantics and the communications scholars with whom it associates continued to gather ideas from multiple fields of study their influence was still felt in composition.

The relationship between communications and composition was cemented in 1947 when the Speech Association of America and the NCTE sponsored a conference where a discussion about "the importance of freshman composition to the college student" (Berlin, 1987, p. 96) garnered so much interest another meeting was set to continue discussing it. Thus the College Conference on Composition & Communication was born. The CCCC quickly founded a journal, *College Composition and Communication,* which Berlin believed gave freshman composition credibility it had not before enjoyed. John C. Gerber, the first chairman of the CCCC, introduced the organization in the first issue of *College Composition and Communication* with similar sentiments writing, "We believe that the activities of this new organization are aimed at the practical needs in the profession, that the standards of the profession will be raised because of them" (1950, p. iv).

With this goal in mind the workshops discussed and agreed upon certain objectives for composition courses in general education at their 1950 Spring Conference. Published in *College Composition and Communication* the goals were as follows:

| |
|---|
| 1. To cultivate the ability to think logically

*By studying logic informally in readings and using logical methods in composition* |
| 2. To cultivate respect for human worth despite accidents of class, color, culture or other divisive circumstances

*By reading works drawn from world literature to inform the students of differences among men; requiring the student to study his own ideas and behavior in comparison with that of others* |
| 3. To develop taste *by analyzing in class discussion and in critical compositions certain literary works; presenting problems in the evaluation of literary works* |
| 4. To develop the ability to discipline emotions and to arrive at reasonable judgments *by reading materials that enable the student to achieve a better understanding of human nature; requiring compositions on controversial topics the qualities of clarity and fairness* |
| 5. To develop intellectual competence *by developing and demonstrating through appropriate readings and required compositions, intellectual competence* |
| 6. To cultivate a belief in the necessity of ethical behavior *by demonstrating the existence of a moral tradition through readings, and requiring of compositions the application of a defined standard of judgement* |

("The Function," 1950)

However, in that same journal the article "Objectives and Organization of the Composition Course: Report of Workshop No. 3" outlines a more practical plan:

The objective of the course as defined is to develop in the freshman the power of

clearly communicating facts or ideas in writing to a specified reader or group of

readers. All other aspects of the course (such as, skill in reading, the study of

semantics, the enlargement of vocabulary, command of mechanics and grammar,

introduction to literature) should be considered subsidiary, to be introduced *only*

*to the degree* that they can be demonstrated to serve the end of clear and effective

writing (1950, p. ix).

Furthermore, the report makes special mention that composition classes will not bear the

full responsibility of producing students ready to meet the requirements needed to not

embarrass their institutions *or* indoctrinate them with humanistic values. This is a shift in

the thinking from the first quarter of the 19th century described above which focused on

how to teach students live socially. This shift exemplifies the steady move over the

nineteenth century of composition away from English-language literature studies to the

more product-oriented current-traditional rhetorical, and finally the general semantics

movement.

Out of many theories and over almost a century, composition professors had

finally come together to create a defined discipline and garner some respect (and the

privileges attending it,) but, ironically, they were still issuing a mixed message. I believe

the mixed message came from the three major organizations for the discipline, the MLA,

NCTE, and CCC's foci on different objectives from the literature, rhetorical, and

semantics schools of thought (italics have been added in each statement to draw attention

to the language indicating their appropriate schools of thought):

- Founded in 1883, the MLA's focus has been to "promote the study and teaching of languages and *literatures*" ("The MLA's Mission," 2018).

- Founded in 1911, the NCTE's mission is to "promote the development of *literacy*, the use of language to construct personal and public worlds and to achieve full *participation in society*, through the learning and teaching of English and the related arts and sciences of language" ("About Us," 2018).

- Founded in 1949, CCCC is "committed to supporting the agency, power, and potential of diverse communicators inside and outside of postsecondary classrooms. CCCC advocates for broad and evolving definitions of *literacy, communication, rhetoric, and writing* (including multimodal discourse, digital communication, and diverse language practices) that emphasize the value of these activities to empower individuals and communities. CCCC promotes intellectual and pedagogical freedom and ethical scholarship and communication" ("About CCCC," 2018).

There seems to me to be one area of study which married the above ideals and practice: rhetoric. Additionally, the pursuit of rhetorical principles was often colored with the objectives of good character which were informing communications at the same time (Benson, 1985). However, Crowley fervently disagrees. In her aptly named article "Composition is not Rhetoric," Crowley outlines the historical relationship of composition and rhetoric. Mainly that literary composition has been considered a

rhetorical art since the attic period (Crowley, 2003).Then, Crowley identifies how she

believes we inaccurately describe composition as a rhetorical practice. She wrote as

follows:

> [Composition was] given [its name] by the Arnoldian humanists who invented the
>
> first-year requirement, and who went out of their way to kill off the vestiges of
>
> rhetorical study that remained in American colleges at the time.
>
> That's the historical connection between rhetoric and composition. The second,
>
> political, connection has been in play for only about forty years. Here rhetoric is
>
> yoked to composition as a means of securing status for composition teachers. Any
>
> such effort to lend respectability to composition, it must be said, puts rhetoric at
>
> the service of composition, hence inverting the historical relationship between the
>
> two arts. Nonetheless, such efforts are periodically made. During the 1960s and
>
> '70s, for example, a number of English-rhetoricians (E. P. J. Corbett, Frank
>
> D'Angelo, and Ross Winterowd, among others) tried to insert rhetoric into current
>
> thinking about composition, writing journal articles and textbooks that reviewed
>
> the mutual history of the two arts and articulated possible contemporary
>
> connections between them (Crowley, 2003, n.p.).

Crowley goes on to write that these efforts to marry rhetoric and composition failed while

the current-traditional praxis still exists in the classroom today. Further, she identifies that

Composition Phd's are sometimes granted with no rhetoric study whatsoever. And

finally, that rhetoric may be present in the pursuit of organization, style, voice, audience,

and other qualities found in modern first-year writing programs but the purpose of rhetoric, "civic intervention," is absent.

In my estimation, there a number of issues with Crowley's analysis of the relationship between rhetoric, and composition. Namely, its purpose. Rhetoric may have been born out of the sophists desire to trade in people's ability to speak in front of ancient Greek crowds, but it grew. By the time Aristotle was teaching, rhetoric served the purpose of the best available means of persuasion. Longinus reviewed rhetoric as a philosophy on the art of language. Whoever actually wrote Ad Herreneum organized rhetoric as means of critical thinking. Yes, these are all examples of people who originally used rhetoric in civil discourse. But rhetoric itself was *not* civil discourse. Even Plato was worried about the dangers of rhetoric because it could be used to do things like make an unqualified doctor seem credible. Crowley wrote that rhetoric was turned to serve composition. I agree. I just don't see the problem. When was rhetoric not a tool used to investigate, communicate, and comprehend?

As for Crowley's example of English-rhetoricians trying to insert rhetoric into composition, I believe it was insertion but a reframing of the objectives already a part of composition. The objectives listed by the CCCC at its inception and its current mission statement are nothing less than a comprehensive survey of rhetorical principals:

- To cultivate the ability to think logically

- To cultivate respect for human worth despite accidents of class, color, culture or other divisive circumstances

- To develop taste

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- To develop the ability to discipline emotions and to arrive at reasonable
  judgments

- To develop intellectual competence

- To cultivate a belief in the necessity of ethical behavior

- And the mission statement: [to support] the agency, power, and potential
  of diverse communicators

Furthermore, we can see this relationship in the product of those English-rhetorician's efforts in the 1960s and 70s by reviewing their context. According to Berlin's account, the launching of Sputnik (1957) set off a storm of concern over the American education system. We were losing the space race to the communists. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 was intended to improve courses in math and science, but by 1964 also included other areas of study housed in English departments (Berlin, 1987). With new interest in the liberal arts came funding which gave the MLA and the NCTE reason to work together for the first time in almost fifty years (Berlin, 1987). Out of this relationship and with the influence of Harvard psychologist Jerome Bruner's *The Process of Education*, the process writing movement took aim at teaching the practice of rhetorical principles (Connors, 1991). This means that even at the beginning of the process movement, explored below, rhetoric was an active force in the pursuit of composition.

However, Connors believes the gap between theory and practice only widened during this time as large numbers of scholars were being granted PhDs in composition. The published scholarship of this era reveals a focus on empirical research, because they

believed empirical research would become common practice in composition and solve many of its issues (Connors, 1991). For a short while this schism existed and research went on in earnest with little reference to the practicality of classroom pedagogy. But by the late 80s process and pedagogy scholars were calling for the incorporation of that researched philosophy into the classroom. This could only be accomplished, they believed, by making it a priority to teach students how knowledge is created and how discourse communities are formed (Connors, 1991)

I would like to take a moment here to acknowledge the intermingling of two allegedly distinct accounts in this history of composition. One, championed by Robert Connors, views the history of composition as a series of crises and proposed solutions. The other, widely accepted and authored by James Berlin, breaks the history of composition into eras. I believe these two scholars are ultimately reporting the same story and framing them differently. The process movement, return to rhetoric, legitimization of composition scholars, and the "vacuum" research those scholars were accused of conducting are a good example of this phenomenon. While Connors illustrates the break between research and practice as a inviolable border in the late 60's, Berlin points out quite separately that scholars like Albert Kitzhaber were revitalizing and, in many instances, arguing for the very existence of freshman composition by fighting for a rhetorical approach.

Looking through this history of composition, I see instances of all of the foundational skills I received in general education and attempts to include the ones I needed later in life but didn't receive in my undergraduate program. All of this leads me

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to the conclusion that communication was meant to be a part of composition, but it was lost in the conceptual separation of skills and art. First, the growing distance between the study of literature and the practice of composition made it appear as though composition was not an art but a literacy skill. Here, communication was relegated to the needs of correct English. Then, a similar problem arose with the distinction between composing to live socially, and composing to achieve literacy. In this time, communication was included but tied to the social objective. And finally, the, I believe, unjustified definition of composition as a non-rhetorical discipline. Communication is a rhetorical art from its inception in oration to its cataloguing of figures to its very performative nature. Not only do I think divorcing rhetoric from composition is unwise; I think it's impossible. Communicative Composition frames composition as a personal communicative act, rather than a general communication exercise, enabling us to build not only the technical skills composition pursued in the beginning but reclaim the artistry we're accused of losing in the pursuit.

## Communicative Composition

I've developed the theory of Communicative Composition in the hopes that it can help create better and more useful composition courses. In that vein, attention has been paid to working within the existing system. Communicative Composition is an idea built on four pillars: Personal, Process, Creative, and Collaborative. I believe together these four pillars can improve composition by creating an environment that encourages students to understand they are part of many larger conversations and the skills they need to participate in them.

Having said that, I would like to take moment to acknowledge the hesitation of some in the liberal arts community to embrace skill-based curricula in light of our historic aim to mold the more abstract qualities that make someone, in the simplest terms, a good person—I have not forgotten our calling during the development of this theory. Quite the opposite, I believe these skills are the very ones that give students the ultimate access to discovering, for themselves, what "good" means. As F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong" ("F. Scott Fitzgerald," 2014, n.p.). I've composed the Communicative Composition theory with the belief that students can be given the opportunity to find the many places they belong; indeed, that they are part of even places they have never known. At the same time, they can create a skill-base for the more mundane future of "the real world" making these newly discovered perspectives explorable in real time. Now, we must examine how these skills and the exploration they lead to are all parts of the act of communication.

Indeed, a focus on communication is already an impressive part of some programs. In his own effort to communicate, former president of Brandeis University and current CEO of Phi Beta Kappa Fredrick Lawrence called us all to arms with a famous quote from the first president of Johns Hopkins University, Daniel Coit Gilman. In regards to the purpose of the university, Gilman said, "[higher education] means a wish for less misery among the poor, less ignorance in schools, less bigotry in the temple, less suffering in the hospital, less fraud in business, [and] less folly in politics" (Benson, 2017, n.p.). In order, these goals require opportunity, comprehension, empathy, research,

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honesty, and analysis. Finding opportunity is part of living socially which requires communication. Comprehension comes from learning which requires communication. Empathy is a product of communication. Research is a form of communication. Honesty is an option in communication. And analysis is the act of listening/reading and reviewing, which is at the very least being the recipient of communication. To give those whose education is in our charge a chance to participate in any of these areas, they must be able to practice successful communication. To say this in another way, our students must be communication literate.

Some institutions have already formalized an approach to communication literacy by renaming their composition requirements. A sample of Texas Tech's "Communication Literacy Requirement" (n.d.) reads as follows:

> To be effective leaders, workers, and citizens—whether in the arts, government, health care, information services, industry, education, or anything else—college graduates must possess the ability to communicate effectively. That is, they must possess communication literacy.
>
> Above all, communication literacy is about competence and proficiency; the attainment of both entails fostering a critical understanding of how communication functions in different contexts, appreciating its uniquely transactional nature, adapting messages to situations and audiences, and communicating in ways that are ethically and socially responsible in a diverse global society ("Communication Literacy Requirement," n.d., n.p.).

Here, the Texas Tech curriculum designers define communication literacy as a two part achievement: competence and proficiency. Examining this definition against other understandings of communication literacy reveals an inconsistency in the concept at large. The University at Buffalo describes their communication literacy requirement as "a two-course writing sequence that recognizes students communicate in a diverse world that is at once *textual, digital, and highly visual*" (Faculty, 2018). While this description touches on the competency objective of communication literacy, its exploration into what it means to be proficient is implicitly focused in genre, or multimodality.

This framing of communication is not new. In 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) attempted to measure literacy, or "the knowledge and skills needed to perform tasks," in three categories:

Prose literacy- "editorials, news stories, brochures, and instructional materials"

Document literacy- "job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and drug or food labels"

Quantitative literacy- "balancing a checkbook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount" ("Three Types of Literacy," 2003, n.p.). Although all parts of this definition of literacy are means of communication, currently composition programs are only responsible for the explanation of Prose literacy. The ability to gather information is still broken down by how that information is presented. What the University at Buffalo and NCES frameworks fail to mention is the adaptability and cross-genre nature of all communication. Texas Tech's description avoids this gap by claiming to examine how communication functions in different *contexts*. This framing

promotes a larger view of communication literacy as a multipart exercise which includes but is not limited to the interpretation of a single text.

Having said that, we are working within an existing system and, although we may recognize that the needs of students are greater than what they receive, we cannot always act on these issues for lack of funding, time, and other forms of support from the academy and community. Stuart Selber's introduction to *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age* (2004) speaks to the same issues in computer literacy programs.

> Critique, he wrote, "is certainly one crucial aspect of any computer literacy program, for it encourages a cultural awareness of power structures. But students must also be able to use computers effectively as well as participate in the construction and reconstruction of technological systems. *What is needed, then, is an approach to computer literacy that is both useful and professionally responsible*…(italics added) (p. 7).

Replacing the word "computer" in that last sentence with "communication" gives us our mandate. Communicative Composition is a theory which strives to enhance communication literacy, defined in the next chapter, in ways that are adaptable to the current systems.

The closest current practice to what Communicative Composition theory is the product of research from Wendy Bishop. Author of "Crossing the Lines: Creative Composition and Composing Creative Writing," "Suddenly Sexy: Creative Nonfiction Rear-Ends Composition," and other notable works, Bishop's main focus is combining elements from creative writing with composition to enhance composition. For example,

"Crossing the Lines" discusses how students are more likely to engage with classwork if it is undertaken with the same feelings students have about creative writing where they are free to explore their own creativity, voice, and message. "Suddenly Sexy," described by the collection of essays *Creative Composition: Inspiration and Techniques for Writing Instruction* as her break-out article, covers similar ground with a specific focus on overlapping assignments in creative writing and composition. This is useful, thoughtful scholarship. In fact, I will engage with many of the articles from the *Creative Composition* essay collection in the following chapters.

Creative composition in the essay collection refers specifically to using creative writing to enhance composition. In this way it is an adjective (creative) and a modified noun (composition). Further, in the essays themselves techniques from creative writing are applied to composition as it currently exists. They are on the whole useful, but in the end they represent only small changes. The theory of Communicative Composition discussed in the following pages is a reimagining and reorganization of composition made up of, yes, some creative writing practices, but also different practices from composition, communication, and other relevant research.

The following theory of Communicative Composition is a new idea. As new ideas often come to be, this is a synthesis of ideas from many corners, some seemingly unconnected, which are bound together by purpose and organized interdependently as an independent methodology. Studying the research which has come before me, I do not see this work as a product of standing on the shoulders of giants. To me, this is far more complex. There is not one giant to whose work I can trace each idea, but writers,

instructors, philosophers, communicators, and even students through time and space to whom I have the privilege to say, "Look at what we can create…together."

In Chapter Two, I will synthesize a definition of communication literacy, drawn from composition studies, communication, and other disciplines in the hopes that educators will use this information to help students develop such literacy. Then, in Chapter Three, I will define the pillars and practices of Communicative Composition theory, and explore how this theory may lead to the enhancement of communication literacy. In Chapter Four, I will outline potential paths to building Communicative Composition syllabi. Finally, Chapter Five will conclude this work.

CHAPTER II

WHAT COMMUNICATION LITERACY MEANS CONTEMPORARILY

A discussion about what Communicative Composition is and how it can enhance communication literacy must begin with a definition of communication literacy, which can then lead us to criteria for evaluating creative composition theory's potential effect on communication literacy. Communication is a fractured word in academia. Literacy is an ambiguous word everywhere. To begin, I will examine how literacy has been defined and implemented in international education policy, then specific actions taken by U.S. policy makers which reveal the working definition of literacy at a governmental level because these high level definitions are where policy makers begin in determining what educational objectives will guide educators.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined literacy formally three times over half a century:

Table 1

*History of UNESCO Literacy Definitions*

| |
|---|
| 1958: A person is literate who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement in his or her everyday life. |
| 1978: A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development. |
| 2005: Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate fully in community and wider society |

(Ahmed, 2011).

We can see from these definitions the evolution and complex growth of literacy as a concept. As technology has become more sophisticated, expansive and – in many parts of the world – ubiquitous, we have become a closer global community (Glaser, 2018). As outlined by the most recent definition of literacy from UNESCO, literacy must include a "continuum of learning" or an adaptive skill-set to enable the growth of multimodal literacy skills as technology advances.

Similarly for American universities, in the early 80's the focus of communication became the utility of skill for oral presentations potentially engaging the use of multiple media and moved towards technical skills in separate speech classrooms where students were judged by a standard of communicative competence. Communicative competence was considered the ability of a student to interact with others and successfully accomplish their own interpersonal goals (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). The purpose of communicative competence was social literacy in an in-person or group context. This definition would not be successful today. The problem when equating communicative competence with social literacy, or social skills in a social setting, occurs when we consider the context in which the terms were developed. The 1980's were not yet steeped in the internet. Speech classrooms focused on oration well into the 1990's. Today, true communicative competence, while still including speaking skills, also requires a multitude of other modal competencies because even though the internet is still a collection of social spaces the above American focus of communication had not yet considered being online as a common social interaction. In fact, in 1998 studies were still warning that internet users "may be vulnerable to social isolation, loneliness, and depression" (Camp J. & Chien Y.T., 1999, n.p.). Although the definition of social literacy today has expanded to include "knowing how to use social tools and platforms to find and gather information, share thoughts, and generate discussion" (Heinila, 2013, n.p.), social literacy alone does not capture the complexity of communication literacy. Therefore, social literacy will be referred to as a subset of communication literacy to facilitate analysis going forward.

James Paul Gee's distinction between acquired and learned skill sets clearly illustrates this contemporary issue. Primary discourses, or the cultural discourse of home, is an acquired skill set prompted by communication *with* one's environment. Secondary discourses are developed in secondary institutions like school and work. In these places we use the skill sets of our primary discourse to communicate *about* our environment. Gee calls mastery in these environments *primary literacy* and *secondary literacy*, respectively (1989). Communicating is a practice we acquire from childhood, but effective communication requires "skills of communication like speaking skills, listening skills, writing skills and reading skills. This is the reason why successful and effective communicators are made but not born" (Rossiter, 2009, p. 129). Communication literacy, then, is both a primary and secondary literacy because, although it is acquired by participation in our natural environment, it must be informed by secondary institutions.

Communication literacy can be further divided into three areas of focus drawing from Selber's *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age* where he examines these three literacies in regards to discourse and practice with computers and the digital world specifically (2004): to be communicatively competent as functional literacy; au fait with digital and multigenre (not to exclude literature) texts as critical literacy; and cognizant participants in multiple discourse communities as rhetorical literacy[2]. By examining this breakdown we can scaffold the requirements for building communication literacy and later consider them while reviewing the organization of the Communicative Composition curriculum.

## Functional Communication Literacy

Assessing communicative competence as functional literacy in this era complicates the early distinctions offered by Ferdinand D. Saussure between *la langue (*language) and *la parole* (speech). Linguistic competence in *la langue* means knowing language and its rules, or grammar. If someone follows these rules they are definitively linguistically competent. However, speech competency, or linguistic performance, is assessed on the ability to demonstrate "appropriate communicative behavior in a given situation" (Larson, 1978, p. 16).This means linguistic competence is two parts: knowing the rules of speech and being able to follow them. Communicative competence currently means successfully interacting in multicultural, multilingual, and digital environments where the "rules" are constantly adapting to new technologies. Whether we are interacting with new cultural and lingual amalgams or new technologies, best practices for clear communication must evolve. I believe the functionality of communication literacy should be defined by its flexibility. In other words, to be communicatively literate students must be capable of utilizing multiple tools for composition.

Examples of the necessity of a breadth of composition skills are plentiful across many discourses. Interestingly, healthcare writing has become its own focus in some educational institutions with an eye for helping healthcare professionals become better communicators overall. They see the ability to competently communicate as creating "better patient care" by ensuring observations are recorded concisely and accurately in the event a patient is transferred to someone else's care, "documentation abilities" which are necessary for the institution-facing records, and "expanding career opportunities." In

the last case, composition tasks include "writing reports, analyzing trended data, creating job descriptions, developing patient-facing materials or even writing blog posts" ("Why Nurses," n.d., n.p.). Each of these listed tasks requires interaction with different technologies. This doesn't even begin to touch on emails and reviews. However, this example should not be interpreted as a cry for how nurses need flexible composition skills (although they do); instead, this is an example of how communication literacy is not limited to one kind of task.

Contemporary technologies have become ubiquitous in the majority of American workplaces. Pew Research Center published a survey conducted in September of 2014 among a sample of 1,066 adult internet users, 18 years of age or older. The survey included 535 adults employed full-time or part-time. Pew Research Center argues:

> Work done in the most sophisticated scientific enterprises, entirely new technology businesses, the extensive array of knowledge and media endeavors, the places where crops are grown, the factory floor, and even mom-and-pop stores has been reshaped by new pathways to information and new avenues of selling goods and services. For most office workers now, life on the job means like online. (n.p.)

The survey supporting this conclusion was comprised of a single question: is the internet "very important" to doing your job? This question was followed by a breakdown by what tools on the internet were most to least useful. Email ranked first with 61%, then 'the internet' (54%), landline phones (35%), smartphones (24%), and social networking sites

making up the smallest portion at 4% (Purcell & Rainie, 2014). These numbers suggest that functional communication literacy must include communicating electronically.

What the survey doesn't address is the wide array of media included in electronic communication that comes with learning to use these platforms. We must now examine how using more advanced technologies is a part of functional communication literacy. Although we may be inclined to believe younger generations are going to be more competent with new technologies, a recent survey from the American Institutes for Research found that millennials are able to use some technologies like social networking while still being ill-equipped to produce works using basic word processing programs like Word (Schaffhauser, 2015). Certainly, most people know enough about communicating online to answer emails and participate in social networking, but browsing online for information, keeping detailed records in data sheets like Excel or Word, and simple visual tasks like cropping a photo, formatting a table, clipping audio, and balancing a slide's design can be challenging (Schaffhauser, 2015). To combat these user deficiencies, developers engineer programs to assist online communicators.

Like autocorrect, many websites have been created to help those less technologically literate achieve clear communication with the expectations of the contemporary workplace. *Prezi, Emaze, Haiku Deck, Slidess,* and *Pixxa Perspective* are among many other presentation engines that assist users by offering templates to fill in their information. These are a good introduction to presentations, but the problem with templates in presentations is the same problem as having templates in essays: they can alter the intended message if a user isn't comfortable straying from the template when

their ideal organization and the template's organization diverge. Similarly, sites like *Wix,*
*Duda, Squarespace, Weebly, Simvoly, Strikingly, GoDaddy GoCentral,* and *Yola* offer
templates to help users build and publish their own websites without having to be familiar
with programming languages. These websites and technologies as a whole are often
considered tools, which implies that they can be used. Like with other tools, the one we
choose affects the outcome of the task we apply it to. Developing functional
communication literacy includes understanding which tools offer the user the opportunity
to engineer their desired outcome.

In *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age,* Stuart A. Selber interrogates this tool
metaphor. While Selber points out that there are dangers in seeing computers as tools
(tools should be used correctly,) he also points out their potential (some tools serve many
purposes.) "In the negative side," he wrote, "this trope masks the political dimensions of
technology as well as the ways in which it helps to structure a wide range of human
activities. On the positive side, however, the notion of people as exploiters of tools
encourages users to keep their task objectives and personal responsibilities in mind"
(2004, p. 34).

*Exploiters* is an intriguing word in this quote, because while here it is perfectly
neutral (as is the trope itself) the reality of higher functional literacy can equip someone
to exploit others or to protect themselves from being exploited. Those who are less
literate may be at the mercy of those more literate.

A short reflection from a gerontological nurse illustrates the vulnerability of the
illiterate. She wrote: "'I didn't bring my glasses, can you please read this for me?' This is

a familiar refrain of those who cannot read. I was shocked into another reality following an address on adult illiteracy at a recent Rotary Club meeting. Have we all not recognized these words from patients and ignored a major problem - illiteracy?" (Burgraf, 2002, n.p). This is a familiar story. How can people in this situation be in control of what should be their own communication? Functional communication illiteracy is this story retold in a swarm of mediums. Being familiar with language—that is simply knowing how to read and write—isn't communication literacy and communication illiteracy can be dangerous for everyone.

So what does this have to do with functional communication literacy? Here, we get into an area of literacy studies that muddies (and more accurately documents) the spectrum of literacy. UNESCO realized the need to differentiate between these levels in 1978, and composed definitions which have served as flexible guidelines ever since. Their definitions are as follows:

- A person is **literate** who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.
- A person is **illiterate** who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.
- A person is **functionally literate** who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development.

- A person is **functionally illiterate** who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development

Here, the distinction between a literate and functionally illiterate person can inform this exploration of communication literacy. Working with the above definition, we can adapt this definition of functional literacy for the purposes of communication literacy. A person may be literate, but functionally illiterate. They may be able to read and write, but not be able to use all the tools required for effective communication in their group or community.

Functional illiteracy in regards to contemporary communication literacy can have devastating consequences on a large scale. Difficulties comprehending communication in the ways listed above leave some vulnerable to the largely visual (both writing and images) communication online. For example, Facebook is currently under scrutiny for not attempting to stop Russian interests which fed false information into the population while posing as interested American citizens. By creating a false, American-friendly profile Russian operatives were able to disseminate misleading, and often completely made up information. Determining the credibility of a source is part of functional literacy as described by Selber (2004); As discussed above, to properly use a tool a literate person must be familiar with that tool. Although, not all of Facebook can be labeled credible or not credible, the first step to being able to make this distinction is awareness. Users may

not always be able to tell if the information they receive isn't credible by looking at a photograph, but being familiar with remixing, editing, and acquiring images creates the functional knowledge that others can do the same thing.

Similarly, being familiar with browsing websites isn't enough. However, being familiar with creating, designing, and filling a website with content builds the functional knowledge that others can do the same thing. There are not any cure-alls for functional illiteracy but consistent participation and education of society in creating rather than simply consuming communication can help. Functional communication literacy requires flexible abilities because there are many ways to say something and a whole world speaking.

A working, or functional, composition education must include diverse modalities. In regards to the applicableness of functional literacy, this is only the first step. After familiarity with different modes is established, a person must also be critically and rhetorically literate to achieve full communication literacy.

### Critical Communication Literacy

However, flexibility doesn't relieve us of the necessity of building from a strong knowledge base and then challenging preconceived notions (Selber, 2004). In fact, flexibility is impossible without it. Knowledge needs to be as exhaustive as possible to equip communicators to adapt. Critical literacy builds on functional literacy; I propose that limiting composition classroom sources to what would be considered academically relevant traditionally handicaps all writers in a vastly more diverse world.

In 2013, Columbia University researchers estimated that the average American knows about 600 people, but they only know ten to twenty-five of them well enough to trust them (Celman, 2013). These numbers are a good analogy for how we interact with communication in whichever form it takes. We probably trust a few favorite methods of communication over the slew of available platforms. Critical communication illiteracy happens when those few favorite outlets are the only outlets someone knows. To complete the analogy, it would be like the ten people you trust being the only people you know. You couldn't get anything done. A person who has critical communication literacy deficits has the same problem.

Being critically literate begins with being exposed to a multitude of texts. As we are introduced to a greater number of discourse and language communities, we overcome communication barriers with shared rhetorics (i.e. visual, musical) and adapt familiar language practices to suit new contexts. A person will have a greater chance at successfully participating in these environments if exposed to their various texts—literary, digital, visual, musical, academic, linguistic, the many places these overlap and beyond. The critical branch of communication literacy, as proposed here, should, should be inclusive and descriptive to support the development of a comprehensive base.

Critical communication literacy is also crucial for the development of information literacy. Information literacy is defined by the American Library Association as "a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" ("Academic Skills," 2018, n.p.).Contemporarily, information literacy is an increasingly valuable skill because of

the sheer number of information sources available to the average consumer. In all areas of life, people must search for information if they want to make rational decisions. Although there are credible sources available to the public in libraries and other academic sources, the easier option is the powerful search engines in our own homes. The ALA issues a warning about source credibility when they write:

> Increasingly, information comes to individuals in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. In addition, information is available through multiple media, including graphical, aural, and textual, and these pose new challenges for individuals in evaluating and understanding it. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose large challenges for society. *The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively (italics added)* ("Library & Information", 2016, n.p.).

The necessary abilities referred to above fall under the critical literacy branch of communication literacy. Recognizing this, we can explore now how critical communication literacy is the platform from which this information literacy is achievable. Put simply, a "complementary cluster of abilities" is not an attainable goal without the ability to process the plethora of sources described.

From another perspective, Nora Murphy, an instructor at Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy, wrote for the American Association of School Librarians's *Knowledge Quest* that source literacy, the antecedent step to information literacy, is *not* about being exposed randomly to multiple sources. She wrote, "It is, instead, the ability to interpret

from context, to know what to ask, to read the clues, and to use the understanding

brought from knowing about other sources." Murphy's argument is that those of us who

have been source literate for a long time can do this intuitively, but the process is

intimidating to students. However, she continues by saying that "with increased fluency

(…) that process becomes less explicit and more intuitive" (2016, n.p.). She advises

moving source literacy out of the "realm of random experience" and purposefully design

lessons which highlight the transferrable skills for critical analysis.

In regards to critical communication, I think Murphy's approach is a little

idealistic. In a perfect world, we could control the flow and quality of sources students

have access to while they learn to evaluate them for credibility. We are already being

bombarded. The question is whether or not we have the ability to sort the information.

Further, students may have previously-adopted relationships with practice of

sorting information. In September of 2017 the Pew Research Group conducted a survey

entitled, "How People Approach Facts and Information." Among a national sample of

3,015 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of

Columbia some 838 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 2,258

were interviewed on a cellphone. They framed their study of how people interact with

information and how-much they trust varieties of sources in five broad questions:

- How interested are they in the subject?

- How much do they trust the sources of information that relate to the
  subject?

- How eager are they to learn something more?

- What other aspects of their lives might be competing for their attention and their ability to pursue information?

- How much access do they have to the information in the first place?

From the answers to these questions the Pew Research Group five groups emerged: 22% of the participants were classified as "The Eager and Willing," 16% were classified as "The Confident," 13% were classified as "The Cautious and Curious," 24% were classified as "The Doubtful," 25% were classified as "The Wary." The groupings are similar sizes and represent a mixture of all ethnic groups and ages without being separated by these criteria. As we can see from the results, there are plenty of places every day for people of all walks of life to get information (Horrigan, 2017). Whether or not that is good information is a question people must be armed with the ability to answer. If we hyperbolize these results, we would be led to believe that older people won't believe anything; white, middle-aged and middle-incomes won't believe most things; most people aren't really sure; pre-middle aged college graduates will believe some things; and minorities will believe anything. In regards to how we approach communication literacy—specifically, critical literacy within communication literacy—this is an enormous revelation. Foucault philosophized that we are all products of our discourse. Certainly, the way we handle information would make it seem like he is right. However, critical literacy is about breaking those boundaries down—reading through and communicating through demographic lines.

Critical communication literacy is about being exposed to multiple sources, modes, genres, technologies. Selber wrote about critical literacy in computer literacy is

an under-developed branch. He asserts students are not encouraged to ask questions that interrogate these tools, but they *should* be.

> A critical approach to literacy, he wrote, first recognizes and then challenges the values of the status quo. Instead of reproducing the existing social and political order, which functional modes do, it strives to both expose biases and provide an assemblage of cultural practices that, in a democratic spirit, might lead to the production of positive social change (2004).

Applying this same standard to communication literacy, the practice of exposing students to new communication must also be followed up with Selber's questions: "What is lost as well as gained? Who profits? Who is left behind and for what reasons?"(p. 81). When considering all the different possible platforms, and the genres in which each is appropriate, educators can show students how different people participate or don't participate in various contexts. After this introduction and initial exploration, students are more likely to be comfortable with both the tools of communication and how these tools affect a message. The final step in pursuit of communication literacy is composing in these contexts and developing rhetorical communication literacy.

### Rhetorical Communication Literacy

Finally, with wide-spread text experiences, students are best able to develop the third branch of communication literacy: rhetorical literacy. Successfully practicing rhetorical literacy requires both functional and critical literacy because it includes the awareness of and reflection on your knowledge and practice. Selber (2004) communicates this idea in the following way:

If discussions of functional and critical literacy construct a well-established dualism, teachers have just begun to define the parameters for rhetorical literacy, which at least partially mediates this dualism because rhetorical literacy insists upon praxis—the thoughtful integration of functional and critical abilities in the design and evaluation of computer interfaces (p. 145).

Again, applying this standard to communication literacy, we revisit the necessity of design in communication. Rhetorical literacy can also be broken down into areas of participation. These areas can be described as utility, which privileges the use of knowledge; liberal culture, which privileges the preservation of knowledge; and research ideal, which privileges the creation of knowledge respectively. Once taught collectively, utility, liberal culture and the research ideal were separated by scholars in the 19$^{th}$ century as post-secondary education was reformatted. Scholars had to demonstrate that their work was *wissenschaft* (theory and knowledge) as opposed to art, which was practice and doing.

Communicative competence theory was a product of establishing speech communication as a legitimate field "centered on constructing an identity based on research and utility ideals" (Goggin, 1999, p. 35). Linguistics and communication theory became centered on the research ideal, and composition was relegated to practice, or demonstration. Creative writing was further marginalized as art, or *geisteswissenschaft*[3], and had little claim to the legitimacy scientific inquiry offered.

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[3] *Naturwissenschaft* (working with universal truths) as opposed to *geisteswissenschaft* (working with contingent truths)

Navigating the various definitions of rhetorical literacy requires an incorporation of these ideals in the rhetorical literacy branch of communication literacy. Using, preserving, and creating knowledge are all necessary exercises in learning to be communication literate. Different institutions are approaching this issue from different angles. For example, as quoted in the introduction Texas Tech University's definition of communication literacy focuses on rhetorical literacy and assumes there will be an introduction to functional and critical literacy. Functional literacy is "competence and proficiency;" critical literacy is "how communication functions in different contexts;" and finally rhetorical literacy is the last section of the description in which we see *using* communications ("adapting messages to situations and audiences,") *preserving* communications ("ethically and socially responsible,") and *creating* communications through a negotiation of the preceding ("Communication Literacy Requirement").

Similar to experiences students need to achieve functional literacy, using communication to build the rhetorical literacy branch of communication literacy is focused on different platforms of communication. There are a number of ways to communicate contemporarily. The rules of conversation are complex and covered by linguists, sociologists, and cognitive scientists. Turn-taking is a specific set of behaviors which changes between different contemporary communications. I believe we can break down this exploration into their time-associated contexts with their platforms: synchronous, semi-synchronous, and asynchronous communication. This breakdown facilitates analysis of the parallels across media, group communication, one-way communication, and two-way communications. By grouping communication types by

turn-taking expectations we can see how dissimilar mediums follow similar rules. Additionally, we discover missing communication media in contemporary composition.

Synchronous communications are largely in-person conversations, but also include phone calls, video telecommunication, and instant messaging. Synchronous communications were the first form of communication. From the first grunt of pre-lingual society to the yelling across the house to see if your significant other folded the laundry, these are conversations at their most basic level. These kinds of conversations are still conducted in much the same way across multiple technologies.

Turn-taking is largely unaffected by which platform synchronous communication takes place on. Cognitive scientist Steven Levinson explains turn-taking as the following:

> The basic properties of the conversational turn-taking system are as follows, with relatively small differences across languages. Turns are of no fixed size, but tend to be short, about 2 s[econds] in length on average, although bids can be made for longer turns, as required for example to tell a story. The turn-taking system o rganizes speakers so as to minimize overlap, and is highly flexible with regard to the number of speakers or the length of turns (2016, n.p.).

These trends are equally efficient without visual contact like on the phone, or no-video telecommunications. I've categorized instant messaging as synchronous communication, but text messaging is classified as semi-synchronous communication. I've constructed these differences by how far off the 2 second turn-taking average is expanded.

Analyzing modes of communication this way makes like-practices in dissimilar modes more apparent. For example, instant messaging shows each communicator when

the other speaker is typing in a message and, unlike direct messaging where users leave a message for someone to find sometime in the near future, instant messaging communicators expect the other speaker to be actively at the keyboard as evidenced by the alert "away from keyboard," or more likely "AFK." This indicates to the other speaker that someone should not expect an immediate response, but they will be back soon. An "away" status indicates the user won't be back soon, but will probably return. And an "unavailable" status which signals to others the user probably won't return while someone is waiting. This structure follows the same rules as an in-person conversation where both participants can signal to one another when they are done with their turn, want a turn, are no longer paying attention, or are ready to end the conversation.

Semi-synchronous communications are identified by their allowances for flexibility during turn-taking. This form of communication includes text messaging, emailing, video messaging, tweeting, and, to a lesser extent, note-passing. Although there is an ongoing conversation taking place in semi-synchronous communication, it is far more likely the subjects of conversation will be changed without transitions, and pauses in the conversation will happen without warning and will not require apologies. The change in expected behaviors is understandable considering the amount of time allowed to pass between communiques.

Asynchronous communications are the bulk of texts we work with in composition classrooms: books, stories, articles, movies, and many other works experienced out of time from when they were composed. This form of communication also includes day-to-day asynchronous communications like road signs, flyers, and billboards. Turn-taking is

practically non-existent in asynchronous communication. Rather than the communiques being considered part of an active conversation between two participants they are treated as artifacts accessible to multiple audiences at once. Responses are possible from the audience to the speaker/author, but aren't expected to be from the perspective of someone who believed the author was purposefully speaking directly to them.

Using communication to build rhetorical literacy means engaging in multiple communication platforms with the goal of understanding persuasion, deliberation, reflection, and social action in its conversational context (Marquette, 2012). Another way of saying this is: like functional literacy, using communication to build rhetorical literacy in regards to communication literacy is an exploration guided from the perspective of *how* that platform affects communication. For example, in the semi-synchronous communications on Twitter, each of the above areas—synchronous, semi-synchronous, and asynchronous communication—has an effect which would change if it were another type of platform.

For example, with only 280 characters to work with communicators must be especially sensitive to malicious persuasion techniques. The "Click bait" phenomenon is characterized by articles of zero credibility often created by algorithms, linked with a provocative picture, and a compelling headline. Using Twitter as a reader is a way to observe how these persuasive techniques work or don't work, but it is also a place to decide when these techniques are beneficial or hurtful. This is a way to build rhetorical literacy for the purposes of communication literacy in this context. Furthermore, this is an

observation that can be made across all semi-synchronous modes of communication as they follow the same time restrictions and associated rules.

**Analyzing Preserved Communication to Build Rhetorical Literacy**

This is called "analyzing preserved communication" because its goal is to analyze communication with special attention to its context. Similar to exercises to achieve critical literacy, preserving communication to build the rhetorical literacy branch of communication literacy is focused on the analysis of cross-cultural and multi-contextual communiques. It is not enough in a pursuit of communication literacy to teach students how to use different communication platforms and expect them to willingly push boundaries and explore on their own time. Properly showing students how to engage with communication requires pushing them to take large parts of conversations within a larger conversation and analyze how the messages are being authored, read, and interpreted within their contexts.

Contemporary composition classrooms do this kind of analysis well. Asynchronous communiques and the conversations they make up are a huge part of classroom sources. To improve communication literacy, classrooms must also embrace the more chaotic preserved communications that, while they were happening, were synchronous and semi-synchronous. These sources are not as easy to find *but* the preservation and analysis of these forms of communication will lead to stronger rhetorical literacy as they move forward creating communication.

For example, interviews, recorded conversations, negotiations, court transcripts, twitter feed archives, and Reddit are just some of the synchronous and semi-synchronous

communications that have been preserved. These can be used for analysis in the same way we use asynchronous communication for analysis. Additionally, analyzing materials sourced from synchronous and semi-synchronous modes draws more attention to different elements of composition than asynchronous communications do. For example, an escalating conversation is likely to highlight tone. An interview is likely to highlight power-dynamics. Finally, synchronous and semi-synchronous sources give students the opportunity to analyze when turn-taking rules are broken. Breaking turn-taking rules whether through awkward pauses or interruptions creates an easily-identifiable problem with pacing. Unlike asynchronous communications, in preserved synchronous and semi-synchronous communications students can literally hear the difference. It follows, when analysis of preserved communication happens, the question of how the rules of conversation were followed within its original context is supremely important. It wouldn't do much good, for example, to think of a telephone transcript in the same way as a news report. The ambiguity, the start/stop, turn-taking, and audience of it all must be included because it protects those analyzing the communiques against presentism. These are actively collaborative communications where meaning is negotiated, accepted, and/or rejected quickly. Building rhetorical literacy through the use of preserved communiques means showing students chaos exists in communication, and asking the complicated questions anyway.

## Creating Communication to Build Rhetorical Literacy

Together, exercises to achieve functional and critical literacy create knowledge of a relationship between platforms and messages. Creating communiques to build the

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rhetorical literacy branch of communication literacy is focused on negotiating this relationship. Where exercises to analyze communication facilitate reflections on platforms and exercises to preserve communication facilitate reflections on interpreting messages, exercises for creating communication require composers to rely on their understanding of both and join the conversation.

Kathleen Yancey takes on the descriptions of these kinds of exercises in her book *Reflections*. She wrote:

> Given that we work in a messy universe, creating and addressing problems undecipherable by means of the paradigms or mechanisms associated with technical rigor is not the same thing as not learning: quite the reverse, though the means of learning is different. Any messy (human) problem•solving efforts, Schon says, function dually: as a way of solving the particular and as a way of investigating the general. (…) For writers, what this means is that as we devise a particularized rhetorical situation, as we create the material of it, as we draft and share and re•draft and finally complete the task we have set for ourselves, we tacitly take on the general question: how do I write? (Yancey, 1998, p.5).

In one respect, Yancey is saying what we have already discovered about communication literacy: that you must be a part of the communicative world to investigate it. Having said that, I believe she is also giving us insight about *why* these exercises work. *Reflections* is aptly named because the work reviews the definitions of different reflective practices before, during, and after the composition process and in the composition classroom. My concern in the above excerpt comes from the "tacit" questions students are supposed to

have had. This seems to be the first step to metacognition, but without raising those questions to the level of consciousness I don't believe communication literacy can translate into a lifetime pursuit.

For example, a student may draft, re-draft, and ultimately "publish" a composition, but we should remember the lengths Selber (2004) encourages us to go to in pursuit of critical literacy. He raises uncomfortable questions students are encouraged to ask about how analyzed communications offer and alter knowledge, has a social value, and absolutely leave a person or peoples out of consideration implicitly. Writing about teaching interface design, Selber notes that reflection strategies usually consider whether or not an interface is "usable." He argued, "Reflection as a conceptual category shifts the focus from the product (Is this interface useable?) to the process (Is this designer reflective?)" (p. 160).Adapting this reflective strategy we can empower our students to ask more than "Is this composition comprehendible?" Instead, they should ask, "Is this writer reflective?" Creating communication to build rhetorical literacy for the purpose of increasing communication literacy involves asking these same questions about our own work as we create it.

## Conclusion

Communication literacy is an attainable goal for today's university students. The definition for communication literacy moving forward is the following: Communication Literacy is the ability to identify, interpret, critique, and create communiques across multiple platforms and contexts. Communication Literacy involves a continuum of learning which equips individuals to communicate his or her perspectives, interpret and

respond to other perspectives, develop his or her knowledge and potential, and participate

fully in the larger conversation.

To achieve communication literacy students must be given the opportunity to develop

functional, critical, and rhetorical practices. In the third chapter we will discuss how these

goals are accessible in a creative composition classroom through the four pillars of

Communicative Composition.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS COMMUNICATIVE COMPOSITION?

Communicative Composition is a synthesis of pedagogies drawn from several disciplines including composition, sociology, communication, and computer science. Communicative Composition is composition for the contemporary world. It is flexible enough to evolve with the society it serves, and hopes to be a valuable resource in equipping today's students with the necessary skills to participate in a multitude of global conversations. To build students' communication literacy, I designed this theory in an effort to facilitate the growth of functional, critical, and rhetorical communicative practices. With this in mind, Communicative Composition is built on four pillars: Process, Personal, Creative, and Collaborative.

Today, I look out on a lively community of composition studies. From the beginning of our history to the present, there has been what Graeme Harper calls a "tradition of materiality." Writing about his work as a creative writing scholar, argues that teaching writing actually has little to do with writing. Harper (2015) wrote, "a Creative Writing program will require a submission of a portfolio of work to determine entrance into the program. But if this portfolio of work was to include a collection of notes and draft pieces of writing, doodles and scribbles, for example, would it be well received?" (p. 19)

I think we know the answer to this question for a traditional composition classroom is "no." Past scholars in our discipline were themselves focused on product. For the students the product was the classwork, but for the institution the product was the student. What happens when we validate the exploration of writing as a reflexive practice? What happens when we stop trying to determine what the world needs of our students and instead ask ourselves how to connect our students to the world so they may speak for themselves? I believe the first step to a student's journey towards communicative competence is a shift in focus from product to process.

**Communicative Composition is (Informed) Process**

An attempt to distance composition from a product-oriented approach is not a new idea. In 1972 Donald Murray wrote "Teach Writing as a Process not a Product" and tried to kill the product focus once and for all. Process pedagogy focuses on the process of writing, and the various strategies writers employ to compose a piece of writing. This movement was a reaction against the "current-traditional" practices of the first two thirds of the 20th century. Murray's article began a complex conversation. Scholars used Murray's ideas as a platform to build on process pedagogy including Janet Emig who wrote, "Writing as a Mode of Learning " (1977), and Peter Elbow who wrote, "Writing without Teachers" (1975). Both of these works explored the students' abilities to learn from themselves and their peers. Communicative Composition includes elements from process pedagogy through the process of reframing Murray's 10 Implications. By examining what was then just the origins of process pedagogy in the context of the present we can discover both why a student's ability to understand their own process is

more important than ever and how Communicative Composition reframes some of these ideals to create a more viable curriculum.[4] And finally, informed process opens the door to develop communication literacy in the composition classroom through the framework of composition as an act of communication.

Murray's first implication creates a prioritization of texts for students to learn from in composition, beginning with their own. He wrote, "Implication No. 1: The text of the writing course is the student's own writing" (1972, p.1). The most important feature of this perspective is the student's feeling that they are able to make "choices" about the text because it is still a work in progress. In practice this reframes writing for students as within their control and ability. They can both determine if something is working and if it is not they can change it.

In theory, this is a lovely idea, and absolutely necessary truth for students to learn about text development. However, by 1990 scholars like Thomas Kent, Victor Vitanza, and Gary Olson were claiming what had been a revolution was still too restrictive. Not only should students use their own texts to learn how to write, they argued, they should be encouraged to guide their own process through a flexible system of routines that is not determined by the instructor (Olson, 1999, p.7-15). This philosophy was known as post-process pedagogy.

The belief that writing can be understood as a series of routines is alive and well today. To find what our students would learn if they asked the internet we need only

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[4] The full list on 10 implications can be found in Appendix D. In the text of this chapter Murray's "Implications" are inserted into their applicable subsections.

google the phrase "How to write a paper." The results show us how different approaches widely vary—many of these coming from credible sources: "The 5-Step Writing Process: From Brainstorming to Publishing"- Authorhouse.com; "Stages of the Writing Process"- Purdue OWL; "The Six Steps of the Writing Process"- Academicwriting.com; "How to Write a Paper (with Pictures)"- Wikihow.com. On average, these step-by-step guides take readers through research, prewriting, first draft, and revision. Each example claims to be a correct writing process with no suggestion that there may be another way or discussion about why they are writing in the first place. The theory of Communicative Composition could be considered an evolved compromise between process and post-process pedagogy with a dash of genre pedagogy. Using the students' texts and guiding them through a series of draft steps is process pedagogy. Alternatively, using the students' texts and supervising as they search for the next (not-necessarily-right-or-wrong) step is post-process pedagogy. Influences from genre pedagogy are outlined in Chapter Four. Informed process, as its name indicates, deals with the process and post-process influences in Communicative Composition. Informed process includes to two major classroom ideals in Communicative Composition: a student with an informed process and an instructor whose supervision is transparent.

To help a student develop an informed process, students should be encouraged to believe their writing is a series of choices. Then, students should be encouraged to guide, question, and revise their own processes through the analysis of their own products. Finally, students should be oriented by the rhetorical situation where their work will exist.

Encouraging students to guide, question, and revise their own processes through analysis of their own products can be accomplished through an assignment series described in detail in the following chapter. Briefly, the four assignments are portfolio based and structured to build functional, critical, and rhetorical communication literacy as the semester progresses. By allowing students to choose a personal theme at the beginning of the semester, students have multiple opportunities to use early research to compose and revise in multiple-modes. This process frees up time from multi-subject research and allows for more time to evaluate process. Because students have been encouraged to frame their writing as a series of choices, each of the assignment sequences offers them the opportunity to make a different choice than they made during the previous sequence without the jarring effect of changing their subject.

Finally, students should be oriented by the rhetorical situation where their work will exist. In regards to Communicative Composition specifically, this means that assignment sequences will include opportunities for students to write for a multitude of communication situations. Although academic communication is one kind of real communication, other appropriate exercises may include social communication skills like interpersonal problem-solving and professional communication skills like emailing.

These pedagogical guidelines will assist instructors in building students' communication literacy skills. By being encouraged to believe their writing is a series of choices and develop their own writing processes, students are given the opportunity to enhance their rhetorical literacy in pursuit of communication literacy. Students are guided through an exploration of multiple types of communications to strengthen their functional

and critical literacy. This equips them to do the necessary work described above. Having

said that, this type of pedagogy requires a clear, and deliberate instruction method. This

leads us to the concurrent Informed Process ideal where an instructor's supervision is

transparent.

I included transparency in the Informed Process tenant of Communicative

Composition because transparency in pedagogy equips students to later teach themselves

and their classmates. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas has already taken steps to

implement transparency in its writing program with the following instructions for their

composition instructors:

Table 2

*Transparency in Writing Programs*

| |
|---|
| Discuss assignments' learning goals and design rationale before students begin each assignment |
| Invite students to participate in class planning, agenda construction |
| Gauge students' understanding during class via peer work on questions that require students to apply concepts you've taught |
| Explicitly connect "how people learn" data with course activities when students struggle at difficult transition points |
| Engage students in applying the grading criteria that you'll use on their work |
| Debrief graded tests and assignments in class |
| Offer running commentary on class discussions, to indicate what modes of thought or disciplinary methods are in use |

("Transparency," 2018)

For the purposes of Communicative Composition, these guidelines offer

instructors a way to use transparency to create a conversation about the classroom, the

assignments, the grading system, and the learning process. Not only does this create another conversational mode for students to experience, but it also empowers students to embrace their autonomy as participants in the context of a learning environment.

Transparency is especially important in a multimodal classroom like the one Communicative Composition is designed for, because students are learning not only how to compose but often learning how-to use new tools. As discussed in the previous chapter, critical literacy and functional literacy recommendations include using multimodal and not just traditionally academic sources. This is the point where it becomes necessary to talk about the viability of this kind of pedagogy with students who may not be familiar with multimodal sources, and ill-prepared to use them in a high-paced learning environment. A 2014 study conducted by Raytheon in conjunction with the National Cyber Security Alliance found that 64% of high school students do not have access to computer classes (Plantz, 2014). Although this number does not have a direct relationship with whether or not students are using computers in their personal lives, it does indicate a lack of training in regards to what will become professional and social communication skills later in their life.

In 2003, Colorado State University surveyed their students to determine their *contemporary skills*, *functional concepts*, and *intellectual capabilities* in regards to computers. Their findings are relevant to this discussion because they outline which computer skills students were familiar with and what percentage of freshmen students self-identified as competent, or, as Selber would identify them *functionally literate*. (N= number of students out of 2,102).

Table 3

*Freshman Hardware Ownership*

| Hardware | *N* | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Desktop | 1,136 | 54% |
| Laptop | 569 | 27% |
| Both | 230 | 11% |
| Printer | 1,722 | 82% |
| Scanner | 445 | 21% |
| CD-ROM | 1,823 | 87% |
| RD-recordable | 1,083 | 52% |
| DVD | 989 | 47% |
| Network Interface | 1,091 | 52% |
| PDA | 250 | 12% |

Table 4

*Use of the World Wide Web*

| Hardware | *N* | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Games | 1,009 | 48% |
| Newsgroups | 776 | 37% |
| E-mail | 2,006 | 95% |
| Videos | 888 | 42% |
| Music | 1,847 | 88% |
| Library/ research | 2,019 | 96% |
| Info on CSU | 1,915 | 91% |

(Kaminski, Steel, & Cullen, 2003)

As we can see, almost all freshmen students said they were competently using the internet for library/research questions, emailing, and accessing information on the university where the survey was conducted. Many fewer were accessing news, videos, and games. In regards to communication literacy, it is important to note that the social literacy aspect of communication literacy includes the skills students didn't identify as competent. Accessing the news specifically, is an important literacy skill for a socially literate person. In fact, in Selber's definitions of functional and critical literacy, the

product of multimodel competence was the ability to participate in and affect social change. This is one of the reasons communication literacy is so important to the contemporary composition classroom. Transparency facilitates the growth of computer literacy skills because it is an invitation to participate in the decision-making process about which tools to use, why you are using those over alternatives, and the effects this choice has on objectives.

Finally, transparency allows instructors to be open about their role as supervisor when students are exploring new technologies. The Federal Communications Commission has several programs attempted to increase or discount broadband availability in low-income areas to create a more equitable environment for students ("E-rate," 2018). While some instructors believe students should put their technologies away and listen to the lecture (Dynarksi, 2017) this is not an efficient use of time in the composition classroom dedicated to helping students be good communicators. In 2016, the National Bureau of Economic Research released their findings from a study where they took 24% of the student body from 15 public schools in California in grades 6 through 10, mostly low income students, who were without a home computer and divided them into two groups. One of the groups was given free laptops and the other group was instructed to continue doing their work as they had been. Interestingly, students who were given computers did not experience an increase in grades. After interviewing both groups, researchers concluded that this was a result of the public technology access students who were in the group which did not receive computers were using. In those conditions, at school or the public library, students were more likely to be supervised.

Students who were able to work from home without close supervision may have experienced a jump in efficiency, but it was a wash after calculating the distractions this technology also introduced to their lives (Guo, 2016).

We can conclude, then, that supervision is often a necessary component of composing with new technologies. Transparency helps instructors scaffold expectations for student regarding both what they will be required to do and why they are not left alone to do it. However, we must ask: if the output remains the same with or without supervision, why bother? The National Bureau of Economic Research study found that although the students who were given laptops were not ultimately more productive they were becoming more socially active. They write:

> The children who saw the most benefit were the ones who didn't have a social-network account at the beginning of the experiment. They became more likely to chat with friends and to meet with friends face-to-face. The home computers allowed these children who were previously socially participating at lower levels to catch up, or at least partially catch up, with children who were previously socially participating at higher levels (Guo, 2016, n.p.).

Although many students did not have access to personal computers at home and experienced a small amount of screen time, colleges are filled with computer labs and even computer classrooms. This creates an opportunity for students to use this technology for academic endeavors, certainly, but we should not underestimate the importance of socialization in the development of functional and critical literacy in regards to communication literacy. Being familiar with these tools builds the foundation of their

ability to approach Communicative Composition rhetorically. Students should be encouraged to use their technology even when their classroom isn't a computer lab to create opportunities for building their critical literacy with supervision. Helping students reach the point where they are prepared to analyze texts on this level requires informed process not just for those students who are new to the environment but also to those who have presupposed ideas about the purpose and limits of these platforms.

**Assessment with (Informed) Process in Communicative Composition**

As stated previously, the only way to implement a pedagogical theory is if it is viable for the departments where it is taught. Communicative Composition theory is no exception and we must examine whether or not using informed process pedagogy is workable in the composition classroom as it exists now. Informed Process, as it is explored in the preceding section, is made-up of two main ideals: a student with an informed process and an instructor whose supervision is transparent. In this section, we will explore how these two criteria affect assessment in the Communicative Composition classroom.

Earlier, we discussed how a student develops an informed process through the four portfolio-based assignment sequences. How-to structure these assignments is detailed in the next chapter. Here, I will evaluate how this focus on process affects assessment in Communicative Composition.

By allowing students to choose a personal theme at the beginning of the semester, students have multiple opportunities to use early research to compose and revise in the multiple-mode assignment sequences. While this process frees up time from multi-

subject research and allows for more time to evaluate process, it also relies on consistent classroom participation to work. Whereas a more product-oriented approach emphasizes a high-involvement period near the due date of an assignment, the process oriented approach consists of a steady effort throughout the semester. To account for this process pedagogical effect Murray's fourth implication addresses assessment. He wrote, "Each new draft, of course, is counted as equal to a new paper. You are not teaching a product, you are teaching a process" (1972, p.1). This recognition by Murray that the perceived value of the work students construct is closely tied to the percentage of the final grade it represents is ultimately the most important hurdle in the viability problem at the classroom level. In other words, the only way for informed process to work in the classroom is if students are participating in the process. Rewarding consistent effort with grading structures that reflect this dispersed value encourages this participation.

At the classroom level, students are less likely to engage with a process that doesn't in some way either give them positive effects for their final grade or safe-guard them from negative effects on their final grade. In 2015, Lolita Paff surveyed three sections of microeconomics and one section of accounting from a small college in Pennsylvania to determine the effect of graded participation policies on classroom participation. Mostly first and second-year students, class sizes were 50 students in accounting and 60 in each section of economics. The assessment policy and participation guidelines were consistent across courses, sections, and terms. The study was broken into three research decisions: to grade participation or not? What counts when grading participation? And who's counting?

Table 5

*Paff Participation Survey Results*

| Survey Item | Question | (n) | Response Tally | | | | | Response Percentages | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Strongly Agree | A | Neutral | D | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| PRE-1 | I participate more in classes when participation is graded. | 206 | 29 | 60 | 79 | 31 | 7 | 14.1% | 29.1% | 38.3% | 15% | 3.4% |
| PRE-2 | Grading class participation is unfair to some students. | 206 | 20 | 50 | 83 | 43 | 10 | 24.3% | 40.3% | 20.9% | 20.9% | 4.9% |

With 33.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that graded participation encourages them to contribute to class, the opportunity to encourage participation should not be ignored. However, 40% of respondents feel graded participation isn't fair to some students.

These economics and accounting students who responded that they didn't feel graded participation was fair to some students cited several reasons for their reticence, which are relevant to composition classrooms. The student's reasons range from social awkwardness to uncertainty, but all fall under the umbrella of not wanting to appear in a negative light in front of their peers. The students also offered suggestions for their ideal policies on graded participation. In their ideal scenarios teachers shouldn't rely on a policy to make students participate, but should make them feel comfortable with a warm approach. Students also imagined a system wherein unique input and correct answers are valued as participation even when they aren't offered to the entire class, but are written out by the student in an assignment (Paff, 2015).

Now, we must unpack these results for the composition classroom. Since the majority of respondents in Paff's survey cited being seen by their classmates in a negative light as their main source of hesitation, we can imagine how this is especially true when asking students to participate in a process-oriented composition classroom. Not only do composition classrooms require students to participate in discussions, they are also asked to brainstorm, draft, and peer-review. All of these activities provide ample opportunity to make mistakes in front of peers. There are a few reasons students resist class and classmate participation during the composition process and not all of them can be

overcome with good planning. During my 15 semesters of teaching composition, I encountered the following five reasons the most often:

Problem One: Students resist participating in process-oriented activities because they believe they do not have anything to offer their classmates as feedback.

Problem Two: Students resist participating in process-oriented activities because they believe their classmates do not have anything to offer them.

Problem Three: Students resist participating in process-oriented activities because they want to have the *right* answer and are embarrassed when there are problems with their work or their ideas.

Problem Four: Students resist participating in drafting because they do not believe it is a valuable exercise in respect to the final grade.

Problem Five: Students resist participating in drafting because they are shy, anxious, or otherwise find it difficult to work with others.

Most of the above problems can be solved with a change in perception. Problems one and two are based on a student's perceived lack of ability; and problems three and four are based on their perceived lack of value in the process. For these four issues, Communicative Composition theory suggests transparent instruction and equipping students with explicit guidelines for review, and giving the results value by grading their participation. In this respect, transparent instruction means that students are made aware of why they are being asked to potentially feel embarrassed in front of their classmates. Additionally, as a part of transparent instruction, students are encouraged to contribute ideas about how activities which require participation are conducted. This is one way

transparent instruction offers students an opportunity to engage in communicative activities. As an added benefit transparent instruction in this context eases students into the more-intimate dynamic of a small-group by giving the instructor the opportunity to validate student concerns in front of the entire class.

Explicit guidelines further ease students into group dynamics by giving them a common agenda. One such method for offering guidelines to students comes from the article "Reinventing Peer Review Using Writing Center Techniques: Teaching Students to Use Peer-Tutorial Methodology" by Catherine S. Kalish, Jennifer L. J. Heinert, and Valerie M. Pilmaier (2012). The Peer-Tutorial methodology refocuses peer-review from "just swapping" papers to working on one paper at a time together. This activity may include students reading their own papers aloud or having their paper read to them. Students may be allowed to swap papers for the purposes of reading them through a first time, but the papers are considered collaboratively one by one. This method pairs well with Communicative Composition because it engages students in conversation at every level of peer review. The effect of this methodology is described by the authors when they wrote, "Rather than a silent room filled with students reading drafts and responding to questions on paper (like many of our former peer review sessions), the classroom now has a low buzz of students talking earnestly in pairs" (p. 34). Rather than composing a book-review of their peer's work or an unexplained list of things peers should improve, this method of open discussion builds on student's social and professional communicative competence.

Finally, the fifth reason students hesitate to participate is harder to parse. Students come in all personalities and temperaments. There is no solution in which everyone will feel comfortable all the time nor should they as what we are asking them to do is difficult. This is another reason informed process is so critical to the Communicative Composition theory. By telling students why they are being required to participate transparent instruction offers us an opportunity to persuade them the exercise is worth getting through the fear of embarrassment. Then, supervising during their collaboration offers us the opportunity to immediately validate their perspectives. Finally, grading their participation shows students their activity has a purpose they understand even if the other methods aren't as effective.

Having said that, Communicative Composition's informed process is not likely to be successful if an instructor is insecure in their ability to encourage student participation *when* the instructor requires it. When faced with student insecurity or fear a useful response is in the family of "I understand where you are coming from, and I am here to help you through this difficulty." However, less moderated responses such as "You have to do it because it is required and I said so" or "Don't worry about participating; I'll just look over your work myself" are disadvantageous to informed process because they invalidate the position of the student, and rob the student of the opportunity to find out they were capable of more than they thought respectively.

## Communicative Composition is Personal

Communicative Composition teaches students not only to write, but to communicate in diverse rhetorical situations. Denise Landrum (2015) draws attention to

the difference between the noun "essay" and the verb "essaying": "When I essayed," she

wrote, "I learned about process, struggle – learning" (p. 3). A difference between

essaying and an essay lies in the practical application of template teaching. For example,

when we offer students a guide like the traditional topic sentence, introduction sentence,

quote, and clarifying sentence, we give them a tool with which they can write many

things clearly. This was the expected organization of themes during the current-

traditional period as described in the introduction. This is the positive side of template

teaching, but it is also its problem. In essaying, the students are encouraged to ask about

the best way to express the thought. We move away from one right way into the reality

that there are several good ways to communicate.

Additionally, we encourage students to make mistakes or struggle, as Landrum

has done. This struggle is not in vain. Murray's fourth implication reads, "The student

should have the opportunity to write all the drafts necessary for him to discover what he

has to say on this particular subject" (1972, p. 1). To be sure, a black-letter reading of this

suggestion is not always a feasible option for all students in the course of a semester.

Some students could spend a few semesters writing drafts to discover what they want to

say. I could spend a lifetime writing drafts to discover what I want to say about

Communicative Composition. However, the spirit of Murray's implication can still be

captured rephrasing as "The student should have the opportunity to write drafts to help

him discover what he has to say on this particular subject." This wording leaves more

room for time-management but still cuts to the heart of the ultimately personal nature of

essaying. While essaying is a difficult lesson to teach, it is an important exercise for

Communicative Composition's "personal" pillar because it accesses student's invention skills to help build their rhetorical literacy, which we will explore in this section. The skill Communicative Composition ultimately aims to instill in students is the ability to gather their thoughts, consider their possible means of explanation, choose the one that best communicates it to their reader, and communicate it.

Communicative Composition is founded in asking questions about how to communicate *well*, moving away from the more traditional understanding of communicating *correctly*. Communicating correctly, as was the focus of the current-traditional period, means focusing on grammar, organization, and style to elevate one's position in society. Communicating well, as it is imagined in Communicative Composition, means focusing on the coherence of a specific message.

In Communicative Composition, essaying, or to *try*, means composing poorly to explore composing well. In Murray's ninth implication he wrote, "The students are individuals who must explore the writing process in their own way, some fast, some slow, whatever it takes for them, within the limits of the courses deadlines, to find their own way to their own truth" (1972, p. 1). Here, we can learn best from creative writing pedagogy. Graeme Harper (2015), points out that many writing programs require portfolio submissions in their applications. How much more do we learn about where a student is from the addition of their drafts to the assessment process? Not only are we discovering the improvements students made on a particular assignment series but with secure deadlines, in-class work, and reflective feedback, we can examine the rate at which the change took place. In Communicative Composition, this rate of change may

vary from student to student, which, when allowed to happen, facilitates the student's

essaying. In this way, Communicative Composition theory should consider the

individuality of students; the beginning of the composition process is inventive, but as

students revise their compositions and their processes they continually reinvent as well.

By validating both the student's personal decisions when they first invent and their

decisions to change their methods later, we have an opportunity to frame their decisions

as devices. In order to access, develop, and refine students' personal writing practice we

must recognize style, voice, and even language as active devices.

First, style: In Potter Stewart's opinion in *Jacob Ellis v Ohio* ("Jacobellis," n.d.)

he wrote that although he could not define what pornography is he'll "know it when [he

sees] it." Style scholar and author of *Stylists on Style* Louis T. Milic believes we treat

style in the same way in composition classrooms. He wrote that teachers tinker with

style with no theoretical guide. We too will know it when we see it. He believes the

problem lies in the practice as described below:

> Correction and revision are done according to some absolute standard of rightness
>
> perhaps related to the hierarchy of styles. […] And if revision and correction are
>
> done sufficiently long and diligently, the expression of the intended meaning can
>
> become complete. It can reach the point where the reaction of the reader would be
>
> 'There seems to be no other way to say it' (p. 145).

Process of strictly revising and correcting until a message has reached the correct level of

style does not leave open the room for the existence of alternative ways of saying

something. However, I believe with one small addition, Communicative Composition can

marry rhetorical dualism and the individualistic. In Communicative Composition the work may reach the point where the reaction of the reader would be "There seems to be no other way for *you* to say it." This means recognizing their individuality as a necessary and helpful part of their personal composition process. It means validating a student's voice *and* ability to reinvent their personal process

Next, we will look at student's multilingual realities specifically. In Murray's third implication for traditional process writing he demanded, "The student uses his own language. Too often, as writer and teacher Thomas Ellis points out, we teach English to our students as if it were a foreign language.'" (1972, p. 1). Murray believes, given the opportunity to search for truth in their own time, students' prepossessed abilities will meet the requirements of the composition classroom. Here, Communicative Composition theory breaks significantly from the original concept of process pedagogy. Instead of encouraging students to simply speak in their own language, Communicative Composition theory educates students on the multilingual nature of their own abilities. *Then* Communicative Composition encourages students to explore their personal expression. Finally, Communicative Composition helps students apply their abilities as appropriate by creating opportunities for different forms of expression.

The complete student identity is far too complex for a thorough exploration here so I'm focusing on just this part; all students are multilingual. For the purposes of this discussion the term language includes national languages like English, Spanish, French etc. Then, there is what we refer as code-switching, which encompasses so much more. Code-switching can mean a pair of polyglot speakers' ability to have a conversation

where they flow in and out of both of their languages. This is the case in Michael

Meeuwis and Jan Blommaert's "A Monolectal View of Code Switching" (1998) where

they explore research about Swahili and English speakers who "evolve a pattern of

switching between the two languages" (p. 155) to capture the complexity of their

identities. The authors write that because the choice to speak in both languages is based

on the speakers' identities "the suggestion that code-switching speakers would be equally

capable of having their 'mixed' conversation in a pure variant of each of the languages

they use in their-code switched speech can certainly not be taken at face value" (p. 156).

The authors are pointing out here that the speakers could *not* have that exact conversation

in a 'pure variant' because the use of one language over another wouldn't accommodate

the express their identities as the code-switched conversation was able to do.

This identity-based communicative choice also holds true for another kind of

code-switching. Code-switching can include nation-state languages, dialects, and

discourse communities. Here, we find the distinction between academic language,

informal language, and home/colloquial language. In linguist Anne H. Charity Hudley's

article "Which English You Speak Has Nothing To Do With How Smart You are,"

Hudley explains how dialects are connected to identity because the "right" dialect is the

dialect of the discourse community in power (2014). In the case of English tradition, that

dialect is standardized English. Valerie Felita Kinloch wrote about the early iterations of

this concept when she reviewed June Jordon's "White English/Black English: The

Politics of Translation." Kinloch asserts:

For when, Jordan wrote, Our Black English is a political fact suffering from political persecution and political malice' (36), she is talking about the subordination and relegation of Black English to otherness just as much as she is talking about the extinction of a communicative tongue that has historically represented the lived experiences of African American people. Additionally, Jordan is talking about the social and political histories surrounding oppression, colonization, linguistic silencing, and the struggle for civil rights (2005).

Ultimately this is a message that carries through to students struggling with expressing themselves in standard academic English when they are far better equipped to capture their multi-dialectical identities with code-switching.

Hudley references her work with grade-school children when she sympathizes with teachers who want to prepare students. In the "real world," Hudley explains, students are more likely to be respected using standard English, but teachers also don't want to "push them into tongue-tied linguistic insecurity" (2014, n.p.). Hudley elaborates on a working solution to this problem as follows:

Talk in terms of being able to use and understand many varieties of English. Educators have also used the term code-switching (…) to express the idea that it's useful to speak standardized English in certain contexts, like academia, but that it doesn't have to come at the expense of speaking your own way in other contexts, with friends or at home (2014).

In regards to Communicative Composition, I find this answer useful but lacking. Like the Swahili and English speakers above, multi-dialectical code-switching serves an

expressive function. Being able to use and understand many varieties of English is an important part of communicative competence, but here Hudley implies one dialect can serve as well as another depending on the context of the conversation. This may be a useful way to approach the issue of audience, but it doesn't address the reality of the speaker. That is, it encourages speakers to consider the expectations of certain contexts without validating the speakers desire to express their identity through code-switching.

Still further, code-switching encompasses multimodal communications. Robert Horn wrote the foundational text for the field in 1998 aptly titled Visual Language. He wrote, "The main claim of this book is that something new has emerged on the scene of human communication" (p. 13). His something new is visual language. Horn easily establishes Visual Language as a language by examining it with set criteria:

- Can it be analyzed linguistically?

- Can it be used by a community?

- Can it be sufficiently complete and distinct?

- Does it have a distinct history?

- Is full expression possible?

- Does it have novel units of communication?

- Is there a systematic explanation of effectiveness?

- Is there a plurality of common signs? And are the signs combinable?

- Is there sufficient ambiguity?

- Is it sufficiently arbitrary and conventional?

Horn found all of this to be true in '98. This was before the language's evolution into emojis, gifs, snapchat, memes, hypertext (includes linked visuals), and a plethora of other ever-increasing modes of communication. The question then becomes whether or not there is room for this area of a student's expressive identity in the composition classroom. Code-switching provides us with the chance to welcome multimodal expression in the classroom. While it may be possible to compose solely in standardized English, Communicative Composition's communication literacy goal is better accomplished through the acceptance of various dialects and modes.

Of course, the academy (as much as we might like to believe so) is not an island and it is not alone in equating intelligence with a premodern, prescriptivistic understanding of *good* English. Weird Al Yankovic, writer, singer, and all around fun guy, released a track entitled "Word Crimes." Throughout the satire, Yankovic attacks what are popularly known as common grammatical mistakes. One of these lines reads, "You said/ you 'literally couldn't get out of bed.'/ That really makes me want to literally/ Smack a crowbar upside your stupid head!" (Wickman, 2014; Yankovic, 2014, n.p.). Although Yankovic isn't directly addressing nonstandard English communicators, he is perpetuating what Matsuda (2010) calls the "myth of linguistic homogeneity." Matsuda describes this myth as the "widespread acceptance of the dominant image of composition students as native speakers of a *privileged* variety of English [emphasis added]" (p. 82). Here, Matsuda is specifying this utopia's English as not only unattained by multilingual learners, but by a great majority of native English speakers as well securing composition's place as an exercise for the elite. This purely imaginary ideal puts all

learners at a great disadvantage when we consider how they could have done without the comparison, and secures their place in a crisis heterotopia.

Communicative Composition works against this imaginary ideal through the prioritization of self-expression through code-switching to facilitate the growth of communication literacy. As we discovered in the second chapter, becoming communication literate requires the development of functional, critical, and rhetorical literacies. Encouraging students to express themselves multi-modally and multi-dialectically doesn't just facilitate their self-expression; it also allows them to frame languages as another communicative tool.

In other words, once we introduce students to different communication platforms to increase functional and critical literacies, we can equip them with/or permit the use of code-switching. Code-switching is the personal pillar of Communicative Composition because when we allow it in the composition classroom we give students the opportunity to engage in a rhetorical literacy building conversation about how their language choices communicate their identity. Having said that, encouraging students to embrace code-switching as an expressive tool can create difficulties for instructor evaluation. If we ask students to evaluate their rhetorical moves as described above, we are further shifting the focus of composition onto process. In his book, *(Re)articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning*, Brian Huot points out that we must then also develop a pedagogical assessment that focuses on students' choices. Huot defines this type of assessment as "instructive evaluation" which is "tied to the act of learning a specific task while participating in a particular literacy event" (2001, p. 69). Instructive evaluation is

different from summative evaluation which happens at the end of the writing process, and formative evaluation which happens during the writing process. Instructive evaluation can happen at any point in the writing process because its focus remains how students are never "done" writing. That is, even after an assignment is complete students have the opportunity to develop their rhetorical literacy by analyzing their own work. Huot wrote:

> Instructive evaluation involves the student in the process of evaluation, making her aware of what it is she is trying to create and how well her current draft matches the linguistic and rhetorical targets she has set for herself, targets that have come from her understanding of (…) rhetorical features of a specific piece of writing. (…) We must help her set the rhetorical and linguistic targets that will best suit her purpose in writing and then we have to help her evaluate how well she has met such targets, using this evaluation to help reach additional targets and set new ones (2001).

Instructive evaluation, then, is another kind of communicative act. This time the conversation is taking place between the student, her work, her imagined audience, her aims, and the instructor. This type of evaluation is appropriate for Communicative Composition because it practices rhetorical literacy for the purposes of building communication literacy through the negotiation of speaker identity, message, and audience expectations. Further, instructive evaluation is well-suited for the personal approach of Communicative Composition because it allows for an instructor's advisory role while leaving the student responsible for making their own rhetorical choices.

This method of evaluation corresponds to the original process pedagogy and Murray's implication eighth implication: "Papers are examined to see what other choices the writer might make. The primary responsibility for seeing the choices is the student" (1972, p. 1). The drawback, as Jerry Won Lee wrote for NCTE, is that Huot's method of evaluation "still assumes a dominant discourse and standard by which to judge students, even if they may be more involved in those processes. His method is more democratic, but I wonder about the uneven ways many students, especially multilingual students, may engage in those democratic methods" (2016, n.p.). This may be true, but my concern lies in the other direction. In practice at a more 'traditional' composition program, which makes up the majority of public programs today, an instructor simply does not have the resources to evaluate every work in all parts of the writing process. We may not all be accustomed to multimodal composition in the classroom, but we are at least speakers of this nonstandard language because we, as much as our students do, participate in a world already communicating this way. With this in mind, we can return to the practices of peer review detailed in the previous section and ease some of the responsibilities of the instructor Hout imagines through collaboration.

## Communicative Composition is Collaborative

In the Communicative Composition classroom, collaboration is defined as greater than the practice of peer review and is a reaction to unique environmental necessities for a successful writing classroom: lack of time. In this section, we will explore how composition is already collaborative. Then, identify how becoming more purposeful and transparent about collaboration can address some difficulties we have as a field.

Writing is naturally collaborative because our experiences with other writings guide us whether we are consciously seeking out their guidance or not.. In Frank J. D'Angelo's "The Rhetoric of Intertextuality" (2009), D'Angelo identifies Julia Kristeva's definition of intertextuality as "the transportation of one (or several) sign system(s) into another." As D'Angelo explains this definition, Kristeva means that every text is in a communicative relationship with other texts. D'Angelo argues this creates a limitless opportunity for rhetorical criticism, and means intertextuality is inherently rhetorical. With this conclusion in mind, D'Angelo applies intertextuality to rhetorical criticism, which results in the following five implications:

Table 6

*Implications of Intertextuality*

| |
|---|
| Implication One: Intertextuality can give us alternative ideas about the rhetorical situation. (…) If every text is an intertext, then every intertext is a context that issues invitations for readers or viewers to adopt a certain perspective for reading or viewing." |
| Implication Two: "Intertextuality can be a fresh source of invention for writers' ideas. In this context I am talking about invention not as lines of argument or modes of reasoning but as commonplace material in the sense of subject matter and striking ideas." |
| Implication Three: "Intertextuality can be a fruitful source of ideas about genre." |
| Implication Four: "Intertextuality can be a profitable source of ideas about arrangement, especially about narrative structure." |
| Implication Five: "Intertextuality can be a fertile source of ideas about the effect of texts and intertexts on audiences. (…) The reader's response may not always be the same as the meaning of a text, but reader responses to a text may include entertainment, aesthetic pleasure, ecstasy, persuasion, instruction, catharsis, and even the ineffable." |

(D'Angelo, 2009)

Accessing the rhetorical nature of intertextuality gives students the opportunity to collaborate with other texts to suggest meaning, source ideas, define genres, explore

arrangement, and investigate reader response. In the Communicative Composition classroom this exercise has the added benefit to the student of building their critical and rhetorical communication literacy skills.

Writing is collaborative by nature because most writing never takes place outside of these considerations. This collaboration is communicative because students are asked to negotiate a series of intertextual dialogics and form their own responses.

In regards to invention, one intertextual exercise Communicative Composition classrooms can practice is called reading like a writer, RLW. When I am stuck on how to write the beginnings of an idea just formed in my own mind, I often go to a novel or short story I remember doing something similar well. Famously, Hemingway and Fitzgerald did the same and reported back to one another about how other writers were producing. They were reading like a writer. Mike Bunn defines RLW:

> "When you Read Like a Writer (RLW) you work to identify some of the choices the author made so that you can better understand how such choices might arise in your own writing. The idea is to carefully examine the things you read, looking at the writerly techniques in the text in order to decide if you might want to adopt similar (or the same) techniques in your writing" (Bunn, 2011, n.p.).

In Communicative Composition theory, collaboration between learners plays a part in the classroom, but first the writing student must also be encouraged to reflectively engage sources with strategies like RLW. This exercise has two important purposes: it arms students to create better developed texts during their process and it gives students a chance to exercise their critical skills. Composition classes already engage these

intertextual relationships for the purposes of helping students learn to write. If we become

more purposeful and transparent about this practice, we can address narrow time

constraints, varying student competencies, and learning objective effectiveness.

**Time Constraints**

In creative writing there is a genre called the Inside-Outside story which can be

used as an analogy for the collaborative imperative in Communicative Composition

theory. An inside-outside story consists of the inside story, which refers to the characters

internal struggle, decision making, and preset traits; and the outside story, which refers to

the action happening around the character to which they must respond and from which

they are inevitably effected. The inside-outside story paradigm serves as a guide while

examining Communicative Composition theory because it requires consideration of the

inside story—that is, the writing and the student ultimately responsible for creation—and

the outside story—that is, the composition classroom driving the student to make

decisions. Communicative Composition theory recognizes that the process of writing is

uniquely collaborative by nature and the classroom is collaborative by necessity.

Teaching and learning in a composition classroom can be a time and labor

intensive operation. Murray's seventh implication reads, "There must be time for the

writing process to take and place and time for it to end. The writer must work within the

stimulating tension of unpressured time to think and dream and stare out windows, and

pressured time—the deadline—to which the writer must deliver" (1972, p. 1). This is an

excellent ideal but it is *not* producible in class time alone. Through engaging with

intertextuality and peer-tutorial methodologies, we can outline collaborative scaffolding for Communicative Composition exercises that makes use of our limited time.

Below I will illustrate a potential two class-session experience as I imagine could take place in Communicative Composition. To explore these exercises, I would like to draw attention to writing-center and collaboration scholar Andrea Lunsford's identification of three theories of knowledge: positivist, absolutist, and social-constructionist. Lunsford wrote that the positivist theory of knowledge views knowledge as exterior to us and directly accessible; the absolutist theory of knowledge views knowledge as inside of use and appears in Genius; then, the social-constructionist theory of knowledge views knowledge as "socially constructed, of power and control as constantly negotiated and shared, and of collaboration as its first principle" (Lunsford, 1991, n.p.).

Communicative Composition theory falls in with the socially constructed view of knowledge, which captures the dialogic collaboration of communication. Creating a truly collaborative environment and tasks, Lunsford believes, requires the activities must "demand" collaboration. They cannot be done alone. With this in mind, Communicative Composition activities engage with intertextuality and peer-tutorial methodologies to spur knowledge creation.

For the following hypothetical, we will use the beginning of a profile assignment in a multi-modal Communicative Composition classroom. During the first class of an assignment sequence, instructors act as expert and guide while students control the flow of discovery. To connect this to the three levels of Selber's literacy, this is a functional

literacy activity. As expert and guide, it is up to the instructor to introduce the profile genre. Then, to ensure students may control the flow of discovery, small groups are instructed to collaborate on what communicative tools would be ideal for the production of this type of composition and why. However, Lunsford warns that a collaborative environment must include common goals so collaborators can stay grounded in their discussion (1991). Questions which accompany functional literacy, found in chapter two, can facilitate student exploration and collaboration in this way. After students have collaborated in small groups, the discussion is opened to the class at-large as the instructor mediates. Together, class and instructor determine three "good" options and explore why they are best suited for a profile. Finally, students are given instructions for homework wherein they are instructed to find a profile composed using one of these tools and critically investigate.

Between class, at home, students act as critics while critical intertextual activities act as collaborators to suggest meaning, source ideas, define genre, explore arrangement, and investigate reader response. As a critical literacy activity, this should position students as questioners of communicative tools. To do this, students must be guided with their instructions. The intertextuality of this assignment consists of relationship between the student's response, the instructions, the profile chosen by the student, and the student's critique of the profile in the context of the communicative tool used to create it.

In the following class, students act as expert and guide while the instructor supervises. As students use peer tutorial methodologies to interrogate their critiques they collaboratively create knowledge about the profile genre and the potential communicative

tools they may use to create their own This is an exercise in rhetorical literacy. Together, students and instructor discuss the conclusions groups gathered. Then, continuing together they create a prompt for a profile assignment using a specific communicative tool, which outlines the requirements for a successful use of this tool in this context.

Collaboration as a time-management tool is about engaging with students while they are actively working in class to assess their progress outside of a major grade assignment. This alleviates some of the burden the instructor is carrying as well, because they are not required to consistently bring home a new stack of papers or reflections that they then will not be able to fully engage with in their own restricted availability.

### Communicative Composition is Creative

Finally, Communicative Composition is creative. In previous sections, I have described some goals of Communicative Composition as a set of skills that can be transferred to situations outside of the academy. We have talked about how communication literacy serves to connect students to a multimodal world and participate in conversations across a variety of subjects. However, as Douglas Hesse explores the history of creative writing scholarship in the CCCC is his article, "The Place of Creative Writing in Composition Studies," (2010) I feel he has identified a problem which has not yet been addressed in Communicative Composition theory: Why should your audience care?

Through the ebbs and flows of favor for iterations of creativity Hesse argues the field of composition became an area of scholarship focused on writing to produce content or writing as a means of rhetorical analysis. These foci don't accommodate the attention-

grabbing art of discourse where writers are given the floor because they have compelled the interest of the listener. Hesse wrote:

> The world of blogs, wikis, podcasts, videos, and even old-fashioned Web pages ensures that writing will be made public—just not that it will be read. Updating familiar terms from two decades past, we've gone from audience addressed, through audience invoked, to audience imagined and seduced. Unlike the old composition, the new composition includes textmaking for situations in which readerships are neither compelled nor circumscribed. One of its main challenges is how writers make readers pay attention (2010)

Selber's theory of rhetorical literacy also recognizes the need to generate audience attention. In respect to interface design, Selber refers to captology, or behavior design, as the meeting of technology and persuasion (p. 146). To apply this concept to Communicative Composition we must ask about the meeting of communication and persuasion in the same way.

The attribute all of these descriptions of persuasion have in common is the conceptualization of an audience. They are saying we not only have to remember an audience exists; we should be able to understand their character enough to persuade them to listen to us. Outside of reading likes and dislikes off of a profile, conceptualizing an audience is a *creative* action.

There are two main reasons this specific creative act is so important to Communicative Composition: 1) The rhetorical literacy branch of communication literacy is foundationally persuasive. 2) The collaborative endeavors in the classroom are

enhanced when the participants are eager. That is, students are more involved when they're interested.

Audience is not a new area of study in composition. As David E. Gray wrote, "Knowing your audience means understanding what it is that they want to know, what they are interested in, whether they agree with or oppose your central arguments, and whether they are likely to find your subject matter useful" (2009, n.p.). In my twelve years as a college student, this is a pretty comprehensive and familiar description of how-to conceptualize an imagined audience. However, while this description consistently uses the audience as its subject, the focus of passage seems to be the writer's argument. As a revision exercise this could serve as a guide to checking with your audience, because they questions draw attention to the relationship between the work and the imagined audience.

However, recent research about how social media users interact with their imagined audiences reveals an issue. The 2015 study "The Imagined Audience on Social Network Sites," consisted of a 2-month diary study of 119-diverse American adults and their 1,200 social posts, followed by participant interviews. The findings revealed that users knowingly communicated with a large and diverse crowd, but they "coped by envisioning either very broad abstract imagined audiences or more targeted specific imagined audiences composed of personal ties, professional ties, communal ties, and/or phantasmal ties" (2016, n.p.). This research suggests that imagining an audience in every-day practice has less to do with who a user thinks their audience is than who the user wants their audience to be.

This rhetorical dodge-and-weave is partially based on the unknowability of a "public" audience. As Eden Litt and Eszter Hargittai argued, "as we fantasize about future exchanges, interact with large audiences, and communicate in mediated contexts. The less an actual audience is visible or known, the more individuals become dependent on their imagination" (2016, n.p.). When we ask students to write in a composition course, aren't they often facing this invisible audience?

Another, more obvious, audience the student may be writing for is the instructor. But writing for the instructor alone works against building communication literacy. The rhetorical literacy branch of communication literacy, in part, deals with students interrogating their own work for rhetorical effects. When they are writing for an audience of one, they are not practicing rhetorical literacy in the context of society.

Having said that, Communicative Composition theory has already outlined practices which can facilitate the creation of a more useful imagined audience: socially constructed knowledge through peer collaboration. An imagined audience can be invented, investigated, and refined through collaboration just as potential communicative tools were in the preceding section. Then, the best means of snagging that audience's interest can be gathered the same way. In this way, the creative pillar of Communicative Composition is another communicative act, and another opportunity for students to engage with communication.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPOSITION CLASS

Now that we have discussed what communication literacy is, defined

Communicative Composition, and explored how composition can benefit from the

addition of a communication literacy approach, I will do my best to guide us in what I

imagine is the beginning of building a viable curriculum under these circumstances.

Before we can investigate Communicative Composition's syllabus, it becomes useful to

introduce a brief survey of select composition syllabi which will be referenced

throughout. Following this introduction to the surveyed syllabi, I will identify and

investigate the pedagogical logic of Communicative Composition's learning objectives,

assignments, and assessments. Concurrently, I will compare current syllabi to

Communicative Composition's syllabus in an effort to explore when and how current

syllabi can be refocused onto building communication literacy.

## Current Composition Syllabi and Selection Criteria

In current composition programs syllabi can vary from one instructor to another. I

have chosen to study trends in current composition syllabi by analyzing a selection of

Composition 1 syllabi published online. These syllabi represent composition classes from

schools small to large, rural to urban, east to west, and both two and four-year programs.

However, I have chosen to include only syllabi used at public institutions.

I chose syllabi at public institutions because, on average, public institutions have a higher student to faculty ratio (Ben, 2017). The size of the student to faculty ratio affects the viability of Communicative Composition theory because the four pillars-- Personal, Process, Collaborative, and Creative—demand time-consuming individual and small-group attention from the instructor in class. Details about this demand on the instructor's attention is available in Chapter 3. Additionally, this examination of syllabi from public institutions which make up seventy three percent of all students (O'Shaughnessy, 2011). ensures, on average, the observations outlined in the following section of this chapter are more likely to remain viable across syllabi which were not examined.

The curated syllabi surveyed below were free, published online, and discovered by searching "Composition 1 Syllabus pdf." I chose this phrasing in an effort to gain direct access to available artifacts after searching similar phrases (i.e. "Composition 1 Syllabi," "Freshman Composition," and "First Year Composition Syllabi",) which returned secondary sources about syllabi in general or program handbook descriptions of syllabi in the abstract. The surveyed syllabi were curated in effort to include representative examples from disparate institutions. In regards to a comparison with Communicative Composition, my selection criteria were various locations, multiple regions, published within the last fifteen years, mixed admissions selectivity, mixed student demographic profiles, and disparate student body sizes. Full copies of all selected syllabi and relevant demographics information can be found in the Appendices.

Table 7

*General Syllabi Location and Size*

| General Syllabi Location and Size | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School | Semester | Location | Undergraduate Enrollment | Student Faculty Ratio |
| Bellevue College | Spring 2013 | Bellevue, WA | 32,500 | 37:1 |
| Pittsburg State | Fall 2012 | Pittsburg, KS | 7,400 | 17:1 |
| Clayton State | Spring 2015 | Morrow, GA | 6,555 | 18:1 |
| Monroe Community College | Spring 2016 | Rochester, NY | 17,699 | 24:1 |
| Old Dominion University | 2006 | Norfolk, VA | 19,793 | 18:1 |
| Southern Illinois University | UNK | Carbondale, IL | 12,182 | 15:1 |
| University of Tennessee | Fall 2013 | Knoxville, TN | 22,139 | 17:1 |
| University of Arizona | Spring 2004 | Tucson, AR | 34,072 | 22:1 |
| College of Lake County | Fall 2015 | Grayslake, IL | 17,685 | 18:1 |
| Texas Woman's University | Misc. | Denton, TX | 10,408 | 18:1 |

The above table, "General Syllabi Location and Size," is included in paragraph for reader reference moving forward.

The subsequent table, "Categorization of Syllabi Content," focuses on the categorization of syllabi content. This table includes categorized data from all nine sample syllabi from other institutions, two syllabi from my courses at Texas Woman's University, and the Communicative Composition syllabus. This information is not

categorized by school to facilitate the exploration of assignment types, assessment

methodologies, learning objectives, and reading load out of the context of their class or

university size. I am analyzing these categories because of their relevance during a

comparison of how current composition and Communicative Composition achieves their

learning objectives

Table 8

*Categorization of Syllabi Content*

| Syllabus # | Assignment Types | Assessment | Stated Learning Objectives | Reading |
|:---:|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Metalingual/ Referential | Participation | Process | Light |
| 2 | Emotive/ Referential/ | Project | Rhetorical | Moderate |
| 3 | Referential/ Conative | Project | Rhetorical | Light |
| 4 | Metalingual/ Conative | Project | Classical | Heavy |
| 5 | Referential/ Conative | Project | Rhetorical | Heavy |
| 6 | Metalingual/ Referential/ Conative | Participation | Communication | Moderate |
| 7 | Emotive/ Referential | Participation | Rhetorical | Heavy |
| 8 | Conative | Participation | Classical | Heavy |
| 9 | Emotive/ Referential | Project | Miscellaneous | Moderate |
| 10 | Emotive/ Referential/ Metalingual/ Conative | Split | Classical | Moderate |
| 11 | Emotive/ Referential/ Metalingual/ Conative | Split | Communication | Light |
| CC | Metalingual/ Referential/ Emotive/ Conative/ Poetic | Split | Communication | Moderate |

**Current State of Composition as Seen Through Syllabi**

Assignment classifications are based on a system developed by Purves, Soter, Takala, and Vahapassi in 1984 originally hoped this study would assist educators compose assignments with a focus on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. By breaking down different classroom assignments (i.e. Personal, Expository, Argumentative) into their relationship with facts, concepts, processes, procedures, principles, and metacognitive, the authors created a table of tasks in relation to their domain of learning. For example, personal essays require students to reproduce stream of consciousness, organize personal stories, and ultimately learn to convey emotions and feelings. The syllabi discussed in this chapter are broken into assignment types based on their "Dominant Intention/Purpose" as described by Purves et al. (1984). The possible Dominant Intention/Purposes are 1) to learn (metalingual) 2) to convey emotions or feelings (emotive) 3) to inform (referential) 4) to convince/persuade (conative) 4) and to entertain, delight, or please (poetic) (ps.394-395). By engaging this methodology, I have uncovered the focus of each syllabus, identified missing domains of learning, and outlined thorough learning objectives for Communicative Composition.

The learning objectives for Creative Composition were designed referencing and evolving Selber's distinctions between functional, critical, and rhetorical literacy. In this way, they are conceptualized from the beginning as a road to communication literacy. However, to ensure the tasks associated with the learning objectives cover a wide range of learning domains—that is, I didn't rush to analysis before foundational criteria was met—I relied on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Purves et al., 1984) to compose objectives

within the larger Selberian framework. In the following paragraphs I will outline each of the three fields of learning objectives, contrast objectives with sample syllabi, diagram how the pillars of Communicative Composition facilitates the process and procedure for specific assignments, and differentiate current composition with Communicative Composition in the context of student needs.

### Functional Communication Literacy Learning Objectives

The first section of learning objectives in Communicative Composition is aimed at building students' functional communication literacy. To review the definition of functional literacy from Chapter 2: "A person may be literate, but not functionally literate. They may be able to read and write, but not be able to use all the tools required for effective communication in their group or community." To achieve functional communication literacy students should be able to engage multiple communicative tools. With this in mind, the learning objectives for functional communication literacy are designed with a focus on an introduction to and utilization of communication tools and platforms. The functional communication literacy learning objectives are as follows:

Table 9

*Functional Communication Literacy Learning Objectives*

(Tool/Platform) To achieve functional communication literacy students will be able to-

List and describe tools for effective communication in their groups and communities.

Recall appropriate communication platforms; Explain why they are appropriate; and show competency in locating and retrieving information.

Outline a communicative process in the context of multiple communication platforms. Estimate potential steps for engaging tools, and produce platforms currently engaging their outlined process.

Reproduce conversational rules; give an example of communication tools following and breaking said rule; and relate this rule to disparate communication tools.

State principles of communication; convert communication principles into observations about communicative tools; and solve communication problems by applying an understanding of principles in the context of their platform.

Remember best use of various communicative tools; interpret use in the context of society, and discover effect of use or disuse on various communities.

 

       With the exception of the first, foundational, learning objective these learning

objectives follow a purposeful pattern of three steps each. These three steps cover

student's learning to "remember," "understand," and "apply" knowledge (Purves et al.,

1984). These learning objectives are designed this way to build a strong foundation for

the critical and rhetorical communication literacy objectives which will follow. Having

said that, the functional communication literacy section of the learning objectives is as

comprehensive and time consuming as the higher-reasoning sections which will follow it.

From the first to the last learning objective listed above, students are engaging with facts,

concepts, processes, procedures, principles, and metacognition respectively.

When considering current syllabi's potential to build communication literacy, the most obvious missing piece is a focus on composition as a communicative act. To determine whether or not a syllabus's learning objectives were attempting to define composition as a communicative act I simply looked for a "Communication" category or description in the lists. With this fairly general criterion, five out of ten sample syllabi focus on composition as a communicative act. However, one could argue that including any focus on audience awareness in the learning objectives implicitly defines composition as a communicative act. While it is true that audiences theoretically receive communiques, the focus of the learning objectives listed this way in the sample syllabi don't follow up a consideration of audience with the exploration of the conversational implications. For example, syllabus 5 covers audience in one of its objectives writing, "Explore an author's use of voice and style to create effective writing which suits his/her purposes and audience through readings, reflective writing, and class discussion." As we can see, this objective considers audience awareness like a device to help students learn to revise their own work as a solitary artifact.

Communicative Composition approaches this specific issue in the current composition classroom with a plan to increase communication literacy by engaging creativity and collaboration. For example, one of the functional communication literacy learning objectives is covered by Communicative Composition's Reader Response assignment. This type of assignment is commonly used to evaluate personal responses to source material. This is a valuable exercise when engaged for writing better academic essays like audience awareness as it is in syllabus 5.  However, this is also the perfect

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time to investigate audience awareness for a better understanding of the complexity of communication.

As Communicative Composition's objective reads, "Reproduce conversational rules; give an example of communication tools following and breaking said rule; and relate this rule to disparate communication tools." A reader response assignment designed to achieve this learning objective might include a prompt which reads as follows:

Throughout this assignment sequence you have identified communication platforms and explored their functions in society. Choose one of these platforms which you see as successfully being used to communicate about your theme to an audience.

1. Considering that you chose your theme and care about the conversation, who do you think the intended audience of this communique is? Are you a part of it? (How do you know?) If not, why not?

2. Is this communique an invitation to participate in the conversation? If so, do you think the interface, design, and usability impacts people's ability to contribute to the conversation? If not, why NOT?!

3. If this communique were hosted on another platform would it have the same effects on audience participation or lack thereof? Why or why not?

Following Communicative Composition's pillars this prompt is imagined as an out of class writing assignment, which is followed up with small-group interrogation in-class. In-class interrogation is intended to help students refine their imagined intended audience and bring conversational rules up to consciousness. In this way, Communicative Composition's collaborative pillar serves to engage students in a conversation about conversations, save precious review time for the instructor, and further validate student's

personal theme choice by engaging peers in their interests. Additionally, this structure for this assignment models process from observation, conceptualization, interpretation, and to actualization for students. Not to mention, the original communique's exploration serves as a classic search for the author's process while *incorporating* the student's consideration of how various communication platforms can affect communiques.

There are a couple of reasons this type of audience awareness exercise works well during the functional communication literacy section of Communicative Composition. First, while students are becoming more familiar with communicative tools, they are also becoming more aware of all the parties involved in its development, and use. Further, this assignment doesn't require students to turn their focus back to their own compositions yet. By removing the need to put their own imagined audience into an essay, students can focus on audience as a group of which they very well be a member! Finally, this exercise draws attention to platforms that do not engage an audience. As discussed in Chapter 3, asynchronous artifacts make-up the bulk of source materials in current composition. This assignment aims to accomplish the above learning objective, but it also serves as an opportunity to encourage students to ask: if they don't have an avenue to respond or contribute, why not? This question is examined even more closely in critical communication literacy.

### Critical Communication Literacy Learning Objectives

The second section of learning objectives in Communicative Composition is aimed at building students' critical communication literacy. To review the definition of critical literacy from Chapter 2: "Critical communication literacy is about being exposed to

multiple sources, modes, genres, technologies." Selber (2004) wrote that critical literacy

is first recognizing and then challenging the conclusions drawn while building functional

literacy. To achieve critical communication literacy students should be able to engage in

this way multiple communicative tools. With this in mind, the learning objectives for

critical communication literacy are designed with a focus on applying functional literacy

skills, analyzing communication artifacts, and evaluating communication artifacts in the

context of their communication platforms. The critical communication literacy learning

objectives are as follows:

Table 10

*Critical Communication Literacy Learning Objectives*

| |
|---|
| (Communique/Artifact) To achieve critical communication literacy students will be able to- |
| Classify communication artifacts. Outline communicative act. Rank artifacts with informed criteria. |
| Show communication concepts at work in society through artifact exploration. Contrast artifacts with conceptualized purpose. Criticize artifacts in the context of their purpose. |
| Produce examples of communication processes. Diagram communicative process of specific artifacts. Defend analysis of identified process. |
| Relate communication procedures to like procedures. Identify common elements of communication procedure from multiple artifacts. Critique communication procedure in the context of their like-artifacts. |
| Discover communiques from various platforms. Infer relational qualities across disparate platforms, and predict how artifact development is effected by platform. |

Like the functional literacy focused learning objective, these critical learning

objectives follow a purposeful pattern of three steps each. These three steps cover

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student's learning to "apply," "analyze," and "evaluate" knowledge (Purves et al., 1984). These learning objectives are designed this way to build on the strong functional literacy and encourage students to challenge their conceptions. An important note: the critical communication literacy section of the learning objectives is still focused on sources outside of the student. However, they should now be able to synthesize a relationship between communiques and communication platforms. Again, from the first to the last learning objective listed above, students are engaging with facts, concepts, processes, procedures, principles, and metacognition respectively.

When considering current syllabi's potential to build critical communication literacy some of the syllabi's learning objectives do come close. In syllabus 6 one learning objective reads, "[Students will] demonstrate understanding of the ways that language and communication shape experience, construct meaning, and foster community." As you can see, this learning objective hits on some of the main points of critical literacy. However, it doesn't come close enough. Where this objective claims it will leave students with the ability to *demonstrate* their understanding of the effects of communication this is a way to describe functional communication literacy. According to Selber's definition, students must reach the level of critique to build critical communication literacy.

Communicative Composition approaches this specific issue in the current composition classroom with a plan to increase critical communication literacy by engaging the informed process, personal, and collaboration pillars. For example, one of the critical communication literacy learning objectives is covered by Communicative

Composition's Bibliography assignment. The bibliography assignment is commonly used to evaluate source material. This is a valuable exercise when engaged for writing better academic essays, and teaching students to think critically about the intertextuality of their sources. A bibliography assignment, then, is one of the assignments that is currently used in the composition classroom which is also viable in the Communicative Composition classroom.

Reviewing a working assignment prompt for a classic bibliography assignment allows us to discover ways to adapt the prompt for Communicative Composition. The overview of an anonymized Annotated Bibliography prompt on the Colorado State University's English department's website states:

> You will craft a strong inquiry question to guide your research, find sources to answer the question, and collect five reliable, relevant, and current sources in an Annotated Bibliography. -The AB will have five sources with annotations of approximately 250 words each (for a total of about 1250 words on the final draft. ("Unit 2", 2018).

Additionally, this prompt describes the process of writing an annotated bibliography, and then composing a researched argument, as listening to the conversations, expanding the conversations, and joining the conversation ("Unit 2", 2018). On its own this assignment has the potential to increase critical literacy in the student's chosen theme because it asks them to critique their sources in relation to the other sources.

However, the critical communication literacy learning objective reads, "Discover communiques from various platforms. Infer relational qualities across disparate

platforms, and predict how artifact development is effected by platform." To shift the

prompts focus fully onto critical communication literacy means moving the artifact under

analysis from a single source contribution on a list of sources. Instead, artifacts are

considered as unanalyzable outside of the context of their communication platform. I

would reword the prompt as follows:

> You will discover and curate a strong inquiry question to guide your research,
>
> find sources from disparate communications platforms (ie. Different types of
>
> websites, modes of conversation) to answer the question, and collect five
>
> relevant, and current sources in an Annotated Bibliography. -The AB will have
>
> five sources with annotations of approximately 250 words each (for a total of
>
> about 1250 words on the final draft.)
>
> Annotations will answer the following questions: 1) How is information
>
> communicated (designed, presented, advertised) on this platform? 2) Why? 3)
>
> What other options are available for communicating information on this platform?
>
> 4) How is information accessed on this platform? 5) How does the method of
>
> access affect who can use this information?

As you can see, in the beginning the bibliography's prompt is almost identical to the

current composition prompt. However, while engaging the personal pillar by keeping the

subject of the search on the student's chosen theme, the instructions aren't geared to find

the most credible information. Instead, the instructions ask students to find different

expressions of information . Further, the purpose of this exercise is not the collection of

information on a student's research topic; students are turned to consider how the

information collected may be affected by the tool they are communicated with. Finally, the exercise is raised to the level of critique when it asks students to explore the design, presentation, marketing, and accessibility of the information.

Following Communicative Composition's pillars this prompt is imagined as an out of class writing assignment, which is followed up with small-group interrogation in-class. In-class interrogation is intended to help students refine their critiques of design, presentation, marketing, and accessibility in the context of how information is changed through a change in communicative methods. Again, Communicative Composition's collaborative pillar serves to engage students in a conversation about conversations, save precious review time for the instructor, and further validate student's personal theme choice by engaging peers in their interests. Additionally, this structure for this assignment models processes from observation, conceptualization, interpretation, and to actualization for students.

There are a couple of reasons this type of bibliographic survey exercise works well during the critical communication literacy section of Communicative Composition. First, this exercise requires students stretch their newly developed functional communication literacy skills by asking them to find multiple types of communication platforms. Second, this prompt zeros in on the relationship of information with its platform further complicating analysis. Third, this prompt asks students to turn their attention to accessibility as a gate-keeper of information. As discussed in Chapter 3, asynchronous artifacts make-up the bulk of source materials in current composition. This prompt aims to accomplish the critical communication learning objective, but it also

serves as an opportunity to require students to ask: if they don't have an avenue to access information, why not? This question is examined even more closely in rhetorical communication literacy.

## Rhetorical Communication Literacy Learning Objectives

The third section of learning objectives in Communicative Composition is aimed at building students' rhetorical communication literacy. To review the definition of rhetorical literacy from Chapter 2: "Successfully practicing rhetorical literacy requires both functional and critical literacy because it includes the awareness of and reflection on your knowledge and practice." To achieve rhetorical communication literacy students should be able to engage in this way multiple communicative tools. With this in mind, the learning objectives for rhetorical communication literacy are designed with a focus on functional and critical literacy skills, analyzing personal communication artifacts, evaluating communication artifacts in the context of their communication platforms, and creating changes to communication processes, procedure, and principles. The rhetorical communication literacy learning objectives are as follows:

Table 11

*Rhetorical Communication Literacy Learning Objectives*

---

(Act of Communication/Composition) To achieve critical communication literacy students will be able to-

Outline, rank, and categorize personal communication artifacts in the context of their platforms.

Contrast, criticize, and modify personal communication artifacts in the context of their rhetorical situation.

Diagram, defend, and design personal communication processes in the context of their rhetorical situation.

Differentiate, conclude, and revise personal communication principles in the context of self.

Infer, predict, and actualize revisions of personal communicative processes, procedures, and principles in the context of communication literacy.

---

Like the functional and critical literacy focused learning objective, these

rhetorical learning objectives follow a purposeful pattern of three steps each. These three

steps cover student's learning to "analyze," "evaluate," and "create" knowledge (Purves

et al., 1984). These learning objectives are designed this way to build on the strong

functional and critical literacy skills and encourage students to apply their skills to their

own communicative acts. The rhetorical communication literacy section of the learning

objectives is the first section where students begin creating and using their personal

communication artifacts as sources in addition to outside sources. Students should now

be able to synthesize relationships between their own communiques, and their use of

communication platforms. Again, from the first to the last learning objective listed above,

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students are engaging with facts, concepts, processes, procedures, principles, and metacognition respectively.

Many of the learning objectives in current composition generally apply to building rhetorical communication literacy. For example, Syllabus 9 includes a learning objective which reads, "[Students will] analyze a variety of texts, including visual media, in their social, historical, and rhetorical contexts." Syllabus 10's learning objective reads, "Communication: Develop individual styles of thinking and speaking, and writing to demonstrate critical analysis and effectively communicate original ideas in written and oral discourse." And Syllabus 7 contains the learning objective: "Write in a variety of situations including those they are likely to encounter in other classes and those that involve writing beyond the university experience" and "Analyze and evaluate written expression by listening and reading critically for elements that reflect an awareness of situation, audience, purpose, and diverse points of view through explorations of style organization, logic, rhetoric, and grammar." As you can see, these learning objectives express some of the main points of rhetorical literacy. The "write in a variety of situations" learning objective in syllabus 7 (listed last above) is specifically relevant to the primary goals of Communicative Composition.

Where syllabus 7's objective reflects that students will become able to write, or compose, across a multitude of communication platforms, this is functional communication literacy. Then, the objectives go on to write that students will be able to analyze and evaluate these texts which is critical literacy. Finally, however, when

approaching rhetorical literacy syllabus 7 falls short of communication literacy. The final

learning objective reads "synthesize and organize into a piece of writing information

gathered from multiple sources." This is a rhetorical exercise, but it is not an exercise

designed to build rhetorical communication literacy as outlined by Communicative

Composition. As it is reviewed at the top of this section, successfully practicing rhetorical

literacy requires both functional and critical literacy because it includes the awareness of

and *reflection on* your knowledge and practice. Synthesis and organization indicates an

awareness of what you've learned, but without revision and actualization (Purves et al,

1984) this objective doesn't rise to the necessary level of rhetorical literacy to achieve

communication literacy. .

Since the field of composition is practiced in rhetorical exercises as they are

explored in the preceding paragraphs, the focus of Communicative Composition's

contribution to this conversation is how-to tack on the final phases: revision and

actualization. In Communicative Composition's learning objectives this goal is stated as

"Infer, predict, and actualize revisions of personal communicative processes, procedures,

and principles in the context of communication literacy."

To facilitate the development of rhetorical communication literacy, I believe

instructors must structure the course throughout the semester to engage an informed

process approach to revision. Through practice revising and folding new socially-

generated knowledge into their critical literacy assignments, students are equipped with

the skills they'll need to infer, predict, and actualize changes to their own communicative

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processes etc. To give students the materials they will use to execute these skills, I believe assessment must be a part of the revisionary process *across* assignments. To bolster this idea, Communicative Composition's assignments are organized for the classroom with an efficiency model borrowed from computer engineering.

As stated in chapter three, assignments in Communicative Composition theory are framed by a single, multi-modal theme exploration. Consider the daisy chain; in electrical engineering there is a design in network topology called a daisy chain. Put in its simplest terms, only one type of system can process information—let's call it the computer. However, other systems can cue, transmit, and store information. "By connecting the computers at each end, a ring topology can be formed. (…) When a node sends a message, the message is processed by each computer in the ring. If the ring breaks at a particular link then the transmission can be sent via the reverse path thereby ensuring that all nodes are always connected in the case of a single failure" ("Network Topology," 2018, n.p.).

Now, think of the collaborative groups in the Communicative Composition classroom. Each student with their work is like a node; they are generating knowledge and transferring it into the next student. But students, like networks, will not be fully operational 100% of the time. Assessments are like the computers on each "end" of the chain and students with their works are

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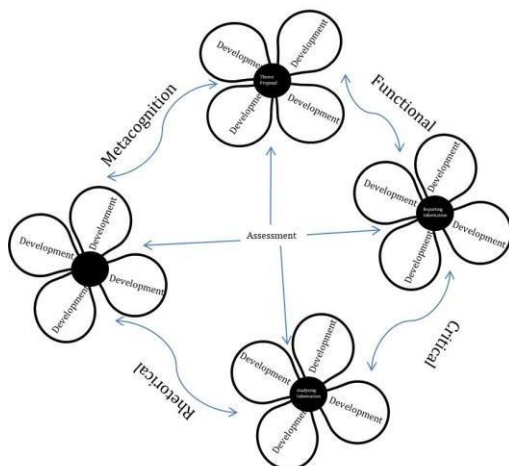
Communication Literacy Daisy Chain

the nodes. As long as the information can still travel back to the project assessment

without interruption the information can get to the end. If too many nodes go down, that

is if a student doesn't socially generate knowledge, then the chain breaks. Put simply,

each group as detailed in Chapter 3 is collaboratively generating knowledge, assessment

serves as filter for that knowledge, the assessment results then also flow into the

knowledge system and so on.

This organization leaves students with everything they need to do their rhetorical

communication literacy exercise because it supplies them with primary communication

artifacts, secondary communication artifacts, all of the knowledge they've gathered about

platforms (which has also been filtered through assessment,) and secondary platform

analyses.

Having said that, it is important to explain how assessment is imagined in

Communicative Composition. The purpose of assessment in Communicative

Composition is ultimately to feed more information into the arch of literacy learning

assignment sequences.

I don't imagine grading individual assignments (like those described in the functional and

critical literacy sections above) to be positively or negatively affected by traditional

rubric methods. I will explain why I believe this is in the following section. It is

important to note in this section, because assessment's role is so important for mediating

student-generated information; special attention should be paid to larger learning

objectives when the functional and critical literacy portions of the curriculum are

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completed. The learning objectives for each section were written in reference to a table

based on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy created by Purves et al. (1984). This table can also

serve as a guide for instructors during assessment:

Table 12

*The Knowledge Dimension*

| The Knowledge Dimension | Remember | Under-stand | Apply | Analyze | Evaluate | Create |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Facts** | list | para-phrase | classify | Outline | rank | categorize |
| **Concepts** | recall | explains | show | Contrast | criticize | modify |
| **Processes** | outline | estimate | produce | Diagram | defend | design |
| **Procedures** | reproduce | give an example | relate | Identify | critique | plan |
| **Principles** | state | converts | solve | different-iates | conclude | revise |
| **Meta-cognitive** | proper use | interpret | discover | Infer | predict | actualize |

Now that this reorganization has been outlined, and potential assessment methods

described, it is important to note that the four pillars of Communicative Composition, as

they are explored in chapter three, are what ultimately make this synergistic system work.

While the assignments are scaffolded by communication competencies, they will not

have the same effect if the Communicative Composition guidelines are not used to

facilitate learning. In theory, Communicative Composition's personal, process,

collaborative, and creative practices can stand alone in a number of different assignment

types. I believe, even the literary assignment types can be enhanced following these

philosophies. However, teaching communication literacy would be less effective without

Communicative Composition because the pillars create the internal logic of the curriculum. Assigning functional, critical, and rhetorical assignments without validating the personal, engaging students in informed process, facilitating collaboration, and encouraging creative thinking would leave students wholly unequipped to engage in these exercises.

## Conclusion

Before finishing this exploration of curriculum in Communicative Composition theory, I want to engage with the question of what makes this more than a communication themed composition course. In a themed course the design of a traditional composition class is applicable to any theme. For example, a student may spend a semester writing about local community efforts to aid the homeless. In a traditional assignment type this student will still be composing essays about the programs, and doing analysis of materials about the homeless. Each of these assignments can stand alone and can be graded as a final product. This does not enhance communication literacy like Communicative Composition aims to do even when the theme chosen by the student is communication. In the design for Communicative Composition described in this chapter, students can apply any theme and through the structure of the class facilitated by the pillars of Communicative Composition pedagogy communication literacy is built in.

Having said that, a question remains about how making communication literacy a primary goal in a composition course affects the also pivotal learning objectives of current composition. To explore this idea, I will list the complete set of learning

objectives from Syllabus 10 and identify whether or not Communicative Composition can still attain these objectives. I chose syllabus 10 because it was the most focused on composition as a communicative act already while not missing any of the objectives from other syllabi. The learning objectives for syllabus 10 are as follows:

By the end of the term, students will …

1. Develop active reading and critical thinking strategies through rhetorical analysis of texts and genres, using those strategies to develop effective positions in composed work. (Communication & Critical Thinking)

    a. As students analyze the effect of communication platforms on information they are also accessing these skills.

2. Effectively use genre, style, and other conventions to shape discourse for purpose, occasion, and audience in papers and an expository exam. (Communication)

    a. As students develop their rhetorical communication literacy, they are required to consider these elements of their own work just as they considered them in others' work.

3. Develop an effective process of invention, drafting, revising, and editing, to be reflected in the quality of composed work and/or pre-writing materials. (Communication)

a. Through informed process, students are consistently revisiting their process. Rhetorical communication literacy is built around their ability to revise and actualize the changes they determine are necessary.

4. Effectively develop claims in papers and an expository exam by applying modes of expression (i.e., description, exposition, narration) as part of the rhetorical event. (Critical Thinking)

   a. The description of the Critical Literacy Bibliography assignment is a good example of students developing these skills.

5. Develop broader perspectives through peer reviews and class discussion, effectively drawing on those perspectives in expository papers. (Teamwork)

   a. Communicative Composition is largely collaborative, and focused on developing socially-generated knowledge.

6. 6. Write clear, coherent prose in papers and an expository exam, with appropriate attention to conventions of academic writing. (Communication & Personal Responsibility)

   a. Completing assignments like the Reader Response and Bibliography familiarizes students with some conventions of academic writing. Having said that, Communicative Composition is not a course focused on preparing students to be college students. As described in Chapter 3, this is an important part of preparing students for college; this is why it is still a

part of Communicative Composition. However, Communicative Composition's primary focus is communication literacy, which can equip students for communicative acts in the academy and beyond.

In the end, Communicative Composition was designed to help students gain a new awareness of the role of communication and how we participate often unwittingly. Through the development of functional, critical, and rhetorical communication literacy the alpha learning objective is: By the end of this semester, students will be able to utilize communicative tools, analyze communications, and actualize thoughts. In other words, students will be able to listen, to understand, and to respond.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

I believe Communicative Composition can be a rich area of continued study for

composition scholarship. I wrote in the introduction to this work that I did not see my

research as a product of standing on the shoulders of giants. Rather, I considered myself a

part of an ongoing conversation about the purposes and practices of composition

pedagogy. Robert O. Bowen, an essayist and novelist in the mid-20th century, imagined

the purpose of the first year composition class to be guiding students to appreciate writing

and show competency in diverse rhetorical situations. This purpose, Bowen wrote, as a

response to two of his colleagues who said composition was either for correcting poor

grammar, or for learning to analyze literature. Bowen believed they are both wrong

because their purposes are too narrow. He wrote about the purpose of freshman English

as follows:

> "Insofar as the course aids the student in writing accurate examination answers
>
> and in organizing competent reports, it is a service course in the university
>
> curriculum. However, since the language proficiency required for such tasks is
>
> indiscernible from that required to produce a professional letter or to read a
>
> professional journal, this aspect of training should be considered not so much the
>
> "service course" aspect but as the minimum, college-level prose proficiency
>
> aspect of the course" (1957).

Bowen recognized that the skills students gained in composition courses were useful in their lives beyond the university. This is a similar conclusion as the one that inspired Communicative Composition. In Bowen's essay he identifies students' future professional lives as the benefactors of composition. In Communicative Composition theory, I identify students' communication across their entire lives as potential benefactors.

The theory of Communicative Composition builds our discipline in many ways. As its name suggests, the primary contribution of Communicative Composition to the field of composition studies is a focus on communication literacy. In the second chapter, I framed communication literacy with the same constructs Selber popularized in *Multiliteracies for the Digital Age* (2004): functional, critical, and rhetorical literacy. With these frames in mind, a communication literacy definition began to form.

First, functional communication literacy investigates communication methods as tools. Communication methods, as it is imagined here, runs the spectrum from pen and paper to building a website. Like Bowen observed about composition in 1957, knowing how-to use these tools can positively affect students' entire lives.

Second, critical communication literacy interrogates communicative methods influence on communication. Critical communication literacy is built through the consistent questioning by students of the texts they interact with. Through this exchange, students are guided to a deeper understanding of information as socially constructed.

Knowledge becomes navigable as a crowd of intertextual relationships, which students are capable of parsing.

Third, rhetorical communication literacy informs communicators as they create communiques. Finally, students are encouraged to be rhetorically self-critical as they engage with these tools in an effort to communicate their own contributions to knowledge.

Armed with the functional, critical, and rhetorical learning objectives, I outlined Communicative Composition as a working theory for the enhancement of communication literacy in the context of the composition classroom. Building this outline required applying these objectives to current composition pedagogies and critically examining what would and wouldn't work in context. In the end, shifting the focus of composition onto communication literacy was broken into four pillars: Process, Personal, Collaborative, and Creative.

The (informed) process pillar of Communicative Composition outlines the course's classroom practices. The process pillar relies heavily on the process movement in composition. Specifically, (informed) process recognizes Murray's 10 implications as guidelines for instructors. However, Communicative Composition evolves Murray's implications to focus on the rhetorical literacy development of students in regards to multi-lingual and multi-dialectical rhetorical decisions. That is, where the process movement captures Communicative Compositions goals by focusing on the student's ability to guide their own learning, informed process equips students with the information they need to be expert guides.

To equip students with the necessary information while leaving the responsibility for learning in their hands, informed process breaks into two distinct guidelines: informed process and transparent supervision. Informed process is the cyclical relationship between teacher, student, and student process. The teacher introduces information to the student about process; the student considers and practices this process; the student collaboratively reviews this process and so on. In this cycle, students are encouraged to see their writing as a series of choices which they have the power to review and change. Transparent supervision was added to informed process to make learning communication literacies more efficient. Transparent supervision makes learning communication literacies more efficient by suggesting instructors guide, rather than lead, students through a series of literacy scenarios wherein the students are still the deciders. Both of these practices engage students in low-pressure, exploratory communication which functions as tutorials in functional, critical, and rhetorical literacy as the students progress. Informed process's focus on student autonomy and value is further bolstered by Communicative Composition's "personal" pillar. Additionally, informed process's transparent supervision is facilitated by Communicative Composition's "collaborative" pillar.

The personal pillar is a subset of Communicative Composition theory which draws attention to the personal nature of composition. This pillar is designed to recognize and validate self-identification as a crucial aspect of student composition. The personal pillar allows for students to struggle, and determine through writing which communicative method best suits their needs. It also allows for students to engage code-

switching to accommodate a student-driven negotiation of self-expression. The personal

pillar is most like Murray's original conceptualization of process pedagogy, but is

monitored by Communicative Composition's collaborative pillar.

The collaborative pillar of Communicative Composition was designed to

accommodate the generation of socially-constructed knowledge. Through a rhetorical

approach to intertextuality, students are encouraged to recognize themselves, their peers,

and the instructor as participants in discourse communities. Collaborative practices in this

pillar are student to teacher, student to class, student to student, and student to discourse.

In this way, students once again practice functional, critical, and rhetorical

communication literacy as they learn to recognize composition as a communicative act.

Finally, as a communicative act, the creative pillar of Communicative

Composition is designed to identify the imagined-audience as a crucial part of developing

communication literacy. Particularly in regards to social literacy this pillar encourages

instructors to focus on imagined-audience as a creative, character-building exercise.

Collaboration serves here again as the moderator and generator of knowledge.

Finally, Chapter 4 outlined each of the three fields of learning objectives,

contrasted objectives with sample syllabi, diagramed how the pillars of Communicative

Composition facilitates the process and procedure for specific assignments, and

differentiated current composition with Communicative Composition in the context of

student needs.

In the end, I helped to build a method for instilling the communication literacy focus in current composition classrooms. As some of the sample learning objectives would indicate, current composition and Communicative Composition aren't completely different. Many current composition classes focus on how-to teach a student to communicate clearly especially in respect to their work in the academy. With this in mind, Communicative Composition is distinguished as an inclusive study. Rather than imply that learning how-to write for the academy isn't a worthwhile goal, Communicative Composition values other forms of communication equitably with academic goals. As such, learning objectives are designed around building communication literacy through the use and analysis of communicative platforms; the analysis and critique of outside artifacts from multiple time-typed sources; and the critique, revision, and recreation of personal communiques.

## Suggestions for Future Research

Communicative Composition for the enhancement of communication literacy was inspired by my experiences as a young student, but my focus on communication for composition as opposed to other foci comes from meeting students as a composition instructor. Every student was different. Every student had something to say, and something to add. The majority of students weren't engaging with the opportunity to say it. Hopefully, the last five chapters have been compelling in regards to why communication literacy is important, and how Communicative Composition can help, but this is only part a bigger conversation. Although we have come to the end of my

conversational turn, I hope to still collaborate with the composition community and this research. There are many paths to travel from this point going forward, but I would start with the Selberian delineation of communication literacy in practice, and time-typed communication artifacts as described below.

I developed Communicative Composition theory to strive to enhance communication literacy while still being able to exist in many current composition classrooms because I believe the life I want for the students who work through composition is improved with communication literacy. To complete this thought in the context of philosophical purpose and moral obligations, I want students to be able to determine for themselves what their purpose is, and what makes that purpose good. The skills Communicative Composition is designed to teach students offers them the opportunity to communicate as critical members of their discourse communities.

An area for future research lies in a study of functional, critical, and rhetorical communication literacy skills development in practice. I would begin with classroom study of the effectiveness of this pedagogical theory in regards to basic composition skills and communication literacy. However, close attention should also be paid to student development outside the classroom as members of their discourse communities.

Time-typed communication familiarity is not as easy a concept to access. Consider it this way—we understand our existence colloquially as three-dimensional. But in reality our existence is four-dimensional. (For the purposes of this English exploration we're not going to worry about quantum possibilities.) Time is that fourth dimension.

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Learning to consider time, or context as we so often describe it, is an invaluable part of understanding the role of communication. For these purposes I broke communication into time-types: synchronous, semi-synchronous, and asynchronous. Labeling these contexts with a framing of time makes not only the contexts students are familiar with accessible, like the phone call or the tweet, but also gives them a way into communications they are less familiar with. For example, if a student hadn't used direct messaging before and didn't know the rules for communication in that form, then describing direct messaging as asynchronous gives them the chance to go in knowing the conversational rules are similar to writing a letter, or an email.

An area for future research lies in a study of the inclusion of multiple time-types of communication artifacts. I would begin with classroom study of the effectiveness of this pedagogical theory in regards to basic composition skills and communication literacy. However, close attention should also be paid to student development outside the classroom as members of their discourse communities.

## A Message

For me, the next few years will be spent in the private sector working, and gathering information about the effects of different levels of communication literacy in the "real world." I look forward to the day when I am back in the classroom full time and can initiate these concepts with a more refined view of what it is like in the working and social world outside of education. Until then I hope for one thing above others for students and instructors to come. I hope that we engage with one another in pursuit of

understanding. For instructors, we can empower students with skills, and inspire them to use them. For students, it is literally everything else. As Hermann Hesse wrote in *Siddhartha*:

> "Wisdom cannot be imparted. Wisdom that a wise man attempts to impart always sounds like foolishness to someone else ... Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, live it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it" ("Hermann Hesse," n.d.).

May we keep listening and keep speaking, and may we find wisdom… together.

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Appendix A

Full List of Assignments in Syllabi Numbers 1-10

Syllabus One: Grammar Assessment/ Collaborative Essay Memos/ E-Copy Portfolio/ 2-page

       Final Student Self-Assessment Essay

Syllabus Two: Portfolio 1- Narrative Writing/ Portfolio 2- Explanatory Writing/ Portfolio 3-

       Analytic Writing/ Portfolio 4- Research Writing/Peer Editing/ Conferences/ Journals/

       Rough Drafts

Syllabus Three: Essay 1/ Essay 2/ Concept Research Paper/ Reading Response/ Class work,

       Drafts, Turnitin. Peer Review/ Final Project

Syllabus Four: 1-page Article Summary/ Academic Integrity Paper/ Feminist Critique Paper/

       Marxist Critique Paper/ Critical Analysis Paper

Syllabus Five: Cultural Analysis of a Website/ Initial Proposal for Research/ Annotated

       Bibliography/ Argumentative Paper/ Peer Surveys/ Final Research Report

Syllabus Six: Literacy Narrative/ Advertisement Analysis/ Summary Response/ Literature

       Review/ Reflective Introduction/ In-class Essay

Syllabus Seven: Essays/Writing Projects/ Daily Assignments, Journals, Quizzes, Peer

       Reviews/ Mid-term Exam/ Portfolio/ Service Journal/ Log

Syllabus Eight: The Textual Analysis Essay/ The Text-in-Context Essay/ The Cultural

Analysis

      Essay/ Peer Critique/ Conference/ Journals

Syllabus Nine: Writing Sample/ Vacation Email/ Essay 1/ Essay 2/ Essay 3/ Essay 4/

Final

      Presentations

Syllabus Ten: Journal/ Quizzes/ Narrative Essay/ Definition Essay/ Description Essay/

Compare Contrast Essay/ Persuasive Essay/ Final Research Paper

Appendix B

Communicative Composition Working Syllabus

University Name

ENG 101 Communicative Composition

| Class information: | Contact information: |
|---|---|
| Semester | Instructor |
| Class meeting times | Phone/Email |
| Class location | Office/Hours |

Course Description

Together we will explore the nuances of college level writing and celebrate the power and beauty of language. This course is designed to help you develop the skills to participate in global, personal, and academic conversations. The university defines this type of course as the theory and practice of written and oral exposition and research in traditional and electronic environments; rhetorical principles and organization in practice. Prerequisites:＿＿＿＿＿＿or a passing score on, or exemption from, placement exam. Three lecture hours a week. Credit: Three hours.

Required Course Materials

Required textbook
Required social/composition accounts access
Required electronic access and places offering public access

All course materials and course content are the intellectual property of me, your classmates, and/or their respective authors. As a result, recording audio or video of the class, as well as the duplication of or forwarding of e-mail and Blackboard postings is prohibited without written permission. This means, for example, that you may not post materials from the class, audio of lectures/discussions, or video of the class to personal web pages, Facebook, YouTube or any other electronic medium without the written consent of the instructor, and if appropriate, all relevant class members. Students may, however, request permission from the instructor to record course lectures/discussions for personal academic use. Remember the internet is a public space and it never forgets. Although you may not post intellectual property which belongs to the class, you may be asked to post your own materials online behind secure websites and log ins.

Assignments

Theme proposal portfolio

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Reporting Information portfolio- Functional communication literacy

Analyzing Information portfolio- Critical communication literacy

Creating Information portfolio- Rhetorical communication literacy

Assignment Schedule

Grading

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89 = B

70 - 79 = C

60 - 69 = D

0 - 59 = F

Portfolio Rubric for Projects

**Portfolio Rubric for Papers in First-Year Writing**: (For my essay scoring, see figures in parentheses)

| | High Proficiency 4 (20-18) | Good Proficiency 3 (17-16) | Minimal Proficiency 2 (15-14) | Non-proficiency 1 (13-0) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Invention of Content** Topic, thesis (stated or implied) focus, purpose, audience | Ideas and thesis are clear, insightful, thought-provoking, and focused; ideas consistently support the topic, thesis, and audience for the paper. | Ideas are clear and focused to support the topic and a clearly-developed central idea, but are not consistently insightful or thought-provoking. | Ideas are clear but conventional or general; ideas generally support the topic, thesis, and audience for the paper. | Ideas are unclear or clichéd and demonstrate a lack of focus in support of the topic or thesis, which may be vague or missing. |
| **Development**: evidence (details, examples, textual support, logical appeals, emotional appeals, and appeals to writer's credibility | Development is illustrative, with abundant details and examples that arouse audience interest and provide relevant, concrete, specific, and insightful evidence with effective appeals. | Development is adequate, but may lack depth, with details and examples that arouse audience interest and provide relevant, concrete, specific evidence with effective appeals. | Development is sufficient but general, providing adequate but perhaps not interesting details, examples, and evidence; few, ineffective, or fallacious logical, ethical, or emotional appeals. | Development is insufficient, providing scarce or inappropriate details, evidence, and examples that may include logical, ethical, or emotional fallacies or unsupported claims. |
| **Organization** structure, coherence, unity, topic sentences, transitions | Organization is coherent, unified, and effective in support of the paper's purpose and consistently demonstrates effective and appropriate rhetorical transitions between ideas and paragraphs. | Organization is coherent, unified, and effective in support of the paper's purpose and usually demonstrates effective and appropriate rhetorical transitions between ideas and paragraphs. | Organization is coherent and unified overall in support of the essay's purpose, but is ineffective at times and may demonstrate abrupt or weak transitions between ideas or paragraphs. | Organization is confused and fragmented in support of the essay's purpose and demonstrates a lack of structure or coherence that negatively affects readability. |
| **Style** sentence structure, word choice, tone, voice verb tense purposeful punctuation | Style is confident, readable, and rhetorically effective in tone, incorporating varied sentence structure and precise word choice. | Style is readable and rhetorically effective in tone, incorporating varied sentence structure and effective word choice. | Style is readable, but unremarkable in tone, sometimes including a lack of sentence variety and ineffective word choice. | Style is incoherent or inappropriate in tone, including a lack of sentence variety and ineffective or inappropriate word choice. |
| **Grammar, Format, and Mechanics** paper format Standard Written English (commas, s-v agreement., sentence boundaries, etc.), spelling, documentation format, MLA (or other required) format | Format, grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct; meet all assignment directions, and work expertly to support the essay's purpose. | Format, grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct and meet all assignment directions, and work generally to support the essay's purpose. | Format is mostly correct and meets critical aspects of assignment directions. Some distracting errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. | Format faulty, does not meet sufficient aspects of the assignment direction, and does not support the essay's purpose. Numerous distracting errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. |

Attendance

Success in this program depends a great deal on whether you show up and participate: Missing a writing class isn't like missing a lecture, where a friend who takes good notescan help you get caught up. Missing a writing class is more like missing team practice or a workout: Someone can tell you that everyone ran laps or practiced batting or did drills, but that isn't going to help you get caught up on the workout that you missed. For the most part, what happens in writing classes benefits only the people who fully participate in them. If you miss a class, you need to understand that you probably will not be able to make up the missed experience, and there may be consequences in terms of your understanding or performance later. Rather than excused and unexcused absences you do not need to gather documentation of excuses.

**All absences fall under the same penalty: at 4 absences your final grade is automatically dropped by one letter grade, at 5 absences your final grade is automatically dropped by another letter grade, and at 6 absences you may fail the course regardless of your final grade. (Please pay special attention to the late policy as this will help you know what to do if you are going to miss a class.)**

I don't want you to fail. I want you to succeed. If you know in advance you have to miss a class, talk to me ahead of time and we can try to minimize the side effects. I can be reached by email at                or by phone at        .

Program and Course Policies

Syllabus Changes

This document is subject to change. I may modify portions of this syllabus (particularly the calendar of assignments) to adjust to issues in the classroom, learning needs, availability of resources, changes in university or department policy, or other pedagogical reasons. When changes occur they will be announced on the class Canvas site and an amended version of the syllabus will be made available on Canvas for upload. Handouts and assignment prompts distributed during the term, physically or virtually, are considered extensions of this syllabus.

In-Office Conferences

You are required to attend at least three ten-minute scheduled conferences during office hours. Each conference is worth 2% of your final grade for a total of 6%. My suggestion is that you schedule these conferences around each of the portfolio due dates.

Late assignments

As a rule, the first-year composition program does not accept late assignments. Absence is not an excuse for late work. If you must miss class when an assignment is due, turn it in prior to the due date. I may accept a late assignment, but only in extremely extraordinary circumstances and with prior approval. However, even with approval, your grade on the work may be reduced half a letter-grade for each class day the assignment is late.

Manuscript Preparation

When you are asked to produce an in-class assignment using a word-processor, then the assignment should be printed from a digital file (double-spaced) in black ink using a Times New Roman font (no larger or smaller than 12pt). Use MLA guidelines for spacing, margins, heading, and page numbering. For multimodal assignments detailed expectations about preparation will be given with the assignment prompt.

Email Correspondence

Instructors in the first-year composition program only reply to emails sent from university accounts.

Also, emails are written communication, and you should be aware of your audience. Craft a subject line that reflects the main purpose of your message, use appropriate language, and sign your name (first and last) as well as indicate you class by section, day, and time. Following these guideline will ensure I am able to quickly identify you as a student and address your needs. I will make every effort to reply to emails in a timely fashion during the week; however, I do not normally respond to student emails on weekends.

Professional Etiquette

You and your classmates are paying to be here and most of you are trying to get things right the first time, which can demand concentration. I am trying to help all of you. For these reasons, please be professional in all activities associated with this class. Often, the same rules you follow in a movie theater work for the classroom: Turning off or silencing cell phones, using the class printer before class begins (instead of while someone is talking!), putting away ear-buds, saving your text messaging until after class, and keeping your computer screen focused on class-related activities help everyone stay focused, too. If I see such activities, I will politely ask you to stop; if you continue, I may ask you to leave the classroom so that other students can focus on the lessons. Disruptive behavior

that makes teaching or learning difficult or a pattern of non-participation or lack of preparation can lead to you being marked absent even if you are here physically.

Syllabus Comprehension and Acceptance Page

Appendix C

Links for Syllabi 1-10

Stable Links for Syllabi 1-10

1. https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/materials/engl/Newton/spring2013/101_H/101_h_syll_sp13.pdf
2. https://pittstate.edu/dotAsset/bd230600-b78f-4d31-abd9-8b318796a1a7.pdf
3. http://www.clayton.edu/portals/125/ENGL%201101%20Syllabus%20Revised%20Spring%202015.pdf
4. http://web.monroecc.edu/manila/webfiles/jnelson/ENG101MWFSpring2016.pdf
5. http://ww2.odu.edu/~kdepew/tcc_example2.pdf
6. https://cola.siu.edu/english/_common/documents/first-second-year/101-objectives.pdf
7. https://www.utm.edu/webshare/library/syllabi/2-20-2014_ENGL_111_PE2_Fall_2013.pdf
8. http://www.u.arizona.edu/~sung/english101/
9. http://www.clcillinois.edu/docs/default-source/honors/fall-2015-honors/fall2015_eng121.pdf?sfvrsn=4
10. https://www.fkcc.edu/skins/userfiles/file/Syllabi/201210/ENC%201101%20Charleston%2010147.pdf

Appendix D

Murray's Ten Implications for Process Pedagogy

Implication No. 1. The text of the writing course is the student's own writing. Students examine their own evolving writing and that of their classmates, so that they study writing while it is still a matter of choice, word by word.

Implication No. 2. The students finds his own subject. It is not the job of the teacher to legislate the students truth. It is the responsibility of the student to explore his own language, to discover his own meaning. The teacher supports but does not direct this expedition to the student's own truth.

Implication No. 3. The student uses his own language. Too often, as writer and teacher Thomas Williams points out, we teach English to our students as if were a foreign language. Actually, most of our students have learned a great deal of language before they dome to us, and they are quite willing to exploit that language if they are allowed to embark on a serious search for their own truth.

Implication No. 4. The student should have the opportunity to write all the drafts necessary for him to discover what he has to say on this particular subject. Each new draft, of course, is counted as equal to a new paper. You are not teaching a product, you are teaching a process.

Implication No. 5. The student is encouraged to attempt any form of writing which may help him discover and communicate what he has to say. The process which produces "creative" and "functional" writing is the same. You are not teaching products such as busness letters and poetry, narrative and exposition. You are teaching a product your students can use—now and in the future—to produce whatever product his subject and his audience demand.

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Implication No. 6. Mechanics come last. It is important to the writer, once he has discovered what he has to say, that nothing get between him and his reader. He must break only those traditions of written communication which would obscure his meaning.

Implication No. 7. There must be time for the writing process to take place and time for it to end. The writer must work within the stimulating tension of unpressured time to think and dream and stare out windows, and pressured time—the deadline—to which the writer must deliver.

Implication No. 8.. Papers are examined to see what other choices the writer might make. The primary responsibility for seeing the choices is the student. He is learning a process. A grade finishes a paper, the way publication usually does. The student writer is not graded on drafts any more than a concert pianist is judged on his practice sessions rather than on his performance. The student writer is graded on what he has produced at the end of the writing process.

Implication No. 9. The students are individuals who must explore the writing process in their own way, some fast, some slow, whatever it takes for them, within the limits of the course deadlines, to find their own way to their own truth.

Implication No. 10. There are no rules, no absolutes, just alternatives. What works one time may not work another. All writing is experimental.