

## Research Agenda

“Those of us who teach writing need, then, to consider media that use the alphabet and to ask how such media engage with our senses and contribute to our embodiment.”

--Anne Wysocki, *composingmedia=composingembodiment*

My research agenda revolves around the multifaceted phenomenon of the body as well as the identities that are supported by the body within Rhetoric and Composition in connection to the points of intersection between bodies and technology, the personal and the public, and bodies the classroom. The interrogation of the body across composing spaces—print, digital, and networked—creates a conversation about not only how the body is a component but also addresses the ways in which identities are constructed and performed through, with, and on our bodies, both materially and digitally. As a Rhetoric and Composition scholar, I seek to further our field’s understanding of and integration of the body in the growing exploration of Digital Multimodal Composition and New Media Studies. This focus is informed by my dissertation project and constitutes a research thread that I will continue to pursue, particularly as it plays out in writing classrooms in writing across the curriculum initiatives, and within Writing Center (and/or Digital Studio) work.

*Dissertation*— I will return to my dissertation project to perform an in-depth analysis of the impact space and time has on the body in relation to digital multimodal composition, performance, and digital embodiment. My dissertation consists of a single longitudinal case study. Within the case study, I analyze the material, aesthetic, rhetorical, and technological factors that contribute to the development of a digital multimodal composition through the engagement of identifiable literacy activities, wherein the body is at the center of the work as a whole. In order to identify the body as a component, I examine digital dance, wherein the body is necessary for the performance of the composition. The existing analysis of the case study includes an examination of the position of the body at three stages of composing: invention, revision, and performance. A recurring assertion from participants that has surfaced through analysis is the heightened sense of awareness in the mind-body connection. Since the body is a contested space within rhetoric and composition, this initial finding merits more in-depth research. But putting this finding in conversation with other relevant scholarship regarding both the mind and the body, I will offer productive insights into how the body in concert with the mind is a key component within composing so that we can work to include it more explicitly within digital composing spaces, and thus digital embodiment. The body has been explored within composing (Demasio; Fleckenstein) as well as rhetorically (Hawhee), but new media (Hanson; Munster) and digital multimodal composition calls for a renewed exploration of the body in both Composition and Rhetoric. I envision this research coalescing into a book project suitable for publication with the Southern Illinois University Press series *Studies in Writing and Rhetoric* or the Michigan Publishing component of the *digitalculturalbooks* which supports the publication of innovative work in new media and digital humanities.

*Writing Classrooms*— My pursuit of research in the writing classroom is two-fold: 1) embodied pedagogy and 2) social media in the classroom. First, I plan to research the ways in which bodies work more fully within a classroom setting, stemming specifically from findings in my dissertation that highlights the ways in which bodies are integral in the composing process as well as the acquisition of new knowledge and literacies. This research will work toward a robust understanding of embodied pedagogy building from work by scholars such as Tina Kazan that takes into consideration both the students’ bodies and the instructor as a body. This scholarship will uncover how bodies participate in the composing process, physically act (move with purpose) within a classroom, the effects of this movement, and how it connects to identity in the dynamic between students and instructors. The culmination of this article would fit the scope of scholarship at either *College English* or the *Faculty Development Journal*. Second, I have put into practice the inclusion of social media in the classroom. This praxis oriented research explores the ways in which students and faculty can understand the balance between personal and professional identities in digital composing spaces. Growing from presentations at both Writing Program Administrators, “Tweet, Tweet: Social Media in the Classroom,” and

Computers and Writing, “#TeachwithTwitter: The Personal to the Public & Professional,” I foresee this research continuing into publication in two ways: 1) as a digital publication through *Kairos* and 2) in print within the context of *Computers and Composition*. The affordances of these two publication types create the opportunity to integrate the practice in different ways through different perspectives; a digital publication creates the ability to show the pedagogical approach in action within digital environments while a print article creates a discussions of the ways in which this innovative pedagogical approach integrates technology into a writing curriculum. These two research endeavors within the writing classroom are not unrelated. Because embodiment and identity surface within the context of both embodied pedagogy and social media, there is also potential research in the combination of these areas, especially in the exploration of embodied pedagogy as it extends into digital classroom spaces.

*Writing Across the Curriculum*— In addition to research particularly situated within the writing classroom, my dissertation project has created opportunity for continued exploration of writing across the curriculum through the examination of literacy practices within the disciplines. This pursuit has already resulted in a forthcoming publication with *Across the Disciplines* in the form of a book chapter “Dancing=Composing=Writing: Expanding Literacy Through Dance and Performance”; however, the exploration of how literacy, performance, and composition (Fishman, Lunsford et. al.; George) can work in tandem across boundaries of disciplines has many potential extensions. For instance, one component of the data from my dissertation suggested that in addition to literacy practices that engage verbal, visual, and somatic systems the component of sound, or aural experiences, contributes to composing in digital multimodal composition, and I will return to my data to analyze the incorporation of sound to understand its position within composing in both composition and dance, which will also attend to the body because we engage literate practices through it. This finding reexamines approaches to digital multimodal composition, especially how it works beyond Composition; furthermore, it can be tied to performance studies as well. While the pairing of performance studies and literacy is not a new endeavor, there has been a recent resurgence of this work, and my future writing across the curriculum endeavors will work to explore the common language we use when discussing writing, literacy, and composing in order to continue to expand our understanding of literacy and how it connects across disciplines. This work would culminate in a publication for the *Writing Across the Curriculum Journal* as well as potential book series through the WAC Clearinghouse.

*Writing Center/Digital Studio*— Finally, one additional project I will pursue is rooted in the presentation I offered at the International Writing Center Association conference in fall 2014. In this presentation, “Beyond the Tutor/Tutee Model,” I explore a shift in the Writing Center atmosphere as students continue to compose across media, which necessitates new approaches within the writing center model; it pursues this central question: How do we serve the needs of both our students and faculty who not only produce ‘traditional’ composition but also develop (often digital) multimodal and/or new media composition? These approaches are situated within notions of collaboration as previously set forth by Kenneth Bruffee and Marilyn Cooper, positioning tutors within the role of consultants and expanding the sessions beyond the one-to-one model wherein consultations invite conversation across consultants and visitors to the space, potentially resituating their identities as they interact. This is also situated within the addition of digital multimodal composition (Baron; Doering, Beach & O’Brien; Losh & Jenkins; Selfe; Wysocki) to many composition as well as other undergraduate courses. The space I worked within was developed for the purpose of serving these projects, and I am interested in pursuing both the development of these spaces and understanding potential shifts in tutor (or consultant) training as the Writing Center engages with both traditional essays and digital projects. I see the continuation of this project taking shape as an article for *The Writing Center Journal*.