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The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing

Rhetoric and composition's increasing attention to multimodal composing involves challenges that go beyond issues of access to digital technologies and electronic composing environments. As a specific case study, this article explores the history of aural composing modalities (speech, music, sound) and examines how they have been understood and used within English and composition classrooms and generally subsumed by the written word in such settings. I argue that the relationship between aurality (and visual modalities) and writing has limited our understanding of composing as a multimodal rhetorical activity and has thus, deprived students of valuable semiotic resources for making meaning. Further, in light of scholarship on the importance of aurality to different communities and cultures, I argue that our contemporary adherence to alphabetic-only composition constrains the semiotic efforts of individuals and groups who value multiple modalities of expression. I encourage teachers and scholars of composition, and other disciplines, to adopt an increasingly thoughtful understanding of aurality and the role it—and other modalities—can play in contemporary communication tasks.

*Participation means being able to speak in one's own voice, and
thereby simultaneously to construct and express one's cultural
identity through idiom and style.*

—Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere"

... perhaps we can hear things we cannot see.

—Krista Ratcliffe, "Rhetorical Listening"

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A turn to the auditory dimension is . . . more than a simple changing of variables. It begins as a deliberate decentering of a dominant tradition in order to discover what may be missing as a result of the traditional double reduction of vision as the main variable and metaphor.

—Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice*

Anyone who has spent time on a college or university campus over the past few decades knows how fundamentally important students consider their sonic environments—the songs, music, and podcasts they produce and listen to; the cell phone conversations in which they immerse themselves; the headphones and Nanos that accompany them wherever they go; the thumper cars they use to turn the streets into concert stages; the audio blogs, video soundtracks, and mixes they compose and exchange with each other and share with anyone else who will listen.

Indeed, students' general penchant for listening to and producing sound can be eloquently ironic for English composition teachers faced with the deafening silence of a class invited to engage in an oral discussion about a written text. This phenomenon, however, may reveal as much about our profession's attitudes toward aural and writing¹—or the related history of these expressive modalities within our discipline—as it does about students' literacy values and practices. Sound, although it remains of central importance both to students and to the population at large, is often undervalued as a compositional mode.

My argument in this article is that the history of writing in U.S. composition instruction, as well as its contemporary legacy, functions to limit our professional understanding of composing as a multimodal rhetorical activity and deprive students of valuable semiotic resources for making meaning.² As print assumed an increasingly privileged position in composition classrooms during the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, aural was both subsumed by, and defined in opposition to, writing (Russell, "Institutionalizing" and *Writing*; Halbritter; B. McCorkle, "Harbingers"; Elbow, "What"), thus establishing and perpetuating a false binary between the two modalities of expression (Biber, "Spoken" and *Variation*; Tannen, "Oral" and *Spoken*), encouraging an overly narrow understanding of language and literacy (Kress, "English"), and allowing collegiate teachers of English composition to lose sight of the integrated nature of language arts. Further, I argue that a single-minded focus on print in composition classrooms ignores

the importance of aural and other composing modalities for making meaning and understanding the world. Finally, I suggest that the almost exclusive dominance of print literacy works against the interests of individuals whose cultures and communities have managed to maintain a value on multiple modalities of expression, multiple and hybrid ways of knowing, communicating, and establishing identity (Gilyard; Dunn, *Learning and Talking*; Royster, *Traces and "First Voice"*; Hibbitts; Powell; Lyons).

My ultimate goal in exploring aural as a case in point is *not* to make an either/or argument—*not* to suggest that we pay attention to aural *rather than* to writing. Instead, I suggest we need to pay attention to *both* writing *and* aural, *and* other composing modalities, as well. I hope to encourage teachers to develop an increasingly thoughtful understanding of a whole range of modalities and semiotic resources in their assignments and then to provide students the opportunities of developing expertise with *all available means* of persuasion and expression, so that they can function as literate citizens in a world where communications cross geopolitical, cultural, and linguistic borders and are enriched rather than diminished by semiotic dimensionality.

What is at stake in this endeavor seems significant—both for teachers of English composition and for students. When teachers of composition limit the bandwidth of composing modalities in our classrooms and assignments, when we privilege print as *the only* acceptable way to make or exchange meaning, we not only ignore the history of rhetoric and its intellectual inheritance, but we also limit, unnecessarily, our scholarly understanding of semiotic systems (Kress, "English") and the effectiveness of our instruction for many students.

The stakes for students are no less significant—they involve fundamental issues of rhetorical sovereignty³: the rights and responsibilities that students have to identify their own communicative needs and to represent their own identities, to select the right tools for the communicative contexts within which they operate, and to think critically and carefully about the meaning that they and others compose. When we insist on print as *the* primary, and most formally acceptable, modality for composing knowledge, we usurp these rights and responsibilities on several important intellectual and social dimensions, and, unwittingly, limit students' sense of rhetorical agency to the bandwidth of our own interests and imaginations.⁴

By way of making this argument, I begin by recounting a very brief, and necessarily selective, history of aural, focusing on the role it came to assume in college composition classrooms from the mid-nineteenth century onward. I then discuss some of the ways in which aural has *persisted* in English

composition classrooms in the midst of a culture saturated by the written word. Finally, I suggest how digital communication environments and digital multimodal texts have encouraged some teachers of composition to rediscover aurality as a valuable modality of expression.

The irony of making an argument about aurality in print is not lost on me, nor, I suspect, will it be on most other readers of this article. Indeed, it is very much the point of what I try to say in the following pages. Thus, throughout this article I have included references to four sound essays composed by students at Michigan Tech, the University of Louisville, and The Ohio State University. I consider these pieces a crucial part of my argument about valuing aurality as a composing modality. Hence, I encourage readers to go to <http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/selfe2/ccc/>, listen to these sound essays, read what their authors have said about composing them.

Aural Composing: Sample 1, Sonya Borton's *Legacy of Music*

At this point, I ask readers to leave this printed text and go to <http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/selfe2/ccc/>, where they can listen to Sonya Borton's autobiographical essay, *Legacy of Music*, in which she tells listeners about the musical talents of various members of her Kentucky family. In relating her narrative, Borton weaves a richly textured fabric of interviews, commentary, instrumental music, and song to support her thesis that a love of music represents an important legacy passed down from parents to children within her family.

A Short History of Aurality in College Composition Classrooms

Theorizing the role of aurality in composition classrooms is not a task that comes easily to most composition teachers. Since the late nineteenth century, writing has assumed such a dominant and central position in our professional thinking that its role as the major instructional focus goes virtually uncontested, accepted as common sense. As Patricia Dunn (*Talking*) writes, it seems absurd even to

question an over-emphasis on writing in a discipline whose *raison d'être* is, like no other discipline, for and about writing. That common-sense assumption, however, may be what makes it so difficult for us in Composition to see word-based pedagogies in any way other than supportive of learning. (150)

Composition teachers, she concludes, have come to believe “writing is not simply *one* way of knowing; it is *the* way” (15). *Doxa*, or common belief, however, always maintains its strongest hold in the absence of multiple historical

and cultural perspectives. Although writing has come to occupy a privileged position in composition classrooms—and in the minds of many compositionists—historical accounts by such scholars as David Russell (“Institutionalizing” and *Writing*), James Berlin, Nan Johnson, and Michael Halloran confirm this situation as both relatively recent and contested.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, for example, collegiate education in America was fundamentally shaped by Western classical traditions and was oral in its focus. As Michael Halloran notes, within this curriculum students learned to read, speak, and write both classical language and English through recitation—the standard pedagogical approach for all subjects—as well as through a wide range of oratorical performances, debates, orations, and declamations, both inside formal classes and in extracurricular settings such as literary societies. The goal of these activities was to build students’ general skill in public speaking, rather than encouraging specialized inquiry as mediated by the written word.

This old model of oratorical education, David Russell notes (“Institutionalizing” and *Writing*), was linked to the cultural values, power, and practices of privileged families in the colonies who considered facility in oral, face-to-face encounters to be the hallmark of an educated class. The male children of these families were expected to help lead the nation in the role of statesmen, enter the judicial and legal arena, or become ministers. For heirs of these families, as Susan Miller has added, little instruction in writing was needed other than practice in penmanship. Their lives were imbricated with oral communication practices—speeches, debates, sermons—and such individuals had to be able to speak, as gentlemen, in contexts of power. Universities were charged with preparing these future leaders to assume their roles and responsibilities.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, universities began to change in response to the rapid rise of industrial manufacturing, the explosion of scientific discoveries, and the expansion of the new country’s international trade. These converging trends accumulated with increasing tential force and resulted in profound cultural transformations that placed an increasing value on specialization and professionalization, especially within the emerging middle class. Such changes required both new approaches to education and a new kind of secular university, one designed to meet the needs of individuals involved in science, commerce, and manufacturing. It was within this new collegiate context that the first departments of English were able to form, primarily by forging identities for themselves as units that educated a range of citizens occupied with business and professional affairs.⁵

In response to these cultural trends, Russell has observed, “the modern project of purification, the drive toward specialization, made old rhetoric impossible” (“Institutionalizing” 40).⁶

Instead, departments of English focused on preparing professionals whose work, after graduation, would increasingly rely on writing, as Russell explains—articles, reports, memoranda and communications, “texts as objects to be silently studied, critiqued, compared, appreciated, and evaluated” (*Writing* 4–5). Supporting this work were technological innovations—improved printing presses, typewriters, and pens, among others—that combined with innovations in business operations, efficient manufacturing techniques, and science to lend added importance to writing as a cultural code, both within the new university and outside it (Russell, “Institutionalizing”).

As they emerged in this context, departments of English sought increasingly modern approaches to changing communication practices and values—hoping to distance themselves from the old-school education in oratory, which was considered increasingly less valuable as a preparation for the world of manufacturing, business, and science, and to link their curricula to more pragmatic concerns of professionalism in the modern university. The new departments of English taught their studies in the vernacular—rather than in Greek or Latin—and separated themselves from a continued focus on oratory, religion, and the classics, which became devalued as historical or narrowly defined studies. These newly emergent departments of English focused primarily on their ability to provide instruction in written composition. During this brief period in the latter third of the nineteenth century, writing became one of a very few subjects required for a university course of study (Berlin; Russell, *Writing*).⁷ Charles William Eliot, who became president of Harvard in 1869, noted that instruction in writing—distinguished by a natural, uninflated style—was not only desirable for students at the new university but also necessary for the success of a national culture based on economic development, modern industrial processes, and trade (359).⁸

Scholars have described, in various ways, the historic shift that occurred during the last half of the nineteenth century, from an older style of education based on declamation, oratory, forensics, and delivery⁹ to a new style of education based primarily on the study and analysis of written texts, both classical and contemporary¹⁰—and the production of such texts. Perhaps the most succinct statement, however, and the one most directly to the point for this history of aurality in college composition classrooms is Ronald Reid’s (1959) comment:

The most significant change was rhetoric's abandonment of oratory. The advanced courses, commonly known during this period as "themes and forensics," consisted almost exclusively of written work. . . . The beginning course, too, gave much practice in writing, none in public speaking. (253)

Although attention to aurality persisted in various ways into the twentieth century, it was clearly on the wane in English studies.¹¹ By 1913, one year before teachers of speech seceded from the National Council of Teachers of English, John Clapp was moved to ask in an article published by the *English Journal*,

Is there a place in College English classes for exercises in reading, or talking, or both? The question has been raised now and then in the past, almost always to receive a negative answer, particularly from English departments. (21)

The general response of the profession to these questions, Clapp noted, was that "for the purposes of the intellectual life, which college graduates are to lead, talking is of little important, and writing of very great importance" (23).

This brief history of composition as a discipline can be productively viewed within a larger historical frame as well—specifically that of the rise of science (and its progeny, technology) in the West before, during, and immediately after the Enlightenment, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. At the heart of science as a rational project was the belief that humans could unlock the secrets of nature using systematic observations and precisely recorded written measurements. In a world attuned to the systematic methodologies of science, the recorded word, the visual trace of evidence, provided proof, and observations rendered in the visual medium of print revealed truth—Newton's notes on mathematical proofs, Franklin's written descriptions of experiments, Darwin's *Beagle* diaries. If the scientific revolution rested on the understanding that seeing was believing, it also depended on writing—and after the mid-fifteenth century—on printing as a primary means of recording, storing, and retrieving important information and discoveries. Later, with the application of scientific methods to a wide range of legal, military, industrial, and manufacturing practices, the complex network of cultural formations that reinforced the privileged role of visual and print information.

From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, then, as the power of vision and print gradually waxed in the context of a university education, the power of aurality gradually waned, although this trend was, at different times and places, far from even or immediate in its effects. U.S. colleges and universities, for instance, lagged slightly behind those in Europe for a time in this regard,

but education within the two cultures followed the same general trajectory. As Hibbitts notes, it was during this period that “the social and intellectual status of vision gradually undermined the position still occupied by the other forms of sensory experience in the Western tradition” (2.25).

In educational institutions and, later, departments of English and programs of English composition, the effects of this shift were far reaching. Writing and reading, for example, became separated from speech in educational contexts and became largely silent practices for students in classroom settings. Written literature, although including artifacts of earlier aural forms (Platonic dialogues, Shakespearean monologues, and poetry, for instance), was studied through silent reading and subjected to written analysis, consumed by the eye rather than the ear.¹² The disciplined practices of silent writing, reading, and observation that characterized collegiate education became normalized and, importantly, linked to both class and race. In educational contexts, Hibbitts observes, “[t]he most important meta-lesson became, as it today remains, how to sit, write, and read in contented quiet” (2.25). It was through such changes that writing became the focus of a specialized academic education delivered primarily to, and by, privileged white males.

If print became increasingly important within the new U.S. universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, aurality retained some of its power and reach in other locations, where individuals and groups were forced to acquire both written and aural literacies by a range of informal means or through an educational system that retained a fundamental integration of the language arts. Many women during this period, for instance, were discouraged from pursuing a university education or had less time and money for such a luxury. Blacks, Hispanics and Latinos/as, and American Indians, in addition, were, for prolonged periods, persecuted for learning to read and write (Gere; Royster, *Traces*; Richardson), educated outside the schools that males attended, and denied access to the white colleges and universities.¹³ Although individuals from these groups learned—through various means and, often, with great sacrifice—to deploy writing skillfully and in ways that resisted the violence of oppression, many also managed to retain a deep and nuanced appreciation for aural traditions as well: in churches and sacred ceremonies, in storytelling and performance contexts, in poetry and song.

The history of slavery in the United States, for example, shaped the educational opportunities of black citizens, many of whom survived and resisted the violence and oppression in their lives by developing literacy values and practices—often, but certainly not exclusively, aural in nature—that remained

invisible to whites and that were, often because of this fact, highly effective. Although many of the legal prohibitions against teaching blacks to read and write were lifted after the Civil War, *de facto* barriers of racism continued to function. Many black citizens were denied access to schools with adequate resources and others had to abandon their own formal education to help their families survive the economic hardships that continued to characterize the lives of blacks in both the North and the South (Hibbitts). And although black citizens, under adverse conditions, found their own routes for acquiring written literacy—in historically black colleges and universities, in churches, literary societies, homes, segregated public schools—artifacts of this historical period persisted in black communities in verbal games, music, vocal performance, storytelling, and other “vernacular expressive arts” (Richardson 680). These aural traces identify communities of people who have survived and thrived, not only by deploying but also by resisting the literacy practices of a dominant culture that continued to link the printed word and silent reading, so closely to formal education, racism, and the exercise power by whites (Banks; Smitherman, “CCCC”; Richardson; Royster, “First Voice” Mahiri). “[T]he written word,” notes Ashraf Rushdy, in part “represents the processes used by racist white American institutions to proscribe and prescribe African American subjectivity.”¹⁴

Hispanic/Latino communities, too, while valuing a wide range of literacy practices in their cultural, familial, and intellectual lives (Guerra; Guerra and Farr; Kells, Balester, and Villanueva; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, and Alvarez; Cintron; Villanueva; Trejo; Limon; and Ruiz) also managed to retain, to varying extents and in a range of different ways, an investment in collective storytelling, *cuentos*, *corridos*, and other aural practices developed within a long—and continuing—history of linguistic, educational, economic, and cultural discrimination. Contributing to the persistence of these traditions has been the history of U.S. imperialism and discrimination in Texas, California, and other border states; the troubled history of bilingual education in this country; the devaluing of Latin American, Puerto Rican, and Mexican Spanish speakers; and the persistence of the English-Only movements in public education. Given this history of discrimination, as Hibbitts points out, Hispanic citizens often find themselves “drawn and sometimes forced back into the soundscapes of their own ethnic communities” (2.43), while simultaneously deploying a wide range of written discourses—skillfully and, sometimes, in ways that productively resist mainstream discourses (Kells, Balester, and Villanueva; Reyes and Halcon; Cintron).

Many American Indians, too, have managed to sustain a value on aural-ity—as well as on writing and a range of other modalities of expression—as means of preserving their heritage and identities: in public speaking, ceremonial contexts, shared stories, poetry, and song (Clements; Blaeser; Keeling; Evers and Toelken), although as both Scott Lyons and Malea Powell point out, the diversity of tribal histories and the “discursive intricacies” and complexity of Native American’s literacy practices and values remain misunderstood, under-examined in published scholarship, and prone to painful and simplistic stereotypes. The aural literacy practices that many tribal members have valued and continue to value—along with the skillful and critical use of other modalities—serve as complex cultural and community-based responses to the imperialism of the “Euroamerican mainstream” (Powell 398). Such practices form part of the story of survival and resistance that American Indians have composed for themselves during the occupation of their homeland and the continuing denigration of their culture as their battles for sovereignty continue.

In sum, the increasingly limited role of aurality within U.S. English and composition programs during the last half of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries was intimately tied to the emerging influence of writing as the primary mode of formal academic work, of commercial exchange and recordkeeping, and of public and professional expression. This trend, influenced by the rise of manufacturing and science, as well as the growing cultural value on professionalism, was instantiated in various ways and to varying extents in courses and universities around the country and enacted variously by groups and individuals according to their different cultures, literacy values, and practices. The trend was, nevertheless, consistent in its general direction and tendential force. In formal educational contexts, writing and reading increasingly became separated from speech and were understood as activities to be enacted, for the most part, in silence.

In this discussion, I take an important lesson from colleagues like Jacqueline Royster (“First Voice”), Geneva Smitherman (*Talkin*), Adam Banks, Scott Lyons, and Malea Powell, who point out the serious risks, when discussing the oral traditions and practices of people of color, to cede written English as “somehow the exclusive domain of Whites” (Banks 70). The work of these scholars reminds us in persuasive and powerful terms that people of color have historically deployed a wide range of written discourses in masterful and often powerfully oppositional ways while retaining a value on traditional oral discourses and practices. My goal in this article, then, is not to suggest that teachers focus on *either* writing *or* aurality, but rather that they respect and

encourage students to deploy *multiple* modalities in skillful ways—written, aural, visual—and that they model a respect for and understanding of the various roles each modality can play in human expression, the formation of individual and group identity, and meaning making. In this work, the efforts of the scholars such as those cited above as well as attention to historical and contemporary discursive practices of blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, and other peoples of color can help direct our thinking and lead our profession forward in productive ways.

Audio Composing: Sample 2: Elisa Norris’s “Literacy = Identity: Can You See Me?”

At this point, please go to <http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/selfe2/ccc/> and listen to Elisa Norris’s audio poem, “Literacy = Identity: Can You See Me?” which opens with a school bell, a teacher reading a classroom roll, and her own personal call and response, “Elisa Norris, Elisa Norris . . . is she absent today? No. Do you see her? No.” In this poetic text, an aural variation on a conventional writing assignment, Norris layers music, voice, and poetic images to create a composition that asks listeners to acknowledge her presence and the complex dimensions of her cultural identity. Through the sonic materiality of her own voice, Norris invites listeners to enter her life, and with her to resist the cultural erasure and racial stereotypes that shape her experience.

Artifacts of Auralty

Tracing how auralty became subsumed by print within composition classrooms in the United States during the nineteenth century, however, provides us only one part of a complex historical picture. Another, and perhaps as important, part of the picture involves investigating how and why auralty has *persisted* in English composition classrooms, in the midst of a culture saturated by print.

From one perspective, this process can be understood as a kind of cultural and intellectual *remediation*.¹⁵ Within the specialized cultural location of the college classroom in the United States, aural practices became gradually, but increasingly, subsumed by academic writing, which was presented as the improved medium of formal communication characterizing new U.S. universities. At the same time, academic writing often made its case for superiority by referring backwards to characteristics of auralty, which was never entirely erased. By the end of the nineteenth century, for instance, as scholars such as Ben McCorkle (“Harbingers”) has noted, the academic focus on the production and delivery of *aural texts* was increasingly to be mediated by *written*

textbooks on delivery and elocution. English studies faculty still lectured and students still engaged in some oral activities, but within the context of the new university, instruction was increasingly mediated by writing and printed materials—published textbooks, in written assignments, collected and printed lectures, written examinations for students.

Throughout the twentieth century, too, English composition faculty continued to talk about oral language, but primarily in comparison with written language. They continued to make reference to the oral qualities of language, but often metaphorically and in the service of writing instruction and in the study of written texts (the *voice* of the writer, the *tone* of an essay, and the *rhythm* of sentences) (Yancey; Elbow, “What”). Similarly, although students continued to have opportunities for oral performance, they were carefully circumscribed and limited to conferences, presentations, and class discussions focused on writing.¹⁶ And although writing assignments in the twentieth century sometimes focused on topics that touched on aurality and oral performances—popular music, for example—students were expected to *write* their analyses of songs, to focus on *written* lyrics, or to use music as a prompt for *written* composition. In scholarly arenas, scholars studied the history of rhetoric but considered orality and the canon of delivery (McCorkle, “Harbingers”) to be of interest primarily as a historical artifact. Even rhetoric scholars whose work was designed to focus attention on the discursive practices and “voices” of long-ignored groups—blacks, Latinos/as, Native Americans, women—*wrote* about these oral practices.¹⁷ The majority of English composition scholars who spoke about their work at professional conferences delivered written papers that they wrote first and, only then, read. By the end of the twentieth century, the ideological privileging of writing was so firmly established that it had become almost fully naturalized. The program of the 1998 Watson Conference, for example, included Beverly Moss as a featured speaker. Moss, who had fractured the elbow of her right arm, delivered a talk about oral language practices in black churches. She introduced her presentation by mentioning her own struggle to prepare a talk without being able to write her text first. Moss’s presentation and delivery were superb—cogent and insightful—but her framing comments highlighted how difficult and unusual it was for her, and many other scholars, to deliver an oral presentation without a written text.

Writing as Not-Speech

A brief examination of some aural artifacts in English composition classrooms during the twentieth century can be instructive in helping readers understand

the ways in which attention to orality has persisted in U.S. composition classrooms.

By the time the Conference on College Composition and Communication was formed in 1949, attention to students' writing in English departments, with a few brief exceptions, had almost completely eclipsed attention to aural composition. Although the professional focus on speech was revived somewhat after scholars like Lev Vygotsky published his groundbreaking work on the developmental relationship between speech and writing in 1962, many composition scholars—concerned with staking out the territory of the new field and identifying the intellectual and professional boundaries of the nascent discipline—chose to focus on the differences between writing and speech, to define the work of composition classrooms (i.e., writing and the teaching of writing) in opposition to talking, speech, and auralness.¹⁸ This scholarly effort continued throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, until informed by the work of linguists like Douglas Biber (“Spoken” and *Variation*) and Deborah Tannen (“Oral” and *Spoken*), many in the profession came to recognize that writing and speaking actually shared many of the same characteristics and did not exist in the essentialized, dichotomous relationship that had been constructed by scholars.

During the 1960s and 1970s, however, many compositionists defined writing primarily in terms of how it differed from speech. Motivating some of this activity, at least in part, were two converging trends. The first, well underway at this point, was the movement away from current-traditional rhetoric (which posited knowledge as pre-existing language, as external, as discoverable, and as verifiable) and toward a social-epistemic understanding of rhetoric (which posited knowledge as socially constructed and created in, and through, the social uses of language) (Berlin). During roughly the same period, teachers of composition were also attempting to digest poststructuralist theories of language, which occasionally proved less than directly accessible. In his 1976 work *Of Grammatology*, for example, Jacques Derrida pointed out the fallacy of immediacy and questioned the notion of coherent, self-presentation of meaning in *spoken* discourse, and he urged close attention to *writing* as the ground for understanding the active play of difference in language and the shifting nature of signification. Although Derrida's aim was *not* to reverse the historical hierarchy of speech over writing, but rather to call into question logocentricity itself, many composition scholars connected his focus to the field's emerging understanding of writing as both social and epistemic. Influenced not only

by these scholarly streams of thought, but by the overdetermined forces of specialization that continued to shape the field within the modern university, compositionists turned their scholarly attention and pedagogical efforts, increasingly, away from speech and toward writing, defining the figure of writing against the ground of speech.¹⁹

In 1984, for instance, Sarah Liggett annotated fifty-one articles on “the relationship between speaking and writing” (354) and suggested another nineteen pieces for “related reading.” The majority of these works, not surprisingly, concluded that the aural language practices of talking and speaking were related to writing in various ways and at various levels, but also that they differed significantly from writing in terms of important features (Emig; Barritt and Kroll; Connors, “Differences”; Farrell; Halpern; Hirsch). Further, in a number of cases, scholars claimed that writing posed more intellectual challenges to students than speech or oral composing, that writing was more sophisticated or complex than speech (Sawyer). Many of these works associated speaking and talking with less reflective, more “haphazard” communication (Snipes) and with popular culture, while writing was considered “inherently more self-reliant” (Emig 353), a “more deliberate mode of expression” and “inherently more intellectual” (Newman and Horowitz 160). In their 1965 article in *College Composition and Communication*, John Newman and Milton Horowitz concluded:

Writing and speaking clearly represent different strata of the person. Although both functions funnel thought processes, speaking evidences more feeling, more emotive expression and more “first thoughts that come to mind.” While writing is more indicative of the intellectualized, rational, and deliberative aspects of the person. (164)

Other scholars (Dyson; Bereiter and Scardemalia; Carroll; Furner; Lopate; Snipes; Zoellner) explored speech and talking as auxiliary activities that could help students during the process of writing. The ultimate goal of these activities, however, was always a written composition or a literate writer. The profession’s bias against aural forms of expression was also evident in the work of scholars who implied that students’ reliance on the conventions of oral discourse resulted in the presence of problematic features in their written work (Cayer and Sacks; Collins and Williamson; Robinson, 1982; Snipes; Shaughnessy). In 1973, for example, Wilson Snipes investigated the hypothesis that “orientation to an oral culture has helped cause a gradual decrease in student ability to handle written English in traditionally acceptable ways” (156), citing “haphazard

punctuation,” “loose rambling style,” and “diminutive vocabulary” (159), writing that is “superficial, devoid of subtle distinctions,” and thought that remains “fixed in a larval state” (160).

Despite the scholarly work of linguists (Biber, “Spoken” and *Variation*; Tannen, “Oral” and *Spoken*) who identified a broad range of overlapping elements that writing and speaking shared as composing modalities, the bias toward writing continued to grow in composition studies throughout the twentieth century. By 1994, Peter Elbow sounded a wondering note at the profession’s continued efforts to separate voice from writing:

What interests me is how . . . most of us are unconscious of how deeply our culture’s version of literacy has involved as decision to keep voice out of writing, to maximize the difference between speaking and writing—to prevent writers from even using those few crude markers that could capture more of the subtle and not so subtle semiotics of speech. Our version of literacy requires people to distance their writing behavior further from their speaking behavior than the actual modalities require. (“What” 8)

The Silence of Voice

Another persistent artifact of aurality in the composition classroom has been the reliance on metaphors of *voice* in writing. In Kathleen Yancey’s germinal collection *Voices on Voice*, for instance, the bibliography annotates 102 sources that inform professional thinking about voice. Yet Yancey and Elbow, the authors of this bibliography, describe it as “incomplete” because “voice’ leads to everything” (315). The treatment of voice in *College Composition and Communication* and *College English* attests to that statement: between 1962 and 1997, in articles or citations to other scholarly works, voice was explored in connection with feminist theory (Finke), rhetorical theory (Shuster); personal expression, identity, and character (Gibson; Faigley, “Judging”; Stoehr); the writing process (Winchester); style and mimesis (P. Brooks); academic writing (Bartholomae); race, gender, and power (Royster, “First Voice”; Smitherman, “CCCC’s Role”; Wiget, Hennig); technology (Eldred), political dissent (Murray), advertisements (Sharpe), public and private discourses (Robson), and authenticity and multiplicity (Fulwiler), and evangelical discourse (Hashimoto), among many other subjects. Between 1972 and 1998, ten books with *voice* in their titles were reviewed in *CCC*.²⁰

What these works on composition had in common, however, was less an understanding of embodied, physical human *voice* than a persistent use of the metaphorical language that remediated voice *as a characteristic of written prose*.

As Kathleen Yancey outlined the scope of work on voice in 1994,

[W]e use the metaphor of voice to talk generally around issues in writing: about both the act of writing and its agent, the writer, and even about the reader, and occasionally about the presence in the text of the writer. . . . Sometimes we use voice to talk specifically about what and how a writer knows, about the capacity of a writer through “voice” to reveal (and yet be dictated by) the epistemology of a specific culture. Sometimes we use voice to talk in neo-Romantic terms about the writer discovering an authentic self and then deploying it in text. (vii)

Aurality in Popular Culture

Although aurality continued to take a back seat to writing throughout the twentieth century in collegiate composition classrooms—especially in terms of the texts that students were asked to produce—teachers continued to recognize its importance in the lived experience of young people. In 1968, for instance, Jerry Walker wrote of his concern that English majors were asked to focus almost exclusively on printed works of “literary heritage” (634) that provided youths little help in dealing with the problems of the Cold War era. Given students’ concerns about “alienation, war, racial strife, automation, work, and civil disobedience” (635), Walker noted, they often found the texts of television and radio, which involved the aural presentation of information, to resonate more forcefully than the written texts of historical eras. Walker pointed to the successes of teachers who focused on popular culture and who used aural texts and popular music as foci for classroom assignments. Similar suggestions for assignments were put forward in subsequent years—with assignments that examined the music of the Beatles (Carter) and Billie Holiday (Zaluda); popular music in general (Kroeger); and the writing associated with popular music (Lutz)—for instance, the liner notes that accompany albums and CDs.

In general, however, the aural text was not the focus of these scholars. Music and communication in mass media (especially radio, film, newspapers) was considered part of popular culture, and teachers of English composition—influenced by the biases of the belletristic tradition (Trimbur; Paine) that shaped composition as a discipline—distinguished such texts from academic discourse, dismissing them as part of the “philistine culture” outside the walls of the university (George and Trimbur 694).²¹ Although most composition teachers in the twentieth century were willing to accept the draw of popular culture, the goal of the composition classroom remained, at some level, as Adams Sherman Hill had described it in the nineteenth century: to “arm” students (Hill, qtd. in Paine 292), to “inoculate” (Paine 282) them against the infectious effects of

popular culture and various forms of mass communication, to encourage them to turn to the written texts of geniuses from the past as a means of discovering their “real selves” (Hill, qtd. in Paine, p. 282) and “*resisting* mass culture” (Paine 283). Although it was permissible to lure students into English classes with the promise of focusing on popular culture or music, most composition teachers agreed it was best to approach such texts as objects of study, analysis, interpretation, and, perhaps most importantly, critique (Sirc).

As representative pieces of popular—or low—culture, aural texts were not generally recognized as appropriately intellectual vehicles for composing meaning in composition classrooms. Only writing held that sinecure, and the goal of composition teachers’ assignments continued to be excellence in reading and writing. Robert Heilman summarized this view succinctly in 1970, within the context of a discussion about the use of electronic media in composition classrooms:

the substitution of electronic experience [music, film, radio] in the classroom, for the study of the printed page is open to question. It tends to reduce the amount of reading by creating a thirst for the greater immediate excitement of sound and light. The classroom is for criticism; the critical experience is valuable; and it cannot be wise to attenuate it by the substitution of sensory experience which the age already supplies in excess. (242–43)

Despite this common characterization, some pioneering teachers during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s continued to experiment with more contemporary texts and assignments that involved aural components. Lisa Ede and John Lofty, for instance, suggested incorporating oral histories into composition classrooms. Both authors, however, also considered the goal and the final step of such assignments to be written essays that quoted from conversations with interview subjects. Although aurality was acknowledged and deployed as a way of engaging students and even a way of investigating various phenomena, it was generally ignored as a compositional modality.

Aurality and Pedagogy

A value on aurality—in limited and constrained situations—also persisted in the context of certain classroom practices throughout the twentieth century. One strikingly persistent thread of work, for instance, focused on teachers and using audio recordings to convey their responses to student papers (G. Olson; Sommers; Mellen and Sommers; Anson; Sipple). In such articles, faculty talked about the fact that their taped oral responses to students’ written work

allowed for a clearer acknowledgment of the “rhetorical nature” of response to a piece of writing, because remarks could be “more detailed and expansive” (Mellen and Sommers 11–12) and unfold across time. As Jeff Sommers noted, the sound of an instructor’s voice seemed at once more immediate and more personal; the aural nature of the comments were able to give students a “walking tour” through their texts, as if a reader were conversing with them (186). Interestingly, however, none of these authors mentioned some of the more basic affordances of aural feedback—that speech conveys a great deal of meaning through pace, volume, rhythm, emphasis, and tone of voice as well as through words themselves.²²

Teachers continued to provide other aspects of their instruction orally, as well. Diana George, for example, explored the use of audio taping in the composition classroom as a way of recording the texts of small-group interactions and responding to these texts with her own suggestions, observations, and remarks. George noted that this approach provided her insight about the problems that such groups encountered when discussing each other’s written papers, as well as the work that small groups accomplished when a teacher was not present. This scholarship deserves attention because it is one of the relatively rare instances in which students’ oral exchanges were considered *as semiotic texts* that were composed and could be studied for the meaning they contained.

As much of this scholarship suggests, however, while students were expected to engage in discussion and oral group work in many composition classrooms, their speaking was located within specific contexts and occasions and was expected, generally, to happen on cue. Such occasions were limited in many classrooms and often were not wholly satisfying to teachers. In 1974, for instance, Gerald Pierre noted that well-meaning teachers who depended on lecturing to convey information often short-circuited their own attempts to generate class discussions, turning them into “oral quizzes, guess-my-conclusion games, or bristling silences” (306).

In an attempt to address such concerns, some teachers turned to oral presentations as venues for student talk within the classroom. Mary Saunders, in a 1985 article in *College Composition and Communication*, described a sequence of assignments in which students were asked to make short oral presentations abstracted from drafts of their written research papers and then to revise their papers based on the feedback they received from classmates. The primary goal of these presentations, of course, was to improve students’ *written* work, to help them “write better papers” (358). Similarly the aural work accomplished within

teacher-student conferences (Schiff; North; Arbur; A. Rose; Memering) and writing-center appointments (North; Clark) was subordinated almost wholly to the end goal of writing. For students, the primary reason for speaking and listening in composition classrooms was identified as improved writing.

In this context, it is interesting to note that aurality also continued as a key form of *faculty* teaching and testing practices.²³ Lecturing, for instance, remained a relatively popular form of teaching in many composition classrooms through the end of the century and beyond—despite a growing agreement that classrooms should be centered around students' opportunities to practice composing strategies rather than teachers' chances to talk about such strategies (Finkel; Dawe and Dornan; Pierre; Lindemann).²⁴

The continued use of the lecture as one method of conducting instruction foregrounds some of the complications and contradictions of the profession's stance toward aurality and writing: although students have been encouraged to focus on the production of *written* texts and such texts have increasingly become the standard of production for composition classes, many teachers have continued to impart information through *oral* lectures, often expending a great deal of time to craft and deliver effective oral texts. In this respect, as every teacher and student understands, power and aurality are closely linked. Indeed, the enactment of authority, power, and status in composition classes is expressed, in part, *through* aurality: how much one is allowed to talk and under what conditions. This phenomenon has been mapped as well in teachers' aural evaluations of both undergraduate and graduate students, which, although not generally considered as important as the evaluation of *written* work, has remained nonetheless persistent. For undergraduates, for instance, such evaluations have continued to be conducted in highly ritualized one-on-one conferences in which students are expected to explain the purposes, audiences, and approaches taken in their written projects (Schiff; North; Arbur; Rose; Memering). For graduate students, oral questioning and disputation has persisted in candidacy exams, as well as in more public defenses of theses and dissertations. To pass such exams, graduate students are expected to succeed both in producing a written text and defending their ideas in disputational aural exchanges, forms rooted historically in verbal argument and display (Ong, *Fighting*; Connors, "Teaching").

Aurality and Silenced Voices

It is important to note that attention to aurality has also persisted in the work of scholars who focused on the rhetorical contributions and histories of mar-

ginalized or underrepresented groups. Individual scholars such as Jacqueline Jones Royster (*Traces* and “First Voice”) and Beverly Moss, Scott Lyons and Malea Powell, Anne Ruggles Gere and Geneva Smitherman (“CCCC’s Role”), among others, for example, brought to bear an understanding of aurality—and its complex relationship to written literacy—informed by the historical richness of their own families, communities, and experiences, and trained it on the complex problems associated with race, class, and gender inequities, and the exercise of power in education and English composition.

This richly textured scholarship—which holds great value for the profession and our larger culture—contributes, in particular, to resisting simplistic binary splits between writing and aurality that have informed instruction in mainstream college composition classrooms during much of the twentieth century, despite linguistic evidence suggesting the erroneous nature of such a division. At the same time, this work acknowledges aurality as an important way of knowing and making meaning for many people in this country—especially those for whom, historically, higher education has often been part of a system of continued domination and oppression. Royster, for example, in her 1996 *College Composition and Communication* article “When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own” and in her later book *Traces in the Stream: Literacy and Social Change among African American Women*, explored the cumulative and multiplied power of her own authentic voice and those of other African American women—and the responses of a racist culture to these voices. In doing this work, Royster outlines a powerful argument for aural discourses (as well as, and in combination with, written discourses and hybrid forms of communication) that take up the challenge of border crossing and political action to confront the insidious “cross-cultural misconduct” (32) so frequently characterizing racism, especially in educational contexts.

The work of Malea Powell and Scott Lyons, too, has helped compositionists complicate the profession’s “uncritical acceptance of the oral/literate split” (Powell 397) which helps mask the complexity, range, and depth of Native American texts and discourses, and perpetuate the stereotypes that continue to sustain racism. Native Americans, these authors point out, have employed both oral and written discourses as tactics of “survival” (Powell 428), while acknowledging the many problems associated with communicating in discursive systems—academic writing, legal writing, treaties, legislative venues—that have been “compromised” (Lyons) as part of a racist, colonial mainstream culture. As Lyons reminds us, because writing for many Native American people is bound so intimately to the project of white colonization

and domination, and oral discourse so often supports uncritical and racist stereotyping, “rhetorical sovereignty” (449) is a centrally important feature of Native American self-determination.

Aural Composing, Sample 3: Wendy Wolters Hinshaw’s *Yelling Boy*

At this point, please go to <<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/selfe2/ccc/>> and listen to Wendy Wolters Hinshaw’s *Yelling Boy*, a reflective examination of her interaction with an undergraduate student in a section of first-year composition. The reflection, a painfully frank and honest look at Wolters Hinshaw’s own teaching is rendered in stark terms—no music and no soundmarks of the classroom,²⁵ no chalk sounds on a blackboard, no scraping of chairs as a class session ends, no rustling of papers or announcements of assignments due. This piece, a memory of what took place in a “dirty grey office,” is focused on a single exchange that happened across a “small teacher’s desk” and takes three minutes for Wolters Hinshaw to recount in its entirety.

Aurality and Digital Environments for Composing

As many contemporary scholars have pointed out—among them Graff, Gee, Brandt (“Accumulating” and *Literacy*), Barton and Hamilton, Powell, Royster (“First Voice”), Hawisher and Selfe—we cannot hope to fully understand literacy practices or the values associated with such practices unless, and until, we can also understand the complex cultural ecology that serves as their context. Such ecologies both shape peoples’ literacy practices and values and are shaped by them in an ongoing duality of structuration (Giddens). In the United States, then—especially at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century—we cannot hope to fully understand aural or written literacy practices and values without also understanding something about digital and networked contexts for communication, among many other factors.

Although digital environments have had many different effects at local, regional, national, and international levels (Castells, *End; Power; Rise*), some of the most profound and far-reaching changes have involved communication forms, practices, values, and patterns. Although the relationship between digital technologies and literacy remains complexly articulated with existing social and cultural formations, and digital environments continue to be unevenly distributed along axes of power, class, and race, it is clear that the speed and extended reach of networked communications have directly affected literacy efforts around the globe (*Human Development Report*). Digital networks, for

example, have provided routes for the increasing numbers of communications that now cross geopolitical, cultural, and linguistic borders, and because of this situation, the texts exchanged within such networks often assume hybrid forms that take advantage of multiple semiotic channels. The international versions of the Aljazeera, *Japan Times*, BBC, and the *International Herald Tribune* websites, for example, offer not only traditional alphabetic journalism, but also video and audio interviews. Similarly, the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, and the International Olympic Movement, among many other international organizations, all maintain richly textured websites that offer not only print reports and white papers, but audio, video, and photographic essays as well. These communications—which consist of not only words, but also audio and video transmissions, images, sounds, music, animations, and multimedia presentations—are used by organizations, nongovernmental agencies, multinational corporations, international financial institutions, governments, affinity groups, and individual citizens who form around common interests and projects, and who compose, exchange, and interpret information, and through these efforts and others, these communications help establish the cultural codes of communication in the twenty-first century.

At the same time, new software and hardware applications—video and audio editing systems and conferencing software, electronic white boards, digital video cameras, multimodal composing environments, and digital audio recorders, among many, many more—have provided increasing numbers of people the means of producing and distributing communications that take advantage of multiple expressive modalities.

These two converging trends have had many effects,²⁶ among them an increasing interest in aurality and modalities of expression other than the printed word—not only in linguistics, literacy, and language studies (Ong, *Orality*; Kleine and Gale; McCorkle, “Harbingers”; Halbritter; Hawisher and Selfe; DeVoss, Hawisher, Jackson, Johansen, Moraski, and Selfe; Tannen, “Oral,” and *Spoken*) but also in medicine (Sterne; Sykes), legal studies (Hibbitts; Gilkerson; Hespanha), cultural studies (Bull and Back), geography (Sui; J. Olson; Carney), architecture (Labelle, Roden, and Migo; C. N. Brooks, *Architectural*; Kahn), film (Altman; O’Brien; Chion), and history (B. Smith; Yow; Richie) among many other areas and disciplines. As Hibbitts sketches the connection:

The history of Western culture over the past 125 years suggests that the recent turn toward the aural is largely a product of new aural technologies. In essence, cultural aurality has tended to become more pronounced as aural technologies

have multiplied and spread. At every stage in this process, the existence of these technologies has radically extended the power and range of aurally communicated information. As technologically transmitted and amplified sound has become able to assume more of the cultural burden, culture itself has turned towards sound for information. (3.12)

In composition studies, then, it is not surprising that some of the impetus for a new turn toward auralness has been contributed by technology scholars focusing on electronic, multimedia, and multimodal composing. This early thread of scholarship resisted, for the most part, simplistic distinctions between orality and writing, and connected digital writing to auralness in *metaphorical* terms. Such work became increasingly important throughout the last decade of the twentieth century as computer systems developed to accommodate new forms of communicative exchanges: online conferences (Bruce, Peyton, and Bertram; Faigley, *Fragments*); listservs (Cubbison; Selfe and Myer); MOOs and MUDs (Haefner; Haynes and Holmveik), and email (Yancey and Spooner), for example.²⁷

By the end of the decade and the century, low-cost and portable technologies of digital audio recording, such as minidisc recorders, and simplified open-source audio editing software, such as Audacity, put the material means of digital audio production into the hands of both students and English composition teachers.²⁸ Many of these teachers were already experimenting with digital video, using Apple's iMovie or Microsoft's Movie Maker,²⁹ both which contained an audio track and limited audio-editing capabilities, but digital audio-editing programs made it possible for teachers and students to *compose with audio* in ways that they could not do previously: recording and layering environmental and artificial sounds to create a textured sonic context and collection of detail, weaving vocal interview and commentary sources together to provide multiple perspectives on a subject; adding music, silence, and audio effects to ways of changing emphasis, tone, pace, delivery, and content.

Although new software environments expanded the opportunities for experimentation with audio compositions in English classrooms, the intellectual basis of such work was also fueled by the germinal scholarship of the New London Group, Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, and Cope and Kalantzis—who identified the aural as *one modality among many* on which individuals should be able to call as a rhetorical and creative resource in composing messages and making meaning. These scholars argued for an increasingly robust theory of semiosis that acknowledged the practices of human sign makers who selected from a range of modalities for expression

(including sound, image, and animation, for example) depending on rhetorical and material contexts within which the communication was being designed and distributed. They also noted that no one expressive modality, including print, was capable of carrying the full range of meaning in a text, and pointed out that the texts sign makers created both shaped and were shaped by the universe of semiotic resources they accessed.

This expanded semiotic theory brought into sharp relief the hegemony of print as an expressive mode in English composition classrooms—especially for scholars studying emerging forms of communication in digital environments. Many of these scholars had observed the profession's love-hate relationship with these new forms of expression during the last decade of the twentieth century—blogs,³⁰ home-made digital videos,³¹ multimedia sites like MySpace³² and Facebook,³³ digital audio and podcasting.³⁴ Although such texts had begun to dominate digital environments and self-sponsored literacy venues, print continued to prevail as “*the way*” of knowing (Dunn, *Talking* 15), *the primary means of learning and communicating in composition classrooms. Although email, websites, and multimedia texts were accepted as objects for study, critique, and analysis—and while many students were already engaging in the self-sponsored literacy practices of creating digital video and audio texts—composition assignments, for the large part, continued to resemble those of the past hundred years (Takayoshi and Selfe).*

In a 1999 chapter, “English at the Crossroads,” in *Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies*, for instance, Kress described the cultural changes he saw literacy practices undergoing in an increasingly technological world and compared these to the continued privileging of print by teachers of English. The exclusive focus on print and written language, he noted,

has meant a neglect, an overlooking, even suppression of the potentials of representation and communicational modes in particular cultures, an often repressive and always systematic neglect of human potentials in many . . . areas; and a neglect equally, as a consequence of the development of theoretical understandings of such modes. . . . Or, to put it provocatively: the single, exclusive and intensive focus on written language has dampened the full development of all kinds of human potential, through all the sensorial possibilities of human bodies, in all kinds of respects, cognitively and affectively. (85)

With the development of the Internet and digital audio and video applications, new depth and scope were added to scholarship around aurality. In 2004, for example, Scott Halbritter, of the University of North Carolina at

Chapel Hill, wrote a dissertation that explored sound as a rhetorical resource in multimedia compositions. In 2005, Tara Shankar, in her MIT dissertation, described a project in which young students composed using a “spriting” software that she had developed to take advantage of their oral exchanges; and in a 2005 dissertation completed at Ohio State University, Warren Benson (Ben) McCorkle explored the remediation of aurality by print and writing, as well as the subsequent diminishment of professional attention to the canon of delivery in nineteenth century collegiate instruction.

By 2006, *Computers and Composition: An International Journal* published a special issue on sound, edited by Cheryl Ball and Byron Hawk. In tandem with this collection of print articles, Ball and Hawk also published a related set of online essays and resources in *Computers and Composition Online*, an online version of the journal edited by Kristine Blair. The collection contained not only print essays but also video and audio texts that offered key arguments, illustrations, and examples that could not be rendered in a print environment.

As such scholarly works have emerged during the last decades, compositionists have continued to experiment with assignments that encouraged students to create meaning in and through audio compositions, focusing assignments on podcasting,³⁵ mashups, voicemail compositions and sound poems,³⁶ radio essays,³⁷ audio documentaries and interviews,³⁸ audio ethnographies,³⁹ as well as video, multimedia, and other forms of multimodal composition. Other rhetoric and composition scholars, taking their cue from increasingly visible projects in history, folklore, and anthropology, began to involve students in recording and collecting the oral histories of two-year college composition teachers,⁴⁰ key figures in rhetoric and composition studies,⁴¹ and pioneers in the writing center movement.⁴²

Aural Composing Sample 4: Daniel Keller’s *Lord of the Machines: Reading the Human Computer Relationship*

At this point, please go to <<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/selfe2/ccc/>> and listen to Daniel Keller’s audio essay, *Lord of the Machines: Reading the Human Computer Relationship*. This richly textured composition explores the complex relationship that humans have established with computers through their daily interaction and through media representations.

By Way of Concluding, But Not Ending ...

In this essay, I offer some perspective about the way in which U.S. composition studies has subsumed, remediated, and rediscovered aurality during the past

150 years. This story, however, is far from complete, and far from as tidy as I have suggested. The recent attention to, and rethinking of, sound as a composing modality—and the understanding and use of other composing modalities such as video, images, and photographs—remain fragmented and uneven, far from a broadly defined professional trend. Although many teachers who work with digital media in this country recognize the efforts I describe here and have participated in them or helped sustain them, for other teachers the bandwidth of composing resources remains limited to words on a printed page.

Sustaining this situation is a constellation of factors—not all of them technological. Chief among them, for instance, is the profession's continuing bias toward print and ongoing investment in specialization, understandable as historically and culturally informed methods of ensuring our own status and continuity. Given this context, many English composition programs and departments maintain a scholarly culture in which, nonprint forms, genres, and modalities of communication are considered objects of study and critique, but not a set of resources for student authors to deploy themselves. As Gunther Kress observes, "Control over communication and over the means of representation is, as always, a field in which power is exercised" ("English" 67).

It is also true that recording and editing sound—or images or video—in digital environments is still far from a transparent or inexpensive activity, and many composition teachers lack the technology, the professional development training, and the technical support needed to experiment with assignments such as those I have described. Although most schools now have access to computers, and most departments of English and writing programs can count on some kind of computer facility, work with sound and video still requires computers specially equipped for such projects, access to mass storage for student projects, support for teachers who want to learn to work with audio, and sympathetic and knowledgeable technical staff members who understand the importance of such work. These resources are unevenly distributed in small state- and privately-funded schools, historically black colleges and universities, and reservation schools, rural schools, and schools that have been hit by devastating events such as Hurricane Katrina. None of this, of course, is helped by the reduction of support for education in the wake of our country's massive expenditures on national security and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I should be as clear as possible here about exactly what I am advocating, and why. My argument is not *either/or*, but *both/and*. I am *not* arguing against writing, the value we place on writing, or an understanding of what writing—and print—contribute to the human condition that is vitally important. Indeed,

it is evident to me that the ability to express oneself in writing will continue to be a hallmark of educated citizens in the United States for some time to come. Nor do I want to contribute to re-inscribing the simplistic terms of a writing/aurality divide, a division that is as limiting as it is false.

I *do* want to argue that teachers of composition need to pay attention to, and come to value, the *multiple* ways in which students compose and communicate meaning, the exciting hybrid, multimodal texts they create—in both nondigital and digital environments—to meet their own needs in a changing world. We need to better understand the importance that students attach to composing, exchanging, and interpreting new and different kinds of texts that help them make sense of their experiences and lives—songs and lyrics, videos, written essays illustrated with images, personal Web pages that include sound clips. We need to learn from their motivated efforts to communicate with each other, for themselves and for others, often in resistance to the world we have created for them. We need to respect the rhetorical sovereignty of young people from different backgrounds, communities, colors, and cultures, to observe and understand the rhetorical choices they are making, and to offer them new ways of making meaning, new choices, new ways of accomplishing their goals.

I *do* want to convince compositionists how crucial it is to acknowledge, value, and draw on a range of composing modalities—among them, images (moving and still), animations, sound, and color—which are *in the process of becoming increasingly important to communicators*, especially within digital networks, now globally extended in their reach and scope. The identities that individuals are forging through such hybrid communicative practices, as Manuel Castells (*Power 360*) points out, are key factors in composing the cultural and communicative codes that will characterize coming decades. Students are intuitively aware of these related phenomena, being immersed in them, but they need help understanding the implications of such cultural trends as well as managing their own communicative efforts in ways that are rhetorically effective, critically aware, morally responsible, and personally satisfying. Responsible educators, critically aware scholars of semiotic theory and practice, will not want to ignore these world-order changes or the opportunities they offer.

To understand how literacy practices change, especially in times of rapid transformation, Deborah Brandt (“Accumulating”) maintains that both teachers and students need to understand how literacy forms emerge and contend and to study those contexts within which “latent forms of older, residual literacies . . . are at play alongside emerging ones” (665). To undertake such work in classrooms, Brandt suggests, we can talk to students about how both “school

based' and 'home-based' literacies form and function within larger historical currents" (666). Composition classrooms can provide a context not only for *talking about* different literacies, but also for *practicing* different literacies, learning to create texts that combine a range of modalities as communicative resources: exploring their affordances, the special capabilities they offer to authors; identifying what audiences expect of texts that deploy different modalities and how they respond to such texts.

Within such a classroom, teaching students to make informed, rhetorically based uses of sound as a composing modality—and other expressive modalities such as video, still images, and animation—could help them better understand the particular affordances of written language, and vice versa. Pam Takayoshi and I have outlined this case elsewhere in the following pragmatic terms:

[T]eaching students how to compose and focus a thirty-second public service announcement (PSA) for radio—and select the right details for inclusion in this audio composition—*also helps teach* them specific strategies for focusing a written essay more tightly and effectively, choosing those details most likely to convey meaning in effective ways to a particular audience, for a particular purpose. In addition, as students engage in composing a script for the audio PSA, they are motivated to engage in meaningful, rhetorically-based writing practice. Further, as students work within the rhetorical constraints of such an audio assignment, they learn more about the particular affordances of sound (the ability to convey accent, emotion, music, ambient sounds that characterize a particular location or event) and the constraints of sound (the difficulty of going back to review complex or difficult passages, to convey change not marked by sound, to communicate some organizational markers like paragraphs). Importantly, students also gain the chance to compare the affordances and constraints of audio with those of alphabetic writing—and, thus, improve their ability to make *informed and conscious choices* about the most effective modality for communicating in particular rhetorical contexts. (3)

The challenges and difficulties of such work cannot be underestimated. The time that students spend in composition classrooms is altogether too short—especially during the first two years of college. Indeed, many teachers will argue that they do not have enough instructional time to teach students what they need to know about writing and rhetoric, let alone about composing digital audio texts (or digital videos or photo essays, for instance). A variation of this argument will be familiar to any compositionist who has offered a writing-across-the-curriculum workshop to colleagues who understand their job as involving coverage of a set amount of disciplinary material rather than the task of teaching students how to think through problems using writing.

Frequently, these colleagues—who design instruction around the mastery of facts, procedures, or series of historical events—consider writing instruction to be add-on content, material that detracts from the real focus of disciplinary mastery. Like most writing-across-the-curriculum specialists, however, I would argue that the primary work of *any* classroom is to help students use semiotic resources to think critically, to explore, and to solve problems. In composition classes, this means helping students work through communicative problems—analyzing a range of rhetorical tasks and contexts (online, in print contexts, and face to face); deploying a range of assets (both digital and nondigital) effectively and responsibly; and making meaning for a range of purposes, audiences, and information sets.

It is an understandable, if unfortunate, fact, as Patricia Dunn (“Talking” 150) argues, that our profession has come to equate *writing* with *intelligence*. Even more important, she adds, we have allowed ourselves to ignore the “back story” implications of this equation, the unspoken belief that those who *do not privilege writing above all other forms of expression*—those individuals and groups who have “other ways of knowing,” learning, and expressing themselves—may somehow lack intelligence. This unacknowledged and often unconscious episteme has particular salience for contemporary literacy practices that are not focused solely on print or alphabetic writing. As teachers of rhetoric and composition, our responsibility is to teach students effective, rhetorically based strategies for taking advantage of *all available means* of communicating effectively and productively as literate citizens.

And so back to what’s at stake. As faculty, when we limit our understanding of composing and our teaching of composition to a single modality, when we focus on print alone as the communicative venue for our assignments and for students’ responses to those assignments, we ensure that instruction is less accessible to a wide range of learners, and we constrain students’ ability to succeed by offering them an unnecessarily narrow choice of semiotic and rhetorical resources. By broadening the choice of composing modalities, I argue, we expand the field of play for students with different learning styles and differing ways of reflecting on the world; we provide the opportunity for them to study, think critically about, and work with new communicative modes. Such a move not only offers us a chance to make instruction increasingly effective for those students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but it also provides an opportunity to make our work increasingly relevant to a changing set of communicative needs in a globalized world. As Gunther Kress (“English”) has suggested, it may also make us better scholars of semiotic systems by provid-

ing us with additional chances to observe, systematically and at close quarters, how people make meaning in contemporary communication environments when they have a full palette of rhetorical and semiotic resources on which to draw, new opportunities to theorize about emerging representational practices within such environments, and additional chances to study the communicative possibilities and potentials of various modes of expression. It gives us another reason to pay attention to language and to learn.

For students, the stakes are even more significant. Young people need to know that their role as rhetorical agents is open, not artificially foreclosed by the limits of their teachers' imaginations. They need a full quiver of semiotic modes from which to select, role models who can teach them to think critically about a range of communication tools, and multiple ways of reaching their audience. They do not need teachers who insist on *one* tool or *one* way.

Students, in sum, need opportunities to realize that different compositional modalities carry with them different possibilities for representing multiple and shifting patterns of identity, additional potential for expression and resistance, expanded ways of engaging with a changing world—as the four audio essays I reference in this article indicate. As student Elisa Norris put it, “If we can imagine using these types of projects in our writing studios, we can open up that learning space so that *all* students have room to express themselves.”

Students need these things because they will join us as part of an increasingly challenging and difficult world—one plagued by destructive wars and great ill will, marked by poverty and disease, scarred by racism and ecological degradation. In this world, we face some wickedly complex communicative tasks. To make our collective way with any hope for success, to create a different set of global and local relations than currently exists, we will need *all available means* of persuasion, all available dimensions, all available approaches, not simply those limited to the two dimensional space of a printed page.

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Notes

1. With the term *aurality*, I refer to a complexly related web of communicative practices that are received or perceived by the ear, including speech, sound, and music. In exploring aurality, I focus on both the *reception* and the *production* of aural communications. I also focus on the purposeful composition of aural texts. One of my goals in exploring the role of aural communication in composition classrooms is to suggest that the written word is not the only way of composing and communicating meaning or understanding, nor should it be *the* sole focus of composition instruction in a world where people make meaning and extend their understanding through the use of multiple semiotic modalities in combination—sound, printed words, spoken words, still and moving images, graphical elements.

In using the term *aurality*, rather than the more common *orality*, I hope to resist models of an oral/literate divide and simplistic characterizations of cultures or groups as either oral or literate in their communicative practices. Humans make and communicate meaning through a combination of modalities—sound, still and moving images, words, among them—and using a variety of media. And they read and interpret texts that combine modalities as well.

2. The term *multimodal* is used by the New London Group to indicate the range of modalities—printed words, still and moving images, sound, speech, and music, color—that authors combine as they design texts.

3. I borrow the term *rhetorical sovereignty* from Scott Lyons (2000), but extend it, advisedly, and in ways that I recognize might not remain faithful to his use of the term. Lyons uses the term to describe the right of indigenous peoples to have “some say about the nature of their textual representations,” to determine their own representational needs and identities, their own accounts of the past and present. For Lyons, rhetorical sovereignty is intimately connected to the land; to the history, the present, and the future of native peoples; to culture and community. I use *rhetorical sovereignty* to refer to the rights of students to have “some say” about their own representational needs, identities, and modalities of expression. In making this statement, however, I do *not* want to suggest that all college students are subject to the same systems of domination and cultural violence as native peoples. They are not. Nor do I want to diminish, in any way or to any degree, the importance, of Lyons’s insights or our professional responsibility for supporting the sovereignty efforts that native peoples have undertaken. I stand in solidarity and support of these efforts.

4. As I suggest throughout this article, aurality remains a relatively small but valued part of the composition classroom—only, however, in limited and constrained circumstances: in the occasional oral presentation, in classroom discussions, or in one-on-one conferences, for example. In these situations, aurality is valued and

even prized. In the vast majority of compositions classrooms, however, the formal expression of knowledge is reserved for writing, and written papers are the product toward which students are taught to work.

5. In 1873, Harvard formed its Department of English. The mission of this unit was to teach written English within the new secular, specialized university. For extended and informative discussions of how rhetorical education was conducted during this period, see Russell (“Institutionalizing”); Halloran; Wright and Halloran; Johnson; Berlin; and Congleton.

6. Within this context, David Russell (*Writing*) notes, writing

was now embedded in a whole array of complex and highly differentiated social practices carried on without face-to-face communication. The new professions . . . increasingly wrote . . . for specialized audiences of colleagues who were united not primarily by ties of class but by the shared activities, the goals, . . . the unique conventions of a profession or discipline. (4–5)

7. James A. Berlin notes that “Charles William Eliot, Harvard’s president from 1869 to 1909 . . . considered writing so central to the new elective curriculum he was shaping that in 1874 the Freshman English course at Harvard was established, by 1894 was the only requirement except for a modern language, and by 1897, was the only required course in the curriculum, consisting of a two-semester sequence” (20). Influenced variously by the belles lettristic tradition, the pressures of increasing collegiate enrollments, the influential move toward graduate education on the German model, and continued moves toward specialized study in the new university, however, writing gave way, in fairly short order, to a focus on the reading and analysis of contemporary and classical literary texts. And by the first part of the twentieth century, the efforts of most departments of English were focused primarily on literary works. For an extended discussion of this trend, see Halloran; Berlin; and Russell.

8. In the *Atlantic Monthly* of March 1869, Eliot wrote

No men have greater need of the power of expressing their ideas with clearness, conciseness, and vigor than those whose avocation require them to describe and discuss material resources, industrial processes, public works, mining enterprises, and the complicated problems of trade and finance. In such writings, embellishment may be dispensed with, but the chief merits of style—precision, simplicity, perspicuity, and force are never more necessary. (359)

9. See Ben McCorkle’s article “Harbingers of the Printed Page” for an extended explanation of how the canon of delivery fared in nineteenth-century composition classes and how orality became subsumed to, and remediated by, writing in composition classrooms.

10. Ronald Reid describes these changes in terms of the Boyleston Professorship at Harvard—and the occupants of this position—as cases in point.

In 1806, rhetoric was concerned primarily with persuasive oratory and sunk its roots deeply in the classical tradition. By the time of Hill's retirement [in 1904], what was called "rhetoric" was concerned not with oratory, but with written composition, expository and literary as well as persuasive and made little direct reference to classical authors. And not even these new concerns were those of the Boyleston professorship, which abandoned rhetoric for literature, oratory for poetry. Such a dramatic shift took place not only at Harvard, but in higher education generally. (239)

The Boyleston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory, was held by the following individuals from 1806 to 1904: John Quincy Adams (statesman, 1806–1809), Joseph McKean (former minister, mathematician, 1809–1818), Edward T. Channing (attorney, editor of *North American Review*, 1819–1851), Francis James Child (who studied at Gottingen University in Germany and applied many German practices to the revision of U.S. curricula, 1851–1876), and Adams Sherman Hill (1876–1904). For an extended discussion of this professorship and the changes it underwent at the end of the nineteenth century, see Ronald Reid's article "The Boyleston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory, 1806–1904."

11. Although oral composition—both scripted and nonscripted—waned relatively rapidly in English composition classrooms during the last half of the nineteenth century, it persisted in other locations. One of these was the extracurricular literary and debate societies that gained popularity in the eighteenth century and persisted throughout the nineteenth century in various collegiate and noncollegiate forms (Gere; Halloran; Royster, *Traces*; Berlin). In colleges, this movement was often initiated and carried on by students, often with little help from faculty, to support practice in public speaking and debating topics of interest. Many such clubs engaged in intercollegiate contests.

Attention to auralty was also sustained by the popular Elocutionary Movement, which began its rise to prominence in the late eighteenth century and continued throughout the nineteenth century. This movement, too, was built on the general interest in systematic and scientific knowledge, identifying elaborately prescriptive texts with "highly encoded notational systems to precisely regulate vocal inflection, gestures of the arms, hands, and legs, and even facial countenances as a means of directly manipulating different faculties in the minds of listeners." (B. McCorkle, "Harbingers" 35). In this movement, oral delivery figured centrally and prescriptively.

12. As Hibbitts (2.25) describes this shift,

Within the white community, public speech became more dependent on visual, written scripts; old-fashioned oratory was increasingly dismissed as "mere rheto-

ric.” Storytelling survived, but it was largely, if not altogether accurately, associated with children, members of less literate lower classes, and inhabitants of backward rural areas. Most white American authors jettisoned the more obvious aural mannerisms and formats that had characterized so much American literature in the antebellum era. At the same time, white Americans gradually embraced silence as both a social norm and a primary means of social discipline. Increasingly used to sitting quietly in front of texts, white American theater- and concert-goers who had formerly been inclined to spontaneously talk to each other and interact with stage performers became more willing to sit in silent (or at least suspended) judgment on the musicians and actors who appeared before them. In the schoolroom where white American teachers had once taught their students to read by recitation, the most important meta-lesson became, as it today remains, how to sit, write, and read in contented quiet.

13. I write about the complexly articulated effects of race, class, and gender from my subject position as a white female academic. As Marilyn Cooper reminds me, this position limits my work: I can write *about* people of color, but never *as* a person of color. I also recognize the great danger, especially in such a brief article, of glossing over the important differences, cultural complexities, and rich histories of different groups, ignoring the specific ways in which individuals and communities have figured in the history of the United States, the distinctive kinds of oppression and discrimination they have experienced, the ways in which they have been treated within educational, judicial, and legislative arenas. I encourage readers to refer to more extended works by the notable scholars cited in this section who write *as* people of color, as well as *about* people of color.

14. For a rich and insightful discussion of how African Americans have both retained a value on historical oral forms and skillfully deployed written discourses in resistant ways, see Adam Banks’s *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground*. In this book, Banks notes how black online discourse and spaces such as Black Planet have served as nonmainstream sites for keeping “self-determination, of resistance, of keeping oppositional identities and worldviews alive, refusing to allow melting pot ideologies of language and identity” (70) to prevail.

15. Bolter and Grusin’s term *remediation*—explored in their 1999 book of the same name—refers to the processes by which new media and media forms (for instance, flat-screen television) take up and transform prior media (conventional televisions)—promising to fulfill a particular unmet need or improve on some performance standard. Bolter and Grusin note, however, that new media *never completely supplant or erase prior media* because they must refer to these forms in making the case for their own superiority (54). Their discussion of remediation extends far beyond the simple, limited, and metaphorical use of the term I make in this article.

16. Technical, professional, and business communication courses offer an important exception to the diminishing role of orality. In these courses, the oral presentation has consistently retained its currency as an important part of the curriculum. In 1994, Heather A. Howard reported that every single one of the authors of the ten leading textbooks in business and professional communication considered “oral communication and public speaking as worthwhile topics” for inclusion in their books, and 70 percent of these authors specifically mentioned “informative and persuasive” speeches (5). And, in 2003, Kelli Cargile Cook noted that oral presentations were the most frequently assigned tasks in 197 technical communication courses identified in a random sampling of ATTW listserv members (54). It is possible that this situation persists because such courses are so responsive to the needs of employers. In 1995, for example, Karen K. Waner noted that “oral communication skills” such as “using appropriate techniques in making oral presentations”; using “appropriate body action in interpersonal and oral communication”; “analyzing the audience before, during, and after an oral report”; and “objectively” presenting information in oral reports” were considered “important” or “very important” by both business faculty and business professionals (55).

17. Contributing to these practices, of course, was the cultural value that the academy placed—and continues to place—on written scholarship published in print journals. This value has been instantiated at numerous levels of university culture and through articulated systems of salaries, raises, hirings, and promotion and tenure guidelines. These related formations have shaped the professional culture of composition studies and continue to do so in fundamental ways.

18. One of the notable exceptions to this trend can be found in the work of Peter Elbow, who has, for years, reminded readers that writing and speech, far from being absolutely distinct activities, are complexly connected through a constellation of cognitive, linguistic, and social relationships. See Elbow’s “The Shifting Relationships between Speech and Writing” and “What Do We Mean When We Talk about Voice.”

19. I thank Debra Journet, of the University of Louisville, for this insight and for many others.

20. The books with “voice” in their title included: Frank O’Connor’s *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story*; Donald Stewart’s *The Authentic Voice: A Pre-Writing Approach to Student Writing*; Otis Winchester’s *The Sound of Your Own Voice*; Jill Wilson Cohn’s *Writing: The Personal Voice*; Martin Medhurst’s *Voice and Writing*; Jim W. Corder’s *Finding a Voice*; Kathleen Yancey’s *Voices on Voice*; Johnny Payne’s *Voice and Style*; Michael Huspek and Gary P. Radford’s *Transgressing Discourses: Communication and the Voice of the Other*; and Albert Guerard, Maclin Guerard, John Hawkes, and Claire Rosenfield’s *The Personal Voice: A Contemporary Prose Reader*.

21. In this article, and elsewhere, George and Trimbur argue persuasively against this conception, as well as English studies' adherence to the historical distinction between high and low culture.

22. For further explanation of this technique and a bibliography see Susan Sipple's and Jeff Sommers's "A Heterotopic Space: Digitized Audio Commentary and Student Revisions."

23. My thanks to Peter Elbow for pointing out the persistence of aurality and lecturing in both composition classroom settings and testing contexts for graduate students.

24. Increasingly throughout the 1960s to 1990s, lecturing in composition classrooms became supplanted by peer-group and project-based work and the one-on-one conferencing approaches that characterized student-centered pedagogies. This process, however, was slow, often uneven, and certainly never complete.

In a 1965 Conference on College Composition and Communication workshop session ("New Approaches in Teaching Composition") that was attended by James Moffett, for example, William Holmes reported on using "televised lectures" developed by Ohio University as a "solution to teaching ever more freshman with ever more graduate students" (207). W. Grayson Lappert described lecture sessions at Balwin Wallace (208); and Eric Zale described using lectures used to teach composition at Eastern Michigan University (208).

In 1972, James R. Sturdevant—defending lectures as one effective method for teaching large groups of students, especially when such methods were combined with other approaches—described a pilot program at Ohio Wesleyan University. This program was developed to teach large groups of students effectively and efficiently: "Students were exposed to the study of composition through assigned readings in a rhetoric text and an essay anthology, large group lectures, short diagnostic exercises, small group meetings, and coordinating writing assignments" (420).

And even later, in 1997, Martha Sammons, providing readers advice on using PowerPoint, noted:

Electronic presentations tend to make you lecture more quickly than usual, so remember to move slowly from slide to slide. To maintain suspense, you can use the feature of hiding bullets until you are ready. Use traditional lecturing techniques to elaborate on key points. Most important, don't lose your normal teaching style.

Indeed lecturing has never entirely disappeared from college-level writing classrooms, although it has certainly become less popular. In 2000, Donald Finkel wrote in his book *Teaching with Your Mouth Shut*:

Most people have a set of ready-made assumptions about what a teacher does. A teacher talks, tells, explains, lectures, instructs, professes. Teaching is something you do with your mouth open, your voice intoning. . . . After hearing their stirring

lectures, we left their classrooms inspired, moved. But did we learn anything? What was left of this experience five years later? These questions usually don't get asked. (1)

25. *Soundmark* is R. Murray Schafer's (1977) term, derived from the word *landmarks*, to refer to sounds that characterize the life of a particular place, time, or group, sonic markers that "make the acoustic life of a community unique" (10).

26. I do not mean to suggest that digital technologies are the *only* reason for a renewed interest in orality. The cultural ecology of literacy is a complexly rendered landscape and comprises a large number of related factors.

27. It is important to note that one of the very earliest online conferencing systems—ENFI (Electronic Networks for Interaction)—was used as a communicative environment for deaf students. As my colleague Brenda Brueggeman has reminded me, innovations in communicative technologies often begin in communities of people who have different abilities and forms of making and exchanging information, of composing meaning. For more about ENFI, see Bruce, Peyton, and Batson. For more about technology and disability, see Brueggemann and Snyder, Brueggemann, and Garland-Thomson.

28. The minidisc recorder was developed by Sony in 1991–1992 ("Hardware and Software"), providing consumers with a low-cost and highly portable digital audio recording device that is still used today. Audacity, a widely used open-source audio editor, was invented in 1999 by Dominic Mazzoni. As the Audacity manual describes the project's development, Mazzoni was a "graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA, USA. He was working on a research project with his advisor, Professor Roger Dannenberg, and they needed a tool that would let them visualize audio analysis algorithms. Over time, this program developed into a general audio editor, and other people started helping out" (Oetzmann). This combination put digital audio recording, editing, and production within the reach of teachers and students in English composition, much like the personal computer put word processing within the reach of such classes in the early 1980s.

29. Apple's iMovie was first released to consumers in 1999 ("Apple Computer"). Microsoft's MovieMaker was released on 14 September 2000 as part of the Windows Millennium Edition ("Windows ME").

30. According to Technorati, by January of 2006, over 75,000 new blogs were being created each day, an average of one new blog every second of every day. In addition, 13.7 million bloggers are still posting three months after their blogs were created. At this point, Technorati tracked 1.2 million new blog posts a day, about 50,000 per hour. For further statistics, see the Technorati website at <<http://www.technorati.com/>>.

31. In August of 2006, YouTube.com reported more than 100 million video views

every day with 65,000 new videos uploaded daily and approximately 20 million unique users per month (<http://www.youtube.com/t/fact_sheet>). Grouper.com, another site that allows users to upload their homemade videos, reported 8 million unique visitors (<<http://www.grouper.com/about/press.aspx>>).

32. Kevin Poulson reported in 2006 that MySpace has “gathered over 57 million registered users (counting some duplicates and fake profiles). As of last November, it enjoyed a 752-percent growth in web traffic over one year, according to Nielsen//NetRatings.”

33. Facebook, the “second most-trafficked PHP site in the world,” reports “175 million active (users who have returned to the site in the last 30 days).”

34. The Arbitron/Edison Media Research report, *Internet and Multimedia 2006*, notes that the ownership of MP3 players increased from 14 percent to 22 percent among all age groups in the United States and from 27 percent to 42 percent among 12- to 17-year-olds in 2005–2006 (32), and that more than 27 million people in the United States have listened to audio podcasts (Rose and Lenski 29).

35. See Daniel Anderson, Erin Branch, and Stephanie Morgan’s website, *CASTING about with Sound: A Podcast Workshop*, offered at the 2006 Computers and Writing conference <<http://www.siteslab.org/workshops/podcast/>>.

36. See Daniel Anderson’s blog, *I am Dan: A Writing Pusher in the Media Age* at <<http://www.thoughtpress.org/daniel/>> for innovative uses of sound in the composition classroom.

37. See Jeff Porter’s course “Radio Essays” at the University of Iowa at <<http://isis5.uiowa.edu/isis/courses/details.page?ddd=08N&ccc=145&sss=001&session=20063>> and Jonah Willihnganz’s course “The Art of the Audio Essay” at Stanford University at <<http://www.stanford.edu/~jonahw/PWR2-W06/Radio-Home.html>>.

38. See Lisa Spiro’s course “The Documentary Across Media” at Rice University at <<http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~hans320/syllabus.html>> .

39. See Katherine Braun’s course “Documenting Community Culture” at Ohio State University at <<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/Braun43/teaching/10901Au05/index.htm>>.

40. See “Oral History Project” (24 March 2005) on the Community College English website at <<http://twoyearcomp.blogspot.com/2005/03/oral-history-project.html>>.

41. See The Rhetoric and Composition Sound Archives (18 Feb. 2006) at Texas Christian University at <<http://www.rcsa.tcu.edu/collection.htm>>.

42. See the “Oral History Archive” on the Writing Centers Research Project website at <<http://coldfusion.louisville.edu/webs/a-s/wcrp/oral.cfm>>.

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