

## Talking Back to our Teachers: Undergraduate Research in Multimodal Composition

- Overview** This chapter is composed of 14 voices—13 undergraduates and one faculty member (Cheryl E. Ball, contact author) from a multimodal composition class at Illinois State University. In a four-part chapter, we speak to the perceptions of undergraduate students' technology use presented by scholarship, attendees at the Watson conference, and on our campus. The first section, presented as a video, reflects on conference attendees' discussions of students who weren't representative of the majority audience (professors and graduate students) at the conference. The second section, also presented as a video, asks how pedagogy needs to change to accommodate an increase in digital technology and what kind of cooperation is necessary between students and their teachers so both parties can effectively communicate to and learn from each other. The third section, presented as a MySpace page, argues that educators should incorporate social networks into their pedagogies because they offer a different way of composing. The fourth section, presented as a Tumblr page, examines the importance of viral videos and their impact through new media distribution sites such as Tumblr and YouTube. The sections will be presented together on the class blog, <http://www.ceball.com/classes/239> (after December 11), where the index page will become a static Introduction to the chapter and each section will be presented as a page off the index. The benefit of hosting the site (for now) on the 239 class blog is so that readers can explore behind the scenes of our learning experience as we produced digital scholarship this semester.
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- Note** Each group below has a permanent contact person to provide revisions after the class ends, should this proposal be accepted for *The New Work of Composing*. Cheryl will notify them upon acceptance.

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Title            The Watson Experience: An Undergraduates' Perspective  
Authors        Kenton Cody, Tom Raehl, Nick Walker, Julie Zei

Technologies Video (Quicktime Player or Windows Media Player)

Abstract       In our portion of the chapter, we examine the relationship between professors who attended the 2008 Thomas R. Watson Conference and undergraduate students by analyzing the perceptions of students held by these professors. In a 15-minute video, we will create a chronological retelling of our experiences attending Watson including how our group demographic—as undergraduates—were being “discussed.” We will use background footage shot prior to attending the conference, session and interview footage from the conference itself, and our personal reflections to professors’ discussions of students, who were often spoken of in generic terms because we were an under-represented group at the conference. Our video will also show that the integration of computers and digital technology in the classroom creates a barrier between professors and students, and that this barrier can be overcome by recognizing the ways in which professors create an unnecessary gap between themselves and their students.

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Title            Technology’s Impact on Teaching: Undergraduates’ Point of View on Learning from the Technologically (il)Literate

Authors        Jessica Huang, Amos Rein, Steve LaGioia, Vince Scannell

Technologies Video (Quicktime Player or Windows Media Player)

Abstract       The Internet allows us the opportunity to access information with one click making the technologies we live with affect the way we, as undergraduate students, think and learn. As part of our English 239: Multimodal Composition class, we attended the 2008 Thomas Watson conference to pick the brains of professors, such as Dr. Katherine Hayles, to ask how pedagogy needs to change to accommodate this increase in digital technology and what kind of cooperation is necessary between students and their teachers so both parties can effectively communicate to and learn from each other. Our main argument addresses these issues and will be presented as a video using footage of sessions and interviews conducted during the conference. However, a portion of our argument will be presented through a montage of moments where the speakers of the 2008 Watson Conference confounded us, moments where we, as undergraduates, react to the teachers’ presentations. The montage will serve to give viewers an idea of what we as undergraduates felt while listening to the speakers. It will also show that when we were most visually stimulated, we understood and learned the most. Based in part on Hayles’ theory of deep and hyper attention, we argue that since students today are used to constant and simultaneous input from

different sources, we can easily become bored with traditional, linear texts. For instance, we will highlight in our video moments where speakers at the Watson conference lost our attention, bored us, or, literally, put us to sleep. We acknowledge that the conference is mainly for other teachers, not undergraduates, but through this video, we question whether that assumption continues to be worthwhile in a world where digital immigrants (teachers) and digital natives (us) need to learn from each other in order to succeed (see Prensky, 2001).

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Title Is MySpace UrSpace? How teachers can integrate social networking in and outside of the classroom  
Authors Matthew Wendling, Amy Determan, Ariana Haza, Katie Rockwell  
Technologies MySpace.com (audio, video, photos, blogs all included on MySpace.com)

Abstract As undergraduates, we believe that educators should incorporate social networks like MySpace and Facebook into their pedagogies because they offer a different way of composing not necessarily outside of the classroom, but inside the classroom as well. Social networking involves composing with attention to digital literacy rather than the basic ten-page, double-spaced papers educators are used to reading. To support our argument that social networking sites offer more than just social purposes, Angela Haas argues in *Currents In Electronic Literacy* that “the use of non-academic sites such as MySpace helps to break the academic/non-academic binary.” If educators would familiarize themselves with the networks, they would be able to recognize that not only their students, but also their peers who have plunged into a new way of composing, are in fact taking literacy to a new level. Breaking the academic binary will give insight to educators on why students are using these easy, accessible social networks. Our submission will be created entirely using the popular social networking site, MySpace.com. Our final submission will be housed on the MySpace Web site. We will include four components on our MySpace page, through which we hope to give insight as to why each feature is a form of literacy: photo album, blog, MySpace TV, and audio files. Each of these media will be used with consideration to what mode is best to communicate our information in, and will overall represent our argument about the use (by both professors and students) of social networking sites as well as behind-the-scenes documentation of our composing processes. By including these different, multimodal features, viewers will be able to understand that literacy goes beyond pen and paper, and onto digital, multimodal formats.

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Title "I Bounty Hunt for Jabba Hutt to Finance My 'Vette": New Media Readings of mc chris Remixes

Author Andrew J Chamberlain

Technologies Website hosted at tumblr.com

Abstract This section of the chapter examines the impact of the song "Fett's 'Vette" by mc chris <<http://www.bobafett.com/multimedia/audio/mcchris.shtml>> as an evolving new media text. From its first two passes through the public in the "All That Jazz" episode of *SeaLab 2021* and its release on mc chris's nerdcore rap album "life's a bitch and I'm her pimp" (both in 2001) to the music videos and remixes available on YouTube to the debut of the song on the big screen in *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*, the song has maintained both longevity and prominence in a contemporary "nerd" society. mc chris's widely publicized stance of his musical distribution is, "Pirate that shit," which also consciously allows his fans unfettered access to his songs for remixing purposes. The continual evolution of "Fett's 'Vette" through his fanbase provides a chronological and step-by-step breakdown of the viral component to internet distribution. My goals are to show why professors need to recognize the importance of "Fett's 'Vette" as a viral artifact and the benefits of examining a text that establishes a launching point for understanding the potentially limitless ways a text can be crafted and remixed in today's technologically evolutionary environment. The presentation of this section is done on a Tumblr page <[www.tumblr.com](http://www.tumblr.com)>, a weblog-formatted site that allows for the seamless integration of video, audio, links, blog posts, and status updates, all of which I plan to use to argue for the distribution, examination and recognition of texts like "Fett's 'Vette."