eComp at the University of New Mexico: Emphasizing Twenty-first Century Literacies in an Online Composition Program

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Abstract: With distance education on the rise, a new program at the University of New Mexico provides an innovative way to teach first-year composition in a fully online format. The program, called eComp (short for Electronic Composition), insists that instructors receive formal and educational training before working in the model. In addition, the curriculum taught within the first-year writing courses attends to multimodal literacies, and students receive help with their drafts from various sources, including instructional assistants who are tutors embedded in each course shell. This profile describes the program, including the scholarship that informed its design, the pilot project, and results from a small-scale assessment. Furthermore, we discuss future expansion of the program. This program description can serve as a model—in whole or in part—for other English departments when structuring a successful, integrative online program that emphasizes teacher training and multimodal literacies.

It seems as if distance education is finding a comfortable home in many universities, with a reported 6.1 million students taking at least one online course in 2011 (Allen and Seaman 8). The Sloan Consortium reports that this number is increasing at a faster rate than face-to-face (f2f) enrollment (Allen and Seaman 4). Students enjoy the freedom of online education, with many indicating they like the ease and flexibility it allows (Wu and Hiltz). However, as this mode of education increases, it remains imperative that we, as educators, learn how to respond to the needs of students. Indeed, although students believe online learning to be a convenient alternative to f2f classes, David Armstrong suggests that many feel that this convenience "comes with a price: in gaining independence, self–directed learning, they were losing direction from and communication with instructors" (224).

In *Preparing Educators for Online Writing Instruction*, Beth Hewett and Christa Ehmann Powers posit that like students, teachers are also concerned about personal contact with their online students (xii). The authors suggest that many instructors feel skepticism, frustration, and concern when faced with the idea of teaching online. In addition to the lack of personal interaction, online writing teachers express concerns about the increased time commitment the online forum may require; for example, at times they write more extensive responses than they would in f2f classes but remain "uncertain as to whether and how they have effected useful learning experiences" (xii). These concerns may arise because of the fundamental differences between teaching and learning in a digital medium as opposed to an f2f one (Hewett and Powers). One of those differences, Powers states in A Study of Online Writing Instructor Perceptions, is knowing how to address students' challenges with writing in an f2f setting but struggling to do so in an online course (166). As Hewett points out in *The Online Writing Conference: A Guide for Teachers and Tutors*, online writing instruction "requires us to rethink both the instructor-to-class and the instructor-to-student interactions" (xv). However, Hewett and Powers also note that a main reason for these concerns is because teachers are untrained in teaching writing courses online.

We believe it is imperative that teachers receive training in online teaching, where they learn to interact with students in meaningful ways and to provide a quality education for distance students. To establish teacher training and offer an effective education for our students at the University of New Mexico, we have recently implemented a new, fully online first-year writing program to complement and work with the existing face-to-face program. We call the new program eComp (short for Electronic Composition). Prior to establishing eComp, UNM's Core Writing Program offered a handful of online classes. However, these courses were typically given to instructors interested

in online teaching, regardless of whether they had had any practical experience teaching online or any pedagogical education in online writing instruction (OWI). With the support of the writing program administrator, the chair of the department, and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the eComp program was launched as part of a university-wide initiative to increase online enrollment by offering Core Writing classes that followed best practices of online instruction. University officials were interested in providing additional access to students who would benefit from distance education: students who live far from campus and have difficulty attending classes every day; students who work full time, making it difficult to attend classes during the daytime hours; and nontraditional students with families or other responsibilities. The goal was not only to provide online classes to these populations (not to mention traditional students who are independent learners and would thrive in online classes), but also to ensure that the courses are pedagogically sound and that instructors, who are primarily graduate students, receive relevant training in online writing instruction.

We piloted the eComp program in the spring of 2013 with two sections of English 102 taught by tenure-track faculty. We started with English 102, the second course in the university's two-semester first-year composition sequence, because it would mean that most of the students wouldn't be completely new to attending university classes. They would most likely already have some composition experience; therefore, the transition to an online composition course might be smoother. Our goal had always been to expand eComp to include all of the university's Core Writing courses, but English 102 seemed like the most appropriate place to start. In the summer following the pilot semester, we conducted a small-scale assessment of the pilot in order to make changes before expanding the offerings, with graduate students teaching many of the classes. In our second semester, we also added sections of English 219, an introductory professional writing course, because this particular course is in such demand. Under the eComp umbrella, we have now offered sections of English 102, 219, and 220, taught by a mix of tenure-track professors, term lecturers, and graduate students who undergo training in OWI. Our next step in expanding eComp is to offer English 101 courses in the future. These four courses constitute the classes offered through the university's Core Writing program. The first two, 101 and 102, are required of all students (except those with high ACT scores who test out) and the 200-level courses are options among Core requirements for all students as well as requirements for some majors. English 219 focuses on technical writing applied broadly to be applicable to a variety of majors. English 220 is a themed advanced composition course, wherein instructors select a topical frame for their focus on rhetorical communication. Potential instructors must write an in-depth proposal outlining their plans for the course before receiving permission to teach the class.

One of the unique aspects of all of the online classes within our program is the attention to multimodal literacies[1]. In these courses, students create multimodal projects such as blogs, videos, and podcasts. Over the past decade, many f2f composition instructors have shifted their curriculum to attend to multimodal literacies; however, some instructors remain unsure of how to teach and assess multimodal projects (Takayohis and Selfe). The added element of the online format may pose an even greater challenge for these instructors, thus the need for extensive teacher training. Our program, with its inclusion of multimodality and teacher education, ensures both our students and our instructors can succeed in the online environment.

What follows in this programmatic description is a detailed explanation of eComp. In the following sections, we offer a detailed description of our university, the program, training methods, and future plans for expanding our program. While eComp has proved successful thus far, we highlight challenges faced when developing the program, and we discuss changes we will make moving forward. By illustrating our program, including the results from a small-scale assessment of the pilot semester, we hope our readers can learn some best practices of online program development, using our model to guide their own efforts.

Institutional Context

The University of New Mexico is one of the few Hispanic-serving universities in the country (The People). The university was founded in 1889 as the state's flagship university, and the student population is composed mostly of residents of the state. According to the university website (http://statewide.unm.edu/online/), in the spring of 2012, "27,278 students attended main campus with another 7,933 students at branch campuses and education centers" (UNM Online). The university offers "more than 215 degree and certificate programs" and has "87 bachelor's degrees, 72 master's degrees and 38 doctoral programs" (UNM Online). A large number of students are nontraditional, attending night and weekend courses to earn their degree.

Nontraditional and traditional students alike also continuously take part in the online education program at UNM. In fact, more recently, the university has seen a push for online education, mostly because it falls short of the national average of online courses offered. Specifically, the Sloan Consortium reported that in 2010, the average percentage of students taking at least one online course equaled 31.3%, with UNM reporting only 23% of their

students enrolled in online courses in the fall of 2011 (Galivan). The university offers several bachelor's degrees online, including Business Administration, Communication, and Dental Hygiene, and a few online master's degrees, including Dental Hygiene and Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies.

The university has consciously been trying to increase its online offerings. In the fall of 2012, UNM students took 30,728 credit hours of online courses, exceeding the number from the previous year by nearly 50 percent (UNM Online). Online course offerings and registrations for such courses have "quintupled in the past decade, and UNM expects they will keep growing" (UNM Online). From current growth trends, administrators predict that at the end of the 2015-2016 school year, the number will increase to 134,784 hours (Galivan). In the spring of 2012, the English department alone offered 28 sections of various online courses, including first-year writing, technical communication, and literature. In this context, eComp was created in an effort to give more programmatic structure to Core Writing's online offerings within the English Department. As we build up the eComp program, we thought it prudent to start eComp with a small pilot, assess the classes, and expand from there. In the near future, all first-year writing online courses will be taught through our eComp program.

The eComp program works in concert with the larger Core Writing program, using the same course outcomes and the same textbook. Overseen by a tenured professor and two assistants, the Core Writing program concerns itself principally with face-to-face instruction and training graduate students in best practices for such instruction. The eComp program is an arm of Core Writing, dedicated to ensuring that graduate students receive proper training in OWI while undergraduate students are taught in pedagogically sound online courses. eComp is administered by two assistant professors (the authors of this profile) who rotate a course release in order to provide protected time for eComp. As eComp grows in size, the department chair has committed a second course release so that each administrator will have one annually at some point in the future. While there were startup costs involved for hiring TAs to work as instructional assistants and for our pilot assessment, eComp is expected to run nearly self-sufficiently now, with no additional funds from the English Department (besides the course releases) beyond what is already budgeted for professors and TAs' salaries.

Program Description

When the authors of this profile were first hired at UNM, the dean of Arts and Sciences was excited about our work in online education. He had heard of a curriculum we had helped develop at Arizona State University called the Writers' Studio. This new curriculum came about as a result of budget cuts; ASU received the mandate to cut more than 200 million dollars, and each college within the university was asked to think of innovative ways to save money. A team of us in ASU's School of Letters and Sciences, led by Assistant Vice Provost Duane Roen, developed a new fully online first-year curriculum for English 101, 102, and 105 (the advanced first-year composition course). In the ASU model, the online first-year writing courses could be scalable, growing according to enrollment demands. Instead of many sections with only a few students, these courses often enrolled upwards of 250 students with multiple teachers working as a team in the same shell. This saved money, as the institution would no longer have to add courses after the enrollment of one course reached its capacity, potentially only filling with a few students, and thereby losing money. To maintain a small classroom feel, each class was divided into writing communities of 25 students, and an instructor would teach one or two writing communities within a section depending on his or her load. When more students enrolled, more teachers were brought into the section. In addition, each writing community employed instructional assistants, or embedded tutors, who assisted students during the drafting stages. Lastly, based on the assistant vice provost's request, the courses were developed to promote twenty-first century literacies by asking students to develop multimodal texts (for more information about the ASU model, see T. Bourelle, A. Bourelle, and Rankins-Robertson; and T. Bourelle, Rankins-Robertson, A. Bourelle, and Roen).

The eComp curriculum at the University of New Mexico was initially based on the model we helped develop at ASU; however, we have made changes based on our prior experience. Our model still sometimes utilizes a team-teaching method, with one or more instructors developing the curriculum for one course together and collaboratively teaching a larger course. One of the major differences is that we are not under such severe budget constraints at UNM, so we decided to keep our course numbers lower, averaging around 75 students per class, with three sections of writing communities in each. In these team-taught courses, each instructor is responsible for his or her course section or writing community of 25 students. In other words, each instructor is responsible for responding to his or her students' projects, facilitating discussion boards, and holding office hours. However, students can ask questions of any and all instructors in a discussion forum called the Writers' Lounge. This forum allows students to receive feedback from various instructors and from each other, thus making the larger class more interactive and community-based. Students can also receive help from various instructors via Blackboard Collaborate, a tool that allows numerous instructors and students to "chat" at the same time. Finally, each writing

community includes two instructional assistants who give feedback to students' projects, and these instructional assistants can also answer questions in the Writers' Lounge and in Collaborate as well. The potential for interaction is increased in the eComp model, as there are more resources from which students can seek help, thereby encouraging greater student success in an online course.

While some of our eComp courses are larger in number than the average composition course, it is important to point out that these classes are not considered MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). According to an Educause Executive Briefing regarding MOOCs, these courses are "free and open to anyone, with essentially unlimited enrollment" (1). Our courses are only available to students registered for courses through the University of New Mexico and are closed to the general public. Furthermore, our classes are limited to 75 students, unlike MOOCs, which can house potentially thousands of students. Lastly, MOOCs often survive based on decreased interaction with instructors, and within eComp, we strive to provide even greater interaction than a traditional online composition course, which is perhaps the most important distinction between a MOOC and an eComp course.

Besides providing more interaction with an instructional team, one important reason for offering larger sections in eComp is to create a method of training new online instructors, pairing teachers who had never worked online before with more experienced online instructors. Instead of asking these TAs to create their own course shell before they have studied the best practices of online teaching, they are paired with an experienced professor in the same shell. Therefore, they gain hands-on experience before teaching their own courses. As part of the training, if the TAs are new to the model, they must also take a graduate seminar in multimodal and online pedagogies, where they create their own course shell to teach from in the following semester. TAs must first teach at least one semester of face-to-face classes for UNM; after that, however, any TA in the program is eligible to take the online pedagogy practicum and begin teaching in eComp. The graduate seminar will be discussed further in the section entitled Training for eComp.

Curriculum and Course Design

The English 101 and 102 Core Writing program curriculum at UNM employs a genre-based approach where students write in various formats; therefore, our eComp program is also built around this approach. Throughout the semester, students create a total of three major projects. In the online English 102 courses, the genres can include commentaries, arguments, reports, and profiles, and students can develop videos, podcasts, brochures, and other multimodal projects. For instance, in one section, the first project asks students to write a review, evaluating their favorite place. They have the option of choosing between two mediums: they can either produce a travel blog or a newsletter that might be found at a travel agency. In addition to the three major projects, students also create electronic portfolios, wherein they provide revised versions of their projects and in-depth reflections on the course outcomes (for the English 102 outcomes, which are used in both online and f2f classes, please see Appendix 1). The online English 219 and 220 courses follow a similar structure, with multimodal projects, electronic portfolios, and in-depth reflections. For example, a typical English 219 course would ask students to create instructions in a video format, a graphically designed analytical report with tables and graphs, and a proposal in the form of a narrated presentation, accompanied with a video or print public service announcement. The portfolio takes the form of a professional online portfolio, with a resume and application letter, as well as reflections on the course outcomes. The f2f classes at UNM follow a similar structure, although the portfolios are more often traditional print portfolios, and instructors don't necessarily have to include multimodal elements in their projects.

For the portfolios, we follow Edward M. White's model described in The Scoring of Writing Portfolios: Phase 2, wherein students must write in-depth, detailed reflections on each of the course outcomes. Together, the reflections constitute a major undertaking for students and serve both reflective and rhetorical purposes. In other words, the reflections allow the students to think metacognitively about their own learning; at the same time, they function as an argument to the instructor that the students have learned the goals for the class. Students are asked to reference their projects, discussion boards, reading assignments, etc. as the evidence for their claims. The reflections end up constituting more writing than any single project during the semester. The portfolios then showcase the projects they've completed during the semester, but also—and more importantly—provide a detailed self-analysis of the students' learning. We follow this model because we, as White, believe that "students should be involved with reflection about and assessment of their own work" (583). When we helped develop the Writers' Studio at ASU, we used the outcomes from the WPA Outcomes Statement (http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html) and the Eight Habits of Mind from the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (http://wpacouncil.org/framework); however, at UNM, we used new first-year composition outcomes that were being piloted by the Core Writing program the same year as our pilot of eComp. At least partly because of eComp's emphasis on multimodality, the UNM Core Writing program outcomes have since been

revised to include more emphasis on the medium of delivery as part of the rhetorical situation, which allows students to reflect on not only their audience, purpose, and rhetorical choices, but also the best medium for communicating with a particular audience and with a specific purpose in mind. (The most recent version of the outcomes is included in [Appendix 1](#).)

Additionally, we chose to incorporate multimodality in our eComp program to ensure that students are learning to become successful citizens in the digital age. A student can be expected to write numerous texts throughout college, mostly in linear fashion with the parameters set by the instructor, which may include font size and page limit. Takayoshi and Selfe also state that during her career, a student will certainly be asked to create texts using other mediums beyond traditional print-based texts. As such, we believe that the texts students create in college should mimic those created in the "real world," and our courses in eComp demand that students think outside of the box, developing such documents as blogs, wikis, videos, and podcasts. But they aren't simply choosing a medium for technology's sake; instead, they learn to adopt the appropriate medium according to the needs of their determined audience and the purpose of the document. These are the critical thinking skills that will translate to life after academia well beyond the shelf life of the average technological tool (See [Appendix 2](#) for the eComp 102 pilot syllabus).

To model the importance of multimodal communication, we design the eComp courses to be as multimodal as possible. We often use video instructions to complement the written instructions. This way, students can access the information in whatever mode they find most helpful. We create screencapture videos using the program Camtasia that show students how to navigate the course shell, how to build their eportfolio websites, and how to complete other exercises. Instructors provide feedback on projects using Jing, a free and easy downloadable program for making screen-capture videos. Moreover, as students work on their multimodal projects, they discuss multimodality. For example, when preparing to create public service announcements to accompany written proposals, the students must find examples of PSAs (videos, podcasts, or print advertisements) and discuss the ways the visual or sound elements influence the rhetorical effectiveness of the PSAs. As Glynda A. Hull and Mark Evan Nelson have said, "[T]here are unmistakable signs that what counts as a text and what constitutes reading and writing are changing—indeed, have already changed and radically so—in this age of digitally afforded multimodality" (224). Therefore, in order to teach multimodality, we must not only give assignments, but also demonstrate multimodality through our instruction.

Brian Huot suggests that students should receive help with multimodal projects during the process of creating them (170); therefore, we utilize instructional assistants, the embedded tutors, to help students develop their projects. For each project, students participate in three rounds of feedback, first from peer review, then from instructional assistants, and finally from the instructor. During the final round of instructor feedback, the student is advised of changes and, after making revisions, can move the project into his or her portfolio. For each project, students write metacognitive reflections, and they use these documents to write more extensive reflections for their portfolio that attend to the outcomes of the course.

The instructional assistants consist of teaching assistants in the English department, upper-level undergraduates completing an independent study about tutoring online, or tutors from the on-campus tutoring center, the Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS). Before working in the model, IAs are required to attend an orientation, which involves an overview of the course and the Blackboard Learning Management System. The orientation also includes a norming session, where the IAs give feedback to three sample multimodal projects. Throughout the semester, the IAs are also required to meet with the eComp instructor they are working with before and after each project is due, mostly to discuss the progress of students and to receive ongoing training through multiple norming sessions. Because retention can often be an issue in online courses (Dietz-Uhler et al. 105), having IAs reach out to students provides one more avenue of help. In fact, students often seek assistance from the IAs before the instructor, mostly because they view the IAs as peers. So far, slightly more than half of our instructional assistants have been undergraduate students, with graduate students comprising the remainder.

In future semesters, we plan to continue to work with CAPS; however, because the number of courses we offer is growing, we also want to increasingly add IAs who will be upper-division students from the English and Education departments. We have thus far offered independent study courses for undergraduates interested in tutoring in the program, and we are currently in the process of creating a university-recognized course that focuses on tutoring pedagogy. Much like the independent study we've used so far, upper-level undergraduate students would take the course while working as instructional assistants. During the course, the IAs will also develop an eportfolio where they reflect on the outcomes for the internship course, using examples of their feedback to students as evidence for their learning.

We recognize that using undergraduate tutors who do the work for course credit, rather than paid writing center tutors, can be seen as a questionable practice. As Katherine T. Durack points out in a recent *College Composition*

and Communication article, there are currently no clear, agreed-upon guidelines for how universities should utilize unpaid internships (245). As she states, it's clear that those supervising internships should strive to ensure that interns have positive educational experiences. In eComp, we strive to ensure that the upper-level undergraduate tutors—whether taking an independent study or, in the future, the tutoring course—will benefit from the internship themselves. We try to make sure that the curriculum for the tutors is designed to train and guide students through a theoretical and practical experience that can benefit them in their future careers. In other words, the use of IAs benefits not only the instructor and the eComp students, but the experience also benefits the IAs themselves.

Lastly, to maintain consistency across all sections of eComp, the program has an administrator who oversees the courses. As we mentioned earlier, two assistant professors (the authors of this profile) work together to oversee the eComp program, rotating the "administrator" hat that coincides with a course release. The administrators teach at least one section of eComp per year and work closely with the IAs and instructors, meeting regularly and answering questions on a daily basis. The administrators' duties include not only collaborating with all faculty involved to develop curriculum and make changes, but it is also their responsibility to help the instructors prepare the course shells for subsequent semesters. While instructors are free to design their own course shells, assignments, discussion boards, etc., they do so under the supervision of the administrators to ensure that the courses adhere to OWI best practices, promote multimodal literacy, and utilize the IA tutors in a way that is beneficial to the instructor, the eComp students, and the IAs themselves. The assistant professors overseeing eComp also work closely with the larger Core Writing program to discuss issues related to both. While the courses under the eComp umbrella are part of the larger Core Writing program, the eComp program exists as a separate and unique entity, ensuring that online classes within Core Writing offer pedagogically sound curricula that attend to multimodal literacies, and that the instructors teaching the courses are properly trained in OWI best practices.

Training for eComp

One of the most important characteristics of the program is training graduate student TAs to teach in the model. Our current method of training involves graduate students either taking a seminar regarding multimodal and online pedagogies or working in the model as an instructional assistant before designing and teaching their own courses (see Appendix 3 for the syllabus). All of the TAs who teach in eComp must have experience teaching f2f Core Writing courses before teaching in the online model.

During the semester in which the TAs take the pedagogy course, they also have the opportunity to work in a course shell where the curriculum has already been designed for them. As we mentioned earlier, the courses are set up in large shells, with multiple teachers working together to manage the number of students. We have designed our model to allow experienced teachers to function as the "lead instructor" within a large course shell while new TAs working in the model are considered "secondary instructors." The secondary instructors oversee their own students and do not answer in any sort of hierarchical way to the lead instructors. However, they have the benefit of working with an instructor already experienced in the model, and the lead teacher serves in a mentor role. After new TAs have worked in the model once, they can become lead instructors. This setup allows for ongoing training of TAs. Once they have gained the necessary experience of working in an established model, then they are able to make changes to the established curriculum or develop their own class for future semesters.

The eComp graduate pedagogy class ensures the TAs are well versed in the theory and practice of online teaching and multimodal pedagogy. This course, which is an option among required graduate courses, ensures that our TAs are not only educated in the theory and practice of teaching composition, but they also have additional educational experience when it comes to the specific multimodal literacies that eComp emphasizes. All of our TAs complete a traditional teaching practicum in the first semester of their assistantships in the Core Writing program; however, the additional online and multimodal pedagogies course gives them the specific education to take what they already know and transfer this knowledge into a digital environment. During the course the TAs learn how to structure their online curriculum and design their own course shells to teach within during subsequent semesters.

Regardless of whether they are experienced TAs who have taken the graduate seminar or first-time instructors teaching the prepared eComp curriculum, all instructors and instructional assistants are required to attend an extensive orientation before the start of the semester. If they are new to the model, they are first walked through the course shell, where the administrator explains the structure of the course. The administrator also explains the features of Blackboard and distributes assignments. A norming session is an integral part of the orientation where instructors and instructional assistants are given sample students' multimodal projects created in response to the course assignments, and together, the instructional team discusses the feedback they could give that would most benefit the student. If they are experienced instructors in eComp, they meet with their instructional assistants

during this orientation, norm their own projects, and walk the IAs through their courses.

Both experienced and inexperienced instructors who have designed their own courses meet with their instructional assistants during orientation and choose times where they can meet throughout the semester to continue to norm feedback on future projects. The administrator attends these meetings and encourages instructors to offer feedback to their instructional assistants regarding the comments they offer students during their composing processes; in this way, instructional assistants receive ongoing feedback throughout the semester. Instructors also frequently meet with the administrator to discuss any issues that might arise during the semester, such as how to respond to student questions or how to offer facilitative feedback. They can also meet with the professor of the graduate seminar and receive feedback or guidance regarding the structured curriculum.

In designing this preparation model, we recognize that being a TA is a challenging educational experience to begin with, even without learning to teach online. As Barb Blakely Duffelmeyer states in Learning to Learn: New TA Preparation in Computer Pedagogy, the experience of first-time TAs mirrors the experience of first-year composition students because "both groups of beginners are working within initially uncomfortable but ultimately developmentally positive levels of ambiguity, multiplicity, and open-endedness" (296). Moreover, she adds, "For the new TA, the new teaching role is both enriched and problematized by the integration of computers in our composition pedagogy" (296). Therefore, just as we want to create an environment for our online first-year composition students to succeed and learn, we strive to do the same for our TAs as they first learn to teach online. As online instruction continues to grow nationally, we feel it's important to give our graduate students training in these areas. Not only will the graduate student TAs who work in eComp have experience teaching online with an emphasis in multimodality, but they will also have an educational background in these pedagogies as well.

Preparing and Piloting

In the fall of 2012, we began preparing to pilot eComp by designing our English 102 courses that would be taught in the spring. We decided to teach only two courses in the pilot (taught by the authors of this article) so that we could conduct a small-scale assessment before expanding the program. Our university was in the process of adopting a new Learning Management System, shifting from WebCT to Blackboard Learn. As such, we needed training and turned to the staff at New Media & Extended Learning (NMEL), a department that helps teachers who are new to teaching online and students who need help navigating various course shells. Because the entire university was shifting to Blackboard Learn, the NMEL staff was somewhat new to the LMS as well. There were only a few training sessions available during the fall semester; however, NMEL was helpful in offering one-on-one sessions to guide us through the process. We met with an assigned staff member several times throughout the semester for help designing the course and using the "group feature," which would enable us to divide our larger classes into smaller writing communities that would make it manageable for the teachers while providing a more intimate atmosphere for the students to learn from each other. Websites such as www.lynda.com also proved invaluable for learning the new LMS, as the site offers tutorials for many Blackboard tools.

Although we previously taught a similar curriculum at ASU, for eComp, we used a different textbook, *Writing Today* by Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine (which is used by all English 101 and 102 instructors at UNM). The eComp curriculum also included new assignments and instructional tools. We created numerous Camtasia videos regarding various elements of the course, including teaching students how to choose an appropriate medium (http://www.screencast.com/t/MdqapYcSLCO) when creating multimodal texts, explaining an assignment (http://www.screencast.com/t/neeJaVYX9ehh), giving tips for writing it, and choosing a medium based on the intended audience. In addition, as an "orientation" to the course, we developed several screen-capture videos that explained the feedback cycle (http://www.screencast.com/t/iH7f10sIAfC) and how to navigate the course shell (http://www.screencast.com/t/qSqwdosJpv). At every turn, our course offered what we describe as multimodal instruction, or the use of text with supplemental video to attend to the needs of students with varying learning styles. In fact, as Anthony Picciano explains, a wide variety of modes is imperative in an online class, leading to greater understanding of course material (13).

After creating the course, our next step was to locate instructional assistants. We wanted to keep our courses small, starting the pilot with only fifty students; therefore, we needed four instructional assistants—two for each writing community of twenty-five. During many talks with the tutoring center on campus, the Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS), we learned that they could provide two tutors who could be embedded into our shells. We also worked with CAPS closely to offer additional assistance to our students if needed, and we provided training sessions, working with the director to lead workshops that helped tutors learn to give feedback on multimodal projects.

Needing two more IAs, we asked the chair of our department for help, and she suggested using teaching assistants. We wrote a job advertisement for the IA position and hired two IAs: one who was a master's student in Rhetoric and Writing, and the other a PhD candidate in Literature. Both had experience using multimodal composition in their courses.

Upon hiring the IAs, our next step was to train them to work in the new model. We provided orientations to the course, first leading them through how to use Blackboard Learn. Once they became comfortable navigating the LMS, we talked to them about keeping in close contact with the students, emailing them and providing help, especially if they found students weren't posting or turning in projects. During the orientation, they read and evaluated several sample students' projects, becoming more familiar with offering feedback on multimodal projects. As a team, we discussed how to improve these student samples and discussed how to provide facilitative feedback that guides a student's writing process without appropriating the text.

When the course was developed, we were ready to teach in the spring of 2013. Within the first two weeks, enrollment fluctuated, with some students dropping and others adding; however, our total stayed around fifty students. At the end, we retained a total of forty-four students out of fifty, which, according to an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* by Rob Jenkins, is normal for online courses. While our withdrawal rate might be slightly higher than that in face-to-face courses, it wasn't inordinately higher.

During the course of the semester, we quickly identified small adjustments we could make: giving more time for posting on discussion boards, making minor changes to the assignment requirements, altering the course calendar, etc. As a whole, however, we found that the curriculum worked well. Students generally developed well-composed multimodal projects and appeared to meet the goals of the course judging by the in-depth reflections on the outcomes. Because students reflected on the course outcomes after each project and then again at the end of the semester, the sum of their reflective comments often fell in the ten- to twenty-page range, with students pulling quotations and examples from their work during the semester as evidence to back up their claims about the learning outcomes. Anecdotally, the pilot seemed to be a success, but we were interested in analyzing the pilot in more depth; therefore, we conducted an assessment during the following summer before expanding our program.

Assessment of the Pilot

To assess our pilot eComp courses, we wanted to compare the curriculum we had created with a similar one taught in an f2f course. One of the authors of this profile taught an f2f course simultaneously with the eComp classes, using the same assignments, electronic portfolio, readings, and emphasis on multimodality. We chose to only compare the eComp courses to one f2f course because the rest of the classes offered in the Core Writing program wouldn't have the same emphasis on multimodality and the same electronic portfolio. We recognized the assessment was being done on a small scale, but our intention was to find ways to improve the program before expanding it significantly.

Because the students' portfolios contained in-depth reflections on all of the course outcomes (using White's Phase 2 model), we wanted to assess the final portfolios as a way to determine student learning in the courses. We evaluated the portfolio using two separate rubrics. First, we used the portfolio rubric that had been used during the semester in both the online and face-to-face classes, with criteria such as multimodality, organization, conventions, etc. We wanted to compare the classes based on the portfolio guidelines that instructors use. We also evaluated the portfolios using a rubric based on the UNM first-year composition outcomes. This way, we would arrive at a numerical average for all of the outcomes. We wanted to compare the online and f2f scores to see if one method of delivery—online versus f2f—made a difference in how the students learned the outcomes. We also wanted to see how well the online students were learning the outcome of multimodality; from our assessment, we could make changes to improve the learning of this outcome.

To assess the courses, we assembled a team of five readers: two assistant professors who had taught in the model, two graduate students who had worked as instructional assistants, and a third graduate student who was needed to ensure that no one read the work of a student he or she had worked with during the semester, especially necessary in the case of portfolios that required a third review. The readers held standardizing sessions to ensure that they were on the same page with evaluation. As Edward M. White puts it, we wanted to "create a temporary, artificial interpretive community" where we "agree to agree on scoring" (100).

The portfolios were scored on a five-point scale (0-4):

4. Highly effective
3. Effective

2. Needs further attention
1. Ineffective
2. Fails to meet criteria

Readers were allowed to score to the 0.5 decimal point. For example, if a reader wanted to assign a 3.5, she could; however, a score of 3.7 or 3.3 was not allowed. To establish inter-rater reliability, if the two readers were off by more than 1 point, the discrepancy would trigger a third reader. For example, if one reader assigned a portfolio a 3.5 and the other reader a 2.0, the difference would prompt a third reader, which would provide, as White calls it, "a reconciliation score" (212). If the third reader gave the portfolio a 3.0, the 2.0 would be discarded as the anomaly. The need for a third reader was only necessary about 10 percent of the time.

The results proved interesting in a variety of ways, and two articles are in progress focusing specifically on the assessment. However, there are two particular sets of results that we would like to share preliminarily:

Multimodality

First, we were curious to examine how the students in the online classes compared to the f2f class in terms of multimodality. Using the portfolio rubric and the criterion of "Multimodality," we found that the students in the online classes scored significantly higher than the f2f class. In the f2f class, students averaged 2.29 on the multimodality criterion, by far the lowest item on the rubric. However, in the eComp classes, the students averaged 2.98. The difference between the two, 0.69, was by far the widest margin of difference among all the criteria. The largest difference otherwise was 0.19.

Outcome	Face-to-face	eComp
Multimodality	2.29	2.98

This information told us that the classes were comparable, except for the area of multimodality; in this category, the students performed better in eComp. In general, students in the online classes were more likely to attempt more complicated multimodal projects; for example, they would attempt videos or podcasts while the f2f students often chose "safer" mediums, such as blogs or brochures. Moreover, the reflections in the eComp classes addressed multimodal literacy more frequently and more articulately. For instance, students in the online courses accounted for their rhetorical choices more often in their reflections, discussing their determined audience and purpose for their projects; the projects themselves illustrated the critical thinking behind these choices.

We believe this difference is likely a result of two reasons. First, we believe that the online learning environment encourages active learning. Students in both the f2f and online learning environments were given the same tutorials to aid them in developing their multimodal projects, and the eComp students seemed to take advantage of these resources to a much greater extent than the f2f students. Mehlenbacher et al. suggest that online classes promote active learning, and distance education students learn to search through information at a rapid rate. Because of the active nature of the class, the online students may have taken advantage of the tutorials and even actively sought more tutorials on the Internet. Indeed, students in the online course commented on the helpfulness of the tutorials. For example, one student stated, "When [the instructor] emailed everyone and told us, 'There are tutorials in the course that will help you learn how to create video using various software,' I went and checked out the tutorials and I was given great information on how to use iMovie which is what I used for my multimodal component of the project."{2}

The other reason we believe the eComp students scored higher is because of the presence of the instructional assistants. The f2f students did not have access to IAs because our university does not currently offer "embedded" tutors in the f2f environment, and this may be one reason for the variation in numbers regarding the outcome of multimodality. Although the f2f students were encouraged to visit CAPS for every assignment and had online access to its tutoring services as well, these students may not have taken advantage of the services. In fact, only the online students commented on the use of tutors, with one claiming, "After watching the video from my Instructional Assistant, I still had further questions. So, I had responded and asked her to help me with my video that I created for my multimodal component." Numerous students commented on the IAs' helpfulness, leading us to encourage their use in not only the online course, but also in the f2f classes as well. We hope to conduct further studies in the future to better determine the effects of the instructional assistants on the multimodal literacy of our students.

Diversity

While the results of the multimodality criterion were informative and validated what we were doing in eComp, other results helped us see weaknesses in the curriculum so we could make adjustments for future improvement. There is one particular result we would like to discuss briefly here because it prompted us to make significant changes to the curriculum. Regarding the course outcomes, the online students received higher scores in some areas, lower scores in others, but for the most part they were very comparable. The overall average scores were nearly identical. However, there were two outcomes in the online class where the scores were particularly informative:

- Describe the social nature of writing, particularly the role of discourse communities at the local, national, and international level.
- Recognize and describe the value of different languages, dialects, and registers in your own and others' texts.

Both of these outcomes are meant to emphasize linguistic diversity in writing and communication. As the majority of UNM students are minorities, the Core Writing program's intention with including these outcomes is to help students recognize the value of difference in writing and communication, understanding that different discourse communities—whether academic or cultural—have different forms and styles of communication. When considering the rhetorical situation, especially audience, students should be aware of these differences. Our results showed that the eComp students were struggling with these outcomes.

Outcome	Face-to-face class	eComp classes
Discourse communities	3.04	2.34
Value of different language	2.23	2.46

For the first outcome, regarding "discourse communities," we found that students in the f2f class did quite well; however, the students in the online class struggled. The students in the online class often addressed the "social nature of writing" in their reflections, but they often failed to demonstrate that they understood what a discourse community was and how the concepts of discourse communities related to their own writing and learning. We deduced that this was because the f2f instructor had spent significant time explaining what a discourse community was and putting the work the students were doing into the context of the social nature of writing. This occurred simply because the students in the f2f course asked for clarification about the outcome; no such questions occurred in the online class. Therefore, no extra instruction about discourse communities and the social nature of writing accompanied the eComp class. In contrast, when considering the data regarding the outcome about valuing different languages, we found that students in both the f2f and online courses scored low. Therefore, this told us that there was a weakness in our curriculum: our assignments, discussions, and readings did not emphasize this outcome adequately.

To address these concerns, we made two adjustments to our eComp curriculum. First, we incorporated a series of discussion boards throughout the semester wherein students discussed the outcomes. Our data about the "discourse communities" told us that the problem was most likely simply that students did not understand the outcome. They didn't know what a "discourse community" was and therefore could not articulate how their learning related to this concept, even if it had. We also thought this discussion alone would help with the other outcome regarding the value of different languages, but we didn't feel this would be enough. Therefore, our team designed an entirely new class focusing on linguistic diversity and discourse communities. In the courses, students would complete assignments that addressed issues of language, discourse, dialect, etc., and they would read essays that showcased these concepts much more explicitly than in the previous curriculum.

We piloted both versions of the online eComp course in the fall of 2013: four sections of the traditional, yet improved course, and three sections of what we called the "Linguistic Diversity" course. We have plans to conduct another assessment to determine the effect of these changes. Our goal is to continually strive to improve the curriculum offered within the eComp program. What Hewett and Powers stated in 2004 remains true today: Online writing instruction "is an understudied phenomenon" and "there exists a vital need for critical, empirical research into both the 'processes' and 'outcomes' of OWI" (xiv).

Current Program and Future Directions

After the assessment, as we mentioned earlier, we expanded the number of eComp classes offered, enlisting the help of TAs to teach in the curriculum. We also offered a new set of classes under the eComp umbrella, what we call eTC (Electronic Technical Communication). In these English 219 classes, we taught technical and professional writing while adhering to the same principles of eComp: an emphasis on multimodality and the inclusion of

instructional assistants. While we offered only two English 102 courses in the pilot semester, we offered a total of ten sections (seven English 102 classes, three English 219) in the second semester. By the third, we were offering twelve sections (six English 102s, five English 219s, and one English 220 course). So far, every section has been filled to capacity. We plan to continue to expand the program as long as there is demand from students for the courses and as long as we have the instructors who can teach.

We have thus far offered three of the four courses offered by UNM's Core Writing program. Our next goal will be to develop an English 101 course. From our perspective, an English 101 course brings special challenges. As most of the students who enroll in the course are first-semester freshmen, English 101 is a course students take while they are first feeling their way through university life, making connections on campus, and struggling with the challenges associated with the change from high school to college. In our opinion, it's a course where students can often benefit from the face-to-face interactions provided by a traditional classroom. At the same time, however, incoming freshman are just like the rest of the student body: some are nontraditional, some live far from campus, some have full-time jobs or families to take care of, and some are the types of students who are likely to thrive in the online learning environment. We think it's important to offer English 101 in the eComp format; however, we want to tread lightly as we move forward. We plan to start on a small scale, as we did with English 102, assess the pilot, and expand from there.

Another goal for the future is to develop eComp classes linked with other courses as part of the university's Freshman Learning Communities (FLC). The university encourages courses in different disciplines to pair up, and the students are given the option to take both courses in the same semester. The linked courses give students a chance to make more meaningful connections by working with the same students in more than one class. In our case, the students in one or more of our online classes would be taking f2f courses with the same students. This way, the names that appear in the discussion forums and responding to their papers in peer review in our virtual classroom will be the same students sitting nearby in their face-to-face courses. This, we hope, will help students make meaningful connections with their peers, and they will be able to see—and get to know—the students in their online classes. The way students interact in online and f2f classes is very different. As Laurie Olson-Horswill states in Online Writing Groups, "[T]eaching and learning in [an online] setting can be even more interactive and personal than a traditional classroom" (188). Therefore, we envision a reciprocal relationship here: we believe that the connections students make in our online classes can help them in their f2f courses, and vice versa.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

One of our main goals for the future is to increase retention. In Persistence in Online Classes: A Study of Perceptions Among Community College Stakeholders, Denise Stanford-Bowers claims, "[O]f the large numbers of students who register for online courses, many end up withdrawing from the course formally, or informally through lack of participation, or they may continue and receive less than desired results" (37). Our online classes—like most online classes—have a higher withdrawal rate than UNM's f2f composition classes. While many students thrive in online classes, other students aren't prepared for the rigors of online work and the self-discipline and self-motivation required to stay abreast of the workload. Given the flexibility that online classes offer, students sometimes fail to stay on top of their work. And once they miss a few assignments (such as reading responses or discussion posts), they can become daunted by the task of getting caught up.

We have recognized these challenges from the start, and one of the things we do in our eComp courses is send the students announcements at the beginning of each week to tell them specifically what is due and on what days. Of course, all of this information is available on the course calendar and within the weekly summaries in the course shell. In addition to the announcements, early in the semester our instructional team discusses students who are falling behind and reaches out individually to each student in an effort to make sure that they aren't confused about some part of the course and yet unwilling, for whatever reason, to contact their instructor for help. Despite all these efforts, however, we still occasionally have had students who simply do not complete their assignments and do not respond to email inquiries from the instructor. Their names simply appear on the roster, but they are otherwise absent. If the instructor can't reach the student to have a discussion about what might be holding her back from succeeding in the course, there isn't much the instructor can do.

Nevertheless, to continue striving toward high retention, we have several ideas of what we will do differently in the future. To begin with, even though our class is online, we intend to hold a face-to-face orientation for students. Early in the semester, we will hold an event wherein we invite all of the students to come, meet their instructional team, and be given a demonstration of how the online course shell is set up. This information is provided in video format in the course shell, as is, but the orientation would help students get to know their instructors and IAs, and it would give students a chance to ask questions in a face-to-face setting, in case they are hesitant to do so in an

online format. Even though our classes are held online, we expect that such a face-to-face orientation will help students feel comfortable working with their instructors and their peers. We believe, as Olson-Horswill, that "[f]or any writing group to be effective, students need to feel safe to express themselves" (189). The orientation is one extra step in trying to make sure this happens.

We recognize, of course, that several students will be unable to attend such an orientation; therefore, we plan to hold orientation in a "satellite" classroom that offers the option for students to attend the orientation via web conferencing software. In cases where students simply cannot attend for various reasons, we will require students to meet with their instructors via Skype in lieu of the orientation. If the students don't get the chance to meet the team and their classmates in the orientation, at least they can have a one-on-one conversation with their instructor about the class format, the course expectations, or any questions they might have. Our instructors offer various ways to communicate with students, including Skype and Blackboard Collaborate, but the students often don't take advantage of this, preferring instead to "talk" via the discussion boards or email. If we require students to attend the orientation or meet via Skype with their instructor, then all students will have at least some kind of face-to-face or virtual interaction with their instructor, which we hope will help them feel comfortable in contacting the instructor if they fall behind.

In addition to the beginning-of-the-semester orientation, we plan to set up a system so that we can text notifications to students' phones because this medium, rather than email, is the primary way they receive information. At the same time, we're considering setting up regularly scheduled virtual meetings or conferences with their instructors or instructional assistants so that students know that they have to periodically check in. We feel confident we have designed a pedagogically sound curriculum, but we want to make sure as many students as possible succeed within the curriculum as well.

Conclusion

We understand that universities might not be able to adopt this program in its entirety, nor would we expect any school to try. Each institution has its own policies, courses, instructional support, etc. However, just as we adapted eComp from a comparable program at ASU, we believe that our program could be adapted to fit the needs of other institutions. We encourage teacher-scholars interested in online pedagogy at their own universities to consider what parts of our program would work at their own institutions. We hope that our program description has shown new, innovative ways of teaching first-year composition in an online format. Most of all, we hope that the description of our program provides a model for other departments or Writing Program Administrators to not only implement effective ways of teaching first-year writing, but also to provide adequate teacher preparation to support the learning of distance education students.

Appendices

Appendix 1: English 102 Outcomes

English 102: Analysis and Argument

Throughout the semester in English 102, you will progress toward the following student learning outcomes:

Rhetorical Situation and Genre

A. analyze, compose, and reflect on arguments in a variety of genres, considering the strategies, claims, evidence, and various mediums and technologies that are appropriate to the rhetorical situation

Writing as a Social Act

B. describe the social nature of composing, particularly the role of discourse communities at the local, national,

and international level

Writing as a Process

C. use multiple approaches for planning, researching, prewriting, composing, assessing, revising, editing, proofreading, collaborating, and incorporating feedback in order to make your compositions stronger in various mediums and using multiple technologies

Grammar and Usage

D. improve your fluency in the dialect of Standardized Written American English at the level of the sentence, paragraph, and document
E. analyze and describe the value of incorporating various languages, dialects, and registers in your own and others' texts

Reflection

F. evaluate your development as a writer over the course of the semester and describe how composing in multiple genres and mediums using various technologies can be applied in other contexts to advance your goals

Research

G. use writing and research as a means of discovery to examine your personal beliefs in the context of multiple perspectives and to explore focused research questions through various mediums and technologies
H. integrate others' positions and perspectives into your writing ethically, appropriately, and effectively in various mediums and technologies
I. compose a research-based academic argument in one of various mediums and technologies by identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing sources, which must include secondary sources
J. analyze and describe the writing and research conventions of an academic field in order to understand the different ways of creating and communicating knowledge

Appendix 2: eComp 102 Pilot Syllabus

ENG 102, University of New Mexico

eComp

Dr. Tiffany Bourelle
Email: tbourell@unm.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3-4:30pm, via Skype

Skype ID: tiffany.bourelle1

Dr. Andrew Bourelle
Email: abourelle@unm.edu

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-2pm, via Skype

Skype ID: abourell

COURSE DESCRPITION

English 102 students learn to analyze other writers' arguments, conduct research, create their own arguments, and continue to reflect on their writing process. Students learn major writing strategies writers use to analyze a text or situation and make a convincing argument about it. They conduct

research and learn to assess arguments and sources they encounter online, through directed readings, and through library searches for academic and popular publications. In addition to editing for correctness, students learn to incorporate quoted material effectively and to cite sources appropriately.
--from *Writing Today: Third Custom Edition for the University of New Mexico*

COURSE GOALS

Throughout the semester in English 102, you will:

A. analyze rhetorical situations in terms of audience, context, purpose, and medium in order to improve your reading and writing;
B. compose arguments in a variety of genres, using rhetorical strategies, claims, and evidence that are appropriate to the rhetorical situation;
C. use research and writing as a means of discovery, to examine your personal beliefs in the context of multiple perspectives, and to explore focused research questions;
D. describe the social nature of writing, particularly the role of discourse communities at the local, national, and international level;
E. integrate others' positions and perspectives into your writing ethically, appropriately, and effectively;
F. use multiple approaches for planning, researching, prewriting, composing, assessing, revising, editing, proofreading, collaborating, and incorporating feedback in order to make your writing stronger;
G. evaluate how the things you've learned about writing in this course can be applied in other contexts and can advance your goals and the goals of your communities;
H. characterize your improvement in the dialect of Standardized Written American English at the level of the sentence, paragraph, and document;
I. recognize and describe the value of different languages, dialects and registers in your own and others' texts.
J. conduct primary and secondary research, and incorporate the acquired information into your writing using appropriate means of attribution and documentation..

REQUIRED

- Internet access to the course (learn.unm.edu); a UNM email account; and a gmail account to access Google Sites.
- *Writing Today: Third Custom Edition for the University of New Mexico* by Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine
- MyCompLab through Pearson (free with your textbook)

Textbook Info. You will have access to MyCompLab, Pearson's free electronic site that will provide extra resources for you. You are not required to complete the activities within MyCompLab; however, the site offers valuable information that will supplement your required reading.

EXPECTATIONS

Workload. Due to the online format of this class, students must be self-motivated and attentive to the details to stay on track. Additionally, students are expected to follow the guidelines of netiquette, located at: http://www.albion.com/netiquette.

First-year composition is a writing workshop, not a lecture course. Students will fall behind if they do not stay on top of the writing and reading assignments. Please recognize that most college courses expect two to three hours of work outside the class for each credit hour.

Response Time. Students will have a reasonable amount of time to respond and complete all required work depending on the difficulty and specific requirements of each assignment. In return, we will respond to e-mailed concerns and questions in the Writers' Lounge within 24 hours from Monday through Friday between 9am and 4pm. All major projects will be provided feedback and returned prior to the following project cycle deadline. Feedback may be provided in a variety of media including through face-to-face communication, audio clips, and screenshots; all graded coursework will occur through the course platform. This course has instructional assistants (IA) who will be involved in the facilitation of student progress and may respond to early drafts.

UNM email must be used to transmit all correspondence; please do not use the email system

in Blackboard Learn. Remember e-mails are not informal discourse; please use proper business format for all correspondence especially when sent electronically.

Class Participation. Your participation points are derived from your participation in discussion boards throughout the semester and from your reading responses you will write for specific readings in *Writing Today*. For each project, you are required to post to discussion boards *and* respond to a peer within each board (in order to gain maximum points for each discussion, you must respond to a peer). *In addition, you will take quizzes throughout the semester to test your knowledge of course policies, as well as project specifics (including information contained in book chapters).*

Students who participate in **university-sanctioned activities** and/or who will be unable to meet the first-week participation requirements for a particular section should move to another section where their activity schedules will not interfere with their classroom obligations (students can freely switch sections during the drop/add period of the semester). We have asked advisors across campus to help students enroll in appropriate sections. If you think that this course may conflict with a university-sanctioned activity in which you are involved— athletics or the debate team or another—please email your instructor immediately.

Late and Missing Work. There is no late work accepted for participation work (i.e., peer review, discussion boards, and Instructional Assistant Revised Drafts). Technology does fail, so please back up all of your work. We will not accept late participation work due to technological failures.

If you turn in a major project late, your instructor may deduct 10% off of the final grade for that project for every day the project is late. In addition, if you turn in a project late, there is no guarantee that the instructor will have time to provide feedback before the next project is due.

Public Nature of the Classroom. Please consider all writing for this class to be "public." Part of becoming an effective writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticisms of others; in this course, our purpose is to come together as a writing community. Remember that students will often be expected to share writing with others. Avoid writing about topics that you may not be prepared to subject to public scrutiny or that you feel so strongly about that you are unwilling to listen to perspectives other than your own. Additionally, the feedback that is provided is intended to help improve your writing; be open to the suggestions from other writers.

That being said, please use appropriate netiquette when responding to the work of others. Consider posing questions before offering criticism. For example, instead of saying, "This information in your paper is irrelevant," you might first ask your partner why they included the information before stating that it feels off-topic and discussing how you might integrate it in a way that makes more sense to your audience.

Student Behavior. The rules and regulations of the University of New Mexico "Code of Conduct" will be followed in our classroom. Any behavior unbecoming, which is inappropriate in a collegiate atmosphere, will result in your dismissal from this class. While we support academic freedom, we expect businesslike behavior; therefore, students may not use offensive language in any forum of our class. Please do not disclose any knowledge of criminal activity, as we are obligated to report it.   Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process.

The English Department affirms its commitment to the joint responsibility of instructors and students to foster and maintain a positive learning environment. This means that you need to be respectful and thoughtful while communicating with others. Racism, classism, sexism, homophobia/heterosexism, ableism, ageism, or any other discriminatory attitudes will **not** be tolerated in this class. If these things do occur, they will be engaged through dialogue rather than through attacks.

ASSIGNMENTS

Multimodal Composition. One aspect of this course that might be different is the fact that you will be creating multimodal projects for each assignment. This means that we're asking you to create something besides a traditional essay. Multimodal texts "exceed the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound" and consist of web pages, films, and podcasts in addition to print-image hybrids such as brochures or blogs (Takayoshi and Selfe 1). For each project, you will choose the appropriate medium according to the needs of the audience and the purpose of the document. *We are asking you to think outside the box; therefore, we will not accept a Powerpoint presentation as a multimodal component to your projects.*

In order for us to give you feedback that will help you improve your projects, we need to know who your audience is, the purpose of the project, and why you chose a specific medium. For each project, you will write a self-reflection telling us these choices and why you made them. ***Because these decisions are so important to the creation of your project, we cannot grade the project or give feedback if you do not turn in your self-reflection.***

During the semester, you will learn to craft your writing through multiple drafts. You will also learn to write in many genres and mediums, ultimately learning to choose your genre and medium in response to the needs of the audience and the purpose of the document. The major assignments within this course include the following:

Review. For this assignment, you will review your favorite place and convince your reader to visit (restaurant, park, etc). You have a couple of options for this piece, including either writing a travel blog, creating a multi-page newsletter that you might find in a travel agency, or creating a travel-blog video you might find on television (think *E! News*).

Commentary. In a commentary, you express your opinions and views on a subject, offering new and interesting perspectives to help your readers to better understand the topic. You have two options with this assignment. You can either create a blog with pictures or you can write a traditional text-based commentary and create a supplemental multimodal video or podcast to support your written work.

Proposal. You must choose a local problem and try to solve it, offering a well-researched solution. You will have to choose your genre and the best medium to convey your message, whether you choose a proposal to the citizens of Albuquerque, a lengthy letter to the local government, a newspaper editorial, etc. You also have a multimodal component to this assignment, and your medium could include (but is not limited to) a Public Service Announcement video or radio PSA, a website, or a multi-page newsletter with graphics and text.

Portfolio. The portfolio is a major project in this class where you will account for your learning in the course. You will write reflections for each outcome of the course, providing evidence for your learning. You must include all three projects you create in this course in order to pass the portfolio, making necessary improvements to each project as suggested by your instructor. The portfolio will be designed in Google Sites and will be completely electronic in nature.

PARTICIPATION

For each project (except the portfolio), you are required to participate in several rounds of feedback:

Peer Review. Writers need thoughtful feedback on their writing if they are to improve their writing skills. For each writing project, you will engage in peer review. The points you earn for this round are part of your participation grade.

Revised Draft. In this course, we have writing tutors, called instructional assistants (IAs), who will respond to drafts of your projects. For the second round of feedback, you will receive help from your Instructional Assistant. Make sure to turn in your multimodal component during this round of feedback so that your IA can give feedback on it as well.

Final draft. Your final round of feedback will be for your instructor. We will give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your project before you add it to your final portfolio.

OTHER PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Discussion. This class thrives on its interactive nature. As such, within each project, you'll be responsible for responding to several discussion board prompts. For full credit, you also have to respond to a peer.

Reading Responses (Journal Entries). In each project, you'll be required to write reading responses for specific readings in *Writing Today*. Make sure to check the calendar for due dates and reading requirements.

Quizzes. During the second week of class, you will take a "Getting Started" quiz that tests your knowledge of the course syllabus and videos. For each project, you will have to take a quiz that ensures you have read the chapter, the project overview, and watched all videos regarding the project.

POINTS BREAKDOWN

Participation (to include discussion posts, reading responses, quizzes, peer review, revised drafts)	300
Review	100
Commentary	100
Proposal	100
Portfolio	400
Total	1000 points

GRADE SCALE

Letter grade value ranges are as follows:

A+: 97-100+%	**B+**: 87-89.9%	**C+**: 77-79.9%	**D+**: 67-69.9%	**F**: 0-59.9%
A: 93-96.9%	**B**: 84-86.9%	**C**: 74-76.9%	**D**: 64.66.9%	
A-: 90-92.9%	**B-**: 80-83.9%	**C-**: 70-73.9%	**D-**: 60-63.9%	

POLICIES

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of theft. It is grounds for failing the course. Plagiarism occurs when a writer uses someone else's phrasing, sentences, or distinctive insights without giving proper credit. Be sure to acknowledge your sources! In this age of downloadable papers, remember that turning in work that, in whole or in part, is not your own is also plagiarism. When in doubt about quotation, citation, or acknowledgment of sources, see me for help.

ADA Accommodation Policy. If you have a qualified disability that requires some form of accommodation to ensure your equal access to learning in this class, please see me as soon as possible so that we can work together to address your needs. A qualified disability is one that has been diagnosed and documented through UNM's Accessibility Resource Center. See http://as2.unm.edu/ for more information. If you have a disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange for accommodations.

CAPS Writing and Language Center. CAPS is the Center for Academic Program Support where you can receive help with each project. They urge you to make appointments well in advance so that you can make sure to receive help. Their contact info is: caps.unm.edu, (505) 277-7205, and they are located on the third floor of Zimmerman Library.

Appendix 3: Multimodal and Online Pedagogies Training Seminar

Tiffany Bourelle
Email: tbourell@unm.edu

Office Hours: MW 3-4pm, Humanities 265

ENG 540: Multimodal and Online Pedagogies

COURSE DESCRPITION

In this class, you will learn how the theory behind online teaching and multimodal composition informs pedagogical practices. Beth Hewett and Christa Ehmann (2004) indicate that teachers are often concerned about teaching online for the first time; however, they suggest that this worry is caused by a lack of proper training. This course will prepare you to teach your online course, helping you understand the best practices of designing a course, facilitating course discussions, holding online conferences, and providing feedback. In addition, the class will also be practical, as you will develop your own course shell to teach in the subsequent semester. The class you'll teach will be part of our new online program, eComp, which is based on a multimodal pedagogy, where students are asked to choose their medium in response to the needs of their audience and the purpose of the document.

As such, this class will teach you the theory and pratice of multimodal composition, helping you create materials such as assignments and multimodal instructional tools that mimic the texts your students develop.

GOALS OF THE COURSE

- To learn the theories that inform online teaching
- To learn the theories that inform multimodal composition
- To develop an online course shell that utilizes multimodal instruction
- To craft a teaching portfolio for the job market
- To learn to write a digital scholarly text for publication

REQUIRED TEXTS

Hewett, B., and Ehmann, C. (2004). *Preparing Educators for Online Instruction: Principles and Processes.* Urbana: National Council for the Teachers of English.

Takayoshi, P. and Selfe, C. (2007). *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers.* Creskill: Hampton Press.

*I'll place all other readings on Blackboard

ASSIGNMENTS

The major assignments within this course include the following:

1. **Digital Literacy Narrative.** In this assignment, you will write a text-based essay detailing how you came to use technology in your life and in your teaching. What are your goals for using technology more in your classes?
2. **Teaching Portfolio.** You will create a teaching portfolio that consists of three multimodal assignments, an electronic portfolio assignment, and the corresponding rubrics for each. You must also have a teaching philosophy, which you can develop from your digital literacy narrative.
3. **Multimodal Composition Assignment.** I'm a believer that we should be creating the same types of documents that our students create to see where they might stumble and how we might improve the topic or context. You and a partner will swap one project, complete it, then write a proposal to your partner, making suggestions for improvement.
4. **Digital Scholarship.** Using Google Sites or other web-developing software, you will write/create a digital article for *Kairos* or *Computers and Composition Online*, discussing an issue in digital composing. The topic is your choice, and I'll help you develop the idea.
5. **Online Course Shell Development.** The latter part of the class will be devoted to teaching you how to develop your own course in Blackboard, using such software as Camtasia and Jing to develop multimodal instructional tools.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Student-led Discussions. At some point during the semester, you and a partner will choose a reading and present it to the class. On this day, you will lead a productive discussion for your peers. You must also have a visual (I'd like you to think beyond the traditional PowerPoint presentation).

Online Discussions. Each week, one of you will post a question for your peers to respond to via Blackboard. This activity will help you learn how to phrase questions for an online forum and how to keep the ball rolling with active responses.

Participation. We will spend much of our class time in discussions and workshops. Regardless of the class format, you are expected to be prepared for class, to listen, to contribute, and to participate in an appropriate fashion (**this means you must participate in the discussion by talking and presenting challenging ideas**).

POINTS BREAKDOWN

Participation (your multimodal composition assignment will be part of this grade)	**100**

Essays (First 3 at 10%)	**300**
Teaching Portfolio	**200**
Digital Scholarship	**300**
Student-led Discussion	**50**
Online Discussion	**50**
Total	**1000 points**

Notes

1. We use the term multimodal literacy according to Maureen Walsh's definition in Multimodal Literacy: What Does it Mean for Classroom Practices? which states "multimodal literacy refers to the meaning-making that occurs through the reading, viewing, understanding, responding to and producing and interacting with multimedia and digital texts." (Return to text.)

2. All student comments were obtained with IRB approval. (Return to text.)

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