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Prospects For Change: Creating A Blended Learning Program Through A Culture Of Support

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PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE: CREATING A BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAM THROUGH A CULTURE OF SUPPORT

by

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning, a combination of traditional face to face (F2f) instruction and computer-mediated communication (CMC), is a popular trend in many universities and corporate settings today. Most universities provide faculty members course management systems, such as Blackboard, Angel, and others as a way to organize and transmit course materials to students. In order to assess the pedagogical value of blended learning in a university-level first year composition (FYC) environment, it is necessary to view the environment through a critical lens and adequately train faculty in the need for and use of the features of the learning management software (LMS).

The setting for this study is the Humanities and Communication Dept. of Florida Institute of Technology, a private university on Florida's east coast, consisting of around 6000 students. As I investigate the various pedagogical and theoretical issues of incorporating blended learning into the FYC environment, I critically examine the issues involved in implementing the program. I employ a blended research method to join the tracks of implementing a blended learning program and developing a culture of support together in the Humanities and Communication Department of Florida Tech. In examining program implementation, I use a combination of institutional critique, as advanced by Porter et al., together with an "ecological" methodology, as outlined by Nardi and O'Day. In examining the feasibility of creating a culture of support through the design of a faculty workshop, I mainly use Richard Selfe's methodology, although elements of the previous two methods operate as well. The results of my study provide a means by which faculty members can experience and realize the benefits, while

avoiding the pitfalls, of implementing CMC into an f2f classroom and provide an action plan for other researchers to utilize in their own educational settings.

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CHAPTER ONE - PREPARING THE GROUND

Introduction

In an article previewing Blackboard Inc.'s new course management software in the September 12, 2008 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, columnist Jeffrey R. Young calls Blackboard "the Microsoft of higher-education technology," leading the market with "66 percent of American colleges [using] its software as their standard" (Young A1). Young also relates that open-source, or free, alternatives are gaining market share in the number of colleges using their products to run university "course Web pages, online discussion boards, digital grade-books, and other teaching tools, which have become as standard as physical whiteboards on college campuses" (A17). In the same article, Michael L. Chasen, the president and chief executive of Blackboard envisions a near future where course management systems will be putting the "whole educational process online," where "teaching and learning [will] take place in the classroom environment as well as outside" (A18). In all likelihood, this information does not surprise most faculty members teaching in today's colleges and universities, for it seems like Chasen's vision is already upon us. Cynthia Selfe's suggestion from nearly ten years ago urging teachers to "pay critical attention to the issues generated by technology use" (Selfe 517) should be heeded even more in today's educational environment, where the concept of technological literacy is in the forefront.

In the early 1990s, Andrew Feenberg outlined two approaches to viewing technology: the instrumental and the substantive. The instrumental theory is "based on the common sense idea that technologies are 'tools' standing ready to serve the

purposes of their users." Technology is viewed as only a tool that remains "neutral without valuative content of its own" ("Subversive Rationalization" 5). The substantive view situates technology more firmly as a type of social system, "a scene of social struggle, a 'parliament of things,' on which civilized alternatives contend" (5). Yet, I believe that some university English department faculty members still adhere to the instrumentalist view, without considering the societal impacts and factors of integrating technology into their educational environment. As a consequence, two camps have evolved: the "technophiles," who extol the boundless virtues of technology, and the "technophobes," who avoid technology as much as possible. Cynthia Selfe describes both sides as "two perfectly meaningless camps":

> Both groups feel virtuous about their choices, and both manage to lose sight of the real issue. Computer-using teachers instruct students in how to *use* technology--but, all too often, they neglect to teach students how to *pay critical attention* to the issues generated by technology use (517 emphasis in original).

When instructors grasp the notion that technology is much more than a value-neutral tool, they can begin to reorganize the social world of the classroom. Stuart Selber advocates assuming a "postcritical stance," which "does not consider technology to be a self-determining agent"; rather, it locates the potential for change in educational settings "in a nexus of social forces" (8). In Selber's approach, students should be encouraged to think about the implications of the technology they're using, to be "critically literate in a digital age" (75). In mapping out a curriculum based on a multiliteracy program,

Selber believes that students will become “well rounded individuals equipped with a keen and judicious sense of the technological world around them” (235). There are positive and legitimate ways instructors can avoid becoming “meaningless” and their students can become engaged to think critically in today’s technology-rich educational environment.

Since Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech) does not currently have hybrid courses as part of the curriculum, I believe that the implementation of a hybrid or blended learning program for contemporary university students in the Humanities and Communications Department of Florida Tech is an avenue to paying critical attention in a localized environment to current technology issues and technological literacy. As Mumpower argues, in her dissertation studying distance learning initiatives in the English Department at the University of Central Florida (UCF), “What is needed are more localized, situated examinations of [learning] within the scope of a particular institution, even a particular department, in order to gauge [learning’s] effects, and effectiveness…” (1). Yet, in order to implement a blended learning program at Florida Tech, a preliminary initiative is required, one that creates a culture of support among the stakeholders involved, which includes faculty, students, department personnel, and university administrators. In developing this “culture of support” within English departments, Dr. Richard Selfe recommends that, instead of blaming others (i.e., the administration) for our perceived lack of control, faculty members and departments must develop a culture where we support each other (9). According to Selfe, to develop a departmental culture of support, priorities must be set. The first priority concentrates on

the people involved, consisting of students and their needs linked with faculty members and their talents. Second, pedagogical concerns of incorporating technology into the classroom should be weighed. Finally, only after concentrating on the first two priorities should technological issues be addressed. Selfe summarizes the value of the ordering of the priorities: "…there is an intimate interplay between these elements; without all three acting in balance, the success of teaching and learning in technological environments can be seriously compromised" (12).

I believe that an integral component of this preliminary initiative is the design of an intensive workshop approach to introduce participating faculty to the blended learning concept. As we investigate the various pedagogical and theoretical issues of incorporating blended learning into the First Year Composition (FYC) environment, we can critically examine the issues involved in implementing the program. The process that I employ for joining the tracks of implementing a blended learning program and developing a culture of support together in the Humanities and Communication Department at Florida Tech also requires a blending of research methodologies. In my examination of the possibilities of program implementation, I use a combination of institutional critique, as advanced by Porter et al., together with an "ecological" methodology, as outlined by Nardi and O'Day. In examining the feasibility of creating a culture of support through the design of a faculty workshop, I mainly use Richard Selfe's methodology outlined in Sustainable Computer Environments (2005), although elements of the previous two methodologies operate as well. In the following introduction, I provide a short narrative of how I became involved in this project. I then

argue for my vision of blended methodologies as an appropriate avenue to bring the two tracks of the research project together. I conclude with a brief outline of each chapter.

My Dissertation Path

My introduction to the "hybrid," or blended, learning environment occurred in 2005-2007, the last two years of coursework for my doctorate in the Texts and Technology program through the English Department at UCF. UCF has been an early adopter of online and web-enhanced courses beginning in 1996. In 2000, UCF reported over 3000 student enrollments in over 60 "web and web-enhanced" courses (Dziuban et al. "Reactive" 172) with 14,000 student enrollments in over 300 courses reported in 2006 ("WebCT-Stats"). UCF originally referred to the term, "Web-enhanced" (E) courses as those that were primarily face-to-face (f2f) with a web component added in. In 1997, the "blended" (M) model was created because the "E modality [had] become so prevalent that UCF …eliminated this designation since many face-to-face classes [were] Web enhanced" (Dziuban, et al. "Blended" 197). A blended (M) course normally holds one or two f2f meetings per week during the semester, with the remaining course material and interaction online. My dissertation and research follows this designation, defining *blended* or *hybrid* learning systems as those that combine weekly face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction.

Part of my coursework at UCF involved the critique of existing (M) courses within the English Department and the actual design and posting of a model (M) course to WebCT, UCF's course management software. For those two years, I was immersed as a student, analyzing the blended learning environment through a critical/rhetorical lens,

as well as a designer/Instructor, taking a hands-on approach. This immersion and experience in blended learning provided the impetus to start a similar program of (M) courses in the Humanities and Communication Department of Florida Tech in Melbourne, Florida, where I teach composition and literature courses.

Additionally, I was afforded the opportunity, as part of a UCF internship proposal, to fashion a workshop approach to train faculty members at Florida Tech for the blended learning program I envisioned. As I worked through the workshop proposal, I found other faculty training workshops in blended learning being administered at various universities. For example, Richard and Cynthia Selfe have held two-week summer workshops for teachers in the Humanities Department of Michigan Technological University for 17 years. In addition to integrating the notions of putting people and pedagogy first, their workshops are based "on the assumption that innovative teachers are most productive when they can spend extended periods of time working on their own projects in the company of like-minded educators and support staff" (R. Selfe, 66). The format and commitment to faculty development in course design and technology training in universities across the country can be as varied as the universities themselves. These formats for workshops range from semester-long seminars to intensive programs similar to the University of Central Florida's "Interactive Distributed Learning for Technology Mediated Course Delivery," a sixty-hour plus, eight-week program (Dziuban, et al. "Blended" 199). The four session workshop that I tailored specifically for faculty at Florida Tech is modeled after one developed and implemented by Miller and Palsole at the University of Texas-El Paso in 2006. It was through the

valuable experiences of critiquing and analyzing existing hybrid courses, designing and teaching blended courses, and learning how to engage faculty through the workshop approach that the vision for my dissertation and research became clear.

I believe that I bring a unique perspective to the issues related to teaching blended courses in the university setting. Through my experiences as a student in a hybrid environment, I've had the opportunity to view blended learning through a critical/rhetorical lens, analyzing the theoretical and pedagogical implications. I've had the opportunity to build the course architecture for a model hybrid course. Also, through my experiences as a full-time Instructor of first year composition, I have had the opportunity to put my learning into practice by teaching blended courses at Florida Tech. In addition to these experiences, I developed an initial application for a faculty training program to help prepare faculty at Florida Tech for a planned blended learning environment. It is my hope that, with the thoughtful examination of the current status of the blended learning environment, along with the design of a faculty training program that aids in creating a departmental culture of support, my research will lend a substantive and critical perspective to the issues involved in paying attention to the uses of technology in a hybrid environment.

Blended Learning in Recent Scholarship

Hybrid learning systems in the university setting have developed from disappointment in outcomes with distance learning initiatives of the past 10 years or so. Distance education is a learning environment where "teacher and students do not meet at all face to face, but instead complete the coursework through computer-mediated

interactions such as content-rich Websites, streamed video and audio lectures, and student postings to a discussion board…in a virtual space" (Sands 202). Research has shown that the virtual space of online instruction can lead students and faculty to experience a sense of "disconnection" and lack of engagement. For example, Palloff and Pratt (2001) found that "when collaboration is not encouraged, participation in the online course is generally low and may take the form of queries to the instructor rather than dialogue…" (Lessons 33). Faculty can experience this sense of disconnection as it relates to the changing role of teacherly authority. Instructors may sense this changing role of authority when dealing with aspects of the course management software (CMS). Web CT and Blackboard, for example, tend to reinforce objectivist learning theory characterized by highly structured activities, recitation, drills, and practice, clashing with instructors' preferences for constructivist and social theories of learning. Faculty noticed these "disconnections between available online delivery applications and their preferred teaching theories and pedagogies…as early as 1994" (Cook 53). In addition, Andrew Feenberg, a pioneer in distance learning initiatives, recognized early on that the "online environment is essentially a space for written interaction…writing is the basic medium of online expression, the skeleton around which other technologies and experiences must be organized to build a viable learning environment" ("Distance Learning" 7-8). The hybrid model strives to incorporate this space for interaction and expression, combining the strengths of both the f2f learning method and the online method (such as discussion boards, chat rooms, etc.), emerging as one of the "most effective learning" systems (Kibby 88).

Advantages of Blended Learning

Recent studies have shown that the needs of today's incoming college students are changing. The blended course appeals to the needs of technologically savvy students by offering "a higher level of interaction" than distance learning courses (Dziuban, et al. "Blended" 196), offering more flexibility to returning and working students, and providing the missing sense of connection between instructors, students, and their peers. Additionally, Dziuban's research, from the University of Central Florida's blended learning environment, demonstrates that university administrators like the advantages in having "multiple courses [occupying] the same classroom slot," resulting in increased efficiency and reduced costs (196).

One of the goals of blended learning is to combine the best aspects of f2f instruction, such as human interaction, collaboration, peer review, and active learning with the "content richness and the flexibility of the virtual learning environment" (Kibby 88). The hybrid model seems to mitigate the feelings of isolation that students and faculty perceive to be a drawback of online learning. Yet a blended course "can also mix the least effective elements of both worlds if it is not designed well" (Graham 8). A poorly designed f2f course can be a negative learning experience for students, yet the negative experience is intensified in a poorly designed hybrid course. Students may feel frustrated learning how to navigate the course management software or working through technological issues such as a lack of basic computer skills. Other issues that faculty should address in designing an effective hybrid course, which can alleviate many students' apprehensions, are: (1) creating "a welcoming environment for collaboration" (Brunk-Chavez and Miller 14); (2) providing clear guidance and instructions for

assignments and discussions; and (3) developing a student-centered approach where students can access “the rich resources of the Internet [and] follow their own interests within a topic area, and…accomplish personal learning goals” (Kibby 90).

Much of the pedagogy underscoring the current thrust of hybrid learning as it relates to first year composition (FYC) is based on social constructivist theories derived from the f2f classroom environment. Although it seems that pedagogies for the FYC classroom are frequently shifting and overlapping, with a myriad of options available for individual instructors to employ, a few constructionist tendencies appear to remain constant in the literature surrounding traditional f2f classrooms today. As it applies to traditional FYC courses, the notion of discourse communities (an environment where students and instructor build meaning together) is one of the primary goals of constructivist theory. In the typical f2f classroom, this notion of discourse communities translates into activities such as class discussions, writing activities, including invention strategies, peer review, workshops, and student-teacher conferences. The classroom discussions should revolve around not only “knowing what” (content) but also “knowing how” (practicing the writing process itself). As Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch describes the class interaction, the “dialogic pedagogy requires two way communication, rather than one way…teachers must move away from a transmission model of education toward a transformation model that includes active participation from both teacher and students as collaborators” (102). Kenneth Bruffee explains the benefits of collaboration in this way:

> [It] helps students learn better--more thoroughly, more deeply,

> more efficiently--than learning alone…collaborative learning teaches students to work together effectively when the stakes are relatively low, so that they can work together effectively later on when the stakes are high… [students] learn to depend on one another rather than depending exclusively on the authority of experts and teachers (xiii).

As a result, knowledge is socially constructed through meaningful conversations between students. This pedagogy also relates to students in their in-class writing activities, such as forming peer review groups that allow individual writers control over their work yet provide the benefit of other readers' responses in planning, writing, and editing.

When instructors move away from the transmission model of education as Breuch suggests, they move away from a pedagogy that promotes the "sage on the stage" lecture method which leads to passive learning. In contrast, the student-centered learning environment promotes a pedagogy of active learning, "creating a community of learners, a community of people who can support each other and learn from each other" (Speck 7). When students take on this role of active learners, the role of the instructor also changes. The instructor becomes more of a mentor, helping students grow intellectually, a "facilitator of learning rather than a transmitter of knowledge" (Speck 8). Palloff and Pratt (2005), in their research into online learning, identified a number of outcomes that can result from a collaborative learning environment. These outcomes are listed as follows:

1. Assists with deeper levels of knowledge generation – when working in small groups, the ability to create knowledge and meaning is enhanced.
2. Promotes initiative, creativity, and critical thinking – the ability to collaborate enables the development of the ability to think critically, a skill that is more difficult to master individually.
3. Allows students to create a shared goal for learning and forms the foundation of a learning community.
4. Addresses all learning styles – when a course is developed using a systematic set of activities that build on each other and scaffold learning…all learning styles are tapped.
5. Addresses issues of culture – enables students to construct their own knowledge and apply prior experience and their own culturally preferred ways of knowing to the task. (Collaborating Online 6-7).

Ironically, the researchers identified these outcomes from studying skillfully designed f2f courses and applied the outcomes to their online course design. The authors state that "collaboration serves the same functions in face-to-face or blended…classes as well. [The] outcome is actually a deeper, more efficient, and complete learning process" (7).

Blended Learning-The Student Perspective

A significant part of the literature regarding hybrid courses involves student perspectives. Blended learning appeals to the "Net Generation" of students entering colleges today (also referred to as "millennials," born between 1982-1991) who have grown up with technology and welcome it as part of their learning experience. A study

of twelve thousand students in Europe, reported in 2006, found that more than “62 percent of new students enter the university using information and communication technology (ICT) … at least two to three times per week (Ross and Gage 157). Another survey of undergrads attending colleges in the U.S. found that “72 percent of respondents reported spending more than five hours per week online, with almost 39 percent spending more than five hours per week online doing academic work” (157). One advantage from the students’ perspective confirmed by current research includes the convenience and flexibility afforded by taking part of the course off campus, on their own time, creating a more relaxed and stress free atmosphere. Marjorie Kibby’s research, derived from her experiences in blended learning at the University of Newcastle, Australia, suggests other notable advantages from the students’ perspective. These include serving a more diverse population (the courses appeal to varied learning styles, including those who favor f2f and those who favor online learning); allowing students to log on and prepare in advance for the f2f component, increasing interaction in the classroom; improving interaction between students and the instructor (provides for more measured responses to discussions); and creating a student-focused environment where passive tasks are replaced by active ones (98-9). Kibby’s study in 2007 of student surveys from her hybrid classes indicate a high level of satisfaction, with 76% preferring the hybrid mode, 8% preferring wholly online, and 16% remaining neutral or undecided (101). Other research demonstrates that a hybrid composition course can improve student writing and critical thinking skills if designed well. A survey of faculty teaching hybrid courses at the University of Wisconsin reported

increased interactions of students with each other and with the instructor (Kibby 89). The online portion of the course provides a secure discussion area for students who are reticent about speaking in class. The data also found that the participation in the online forum actually led to increased participation in the f2f classes.

Research has also demonstrated that contemporary university students expect their instructors to use technology in the classroom to better communicate knowledge to them. Students consider "a balanced use of technology in the learning environment essential" (Roberts 3.4). In a study undertaken at the University of Pittsburgh and reported in 2005, students were asked to rate their preference for the level of interactivity in their classes in reference to the integration of technology. The classroom options included 100% lecturing, 75% lecturing and 25% interactive, 50% of each, and 100% interactive. As Roberts reports, the "vote wasn't even close…all students gave the highest rating to a balanced, 50-50 environment" (3.4).

Additionally, if a hybrid course is designed well, many of the skills students develop can be transferred into lifelong learning. Skills needed to succeed in a hybrid course include working more independently, improving time management skills, thinking critically, and responding and communicating their ideas clearly. These skills reflect more of the "real world" skills needed to succeed in the professional marketplace. Sands demonstrates the advantage of learning in this way in reference to improving students' writing skills:

> …publication of student writing as an incentive and teaching tool has a long history in the traditional classroom…In a

> hybrid course that presents students with both in-class editorial meetings and writing time, as well as independent, outside-class writing…the conditions of actual publishing… are more accurately simulated. Hence, the simulation of the hybrid course brings students into contact with the real-world conditions of work that writers labor under… (204).

Yet, even though today's university students seem to be able to manage technology well enough to succeed, "for many…the courseware used to deliver materials is one of their first technology gateways, effectively shaping their perspectives in regards to the uses of technology for learning and collaboration, as well as more general uses of technology within our culture" (Brunk-Chavez and Miller 18). Instructors must use more of the aspects of the courseware, so that the learning space becomes more than just a "digital closet or file cabinet" which could lead to student disinterest or dissatisfaction (18). Furthermore, other studies have shown that some students are uncomfortable with the hybrid model in general, still preferring a more passive learning environment. Other students may complain that the integration of an online component into an f2f course requires a larger investment of their time, and still others may continue to feel a sense of isolation prevalent in DE courses.

Integrating Computer-Mediated Discussion (CMD)

There are many examples in the literature that demonstrate the effectiveness of asynchronous and synchronous CMD in online and hybrid learning situations. In evaluations of data received from an online course in Technical Communications at

Texas Tech in 2005, the English Department found that a blend of the two discussion components enabled "student-to-student interaction" (Rude 80). The course's synchronous component, utilizing a MOO, was "pedagogically sound according to constructivist pedagogy," with multiple voices contributing to understanding (81). In a Canadian study of eight universities using Web CT or Blackboard reported in 2006, the online discussions were a primary part of blended communication courses. Ronald Owston's review of the data found that both students and instructors "saw the online components as a means to encouraging critical thinking" (346). The data also supported the blended learning notion in general; the students liked how the f2f contact supported online discussions, and the instructors found that "the online component … enabled them to get to know their students better than in a traditional face-to-face class" (346). In a study of a FY writing course at Georgia Southern University reported in 2006, the data proved that, "In Web CT-enhanced classes, the greatest amount of writing and sharing takes place on the bulletin board … students use the bulletin board as a means to discover and share ideas, and they come to consider it a place where they can share without fear of being judged as writers or thinkers" (Hendrix 72). The data also suggests that utilizing the asynchronous and synchronous functions of CMS allows students to "work transactionally and expressively," offering them a wider audience, and providing them with confidence and "a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction" (74).

Although there are many success stories, problems can occur if the course's objectives are not clearly outlined. Studies have shown where CMD "may perpetuate

inequalities of power and influence" in regard to gender, culture, or student-teacher interaction issues (Fauske and Wade 138). Another issue to consider is assessment. How does one interpret a student's silence? How does an instructor assess evidence of critical thinking, or the quality of the written responses? These are just some of the questions that need to be addressed. As Fauske and Wade recommend, in their analysis of CMD as part of an issue-based online education course:

> Although CMD appears to promote a democratic forum, community, and critical thinking, such an assumption should not go unexamined, and the connections among electronic communication and course content, objectives, and assessment should be continually assessed against theories of teaching and learning (154).

Blended Learning-The Administrative Perspective

Research has also shown that universities can reduce costs by offering hybrid courses. Cost reductions include savings in professional development costs (where faculty can cross-train each other), savings in costs of providing certain resources to students, and savings in costs in staffing by employing lower-level staff to oversee the courses (Kibby 94). Yet, it is also well known that allowing "the administrative and economic benefits of hybrid teaching to drive the implementation of the model risks destroying the pedagogical benefits" (95). For example, in a historical analysis of the competing values of efficiency in universities across the United States, Depew, et al. demonstrate how the "pervasiveness of cost-efficiency" in writing programs, and

distance learning in particular, can overwhelm faculty pedagogical values (50). The authors of this study from 2006 outline four values of efficiency prevalent in university writing programs found from the late 19th century to the present. The four values discussed are defined below:

- Cost-efficiency — This refers to achieving the greatest productive output for the least investment.
- Medium efficiency — This refers to utilization of communication mediums that allow for the most rapid transmission of message.
- Communication efficiency — This refers to the presumption of the ability to communicate information with the least amount of ambiguity.
- Pedagogical efficiency — This is where the process of learning becomes efficient when the course content is articulated from instructor to students without ambiguity (50).

The study shows how faculty values, such as communication and pedagogical efficiencies, can be superceded by the administrative values of cost and medium efficiencies. The result is an environment of competing agendas, where development of new courses can be the "site of power struggles and represent the competing will of multiple microinstitutions. Thus, efficiency, despite being a desired goal, is rarely realized" (Depew, et al. 54). To prevent this from occurring, the authors suggest that faculty need to resist university administrators' "privileging of efficiency" over pedagogical concerns. By developing a culture of support within the department, observing and studying "best practices," and collecting the "stories of the 'silent'

stakeholders, particularly instructors and students," faculty can be successful in creating "a plurality of perspectives [that] can lead to more effective pedagogies' (64). As Dziuban's research seems to concur, in reference to blended learning initiatives at UCF:

> All aspects of the university must be involved in a systemic way--colleges, departments, faculty, support services, and infrastructure--to enable student and faculty success in the online environment. When those elements are in place and functioning effectively, blended learning can produce satisfied and high-achieving students, professionally satisfied faculty, opportunities for innovative and responsive program design, more efficient and effective use of facilities, and improved relationships with the community. (Dziuban, et al. "Blended" 205)

Blended Learning-The Faculty Perspective

Yet, there are concerns that may impede "professionally satisfied faculty" as Dziuban envisions. One concern that I believe faculty who teach a hybrid course should be aware of is a change in the instructor's authority. Although similar to the theoretical notion of decentered authority in a collaborative f2f classroom, there are different ways an instructor's role can change in the hybrid classroom. As Peter Sands describes it, the role can change, "into a completely decentered facilitator with little or no display of traditional authority…into a strictly hierarchal role devoted to controlling network traffic and interaction…or into a mediated, third role that both accepts and appropriately uses

teacherly authority, but also distributes…power and responsibility…out into the class" (204). Sands provides an analysis that recommends the third classification as the optimum role for best results. Some instructors may feel apprehensive with this changing distribution of authority. Other instructors may not feel comfortable working within the CMS, which can reinforce aspects of the lecture format and "carry the values and priorities" of the companies that produce the software (Kibby 97).

Fleckenstein's analysis from 2005 of student-instructor interaction within the Blackboard Learning System found that the software "privileges certain interaction and abilities" (158). She provides evidence that demonstrates that the software's coding provides no apparatus for private chats between students or student and teacher. The full group discussion feature of the software is the only way for this interaction to occur: "nothing prevents other classmates from continuing to post responses to each other—which means that the teacher-pupil discourse is interrupted by lines of type not integral to their private discussion" (158). This type of interface can be confusing, as well as increasing the instructor's time in sifting through the threaded discussion. As a result, teaching a hybrid course requires instructors to acquire a set of new skills, including more emphasis on time management.

Research has shown that teaching an online component actually adds to an instructor's workload. A study conducted by Reinheimer in 2005, comparing f2f composition courses with their online counterparts, discovered that teaching online "takes about 85% more time than teaching the same course in a traditional classroom" (468).This increase in the amount of time can be successfully mitigated by devising a

strong faculty training program based on sound pedagogical practices. Also, as faculty become more comfortable with teaching in a hybrid format, the workload can be substantially reduced because early versions of the course require more planning, maintenance, and debugging than later versions.

Clearly, the data from these various studies supports the notion that CMD can be a pedagogically valid component of a hybrid course structure. While this literature review addresses a number of issues related to instructional pedagogy, they are all unified by the theoretical framework of social constructionism. It is this premise that connects these studies and contextualizes them within an original contribution to current scholarship.

Blended Research Methodologies

To achieve the parallel goals of developing a culture of support through the design of a faculty training workshop and of implementing a blended learning program at Florida Tech, I use a blending of research methods. These goals may seem separate and distinct; in actual practice, the research methods employed to achieve the goals overlap, and I will weave the goals together in a unified direction. For example, Selfe's methodology, as explained in Sustainable Computer Environments to develop a departmental culture of support, begins by asking strategic questions. Selfe suggests that participants should ask questions that include considering core teaching values, determining what "literacy skills, attitudes, and approaches [are] needed for students" in the classroom, or asking how pedagogical needs can best be balanced with technological concerns (44). Strategic questioning is also a component in the

methodology suggested by Nardi and O'Day in Information Ecologies; the authors view the setting and "particular local circumstances" of an environment where technology is used through an ecological metaphor (71). Nardi and O'Day's series of asking questions parallels Selfe's in many ways; in fact, Selfe concurs that Nardi and O'Day give researchers "a useful way to think about the complex beauty of technology-rich teaching and learning environments" (R. Selfe 55). Selfe argues that the process outlined in Information Ecologies, of working from core values, paying attention and reflecting "aloud about what you notice," and asking questions about use (performing "thought experiments by asking 'what-if' questions") can encourage faculty to search for meaning and help develop a culture of support in local environments (55).

Nardi and O'Day justify using the ecology metaphor to analyze local technology systems in this way:

> The notion of an ecology … is metaphorical, intended to evoke an image of biological ecologies with their complex dynamics and diverse species and opportunistic niches for growth. Our purpose in using the ecology metaphor is to foster thought and discussion, to stimulate conversations for action (50).

I have adopted this methodology in analyzing the components of Florida Tech's Humanities and Communications Department in preparation for the dual tracks outlined in my dissertation. I agree with Nardi and O'Day's assertion that an "information ecology is a complex *system* of parts and relationships" (50). It is diverse and

continually evolving as long as it is healthy. The parts of a healthy information ecology suggested by the authors, along with the corresponding parts of the specific ecology researched at Florida Tech, are as follows:

1. *System:* Like a biological ecology, an information ecology is marked by strong interrelationships and dependencies among its parts. The parts may be different from each other, but they are closely bound together. I equate the system component to the departmental level, where numerous instructors, professors, and other administrative personnel "fit together in complementary ways" (Nardi and O'Day 51).

2. *Diversity:* In information ecologies, there are all kinds of people and different kinds of technological tools. "A diverse information ecology is [an] intensely social place [allowing] for individual proclivities and interests" (Nardi and O'Day 52). This component aligns naturally with the many varied faculty members teaching many varied courses.

3. *Coevolution:* This principle is one of adaptation, where participants must be prepared when "new ideas, tools, activities" arise (52). This component relates to the faculty training aspect of implementing a blended learning program.

4. *Keystone Species:* In a biological ecology, a keystone species is one "whose presence is crucial to the survival of the ecology itself" (Nardi and O'Day 53). Another way to think of a keystone species in an information ecology is that of mediators, "people who build bridges across institutional boundaries" (54). These mediators begin within the department, as trainers and developers of new systems or programs, but can

also include the university's IT department which can aid in technical issues and advice when needed.

5. *Locality:* This last principle refers to the knowledge and influence participants have "about our own local ecologies that is inaccessible to anyone outside them" (55). This knowledge can translate into productive "*engagement* and *participation*" and a "commitment to a set of shared motivations and values" (57-58). This translates well into the notion of developing a culture of support, blending methodologies suggested by Selfe and Nardi and O'Day.

Nardi and O'Day's notion of mediators who "build bridges across institutional boundaries" (54) aligns well with institutional critique, the final component of my blended research methodology. Porter et al., in the article "Institutional Critique: A Rhetorical Methodology for Change" (2000) propose two tactics (postmodern mapping and boundary interrogation) as ways to explore institutional relationships in educational settings. Of the two tactics, I utilize the critique of boundary interrogation to analyze Florida Tech's institutional policies as related to issues of technology use and new program development. In their article, Porter et al. advocate "using spatial methods adapted from postmodern geography and critical theory' (610) to "re-write" institutions through rhetorical action, thereby producing a "pragmatic mechanism for change" (612).

Boundary interrogation as a method of critique draws from Sibley's work in Geographies of Exclusion, which demonstrates ways that "exclusionary practices and devices are used by groups to maintain or extend their group social identity and power" (623-24). Within these exclusionary practices, "zones of ambiguity" can be exploited as

locations where “change can take place because of the boundary instability they highlight” (624). Employing a rhetorical stance, Porter, et al., suggest that, as we delineate the zones of ambiguity present in the institution, “we can articulate the power moves used to maintain or even extend control over boundaries” (624). In the following section, I provide an example of how boundary interrogation can work to identify a rhetorical zone of ambiguity.

As part of the methodology focusing on boundaries and zones of ambiguity, Porter et al. argue that “mismatches between the official story told by public relations and other narratives and the actual practices of the institution” is a fertile area for investigation (630). One of the topics often discussed at our department meetings and at the Faculty Senate level at Florida Tech is the lack of technologically equipped classrooms. At the start of each new semester, this lack sends faculty scrambling and jockeying for the limited number of wired classrooms; this is especially frustrating considering the overall classroom capacity is at the maximum level based on increases in student enrollment. In a review of an e-mail to faculty from September of 2008, the department chair advised us that we were “to anticipate a cut to our budget…funds for travel, new furniture, computer equipment etc. will not exist for some time” (Taylor 1). This concern has been a prevalent issue since at least as early as 2004. In a review of Faculty Senate minutes from December 2004, the Provost of the university addressed faculty requests for more technologically enhanced classrooms by stating, “By next semester something will be in place to alleviate [the problem]” (Faculty Senate 4). Yet it

seems that, from the above review, the issue has not been addressed satisfactorily at the department level for the past four years.

Early in 2008 when I began writing this dissertation, Florida Tech began a year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of its founding as a university in 1958. This event provided a wealth of official material and publications to incorporate into my research. For example, one of the official fiftieth anniversary publications describes the building projects planned for the near future, using a detailed campus map with each new building project highlighted with numbered stars. A large headline runs across the top of the map proclaiming '50th Anniversary to See Historic Building Boom.' Accompanying smaller text begins by stating how the campus will be undergoing "nearly $75 million worth of new construction" (Florida Institute of Technology). The text then describes the six new projects which include an autism treatment center, an Olympic-sized pool, a dining hall, a parking garage, and a 24,000 square foot building named the Harris Center for Science and Engineering. The text also mentions the addition of eight new residence halls recently completed. Although each of these new projects is exciting and worthwhile, the only one of direct interest to the faculty is the 24,000 square foot building. If the public relations department had thought to add text describing the building in more detail, such as "equipped with many new state-of-the-art media enhanced classrooms," some of the concerns of the faculty could have been alleviated. This is just a modest example of a boundary issue, or a "disconnect," between an official, administrative perspective and a departmental perspective which illustrates a zone of ambiguity to be exploited. Ironically, the lack of technologically

enhanced classrooms adds credibility to my proposal for the implementation of a blended learning program that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

I believe that the blended research methodology employed in my dissertation is a valid one. Each of the components advocates examining the technological environment through a situated, local lens. In developing a departmental culture of support, designing a faculty workshop, implementing a blended learning program, and articulating institutional boundary issues, the goal of institutional change can be accomplished. In the following section, I provide a brief summary of each chapter, outlining in more detail the blended methodological approach.

Chapter Two – Planting the Seeds

I provide a brief review of composition theories and the pedagogy of collaboration and socially constructed meaning as a means of foregrounding the research to follow. In particular, the chapter focuses on the status of Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) within the context of the blended learning environment. I also provide an introduction to the basic framework of the design for my faculty workshop. A discussion of new media literacies and the need for faculty members to be aware of the importance of technological literacy provides the basis for the potential benefits of blended learning as explored in Chapter 3.

Chapter Three – Enriching the Ground

In order to help implement the blended learning environment at Florida Tech and aid in creating a departmental culture of support (as explored in Chapter 4), faculty and administrators need to be cognizant of the positive and negative aspects associated

with the notion of blended learning. This chapter discusses these aspects in detail, including administrative, faculty, and student concerns. This chapter also provides a more in-depth analysis of collaborative features of the LMS, illustrating ways the blended learning environment can respond to the new media literacies of our students and how a properly designed blended learning environment can make faculty more relevant, thus allowing faculty to assume a more active role in decision making.

Chapter Four-Growing and Maturing

This chapter provides a more detailed rendering of my blended research methods as they relate to the design of my faculty workshop. The chapter also reports the results of a case study involving the Humanities and Communications Department of Florida Tech. Using the local information ecology approach of Nardi and O'Day, interview and survey results of faculty, students, and administrators are tabulated and reported. In addition, based on these results, I design a faculty training workshop based on Richard Selfe's methodology. The analysis and workshop design begins Richard Selfe's process of developing a departmental culture of support, which leads to the implementation of the blended learning class outlined in chapter 5.

Chapter Five – Gathering the Harvest

Concluding the dissertation, this chapter provides further justification for implementing a blended learning program at Florida Tech. Incorporating institutional critique, I utilize new program development as a means of mediating the discursive gap between "the macro-level national critiques and the micro-level practices on individual campuses," thus creating positive change (Porter et al. 616). The new blended learning

program can then become “a key argumentative lever in securing administrative support” for the department (629). It is my hope that the dissertation can be read as a sort of action plan for other researchers to use in their own unique, local educational settings.

CHAPTER TWO – PLANTING THE SEEDS

Prior to accepting my first position as an adjunct instructor in 1996, I envisioned attending several training sessions being led by seasoned professionals in the current theories and pedagogy of college composition. This image I had constructed did not coincide with the reality I faced when I met with the department chair a few days before the start of the semester. He handed me some sample syllabi, a textbook, and shaking my hand with a wide smile he said, “Good luck and enjoy your classes!” After wandering away in shock, I realized that I was on my own and knew very little about teaching. My only reference points were my professors and their teaching methods that I had experienced as a student myself some 20 years before. It was at that point I started seriously to question my choice of a second career in academia.

I suspect that my experience as related above is more common to English departments than we would like to admit, which is a disservice to faculty, students, and the university itself. The faculty workshop approach discussed more fully in Chapter 4 is a direct result of my early eye-opening experience as an instructor of college composition; it seeks to address the need for training, incorporating discussions of composition theory and pedagogy as it relates to the blended learning environment at Florida Tech. This chapter provides grounding for Chapters 3 and 4 with a brief overview of various composition theories being used in current college learning environments, along with an introduction to the basic framework of the workshop design. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the need for faculty to be cognizant of the importance of technological literacy as part of the training model.

Chapter One demonstrates the pervasiveness of course management systems, such as Blackboard and Web Ct, in today's universities. I agree with well-respected scholars, such as Cynthia and Richard Selfe, Andrew Feenberg, Stuart Selber, and others, that a critical stance needs to be employed as we examine issues related to the implementation of technology in the classroom. One issue that I wrestled with early in my dissertation process centered on whether integrating computer-mediated communication (CMC) into the f2f environment was a pedagogically sound strategy, or if faculty and university administrators were simply yielding to outside pressures to integrate technology. The evidence presented in Chapter 1 indicates that there can be sound pedagogical results derived from the blended learning environment. As previously documented, a University of Wisconsin survey found that the blended learning environment can improve student writing and critical thinking skills if the course is designed well; a Texas Tech study showed how multiple voices can contribute to greater understanding; and a Georgia Southern study demonstrated how the bulletin board discussions help build students' confidence in expressing themselves. Additionally, much earlier evidence reported in 1991 that lends support to the notion of blended learning describes the integration of CMC within the context of a writing lab, where computers are networked. This use of CMC in writing labs and classrooms has generally been characterized as beneficial to students (Hawisher and Selfe 59). Some of the benefits are as follows:

1. CMC appears to make brainstorming, writing, revising, and editing more efficient.
2. CMC can heighten students' sense of audience.

3. CMC encourages a sense of community.
4. CMC helps students see writing as a recursive, not linear process.
5. CMC enhances peer review of drafts and facilitate feedback.
6. CMC encourages equitable participation, stirring reluctant students who may not speak out in class. (59-62)

Even newer interface technologies, such as Wikis and Second Life simulations, are being used to foster collaboration and improve literacy in college classrooms. A wiki utilizes open-source software to create collections of hypertext pages that can be edited by multiple users. For the last two years, Texas A & M University has used wikis in FY composition classes. The wiki format allows students to add links to the posted pages and insert articles, visual elements, or multimedia presentations. I believe this can enrich the students' knowledge of visual communication, allowing them to "shape their own information spaces, [providing] a more positive experience for writing and collaborating" (Garza and Hern 2).

Second Life simulations are being integrated into the composition classroom as well. James Paul Gee has argued that a player's immersion in the "semiotic domain," or virtual world of video games, can be an active and critical learning experience. In his book, What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy, he develops "a perspective on learning, literacy, and semiotic domains that applies more generally to domains beyond video games" (19). The virtual-reality interface known as Second Life seems to reflect many of Gee's notions of learning and literacy. Second Life is an interface used in corporate settings for instructional simulations, and many universities

are experimenting with it as part of classroom pedagogy. Sarah Robbins, an instructor at Ball State University, has been using Second Life in her FY composition classes recently. She admits the concept may not work for everyone, or for all classes: "as a form of technology, the site can be intimidating,' noting it helps to be familiar with Photoshop and scripting language if you want to build something" (qtd. in Koch 1). Yet her students say the simulation makes taking an English class fun and interesting. One of her students remarked, "This class approaches English from another angle and teaches it in a different way. Having fun while learning doesn't happen very often, but it occurred every time we went to class" (Koch 1). In the virtual setting, Robbins' students create avatars, sit in a circle, and debate via a public instant message system. She then prints the dialogue recorded as classroom notes. "In 20 minutes we get about 10 to 20 pages of dialogue. . . . We have great discussions that extend beyond what we'd be able to do in a traditional classroom" (1). Ball State administrators also welcome and support the integration of this new technology. "[The CMD] contributes to the university's instructional mission by supporting exploration of new media," states Michael Holmes, associate director of insight and communication research (Koch 2).

Overview of Composition Theories

These developments which demonstrate the pedagogical effectiveness of the blended learning environment have evolved primarily from the theoretical notions of social constructionism and collaboration. Most composition faculty members are familiar with the basic tenets of social constructionism and have used elements of constructivist

pedagogies in their classrooms for years. These elements are broadly characterized in this way:

> The *constructivist* concept of education views learning as resulting from complex interactions, beyond what has been termed as the *objectivist* or *knowledge transmission* model in which "knowledge" is viewed as a product that can be transmitted one way from the professor (or the textbook) to the students...constructivism means that as people experience something new they compare this experience to internalized knowledge constructs based on past experiences, and then modify their constructs accordingly (Benbunan-Fich, Hiltz, and Harasim 21, emphasis in original).

Kenneth Bruffee is a well-known advocate for utilizing constructivist pedagogies in the composition classroom. Bruffee draws upon disparate fields of knowledge, such as anthropology, philosophy, and the sciences to flesh out his perspective. He argues that the writing class should be more of a social or collaborative effort rather than an individualistic act. In Collaborative Learning: Higher Education, Interdependence, and the Authority of Knowledge (1999), he states that the act of writing should be

> . . . a community construct. It constitutes, defines, and maintains the knowledge community that fashions it. We write either to maintain our membership in communities we are already members of, to invite and help other people to join communities we are members of, or to make ourselves acceptable to communities we are not yet members of. (55)

The notion of collaboration in the composition classroom redistributes the power relationship between the instructor and students to engage students in their own learning and foster critical thinking skills. Collaborative learning practices can include small-group work, peer response and tutoring, whole-class writing workshops, invention strategies, and many others. Bruffee suggests that one of the primary goals in this type of environment is for the group to reach consensus. He believes that consensus is reflective of real world environments that students will find themselves in after leaving college, and that consensus is part of the normal discourse of knowledge communities. Abnormal discourse, on the other hand, occurs when consensus no longer exists. The product of abnormal discourse can be "anything from nonsense to intellectual revolution" (429). Bruffee believes that it cannot be taught; instructors must inform the students of the tools of normal discourse and let students discover for themselves the idea of abnormal discourse.

John Trimbur's view is wider in scope than and somewhat critical of Bruffee's view. Trimbur, another well-known composition scholar, suggests that abnormal discourse goes hand-in-hand with dissensus which becomes a viable way of questioning the status quo. In his view, teachers need to direct students to be more critical, to utilize abnormal discourse, and "to ask students to explore the rhetoric of dissensus that pervades writing situations" (471). Trimbur envisions the collaborative environment as one that can lead to the formation of a new world order. Instead of consensus being the goal, as Bruffee suggests, it needs to be taught "as a utopian instead of a 'real world' practice" (473). Seeing it in this light allows students to question

the “expert-novice” system of education and to investigate who may talk and what is said. The collaborative environment fosters a classroom of critical thinkers, not divorced from their social and political backgrounds; it is a classroom, as Ann Berthoff sees it, where meaning is created by giving the students “back their language so that they can reclaim it as an instrument for controlling their becoming” (342).

It is not surprising that composition instructors cannot even agree, or achieve consensus, on the same definition of “collaborative activities.” Some argue that the term “collaboration” has lost its meaning and that any activity designed involving “participant interaction is the same as collaborative learning” (Brunk-Chavez and Miller). For example, many instructors label an activity collaborative learning when it could be more clearly defined as “cooperative” learning. E. Stacey, a designer of adult online courses, explains the major distinction between the terms this way: “. . . in cooperative learning, students divide the work among themselves and later assemble it into its final product to be evaluated. Collaborative partners . . . do the work together and while the work may be delegated, the final result is negotiated.” (qtd. in Brunk-Chavez and Miller)

Instead of constructed knowledge, cooperative learning activities result more in shared knowledge. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, is more engaging, where a project’s goal isn’t as predetermined, where the instructor and students can work together, arriving at unexpected results; knowledge is socially constructed through meaningful interaction. This type of construction of knowledge within a community (for example, the composition classroom or peer groups) has evolved to become one of the primary theoretical foundations of online education as well, where asynchronous

computer-mediated communication is used “to engage each participant at length and in detail on the construction of common understanding” (Benbunan-Fich, Hiltz, and Harasim 22).

Although collaborative activities based on social constructionism play a central role in composition pedagogy, my research indicates that there is a mixture of theoretical notions employed by various instructors in an actual classroom environment (whether f2f, online, or blended). These include elements of process pedagogy, current-traditional theory, classical instruction, writing across the curriculum, community-service pedagogies, cultural studies, and visual rhetoric to name a few. Beth Hewitt and Christina Ehmann, educators and faculty training professionals, provide a brief outline of what they perceive as the primary theories being implemented in composition learning environments today. In their excellent resource guide for faculty development, Preparing Educators for Online Writing Instruction (2004), Hewitt and Ehmann identify and label the prevailing theories as expressivism, current-traditional, and neoclassical, as well as social constructionism. Surprisingly, their categories align closely with James Berlin’s taxonomy in his research of composition theories published in Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985. Hewitt and Ehmann’s expressivism equates to Berlin’s category of the *Subjective*, which “place[s] truth within the subject;” current-traditional aligns with Berlin’s *Objective*, which “locate[s] reality in the external world;” and the neoclassical corresponds to Berlin’s *Transactional*, which “locate[s] reality at the point of interaction of subject and object, with audience and language as mediating agencies” (Berlin 6). Each of these theories is found in varying

degrees in the first year composition courses taught at Florida Tech. For example, both of the assigned textbooks for the course (The Bedford Handbook and The Longman Reader) begin by describing the writing process. Brainstorming activities such as freewriting, clustering, and journal writing are discussed as ways writers can generate ideas; these activities are examples of expressivist theory which "focuses on the writer as one who has personal and sole access to his or her own 'truth' and encourages writing that expresses the writer's individuality and thinking" (Hewitt and Ehmann 56). One writing activity that is closely aligned with the expressivist notion is the personal experience narrative. This is one of the first assignments that many instructors ask their students to write. The personal essay is a form that the students are familiar with, and it invites self-exploration in relationship to events, other people, and their environment. In addition to giving students an opportunity to be reflective, to consider matters of purpose and audience, and to refine their style, Patricia Sullivan, in "Composing Culture: A Place for the Personal," sees the personal essay as a form of "cultural pedagogy." As teachers read our students' personal writing, we become scholars of their lived experiences. Sullivan believes that these narratives about divorce, abusive parents, traumatic accidents, or overcoming adversity "…offer us a glimpse into a social text, drawn from the cultural subconscious, that reveals us to ourselves" (43).

Also integrated into the Com 1101 course requirements are elements of the current-traditional theory, which translate into paying attention to grammatical correctness and sentence-level development. The Bedford Handbook devotes 50 chapters to these issues, and instructors are asked to cover and test students on the

material. The Longman Reader includes instruction on and examples of the various rhetorical strategies (such as description, comparison/contrast, process analysis, etc.) which provide students ways to organize and develop their essay assignments. This focus on rhetorical strategies is another element of current-traditional theory. Finally, toward the end of the first semester in first year writing, students are assigned a research paper, which integrates components of the neoclassical approach. As defined by Hewiitt and Ehmann, this theory "privileges transactional writing over expressive, with instruction tending to lead to the development of exposition and argument, both intellectual (arguing a position) and rhetorical (arguing a proposal)" (57). In addition to the objectives of students demonstrating their mastery of library and internet research and documentation skills, the value of this assignment lies in encouraging students to investigate a topic on a deeper level, using other voices to help support their argument, and in thinking critically until they arrive at a well-informed opinion. Integrating their own voice and opinions with others provides them a way to enter into an intellectual discussion. At Florida Tech, this assignment prepares students for researched writing in subsequent required humanities courses and in their major course work as well. This type of writing can be as creative "as any piece of personal writing they've done . . . it provides an opportunity to introduce students to the quickly changing world of academic research, which will undergird all the other work they do in college" (Glenn, et al. 109).

In addition to the theories and pedagogies outlined above, some instructors are incorporating other pedagogies which could be integrated into my design of the blended

learning environment. These include elements of website design using Gregory Ulmer's notion of the mystory and activities related to visual rhetoric. In Ulmer's pedagogical example uniting technology and writing outlined in Internet Invention (2003), he crafts a curriculum designed for an upper-level course that embraces technology, in which the website is used as the medium of instruction and learning. In doing so, Ulmer instructs students "…in how to make the transition from writing for print cultures to 'writing' for and 'thinking' in electronic cultures" (xi). Although many of the ideas and exercises are based on traditional rhetorical strategies, and could be used in the conventional classroom, Ulmer suggests that our goal should be to aid students in moving from literacy to "electracy." The ultimate objective of the coursework, through an analysis of Family, Entertainment, and Community history is, as Ulmer suggests, for students to develop an "image of wide scope," a way of acknowledging and learning who they are, so that they can participate "in community problem solving" (xiii). Although the completion of a website is not an objective in my blended composition course proposal, other elements of Ulmer's pedagogy are incorporated, such as the making of a "mystory." Norman Denzin defines mystory in "Performance Texts" as "reflexive, critical, multimedia tales and tellings. They begin with the writer's biography and body, epiphanic moments, turning-point experiences, times of personal trouble and turmoil . . ." (180) The goal of incorporating this activity into the coursework is to move to a place of "reflective, critical action, not just emotional catharsis" (182).

Allowing students to produce and submit a portion of their assignments electronically can also challenge instructors to expand the concept of writing to include

visual texts as well as verbal texts. Lester Faigley and Cynthia Selfe have developed a methodology that accommodates students' awareness of the visual and that also could be incorporated into the hybrid course. Their 2004 publication, Picturing Texts, guides students through a rhetorical framework for looking at texts composed of words and images. They offer three strategies to teach students how to expand their ideas of composing—"writing *about* visuals, writing *with* visuals, and writing that *is* visual" (Faigley, et al. vii, emphasis in original). In writing about visual texts, students are taught to think and write critically about the rhetorical choices that writers and designers make. In writing with visuals, students are asked to examine how images can be used persuasively. The final strategy instructs students how to make their writing visual, instructing them to produce their own documents that combine words, images, and graphics. As stated in the preface to the textbook, "the pedagogy . . . focuses more on collaborative (student and teacher) learning and exploration of possibilities, which, we hope will lead students to be better critical thinkers and composers of text" (xi).

Workshop Design Framework

Combining these complementary strands of composition theory and pedagogy in a learning environment offers, as Hewitt and Ehmann define it, an "eclectic theoretical approach" to teaching composition and also training instructors within the context of a faculty development workshop (54). Just as instructors tailor these various approaches in the classroom as they deem necessary to fulfill their teaching goals and philosophy, course requirements, departmental objectives, and student needs, incorporating theory into faculty training should be tailored to the knowledge levels and needs of the

trainees. A grounding in the pertinent theories provides a foundation for critically considering the use of technology and technological literacy. As Hewitt and Ehmann argue, linking theoretical discussions with hands-on training helps participants to develop a critical awareness along with practical experience, and my workshop approach aligns with their framework. Echoing Richard Selfe's suggestions for setting priorities to develop a culture of support, Hewett and Ehmann have developed an approach for online training of faculty that I feel is a valuable framework for the design of my blended learning workshops. Similar to Selfe's approach discussed in greater detail in chapter 4, Hewitt and Ehmann concentrate on the people involved and the pedagogical concerns "…that supercede specific technology platforms…" (5). The principles that the authors suggest are founded "in thinking about action research, rhetoric and composition, adult learning, business-based online 'e-training,' and our experiences as cross-disciplinary educators…" (6). The five principles are Investigation, Immersion, Individualization, Association, and Reflection.

1. Investigation - This principle entails examining teaching and learning processes as they occur in the natural setting, viewing everyone involved in the training as collaborators. Within this setting, all participants can engage in debate, discussion, and evaluation of the training process. The goal is to improve practices, "thereby advancing knowledge that can be poured into improved iterations of the training program" (Hewitt and Ehmann 6).
2. Immersion - Research has shown that adult learners need to be "immersed" in a new teaching environment, which means that *"teaching online necessitates*

training online" (11, emphasis in original). The value of this aspect is the participants' experience from both the student and teacher perspectives. The goal is to "cultivate in teachers a transformative online mindset" (13) which should allay apprehensions about teaching in online environments.

3. Individualization - This principle suggests that training needs to be tailored to the needs of individual participants. Various methods are used in designing workshops that are "uniformly effective, yet flexible enough to accommodate differences in the cognitive and affective needs of trainees" (15).
4. Association – This principle addresses the needs of participants to build networks and work in connection with others. Hewitt and Ehmann believe this development of working with peers "rewards the…trainer with a self-sufficient…instructional group that is comfortable working as a team" (20).
5. Reflection – This last principle involves the critically reflective process of examining ideas about teaching and learning as shown in the participants' actual experiences. In reviewing the "global" concerns of the online teaching environment, reflective feedback can lead participants to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the training program, ". . . or other online disciplines' teaching goals or strategies . . . as a whole" (24).

I feel that much of the value in this design is found in increasing the marketability of participants in today's technological environment, allowing them to be better teachers, and furthering their opportunities to become agents of change "positively [influencing] the organization/s for which they work" (Hewitt and Ehmann 23).

In addition to integrating components of the theoretical and practical into the design of my faculty workshop, I also integrate a component based on Cynthia Selfe's suggestion from 1999 to "pay critical attention to the issues generated by technology use" (517). This component translates into a discussion that helps faculty and their students better understand "the social, economic, and pedagogical implications of new communication technologies and technology initiatives that affect their lives" (520); this component also translates into a discussion of the issues of technological literacy within the context of the blended learning environment in the Humanities and Communication Department of Florida Tech.

Technological Literacy

One of the goals outlined more fully in chapters 3 and 4 is to create a culture of support among the members of the department. My workshop approach plays an important role toward achieving this goal. Based on the results from the faculty surveys more fully reported in chapter 4, some faculty members in the department seem reluctant to integrate technological features into their classroom. Their reluctance may result from being uncomfortable with the hardware or software, which the "hands-on" practical component of the training addresses. Other instructors may believe that using computers in their office for word processing or sending email is part of their job, but not using computers as part of classroom instruction "absolves them and their students from paying critical attention to technology issues" (Selfe 23). Still others feel they may not be able to effectively integrate "technological literacy instruction into the composition classroom in meaningful ways" (Vie 10). Even though these different views may have

some legitimacy, all faculty members should realize that the meanings of the terms "writing" and "composing" are evolving. Composing can mean participating in an online discussion through a listserv or bulletin board. Composing can also refer to the creation of a PowerPoint presentation, participation in chat rooms, creating websites, or writing on a class web log. Stephanie Vie argues that faculty need to familiarize themselves with the technologies that our Generation M students (also referred to as Millenials) use, such as blogs, wikis, text messaging, or online social networking sites, in order to "catch up with the Generation M students who have left [us] behind" (10). What follows is an exploration into these different views which serves as support for the critical component of my faculty workshop design.

Keeping current with our technologically savvy students helps alleviate the risk of becoming irrelevant in the classroom. It is not surprising that a UCLA survey of faculty reported in 2004 found that, "staying up-to-date with technology affects more professors than traditional stresses such as publishing demands and teaching loads," and that close to two-thirds of the faculty surveyed "fear the task of keeping current with technology" (qtd. in Selber 19). Certainly, a practical, or instrumental, knowledge of the course management software (CMS) is a main consideration and a necessary component of my workshop design. Yet faculty should also be aware that "staying up-to-date" means more than being proficient in emerging technologies. It also means realizing that the definition of literacy is evolving.

In Orality and Literacy (1982), Walter Ong makes a convincing case describing how human society evolved from its oral traditions to a literate culture. He defines an

oral culture, such as the culture of the ancient Greeks before the development of an alphabet, being "untouched by any knowledge of writing or print [as] 'primary orality'" (11). Our literate culture, on the other hand, Ong defines as a culture of "'secondary orality' . . . in which a new orality is sustained by telephone, radio, television, and other electronic devices that depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print" (11). In this view, Ong differed from many of his contemporaries in the 1970s and 1980s who believed that electronic media threatened to displace print media. Kathleen Tyner describes this distinction in, Literacy in a Digital World:

> Ong believed instead that speech was transformed by print culture, but did not displace it. Similarly, he believed that electronic forms were incorporating, not erasing, print. Ong observed that electronic modes of discourse were actually based on the traditions of print, thus strengthening and reinforcing them (56).

Tyner argues that Ong's notion of secondary orality "offers possibilities for linking the overlapping codes and conventions for oral, print, and electronic modes with theories of literacy" (57). Instead of composition instructors believing that the use of technology in the classroom will supplant the need for literacies of print, I agree with Ong and Tyner who believe that the secondary orality strengthens the ones that come before it, where the "use of electronic literacy technologies . . . breathes new life into the quartet of educational basics familiar to every educator: reading, writing, listening, and speaking" (Tyner 57).

Ong also suggests that the evolution from orality to literacy and to what Ulmer terms “electracy” is necessary “for the evolution of [human] consciousness” (172). It follows then that instructors should view technology issues in what Stuart Selber describes as a “postcritical” stance. In Multiliteracies for a Digital Age (2004), Selber articulates his view in this way:

> …computers…are here to stay…and that the time and energy of teachers is therefore best spent not deploring computers but learning how to use them in ways that…productively challenge… the values of the profession….my use of the term *postcritical* does not consider technology to be a self-determining agent. In rejecting theories claiming that technology alone creates educational change, it locates the potential for such change in a nexus of social forces (emphasis in original 8).

Thus Selber advocates that instructors should assume more responsibility in the design and implementation of technological systems. When we assume more responsibility, we become more relevant, and our pedagogy should help us and our students understand “computers in critical, contextual, and historical ways…” (13). To help accomplish these goals, Selber recommends implementing a curriculum based on three literacy categories: functional literacy, which focuses on students “as users of technology;” critical literacy, which focuses on students as “questioners of technology;” and rhetorical literacy, which focuses on students as “producers of technology” (25).

Finally, the concern over effectively integrating technological literacy in meaningful ways is in keeping with viewing the blended learning environment as an "information ecology [consisting of] a complex system of parts and relationships (Nardi and O'Day 50). Using a metaphor similar to a biological ecology, an information ecology should be dynamic, comprised of diverse opinions, and contain real opportunities for growth. A functional information ecology should focus on the individuals involved, their practices, and the relationships between them. Viewing and designing our courses and programs through this ecological understanding, beyond just being comfortable with an instrumental or functional understanding of the capabilities of the technology, is a more desirable outcome. This understanding incorporates the definition of technological literacy as outlined by Hawisher and Selfe in their 2004 publication, Literate Lives in the Information Age:

> By *technological literacy*, or *literacies*, we mean the practices involved in reading, writing, and exchanging information in online environments, as well as the values associated with such practices-cultural, social, political, and educational…We use the…term, literacies of technology, as an all-encompassing phrase to connect social practices, people, technology, values, and literate activity, which, in turn, are embedded in a larger cultural ecology. (2, emphasis in original)

In Hawisher and Selfe's six-year project of 20 case studies of people aged 14-60, and their relationships to literacies of technology over the last 25 years, a few major themes

became apparent. Some of these "emerging themes" speak directly to the issues discussed in this chapter and explored more fully in the following chapters. Reminiscent of Ong's notion of secondary orality, one theme that Hawisher and Selfe's research discovered is that "literacies have life spans," and that they are situated "within a complex ecology of events and effects" (212-13). For example, in a college composition environment, the digital literacy experiences of our students can clash with the print literacy experiences of instructors. This can result in a situation where "educators may remain unsure of how to value the new-media literacies or even how to practice these new literacies themselves" (215-16). This leads to a failure to learn from the strengths of our students and "miss important opportunities to link their own instructional goals to the developing literacy strengths" of their students (216). My faculty workshop design and the implementation of the blended learning environment attempts to bridge this gap.

Another theme that emerged from Hawisher and Selfe's study was the need for instructors to realize that the university is one of the "four major gateways through which people [gain] access to computer technology" (223). Of the four gateways, which include workplaces, communities, and homes, "schools and universities have provided the earliest and most consistently accessible gateways" (223). Yet, as I have demonstrated throughout my discussion of technological literacy, we could do much better providing students "with a critical perspective on these technologies or on what may be inappropriate uses of computers" (224).

Once we grasp our importance as an integral component in a primary gateway, then we can accept the challenge that Hawisher and Selfe identify as another emerging

theme in their study; the need to comprehend that the definition of literacy is constantly evolving. We should take into consideration that our understanding of literacy is pushing past the boundaries of print and alphabetic literacy. If we faculty members "ignore, exclude, or devalue new-media texts," we "abdicate a professional responsibility" to incorporate new methods of communicating meaning, running the risk of our "curriculum no longer holding relevance for students" (Hawisher and Selfe 233).

CHAPTER THREE – ENRICHING THE GROUND

As demonstrated in chapter 2, one way faculty members can become more relevant in today's college composition environment is to take a postcritical stance and assume more responsibility in the design and implementation of technological systems available to us. In addition, grasping the notion that the definition of literacy is evolving allows us to be more open to new definitions of writing and composing. Yet the results of my research (analyzed in greater detail in chapter 4) indicate that a significant percentage of the faculty resists keeping current with new technologies. For example, in responses to questions from my faculty survey regarding the use of the Angel Learning Management System (LMS) within the Humanities and Communications Department at Florida Tech, I found that many faculty members were not comfortable using components of the LMS, and many did not use the LMS at all in their courses. Also, a large percentage of the faculty members surveyed did not even participate in regularly scheduled training in the components of the LMS offered by the IT department. These findings attest to the need for my comprehensive workshop approach to faculty development more fully outlined in chapter 4.

Because the integration of collaborative aspects of the LMS plays a pivotal role in the faculty workshop design and my proposed blended first-year composition course at Florida Tech, this chapter bridges the theoretical discussion outlined in chapter 2 and the practical workshop discussion outlined in chapter 4, providing a more in-depth analysis of collaborative features of the LMS. In viewing these features through the perspectives of faculty, students, and university administrators, I hope to increase

awareness of the benefits and potential drawbacks of incorporating a computer-mediated component into a face-2-face environment.

As noted in the beginning of chapter 1, Blackboard, Inc. is the largest provider of course management software (CMS), with over 5000 customers (Young A18). Blackboard merged with its largest competitor, Web CT, three years ago and became even larger. There are many smaller competitors of learning management systems (subsequently, the acronyms CMS and LMS will be used interchangeably to denote these systems), such as Desire2Learn, Angel, and Moodle which is a free, open-source system. Florida Tech recently made the switch from Blackboard to Angel, a company with around 300 clients, and I will discuss this issue in more detail later in the chapter. Each of these LMS packages has many varied features, some of which are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Likewise, different departments within a given university may prefer certain features to others, depending on their individual departmental or course goals. Within English departments, the collaborative features of the LMS seem to be the primary focus of recent scholarship. These features include e-mail, discussion boards, synchronous chat functions, and electronic peer review; these are the primary components utilized as ways to build community and socially construct knowledge, whether in a blended course or a distance learning environment. Before analyzing the potential benefits and drawbacks of these features, I provide a brief introduction to interface design issues inherent in most LMS packages.

Interface Design

Although I've attempted to provide a balanced argument regarding the concept of integrating a computer-mediated component into an f2f environment in chapters 1 and 2, some may believe that I've presented too positive a picture of the concept. It is also important to be reminded that, as Selfe and Selfe (1994) point out, an LMS is an interface that presents "reality as framed in the perspective of modern capitalism, thus, orienting technology along an existing axis of class privilege" (69). It is easy to become enamored with the many technological features built into the architecture of the LMS and take an "overly optimistic vision" which works "against critically reflective efforts of good teachers and students" (Selfe and Selfe 66). In their analysis of the Mac interface, the authors demonstrate how the "desktop" notion aligns with the corporate world, along with the icons and objects used: file folders, documents, etc. They also demonstrate how the interface supports those in power, such as the use of a white pointer or hand, signaling to the user that they are "entering a world constituted around the lives and values of white, male…professionals" (70). It is relevant to be reminded of these types of issues as we transform our pedagogies into a blended learning environment.

Other scholars view the use of an LMS interface as one that "[limits] authorship and agency, following a more autocratic, assembly-line method" (Moxley 187). For example, the Statistics page in Blackboard allows instructors a surveillance tool to closely monitor students' progress through the semester. This feature has been compared to Bentham's idea from the 18th century of the panopticon, "an architectural design of a prison that allows one guard to manage the behavior of multiple prisoners" (Moxley 187). Joseph Moxley, a professor of English and director of FY Composition at

the University of South Florida, sees this panoptical effect that teachers have over students in a negative light, an extension of those in power. The values of those in power (which includes administrators and the corporations that market the various LMS systems) conflict with the values of those in a "community of learning . . . who see all learning as an interconnected, collaborative act" (186). Moxley suggests that instructors and students could be better served in collaborative efforts by utilizing more social software, such as Wikipedia or Sharepoint by Microsoft, rather than a university sponsored LMS.

Diane Penrod, author and composition professor, situates the panoptical effect of the collaborative features of the LMS from the students' perspective. In relating this effect to the discussion board feature, Penrod believes that students who know their conversations are going to be seen by the public adjust them accordingly, which could be both positive and negative:

> Some students respond to this circumstance by self-censoring or self-monitoring their replies to the group. Others react to the constant sending and receiving of messages by tapping into the relationships formed on screen (some of which may or may not seep into F2F class encounters) or by constructing a different personality from the one presented in the classroom. This latter option is done when students wish to avoid the panoptical effect and speak freely. (9)

Another issue linked with introducing a LMS interface into the context of an f2f classroom is the one of competing efficiencies described in Chapter 1. Depew, et al.

suggest, through their historical analysis of university writing programs, that the goals of LMS providers and many university administrators in delivering course content can compete with the goals of faculty. For example, the administrative goals of medium and cost efficiencies can conflict with the faculty's goals of communication and pedagogical efficiencies. Depew and his co-authors acknowledge that this can lead to power struggles where each other's respective goals are "rarely realized" (54). These power struggles seem to correlate with Moxley's description of the conflicts between communities of power and learning and Selfe and Selfe's analysis of how the interface can reflect a reality based on capitalism or class privilege.

Remaining vigilant to the issues described above and similar ones should encourage faculty to incorporate a critical component into their course design, becoming with their students "technology critics as well as technology users "(Selfe and Selfe 78). Incorporating a critical component helps us to recognize and to teach our students that the interface is a "non-innocent' map of our culture that reveals differences in power structures (Selfe and Selfe 77). Faculty should also solicit input from students on ways to reimagine the LMS interface. This may lead to conversations with software designers, allowing faculty more control over the features inherent in the LMS. Additionally, as faculty integrate a critical component, Depew et al. suggest that we should focus on the "historical context of the writing occurring in these [interface] environments" (63). This focus would help faculty and students understand better how digital literacies have evolved from print literacies and help "students understand the media in which they are learning, writing, and communicating" (63).

Finally, a possible way to help faculty grasp these numerous issues and mold them into a coherent pedagogy would be to imagine the blended composition environment “as a salon” (Penrod 17). She likens her salon metaphor to Kenneth Burke’s notion of a parlor, where writers can gather to “exchange ideas” and “share their beliefs, positions, aspirations, and views related to topical material” (16). Penrod reminds us that, when we incorporate an LMS into an f2f classroom, “students and. . . instructors must realize. . . language is in a free zone, a place that exceeds the boundaries of classroom, corporate, administrative, or legislative authority” (16). She believes that the salon metaphor, in which people congregate to discuss and debate ideas, is a perfect way to imagine the online component. Yet, in transforming a portion of the classroom into a salon, Penrod cautions that faculty members need to remember that the interface will change the “style, discussion climate, and topic considerations found in college writing classes” (17).

The salon format requires that students assume more responsibility for keeping discussions going and organized and assume more control over which topics to discuss. Penrod believes that when we integrate the features of the LMS, such as e-mail, discussion boards, or chat functions, “critical reflection occurs, and students shape their views around the contexts and audiences available to them’ (18). If instructors are successful incorporating these strategies into their pedagogies, Penrod suggests that the next challenge will be in assessing students’ performance using “current writing assessment tools” (18). Some suggestions for assessing student performance are discussed in the following section regarding the collaborative features of the LMS.

Collaborative Features

I've demonstrated in chapter 2 how our definitions of composing and writing are evolving, from composing in print formats to composing for the screen, in such ways as responding to discussion boards, participating in chat rooms, or blogging to name a few. I've suggested that this transformation reflects Ong's notion of secondary orality, where composing for the screen incorporates conventions from previous print formats, strengthening them. I've also argued that when faculty use these technologies in their pedagogy, it can lead to a more critical understanding of technological literacy, a view that connects society's values and practices to the people using the technologies. Utilizing the collaborative features of the LMS, such as the discussion board within a blended learning environment, can also be considered as "remediation" or a refashioning of an f2f classroom discussion. The type of writing that results from this refashioning can be considered a form of "secondary literacy," writing that "favors immediacy, quickness, associative leaps, and ultimately a more fluid and flexible style of correctness" (Diogenes and Lunsford 60).

Breuch's Virtual Peer Review (2004) incorporates Bolter and Grusin's theory of remediation and proves the case that performing peer review online (exchanging documents for the purpose of improving writing) is an example "of how a common writing activity can be repurposed or remediated through computer technology" (5). Jay Bolter in Writing Spaces (2001) defines the concept of "remediation" this way:

> . . . a newer medium takes the place of an older one, borrowing and reorganizing the characteristics of writing in the older medium and reforming its cultural space . . . the new medium imitates some

> features of the older medium, but also makes an implicit or explicit claim to improve on the older one. (23)

Breuch demonstrates how virtual peer review repurposes the commonly used f2f peer review activity, improving upon it by reversing "the primacy of oral over written communication so that written communication is king" (2). She also illustrates how the process of virtual peer review (the act of communicating in writing, editing, and commenting on writing through the use of software programs) can take student learning beyond the traditional oral peer review championed by social constructionists such as Bruffee. Virtual peer review does not eliminate the need for its f2f counterpart; rather, it "extends our understanding of peer review," using additional methods and skills, thereby improving the process (9). I build on Breuch's argument presented in Virtual Peer Review and apply the concepts to my analysis of the discussion board feature of the LMS as a remediation of its f2f counterpart.

As Breuch notes, the act of communicating through writing improves upon the oral aspect of classroom peer review, making it less ephemeral. I agree that the integration of a discussion board feature, using an LMS such as Blackboard or Angel, remediates and improves upon an f2f discussion. This aspect of remediation has been demonstrated in numerous studies.

Ellen Hendrix illustrates how the use of a discussion board not only helps students become more comfortable with each other through the act of conversing in regard to a particular topic, but it also helps them "develop writing skills" (71). In her analysis of Web Ct-enhanced online courses at Georgia Southern University in 2006,

Hendrix found that when students communicate via a discussion board, they "come to see themselves as writers because writing is their primary means of communicating" (71). She describes this transformation from discussion to writing in this way:

> The process begins with the teacher posting prompts related to reading assignments. Students then respond to those prompts and also read what other students have written. The conversation truly begins when students begin to respond to each other's responses. In this way, students use the bulletin board as a means to discover and share ideas, and they come to consider it a place where they can share without fear of being judged as writers or thinkers. On the bulletin board, what students have to say is important; how they say it is not. (Hendrix 72)

Hendrix suggests that this process allows students to expand their sense of audience, to develop more confidence as writers, and "to realize a purpose or achieve a goal through their writing" (73).

Patricia Webb Boyd's study, conducted at Arizona State University in 2004, concluded with similar results. In her survey comparing 19 sections of hybrid and online composition courses, Boyd found that students felt that the integration of discussion boards "fit well with the goals of a writing class because they were required to write their ideas rather than speak them as they would in a f2f course" (239). The student responses also indicated that the discussion board exchanges were their favorite

activity, providing them the benefits of “multiple perspectives,” sharing opinions “without fear of reproach,” and “directly [benefiting] their writing” (235).

Although Boyd’s study demonstrates that an LMS like Blackboard or Angel can work well in achieving pedagogical goals, she cautions that instructors need to make clear to students their “reasoning behind the course design” (240). Her findings also suggest that students may feel challenged by a lack of teacher interaction and do not totally trust their fellow students to provide adequate feedback through the discussion postings. A majority of the students surveyed still felt that “the teacher’s feedback was what was most important to their learning (240).” For Boyd, the results from the survey provide justification for instructor interaction with students to carry over to the f2f classroom, with a good balance required between “peer-directed discussion boards [and] direct instruction” (239-41).

These studies demonstrate, as do the results of my experiences outlined later in this chapter, some of the benefits of incorporating a discussion board component into an f2f environment. But how should faculty assess student performance in this remediated discussion space? Strictly as a matter of recordkeeping, a written transcript of student participation in a discussion is preferable to trying to recall who has or has not participated in numerous f2f discussions throughout a given semester. But frequency of responses does not translate into quality of responses to a given prompt. Penrod suggests that “topic knowledge” is as desirable for student writers to acquire in a computer-mediated format as it is in a f2f format. Yet, assessing topic knowledge in a discussion forum is very different from assessing a single essay or research

assignment. Penrod believes that “a shift in writing assessment must happen because instructors have to move from evaluating the finished product to evaluating what students do along the way in completing a project” (22).

In reference to assessing student responses in an e-mail listserve, Kathleen Blake Yancey (2008) provides a heuristic I have adapted for assessing student responses in a discussion forum. The heuristic considers the context of the conversation, the intent of the writer, and the fit between the intent and the effect (which I interpret as the creative content of the response) (301). For example, the context of the conversation would be a class discussion in the discussion board interface within the LMS software. With adequate grounding by the instructor in the goals of the discussion related to the overall course structure, as Boyd suggests, the prompt should correspond to an issue raised in class or an assigned reading, possibly starting with verbs such as “provide a measured response,” “describe,” or “give some feedback.” The content of the prompt would lead into the second aspect of the heuristic, the writer’s intent. Is the writer’s intent to respond in as few words as possible to fulfill the requirement? Does the writer elaborate and offer more insight than the basic instruction supplied in the prompt? Does the writer’s response generate debate and interest by other students which lead in new directions? As for the third aspect of the heuristic, how creative and well-planned is the writer’s response?

This type of assessment heuristic differs from what some instructors are used to in judging student writing. The remediated writing found in discussion boards may not

be grammatically correct. Instead of looking at surface correctness, Yancey's heuristic, which I have adapted for evaluating discussion board postings, addresses three criteria:

1. The ability of the writer to connect with "earlier posts by providing sufficient context and synthesizing" (302).
2. The ability of the writer to respond specifically to the issues directed by the prompt and to "issues already raised."
3. The ability of the writer to take issues that have been raised by other students in the discussion forum and "[extend] or [complicate] them." (302)

Although this assessment strategy has worked adequately for me, some instructors may find it unwieldy or time consuming. This is just one effort, and other efforts may work equally well in addressing assessment issues related to the discussion board feature and the notion of remediation in our "late age of print" (Bolter 3).

Additional features integrated into an LMS such as Blackboard or Angel demonstrate how an LMS remediates f2f activities and develops a collaborative learning environment. Strenski, Feagin, and Singer, also building on Breuch's accomplishments in Virtual Peer Review, illustrate the effectiveness of e-mail when used as a tool for students to respond to drafts within small groups. In "Email small group peer review revisited" (2005), the authors show how asynchronous online peer review "frequently elicits superior responses to student drafts" compared to f2f peer review (193). Their research also indicates that when students share and respond to each other's drafts via e-mail, it improves "the nature and quality of student participation" in the f2f classroom (198).

Along with the asynchronous collaborative features of discussion boards, e-mail, or listserves, synchronous features, such as chats, group whiteboards, or podcasts are available to instructors to integrate into their pedagogies within the architecture of the LMS. Chatrooms for small groups, for instance, have been shown to allow students more immediacy and privacy than a class discussion forum. Studies have demonstrated that, after a chatroom conference, "students begin to feel more comfortable responding to drafts of essays because the personal exchanges help them respond to a person rather than simply a name on a draft . . . the chatroom allows for immediacy and spontaneity—a dialogue much closer to . . . shared discourse" (Hendrix 73). As these examples and studies illustrate, remediation can occur when the collaborative features of the LMS are designed to enlist some of the better features of f2f interaction and improve upon them.

Florida Tech/Angel Case Study

As stated at the beginning of my dissertation, Florida Tech has no formal blended or hybrid courses as part of the curriculum. The university does have a thriving distance learning curriculum, and I have been teaching online composition courses since its inception. As a component of the main campus learning environment, the administration recently adopted the Angel LMS over Blackboard to be the University's official LMS. In the Fall semester of 2008 Angel became available for faculty, and I have used various components as part of my pedagogy in teaching FYC since that time. Before discussing some results of my experiences with the Angel LMS, I believe that a brief historical perspective of Florida Tech's growth as a university would be productive.

Also, an analysis of the decision-making process behind the selection of the Angel LMS would be insightful. The historical perspective, the analysis of the technology decision-making process, and my personal reflections on using Angel will serve as an introduction to the implementation of my blended research methodologies outlined in chapter 4.

As noted in chapter 1, Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech) celebrated its golden anniversary in 2008. The University was founded in 1958 by Jerome Keuper, an engineer from New England who moved his family to Cape Canaveral and accepted a position as the "Chief scientist in RCA's Systems Analysis Group" (Wilson 3). Keuper had previously taught courses at Bridgeport (Conn.) Engineering Institute and found soon after moving here that there was a "lack of higher education resources in East Central Florida" (3). Keuper tried to get Bridgeport Engineering Institute (since 1994 known as Fairfield University) to start a branch at Cape Canaveral, but the founder of BEI refused and told Keuper to "'start your own college.' And that's what Keuper did" (Wilson 3). The first administrative meeting of what would become Brevard Engineering College took place at a bar in south Brevard. The first donation to the fledgling university was thirty-seven cents, "change from a pay phone call given to young missleman Jerome P. Keuper" (3).

The college's ties to America's space program were strong from its founding. In 1959, " the college announced its first formal degree programs, a master of science in space technology and a master of science in applied mathematics" (Wilson 4). The first commencement took place in 1962; among the 38 graduates was Astronaut Virgil

"Gus" Grissom who became the "first Nasa astronaut to receive an honorary degree" (4). In 1966, the name was officially changed to Florida Institute of Technology, and more degree programs were added. During the 1970s, after years of building infrastructure to accommodate growth, "the focus shifted to creating the academic and athletic foundations necessary for long-term stability . . . " (Wilson 43). Along with other new programs developed during this timeframe, the School of Psychology and the School of Management and Humanities were added which showed the community that Florida Tech "had truly expanded its mission from that of an institute to one of a university" (43).

Today, Florida Tech continues to thrive, with about 5000 students attending the main campus in Melbourne. The University maintains its strong ties to the space industry, counting several NASA astronauts as alumni. Construction continues, addressing infrastructure issues such as new classrooms, student housing, parking, expanding athletic facilities, and other issues. With the celebratory mood and positive outlook for the future that accompanied the golden anniversary in 2008, I believe the administrative and financial climate is warm to ideas regarding new program development. With Florida Tech's rich history and prominent ties to the development of new technologies, I expect a receptive response to my proposal of a blended learning environment within the Humanities and Communications department.

A component of my blended research methodology covered in depth in chapter 4, developing a culture of support, is based on Richard Selfe's Sustainable Computer Environments (2005). One of the aims of developing a culture of support is to help

enable faculty members and English departments to be more involved in "setting technology policy and managing technology practices at the local level" (Selfe 8). Selfe suggests that moving toward this aim would help us to contend better with administrators who plan policies that could have negative impacts on teaching effectiveness and also help create "a more reasonable team demographic so that such [technological] decisions . . . . are not . . . imposed from without" (Blakelock and Smith 150). As faculty and department personnel get more involved in the local "information ecology," Nardi and O'Day advocate three strategies that can help us be more effective: working from core values, paying attention, and strategic questioning (65). I apply these strategies in my analysis of the process of Florida Tech's decision to switch from Blackboard to Angel.

Since I was not an actual participant in the process which occurred in the last part of 2007, my analysis is based on administrative reports and evaluations and video presentations by the vendors provided to me by the Associate Provost for Online Learning, Dr. Mary S. Bonhomme, who initiated the investigation to upgrade the existing LMS. I conclude, after reviewing the documents and videos supplied by Dr. Bonhomme, that the process reflects certain core values of the University, including thorough investigation, objectivity, and transparency in decision-making. According to Dr. Bonhomme, the copy of the report that I received was identical to the report that the Provost and VPs received to make their final decision, "without the pricing info which is proprietary" (Bonhomme1).

After studying the report, I found that prior to 2007, Blackboard had been Florida Tech's official LMS for 7 years. The growth of the University had "strained the capacity of Blackboard [Basic] to the point that efficient administration and operation of the system [was] problematic "(Office for Online Learning 2). A technical committee was formed, with five systems designated for consideration. These five systems were Blackboard Enterprise (an upgraded version of Basic), Angel, Desire2Learn, Moodle, and Sakai. Moodle and Sakai, open-source systems, were eliminated due to "concerns about support and hosting" (2). The three commercial systems left were then submitted to a committee consisting of 15 faculty and staff for evaluation, "selected from colleges and departments around campus for their frequent LMS usage" (2). The vendors gave presentations to the committee members, "who then proceeded to test-drive the three systems for a period of ten weeks in order to fill out a survey comparing their features" (2). After this evaluation, Angel was selected first, with Blackboard a close second. Quotes were solicited from the vendors, and Blackboard's quote was "disproportionately higher than Angel's, to the point that it [was] difficult to justify the additional expense" (3). Thus, Angel was selected to be Florida Tech's official LMS beginning with the Fall 2008 semester for a contract length of three years. Besides the cost factor, "both the faculty and technical review teams [noted] the following improvements:"

1. Students will be automatically enrolled into classes (faculty will no longer have to manage class lists).
2. There will be improvements in online testing capability
3. There will be improvements in content storage

4. An integrated survey tool will be added
5. There will be improvements and new features in class collaboration tools (Office of Information Technology 1).

In my review of the rubrics used by both the faculty and technical committees, I found that the second strategy advocated by Nardi and O'Day, of paying attention which involves "deliberately evaluating whether a practice or technology has merit," (69) was adhered to in the committees' decision-making process. Also, after I watched the vendor's presentation videos, I determined that both the faculty members and administrative personnel were proactive and engaged in asking appropriate strategic questions, such as "how" questions, which focus on "logistics and tactics," and "why" questions which "explore motivations, objectives, and values" (70). For example, "why" questions focus on "why this particular technology seems best, why it fits well with our current practices or . . . why it will be a good idea to change our current practices" (Nardi and O'Day 70).

Even without the knowledge of the financial reasons why Angel was selected over Blackboard, it became apparent, as I studied the vendor videos, that Angel seemed like the best fit for Florida Tech. On the one hand, Blackboard's presentation seemed very market driven, with one of their primary selling features directed towards the available "add-ons" that could be purchased in addition to the basic LMS package. On the other hand, the Angel presentation focused on how open and simple the basic package was and how more components were embedded, negating the need to purchase plug-ins from outside vendors. Even the sales personnel from Angel seemed

more casual and friendly, stressing how their company originated in a university setting and how their product was designed by academics for academics. Their dress was more relaxed than the Blackboard presenters who were dressed in expensive three-piece suits. In my opinion, Blackboard projected the big corporate image that they are known for, pointing out that Florida Tech would be part of the 3400 other institutions in their customer base. Angel's smaller customer base was a positive selling feature, since Blackboard's reputation for poor service, "overly aggressive" behavior, and "fast growth in recent years has distracted it from supporting [their] product" (Young A1).

My personal experience with Angel LMS has been somewhat limited. I have used various collaborative features of the LMS in my classes for the last two semesters. After receiving some basic instruction from the IT department, which is available to all faculty members, I've found Angel LMS easy to learn and its features easy to integrate. I've used the e-mail feature to notify and converse with students, and have integrated the discussion board feature using prompts related to in-class readings and assignments. As part of their class participation grade, I've required students to respond to the prompts and their fellow students' comments. Most of the students respond thoughtfully and completely to the prompts and to each other, enjoying the additional communication process that occurs through the forum. I've also used the drop box feature of the LMS which allows students to submit drafts for peer review.

The past two semesters have proved to be a good training period for me and the students, for the students have expressed that they have had very little exposure to a LMS before coming to the university. I plan to continue my efforts of experimenting with

the features built into the LMS architecture, integrating other assignments that fit with my composition pedagogy, in order to judge the effectiveness of the blended environment on student learning.

As Nardi and O'Day suggest, an information ecology is a complex system of parts and relationships. The system has multiple components, such as the needs and values of the administration, faculty and staff, the students, and other stakeholders. We should remind ourselves that "without attention to the tensions that exist between what is most efficient and what is most instructionally robust, decisions will continue to be made that do not reflect what we . . . believe to be in the best interest of our students" (Depew et al. 64). A healthy information ecology needs to productively evolve, which includes utilizing the diverse talents of the people within the ecology. The people need to be prepared to work with new ideas and tools, build bridges across institutional boundaries, and share a commitment to common values. Without taking the stance "of participation and engagement with technology," (Nardi and O'Day 215) a dysfunctional ecology could evolve; without beginning the process of creating a culture of support, "paralysis" could occur which could impede "productive ways . . . . stakeholders can act collectively to leverage pedagogical and institutional change" (Selfe 11). My proposal for a faculty workshop, outlined in the following chapter, addresses the need to work with new ideas and tools, incorporating the talents of individual faculty members to help create a healthy information ecology. In so doing, I hope that the process of developing a culture of support can begin, and my goal of implementing a blended learning program can be realized.

CHAPTER FOUR – GROWING AND MATURING

The encouraging climate generated by the celebrations surrounding Florida Tech's 50th anniversary in 2008 has prompted me to promote my initiatives of developing a faculty workshop along with implementing a blended learning program to the department. This notion of "[grasping] the right occasions for speaking and for holding back," refers to the notion of *kairos*, the Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment (Plato 74). For example, Florida Tech's 50th Anniversary website echoes the sentiment of the "kairotic moment," as Phillip W. Farmer, Chairman of the Golden Anniversary Campaign, "believes this is the right campaign, at the right time, for the university" (Florida Institute of Technology, "About" 1). Mr. Farmer is referring to Florida Tech's undertaking of a three-year campaign to solicit $50 million to benefit the entire "Florida Institute of Technology family" (1). I also previously alluded to the notion of *kairos* in describing the coalescing of multiple initiatives within the university which occurred in 2008, including the launch of a broad distance learning initiative and the university's decision to adopt the Angel LMS over Blackboard.

Sullivan and Porter (1997) integrate the concept of *kairos* as well when promoting their research methodology of institutional critique as a "situated practice." This notion views the research methods employed as subject to *kairos*, "always exercised at particular moments, at a particular time and place in a culture, society, or group" (Opening Spaces 28). In their view, Institutional Critique necessitates that researchers pay careful attention to the particulars of the context of the study, "the types of writers and audiences involved, [and] the forms of technology being used" (9). Nardi

and O'Day's information ecology methodology and Richard Selfe's methodology for creating a culture of support also advocate viewing the research context through a situated lens, suggesting that the researcher needs to be sensitive to the "people, practices, values, and technologies in a particular local environment" (Nardi and O'Day 49). The primary goals and desired outcomes of paying attention and being sensitive to the particulars and people of the local context are positive change and the formation of an action plan to help "construct a larger vision of these issues on a professional level" (Selfe, Technology 147).

This chapter of the dissertation attempts to take advantage of the above "opportune moment," providing a more in-depth rendering of my blended research methods as they relate to the design of the faculty workshop. The methodology outlined in chapter 1, linking the components of Florida Tech's Humanities and Communications department to Nardi and O'Day's information ecology model, is more fully developed using strategic questioning, faculty survey results, and data collected from student surveys. Building on the historical treatment and decision-making process of Florida Tech provided in chapters 1 and 3, the methodology of institutional critique is more thoroughly employed. The analysis and workshop design begins Richard Selfe's process of developing a departmental culture of support, which leads directly to the implementation of a blended learning program detailed in chapter 5.

The first step toward reaching these goals, and in analyzing the local information ecology of the Humanities and Communications Department of Florida Tech, is to determine the needs and values of the stakeholders to be affected by my

initiatives of the faculty workshop and blended learning program. Both Selfe and Nardi and O'Day suggest asking a series of strategic questions to begin the process. The desired outcomes of this strategy, utilized to a lesser degree in chapter 3 in analyzing the university's decision-making process employed in switching to the Angel LMS, are to involve the stakeholders, to achieve multiple perspectives, and to help create a plan for future action. Before providing the results and comments collected from the distribution of a survey to faculty members and to students in various classes within the department, I feel that a brief historical look at the growth of Florida Tech's Humanities and Communications department would be beneficial.

As noted in the historical overview of the university presented in chapter 3, the humanities program was added to the university's curriculum in the early 1970s. In addition to an emphasis on history, faculty members were hired during this timeframe to teach composition, speech, and technical writing. As the department continued to grow, it was formally named the Department of Humanities in 1981. After a university reorganization in the early 1990s, the Humanities Department was combined into the new College of Science and Liberal Arts. The communications wing of the department continued to thrive and, in the middle of the 1990s, the department was renamed the Humanities and Communications Department. In 2005, it merged with the Psychology Department and became known as the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts. Today, the Humanities and Communications Department serves over 500 incoming first-year students every fall and consists of 30 full-time and a dozen part-time faculty members. The department awards two undergraduate degrees, one in Communications and one

in Humanities, as well as a graduate degree in Technical and Professional Communication.

When I began teaching FYC at Florida Tech over 10 years ago, I wasn't aware of the rich history of the department. As I began to research this rich history in preparation for my dissertation, I discovered that the founder of Florida Tech, Jerry Keuper, had "discussed [the] idea for offering courses in the humanities . . . before the college's first day of classes on September 22, 1958," and degrees in English, psychology, and history were soon to follow in 1963 (Patterson 6). Yet, during my first year of teaching in a university with an emphasis on scientific fields of study, I started to sense, primarily through student interaction, that our department's course offerings were not looked upon in the most favorable light. The students seemed to view them as a "necessary evil" to get through, simply a requirement that had to be achieved before their major course of study began. In my composition classes, I tried hard to justify the value of writing and thinking critically in my course pedagogy. As my tenure as an instructor continued through the years, I sensed this frustration growing among other faculty members. It is easy to feel under-appreciated; for example, the first page of the university catalog lists the liberal arts offerings of the university second to last in the list of disciplines that the university is committed to. As Richard Selfe suggests, these feelings that faculty members experience can become pervasive, and "individuals become convinced that they are powerless to shape teaching and learning environments effectively" (9).

The university's launch of a broad distance learning initiative in early 2008 created additional concerns among faculty members. The online undergraduate program, which allows the university "to deliver a world-class university experience with courses taught by internationally recognized faculty to students almost anywhere in the world," initially caused concern over course content and design issues (Florida Institute of Technology, "Online" 1). These initial concerns were superceded toward the latter part of 2008 when faculty members realized that the explosive growth of the online program could increase departmental pressure on them to teach the new courses. This type of growth of online programs is not uncommon. For example, a report published by the Sloan consortium found that, between 2002 and 2007, online course enrollments "grew 19.7 percent, compared with 1.5 percent growth in . . . higher-education enrollments" (qtd. in Brooks A64). In this kind of atmosphere, faculty concerns over course quality and content, lack of training, lack of adequate compensation, and departmental pressure became evident in their responses to the faculty survey (see Appendix A).

Richard Selfe suggests that creating a successful culture of support can help faculty members cope with this type of adverse environment. According to Selfe, the elements of a successful culture of support should consist of:

1. a team of interested stakeholders meeting on a regular basis
2. a team of teacher/leaders who are supported in their efforts and involved in shaping the culture of support

3. robust and flexible digital environments that support the day-to-day activities of teachers
4. a program of student assistants supporting the teachers
5. workshops led by teachers that contextualize technology use
6. robust and flexible computer-supported environments designed to support English and language arts classes (41).

In my analysis of the components of the Humanities and Communications department using the information ecology methodology, I note how the components are positioned to reflect Selfe's elements of creating a successful culture of support. The first section of my analysis is an overview of the design and results of the faculty survey.

The faculty survey was designed with several goals in mind:

1. To gauge the Humanities and Communication department faculty's general knowledge and attitudes toward the concept of blended learning
2. To determine the faculty's willingness in studying the feasibility of implementing a blended learning program in the Humanities and Communications department
3. To measure the faculty's willingness to implement an online component into their f2f classroom pedagogies
4. To reveal the faculty's willingness in participating in a workshop to help integrate an online component into their classes
5. To solicit suggestions and comments from faculty which could be integrated into the process of asking questions to create strategies for future action

The following set of strategic questions, developed from discussions with and the suggestions of the faculty members who participated in the survey, begins my analysis of the information ecology of Florida Tech's Humanities and Communications department based on Nardi and O'Day's methodology. Strategic questioning helps to identify the values and ideals of the people involved in the local ecology and aids in evaluating whether the integration of a new technology has merit. Nardi and O'Day's two main categories of questions are labeled "Questions that Describe the Issue" and "Questions that Dig Deeper" (72). The authors suggest that their list of questions within the two categories is not exhaustive, yet it moves the analysis beyond the standard questions of "how" to more "crucially important" questions of "why." Nardi and O'Day point out that, until researchers address the "why" questions, "the greatest skill in addressing 'how' questions can still result in a misguided technology implementation" (70).

Strategic Questions-Humanities and Communications department

Questions that Describe the Issue:

A. Feeling Questions relate to the emotions and health of the individuals involved: (72)

1. What is our faculty and department's history of flexibility in response to change?
2. Is there a culture of innovation within the department?
3. What is the department's record of successful or unsuccessful experiences in relation to the use of technology by faculty members?
4. What human and/or technological resources do we have available?

5. Do our personnel have the expertise or desire to contribute to this new enterprise?
6. What about those who have no interest in participating?

B. Analysis Questions concern motivations, opinions, and relations between things: (Nardi and O'Day 72)

1. What is the real goal, and what do we hope to accomplish through implementing a blended learning program?
2. Who should participate in carrying out this program?
3. Would a blended course fit well with other courses in the curriculum?
4. Will there be any resistance from any particular stakeholders?
5. Should a trial program be instituted within the department as a preliminary step before communicating our ideas to the larger university community?

Questions that Dig Deeper:

A. Visioning Questions ask people to consider their ideals, values, and dreams: (Nardi and O'Day 72)

1. Is blended learning a pedagogically desirable method of teaching our students?
2. Will a blended learning program enhance our students' marketable skills?
3. Where would our faculty and department like to be 5 years from now?

B. Change Questions look at how we get from the current situation to the desired situation: (73)

1. Which classes should or could be blended?
2. Who will design them and when?

3. What funding is required for the blended program?
4. How do we present the idea to the university community?

C. Questions that consider consequences aid in evaluation of the program's merit: (73)

1. Will there be any rewards for participation?
2. What are the risks/advantages associated with implementing a new program?
3. Who benefits the most from program implementation?
4. How can we evaluate our successes and failures?

In addition to providing material to develop a set of strategic questions, the suggestions and results from the faculty who participated in the survey (Appendix A) also provide hints as to the health of the department's information ecology. Through analyzing the data obtained from the surveys, I determined that my initial schema of the department's ecology given in chapter 1 is limited. For example, in my description of the keystone species, I stated that the presence of trainers and developers of new programs, as well as the university's IT department, represent "what is crucial to the survival of the ecology" (Nardi and O'Day 53). Yet I soon realized, after analyzing the data from the surveys, that all of the faculty who inhabit the Humanities and Communications department, with their diverse talents and skills, are the strongest component of the ecology and the true keystone species. The range in age and teaching experience are simple indicators of the diversity, ranging from ages 25 to 65 and from 5 to 30 years of teaching experience. In fact, six faculty members have been with Florida Tech since the department's inception in the 1970s. However, it was

through the analysis of the faculty's answers and comments regarding their teaching preferences and methods, their preferred interaction with students, and their pedagogical approaches that a clearer picture of the department's diversity became apparent.

Overall, the majority of the faculty members surveyed expressed a positive outlook on the integration of technology in the classroom, and most incorporate some technological features into their pedagogies. Not surprisingly, the majority of the faculty surveyed expressed a preference for teaching f2f courses:

- "[f2f classes allow] a much better position to foster discussion, track student preparation, and engage with a wider variety of physical communication."
- "I prefer f2f courses because I like the real time interaction with students. I also find that I am able to give immediate feedback and better monitor student progress."

Most respondents also expressed a dislike for fully online courses:

- "Online courses require a lot of preparation by the instructor. Many people do not realize it."
- "Lack of student f2f contact results in lack of student ability/faculty ability to judge satisfactory progress."

Still others feel pressure to integrate technology into their pedagogies:

- "I don't like online courses because of all the administrative kinks that haven't been worked out yet. I would enjoy it if it wasn't an administrative nightmare."

- "I know the Angel LMS in my classes, has great potential. However, setting it up for maximum effectiveness will require significant time. So far, I have barely used the system. I hope to change that next year."

The data indicates a willingness of the faculty to support the notion of a blended learning environment, combining their preferred method of f2f teaching with a desire, sometimes forced, to integrate an LMS component. Comments from faculty members already utilizing the Angel LMS reflect the positive outlook:

- "Web-enhanced courses enable students to complete some of the 'rote' or individual work independently, leaving class time available for discussion and team activities."
- "Web-enhanced courses offer effective gradebook options and a convenient way for absent students to participate while out."
- "Synchronous online sessions with live audio/visual streaming come close to on-site sessions."
- "I prefer web-enhanced because this is real life. This is what students are used to."

Even though the survey results cast a mostly positive view, there were some comments that expressed a more hesitant view toward implementing a blended learning environment:

- "Not sure how [blended courses] could benefit the students since f2f is very important for the goals of my courses."
- "I've never used an LMS before."

- "I prefer either all f2f or all web only. I think the "combo" is too much work for the instructor."
- The interaction you get in f2f is much different than CMC. I prefer the interactivity/engagement of the classroom."

Generally, though, the positive comments overshadowed the negative; I am encouraged by the supportive atmosphere in the department and the faculty's willingness to learn more about the notion of blended learning. Many comments such as, "I am strongly in flavor of a blended learning approach to fill in some of the weaknesses/gaps in fully online delivery," and "the key to having an effective online course and/or web-enhanced course is faculty training" are examples of their willingness to participate. Positive and negative comments alike speak to the accuracy of the strategic questions generated by the faculty surveys. Yet the answers to some of the strategic questions may not become evident until the theories are put into action. Sullivan and Porter make this clear in their Institutional Critique methodology:

> A research project has to actually enact the practice (s) it hopes for by demonstrating how the process of producing the publication or engaging in the research enacted some form of institutional change . . . Institutions change slowly, and the results of a given project . . . may not be visible for some time (Opening Spaces 628).

The responses from the faculty surveys and the development of the strategic questions illustrate many aspects of a healthy information ecology. They also provide a nucleus for many of Selfe's elements for creating a successful culture of support: a

team of interested stakeholders and teacher/leaders who want to be involved in shaping their information ecology. This atmosphere is also characteristic of a crucial keystone species that demonstrates a willingness to adapt, to "coevolve" when "new ideas, tools, activities" arise (Nardi and O'Day 52). In a healthy information ecology, coevolution implies that the participants' "craft of using tools with expertise and creativity continues to evolve." (53). This is illustrated in faculty comments such as, "web-enhanced courses require significant adaptation because of the nature of the media used," and "[my] experience with teaching online courses shows that similar student questions/problems must be answered more times in more different ways." Coevolution also implies a progression, where the stakeholders involved in the local ecology can embrace their shared history and experiences and build toward the future. As Nardi and O'Day suggest, "healthy ecologies" achieve a "dynamic balance . . . a balance found in motion, not stillness" (53). Through this process of questioning and planning, commenting and reflecting, and including the stakeholders in decision-making, dysfunction can be avoided. The positive atmosphere encourages me to forge ahead in creating the next step of a successful culture of support: designing the faculty workshop.

Before proceeding with the outline and proposal of the faculty workshop, I believe that it would be beneficial to view the workshop design through another lens. In addition to viewing the workshop design through the faculty and departmental perspectives, we should also consider it from the perspective of the stakeholders that could benefit the most from a faculty training program: the students. The students in the FYC classes and other offerings within the Humanities and Communications department of Florida

Tech have characteristics representative of the 18 to 22 year old group known as Millennials. Diana and James Oblinger (2005) define this group of college students this way:

- They gravitate toward group activities
- They identify with their parents' values and feel close to them
- They are fascinated by new technologies
- They are racially and ethnically diverse
- They are focused on grades and performance
- They are busy with extracurricular activities ("Is it Age" 2.4)

In addition, these students are more digitally literate than previous generations. They are more "intuitive visual communicators," and they place a high premium on being connected to their peers, expecting immediate responses, and learning by doing an activity rather "than being told" (2.5).

Although these are some of the predominate characteristics of Millennials, my research supports the findings of Diana and James Oblinger who discovered that the students "appreciate the convenience provided by online syllabi, class readings, and online submissions of assignments," but they still desire "face-to-face interaction" with their instructors and classmates ("Is it Age" 2.11). The following responses from student surveys (see Appendix B) distributed to various classes within the Humanities and Communications department of Florida Tech provide further reinforcement for linking the needs of the students to the development of a faculty training program. Similar to the faculty survey that was designed to elicit perceptions of faculty members in regard

to the notion of implementing a blended learning environment, the student survey was also designed with several goals in mind:

1. To reveal students' prior knowledge of and comfort level with using an LMS.
2. To measure students' knowledge of and willingness to participate in a blended class.
3. To determine students' perceptions of how a blended class contributed to their learning experience.
4. To gauge students' preferences for various components of the Angel LMS.
5. To reveal students' opinions toward their interaction with fellow students and instructors in a f2f, blended, or online class and their experiences with collaborative learning activities in those classes.

Surprisingly, the results from the students who responded to the surveys revealed only a moderate comfort level with using computers and the internet. The majority of the responses also demonstrated that the students had very little exposure to an LMS before coming to the university. After enrolling at Florida Tech, a percentage of the students expressed that they were exposed to some of the components of the Angel LMS in their various courses. In most cases, the courses did not utilize much of the collaborative features of the LMS; instead, their instructors used testing, grading, and assignment features more often. When the collaborative features were used in their courses, the results were mainly positive:

- "[The discussion board] makes classwork more interactive and stimulates learning."
- "[Writing responses to a discussion board helped us] work together without physically being together."
- "[I was able] to work at my own pace instead of the instructor's."
- "My instructor responded to my emails quicker than waiting to have my questions answered in class."

Although most comments were positive in nature, there were some negative comments as well:

- "Web-enhanced leaves room for slacking and makes students lazier."
- "Professors rely on email too much and I'm forced to check the LMS often…sometimes I forget."
- "The discussion board and chat features were never used."
- "[Using an LMS leads] to decreased interaction between teacher and students."

In regard to the students' preferences for the f2f, blended, or online environment, the majority of the responses indicated that the students had not yet been exposed to online classes. Also, most were not familiar with the notion of blended learning at the university level. The results from the surveys correlate with Diana and James Oblinger's results which demonstrate that students desire f2f interaction. When collaborative components of the Angel LMS were employed as part of an instructor's pedagogy, the responses revealed mostly positive reactions:

- “The discussion board feature also improved interactions with classmates outside the classroom.”
- “Commenting on classmates’ responses gave me new ideas for my own posts.”
- “The blogging group allowed us to communicate together without meeting.”
- “I get more feedback from the instructor through the Angel website than I do in class.”
- “The grades [are] easily accessed as well as courses materials…the gradebook feature was my favorite.”

Overall, the results from both the faculty and student surveys demonstrate a definite viability for implementing a blended learning program at Florida Tech. As the 2004 CCCC Position statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments recommends, in designing programs, we should “assess students’ readiness to succeed in learning to write in digital environments . . . programs may also assess students’ attitudes about learning in online environments” (CCCC 18). I have attempted to conform to this recommendation in collecting and reporting the data in regard to instituting a blended learning environment. It is my hope that the following portion of my dissertation outlining the faculty training workshop design can address the needs of faculty members and students alike, so that each group has “the skills needed to implement systemic change” (Moore, Moore, and Fowler 11.3).

My research into professional development programs indicates that the length and depth of a university’s training program is closely aligned with the university’s

commitment and goals for “technology-assisted instruction” and its dedication to “the necessary human and financial investments” (Moore, Moore, and Fowler 11.1). The majority of training program administrators agree that the training needs to be tailored to support the university’s goals, and the training needs to be ongoing, evolving “each year as new technologies emerge and faculty demonstrate improved approaches to using technology in instruction” (11.6). The workshop design proposed in my dissertation is based on a four session one designed by Miller and Palsole in 2006 for faculty at the University of Texas-El Paso. I have chosen the 4-session format for several reasons.

First, since no blended courses are currently being taught in the Humanities and Communications department of Florida Tech, I am introducing a new concept to the faculty members teaching first-year composition courses. I believe that a longer training period, such as two to four weeks would be impractical and burdensome at this initial stage. Also, since no funding source is currently available to bring in faculty over an extended timeframe, the four session workshop works well with the time available. For instance, I have planned the workshop to coincide with the week prior to the beginning of the Fall semester, when all faculty are expected to report for work. I have planned the workshop to begin with a half-day session on Monday, followed by three full day sessions that end on Thursday. This design allows faculty members adequate time for planning purposes on the Friday before the semester begins. The 4-session design targets non-early adopters of technology who want to become proficient in the features of the Angel LMS; accomplishes the goal of

introducing participants to the blended learning concept; provides hands-on training in the features of the Angel LMS; and builds a collegial atmosphere among the participants.

As explained in chapter 2, the basic pedagogical framework of the faculty workshop conforms to Hewitt and Ehmann's concepts of Investigation, Immersion, Individualization, Association, and Reflection. Within this framework, I also integrate elements of a pedagogy used and recommended by Selfe and Hawisher in their case studies of technological literacy in Literate Lives in the Information Age (2004). This pedagogy, forwarded by The New London Group, is a "multiliteracies pedagogy that relies on four broad approaches to instruction: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice" (Selfe and Hawisher 209). In their 2000 publication, Multiliteracies, editors Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis explain that the New London Group's "[recent] work in cognitive science, social cognition, and sociocultural approaches to language and literacy" (31) has determined that learning best occurs through a combination of the elements mentioned above. Cope and Kalantzis further define the four elements this way:

1. Situated Practice . . . "is constituted by immersion in meaningful practices within a community of learners who are capable of playing multiple and different roles based on their backgrounds and experiences" (33).

2. Overt Instruction . . . “includes all those active interventions on the part of the teacher and other experts that scaffold learning activities” (33).
3. Critical Framing . . . “involves the students’ standing back from what they are studying and viewing it critically in relation to its context “(35).
4. Transformed Practice . . . “[is] a re-practice, where theory becomes reflective practice [where students put] the transformed meaning . . . to work in other contexts or cultural sites” (35).

The sample syllabus (Appendix C) and daily activities calendar (Appendix D) provided for my faculty workshop demonstrates how Hewitt and Ehmann’s framework blends with the elements of the New London Group pedagogy. A more detailed explanation of how this blending occurs is outlined below:

Investigation- Since this is the initial installment of the faculty workshop, this element consists primarily of my efforts, as a facilitator in the pre-planning stage, in studying the needs and goals of our department and analyzing how other universities manage their faculty development programs. I have used responses provided by faculty and students from surveys, as well as Nardi and O’Day’s strategic questioning model, to produce the sample syllabus and schedule of activities to begin the training program. In this sense, I have performed three of the five assessment methods for new program evaluation and implementation outlined in Evaluation: A Systematic Approach (2004). These methods include a *needs assessment*, the first step in program planning that provides “information about what services are needed and how they might best be delivered”;

assessment of program theory, which addresses the "conceptualization and design of the program"; and *assessment of program process*, which addresses questions related to "program operations, implementation, and . . . delivery" (Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman 54). Actual implementation is the next stage of investigation, and the final stages occur after the workshop ends in the form of participant feedback and suggestions for improvement. Theoretically, all participants should be viewed as collaborators, working together, teaching each other, and evaluating the training process to improve future installments. This particular stage relates to Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman's fourth assessment method known as *impact assessment,* which measures whether the "desired outcomes" were attained (58). I have included strategies related to this method, such as self-reflection and assessment tools, feedback from discussion prompts, and responses to questionnaires, which also align with Hewitt and Ehmann's framework. Responses to questions similar to the following could help me evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop design:

- Did today's activities meet your expectations?
- Was the workshop format effective for your learning?
- Were there enough opportunities to ask questions?
- What part of today's sessions was least helpful to you?
- Based on what you learned, will you change how you design your courses?
- Do you foresee any barriers in implementing changes in your course design?
- Can you recommend any changes to the format of or materials used in the workshop?

Immersion/Situated Practice/Overt Instruction- Although it may seem as if these elements are separate entities, they are very closely connected. In fact, Cope and Kalantzis use the term "immersion" to describe situated practice, and Hewitt and Ehmann describe immersion as "situated practice [where] learning occurs when the training involves authentic situations" (12). Overt Instruction involves scaffolding learning activities, primarily guiding the participants, as in learning the components of the Angel LMS. Immersion/Situated Practice forwards the notion that, if participants are going to teach a blended course, then they should also be a part of one to gain experience from both the teacher and student perspectives. Thus, some of the immersion activities include discussion forums, online chats, and a separate weblog that participants "can collaboratively reflect on material, brainstorm, and move far outside of the confines of assigned text or resource material in their thinking" (Palloff and Pratt, Collaborating 81).

Individualization/Association- Built into the design of the workshop are blocks of time where participants who need additional training can receive individualized instruction. Also, the discussion forums and chat feature allow "and encourage discussion among learners with varied learning styles" (Hewitt and Ehmann 16). This format creates a team approach among the trainers and participants, addressing the participants' "needs to build networks and to work in connection with others" (17). Even though the workshop emphasizes training in an online format through the Angel LMS, it also provides time for human interaction. The workshop not only "encourages a common

sense of purpose and experience" (Hewitt and Ehmann 19) but also helps prepare faculty for the foundational tenets of the blended learning environment.

Reflection/Critical Framing- Allowing time as part of the workshop design for reflection speaks to the notion of incorporating a critical component in this type of technological environment. This element includes examining blended learning in a historical/cultural context, providing "learning opportunities . . . during which we can thoughtfully explore current changing practices as well as the more traditional . . . institutional expectations that we all have to live with" (R. Selfe 162). Also part of a needs assessment, reflection includes assessing whether or not the individual participants have achieved their own goals and evaluating the goals of the workshop itself. Questions workshop participants should consider and respond to asks them "to reflect on the process . . . to evaluate the activity [and to give] the instructor important formative and summative information [for] future iterations. . . " (Palloff and Pratt 43). The daily reflection component of the workshop could include answers to questions such as these:

- Were today's ideas and concepts relevant to you and your work?
- Did you learn something new in today's session?
- How effective was the hands-on part of today's session?
- Were there any problems/concerns that need to be addressed?
- What were the most useful things you learned from today's session?
- What improvements could be made to the activities/instructor's presentation in today's workshop session in the future?

In addition, as a component of Institutional Critique, Sullivan and Porter suggest that critical framing should try and determine "what kind of social change is needed," from "improved" communication, "increased power," "improvement of social [or] work conditions," or "the improvement of learning conditions and the empowerment of students" (Opening Spaces 20).

The reflection/critical framing process leads directly to The New London Group's final element of learning, Transformed Practice. After the participants are finished with the training provided in the faculty workshop, the goal is for the participants to implement what they have learned, revising the outcome with "their own goals and values (Cope and Kalantzis 35). Ideally, the participants will transfer their knowledge, skills, and values to their students in their own blended learning courses. Garrison and Vaughan provide a "Redesign Guide for Blended Learning" to help faculty members and their departments move closer toward achieving their goals and desired outcomes. This guide consists of five phases:

1. Analysis phase – this initial phase addresses questions such as, "What do you want your students to know when they have finished taking [the] blended course?" or "What do you want to preserve from your existing course format?" (Garrison and Vaughan 177).
2. Design phase – this stage of the redesign guide points to "identifying learning activities, assessment plans, and key components for [the] course" (177).
3. Development phase – this phase deals with creating the content for the course and addresses questions such as, "How will you use a learning management

system . . . to create a structure for [the] course?" and "What existing resources can you use for [the] blended course?" or "What new learning activities . . . do you need to develop?" (178).

4. Implementation phase – this stage relates to "actual course delivery" and focuses on administrative and student concerns during implementation (178).
5. Evaluation phase – this phase of the redesign guide deals with gauging the "effectiveness of the blended learning course and disseminating the results." It considers issues such as, "What kind of assessments and data collection are you planning in order to effectively evaluate [the] project?" and "What measures will you and your . . . department take to ensure the continuation and improvement of the course?" or "How will you share what you learn with others in [the] faculty?" (Garrison and Vaughan 179). To address these issues, I envision revising my existing student and faculty surveys for use in evaluating the Com 1101 blended courses, as well as establishing separate control groups of blended and non-blended classes for qualitative evaluation purposes.

The syllabus and calendar of daily activities attempt to address the fundamental issues discussed in my dissertation, such as the need for technological literacy; being critical, thoughtful users of technology; and developing a culture of support within the Humanities and Communications department to help effect positive change. I want to believe that the first installment of my blended learning workshop takes advantage of the kairotic moment envisioned by Plato and generated by the celebratory mood surrounding Florida Tech's 50th anniversary. The final chapter of my dissertation also

attempts to embrace this opportunity, outlining my proposal for implementing a blended first-year composition course.

CHAPTER FIVE – GATHERING THE HARVEST

The implementation of a blended First Year Composition (FYC) course is the next component in creating a culture of support and promoting positive change within the Humanities and Communications Department of Florida Tech. The responses and suggestions from the faculty and student surveys analyzed in chapter 4, which incorporate Nardi and O'Day's methods of working from the core values of the department and of asking strategic questions, indicate a nucleus of a healthy information ecology; for example, 60% of the faculty members surveyed indicated a positive willingness to teach a blended course at Florida Tech; 40% indicated that they might be willing; and no respondents indicated the negative. Similar results were shown in the respondents' willingness to participate in a faculty workshop. I believe this demonstrates the elements for creating a successful culture of support: a team of interested stakeholders who want to be involved in technology implementation and who want to learn new tools and methods. Nardi and O'Day also suggest researchers should "pay attention" to "meanings [that] are assigned to technologies . . . in your ecology," and "*reflect aloud* about what has been noticed' (65-69 emphasis in original). I believe that my faculty workshop provides a valid forum for participants to "reflect aloud" and share their ideas and concerns regarding the notion of blended learning, thus avoiding "inattentional blindness" (Nardi and O'Day 17). A formal setting can help promote a more transparent and collaborative effort, so that participants can be more "aware of aspects of work that are usually invisible" (17). Sometimes faculty can be working on individual projects, unaware that others may be working toward similar

goals. The workshop forum allows faculty members to be more unified and work toward a larger vision. One component in a larger vision, which the results from my surveys also demonstrate a strong interest in, is the implementation of a blended FYC course.

The final chapter of my dissertation provides further justification for implementing the blended course. A discussion of the value of such a course is offered through the faculty, student, and administrative perspectives. Through this discussion, the various elements of my blended research methodology will be joined. The chapter concludes with a summary of the potential benefits, as well as the limitations of my research with a nod to future implications for the blended learning environment.

Further Justification for Blended Learning

Institutional Critique Revisited

As noted in chapter 1, the Institutional Critique methodology, as advanced by Porter et al., is composed of many layers and elements, including postmodern mapping and boundary interrogation. These elements are used as ways to analyze technological issues within educational settings and are rhetorical in nature. For example, I use the tactic of boundary interrogation to highlight a rhetorical zone of ambiguity, the mismatch "between the official story told by public relations . . . and the actual practices of the institution" (Porter et al. 630). My analysis of official university publications outlining new building projects in chapter 1 demonstrates a lack of concern for faculty needs for more technologically enhanced classrooms.

Boundary interrogation is also employed in chapter 3 in analyzing official documents, video, and surveys regarding the administrative decision to select Angel as

Florida Tech's official LMS. In this case, the institutional critique methodology proves that the decision-making process was objective and transparent, which shows how the methodology can point out positive features within the localized setting, as well as negative features. Institutional critique also encourages researchers to "consider the historical dimensions" of the case study (Sullivan and Porter 16). I conform to this suggestion in chapter 4 when describing the long-standing emphasis on the humanities and composition disciplines since the founding of Florida Tech as a university in 1958 and the achievements of the department over the last 50 years. Chapter 4 also speaks to Sullivan and Porter's emphasis on the rhetorical notion of *kairos*, of taking advantage of the right time and place to promote my ideas of a faculty workshop and a blended composition course, of taking advantage of the encouraging atmosphere surrounding the 50th anniversary of the university. This notion of taking advantage of the *kairotic* moment also guides the following discussion of a zone of ambiguity I discovered in comparing two recent documents: the Humanities and Communications Department Strategic Plan 2007-2012, and the minutes of the September 1, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting.

Institutional Critique Revealed

As stated previously, I believe the results of my case study of the Humanities and Communications department of Florida Tech demonstrate that the department has the nucleus of a healthy information ecology. Yet the results also allude to conflicts between the values of the department versus recent efforts of the university administration, especially in relation to the growth of the new online program. In a

review of the department's Strategic Plan 2007-2012, this conflict becomes apparent. For example, I discovered that the department is not meeting its goals for increasing student enrollment in the department's majors. In my review, I found that, in the years 2000-2006, the department averaged around 44 students per year declaring majors in humanities and communication. The data showed 2004 as the highest enrollment year, with 53 students, with 2005 and 2006 experiencing drops to 36 and 39, respectively. Yet in the Strategic Plan, the department projected enrollments of majors to increase to 72 students in 2007, 79 students in 2008, and 87 students in 2009 (the last year projected). According to my calculations, the actual number of students enrolled for 2007 was 42 and 44 for 2008 (2009 figures are unavailable). The data indicates that our department is not coming very close to the projected enrollment figures; in fact, the figures indicate that the enrollment numbers are stagnant. I believe the results from this analysis corroborate the findings collected in chapter 4, alluding to the needs for the department to find a new direction, to be more innovative in ideas for improvement, to embrace "bold experimentation" (Humanities and Communication Dept. 6). I believe that my proposals for the faculty workshop and for the blended composition course correlate with the department's desire for improvements, where the "status quo [should not] be the departmental norm" (6).

As Porter et al. suggest, in discovering rhetorical zones of ambiguity which highlight mismatches between the official narrative and actual practices, rhetorical spaces can be created "for reflection, resistance, revision, and productive action" (613). On a department level, my proposals offer a venue for "revision" and "productive action"

to “re-write” components of the Strategic Plan. In creating a departmental culture of support, the faculty workshop and blended course can be ways for our department to grow in student enrollment by attracting a new clientele of students and helping the faculty become more relevant. Similarly, my proposals also take advantage of the kairos environment envisioned by the university administration. An example of this environment is described by Florida Tech’s president as recorded in the September 2009 meeting minutes of the Faculty Senate:

> In June [the president] attended the annual administrative retreat. President Catanese gave a State of the University report, and the Deans reported on the states of their Colleges. Most of the retreat was concerned with ways to increase Florida Tech’s revenue. Discussion focused on three points: [one was] a new approach to marketing on-campus programs, similar to that now used for online programs . . . (Faculty Senate)

These comments demonstrate a willingness on the part of the university administration to be receptive to proposals such as mine. As Porter et al. suggest, even “minor rhetorical actions . . . can be dramatically effective ones, if they happen to hit the right kairotic institutional moment” (630). I believe the implementation of a blended composition course, although viewed by some as a “minor” action, can be a “pragmatic mechanism for change” while taking advantage of the current welcoming atmosphere of change (Porter et al. 612). In addition to making the department’s course offerings more attractive to more students, which aids the department in achieving its goals, the

program can be an avenue for the department to gain recognition and power within the university; this is not only an aim of institutional critique, but of Richard Selfe's methodology as well. Helping faculty to grow professionally and to remain relevant in our pedagogies may lead to a changing mindset within the department. These ideas and issues are explored more fully in the following section of the dissertation.

Changing Mindsets

The development of a blended FY composition course provides a connection to the administration's desire to market on-campus programs and the department's desire to increase enrollment in its majors. For example, the administration markets the new online courses to non-traditional students, those older than 22 and living outside the local area. Although the blended courses may appeal to that same demographic, I envision the blended courses primarily appealing to the on-campus students of Florida Tech. Three groups of students immediately come to mind: those in the Aeronautics department, ROTC, and the athletics department. Most of the students in the Aeronautics department enroll with a flight option. This requires students to be at the local airport very early in the morning for training flights that may last for hours. Many of my aeronautics majors have high absentee rates because of their training schedule, as do many of the ROTC students who leave classes early on a regular basis for weekend training exercises. Also, many of the student athletes in my classes who participate in a variety of team sports miss classes because of games requiring travel. Each of these student groups could benefit from a blended course alternative, for example, a class that meets f2f two days a week instead of three, with a computer-mediated component

replacing the third f2f class meeting. This is just one avenue to market the blended course to a new clientele of students and promote it as a viable alternative.

As stated previously, in relation to the development of the faculty workshop, a blended FY composition course can also help faculty members be more relevant in their pedagogies, thus appealing to a broader market of more technologically savvy students. I demonstrated in chapter 1 how blended learning appeals to our students who have grown up with technology and welcome the use of it in the classroom. Millenials, also described often as "digital natives," are those who were born between 1982 and 1991. These students expect instructors to utilize technology in the classroom and are more visually literate. I've also shown how the blended environment appeals to varied learning styles; how discussion boards provide a more secure area for reticent students to participate in; how students' skills can be more easily transferred to real world work situations; and how integrating certain features of the LMS provides students a way to prepare in advance for f2f meetings and create measured responses to class prompts. I've suggested that a well-designed blended FY composition course can help faculty move from a reliance on print literacy to take better advantage of technological literacy. Also, in adding a critical component to the course, I've suggested how instructors can move beyond the "two perfectly meaningless camps" of "technophiles and technophobes" envisioned by Cindy Selfe in 1999 and cited at the start of chapter 1.

As Hewitt and Ehmann suggest, with the addition of an immersion/situated learning component as utilized in my faculty workshop, a new "mindset" can be developed among the participants in the training. I believe that this new mindset can

help the faculty members in the Humanities and Communications department of Florida Tech “move more fluidly between the traditional and online environments” (Hewitt and Ehmann 12). The faculty workshop proposal, as well as the blended course proposal, can forge a stronger bond between our students (the digital “natives”) and the faculty members (digital “immigrants”) who are generally characterized as “over the age of 35” (Lankshear and Knobel 35). Lankshear and Knobel, in their study of new media literacies in educational settings, define the term “mindset” as a “point of view, perspective, or frame of reference through which individuals or groups of people experience the world, interpret or make sense of what they encounter, and respond to what they experience” (31). As the results from the faculty and student surveys in chapter 4 indicate, the faculty members’ mindset is more traditional, assuming “that the contemporary world is essentially the way it has been throughout the modern-industrial period, only now it is more technologized” (Lankshear and Knobel 34). I believe that this is reflected in the faculty members’ reliance on print literacies as a major component of their pedagogies as shown by their overwhelming preference for the f2f learning environment versus the web-enhanced or fully online environment. The students’ mindset, on the other hand, “assumes that the contemporary world is different in important ways from the world we have known, and that the difference is growing. This is related to the development of new . . . technologies and new ways of . . . being that are enabled by these technologies” (34). This mindset is shown in the students’ desire for a technological component to be part of their educational experience.

Yet, I also believe that the results from my study indicate that the divide between digital natives and immigrants is rapidly closing as evidenced by faculty members' strong interest in participating in a faculty workshop and implementing a blended program. As faculty members become more comfortable with the technologies, and become regular users of them, the two mindsets begin to merge, and age differences become less of a factor. For example, this merging of mindsets becomes apparent if faculty members ask themselves questions such as these:

1. Are you more comfortable composing documents online than longhand?
2. Have you turned your "remembering" (phone numbers, meetings, and so on) over to a technology device?
3. Do you go to meetings with your laptop or PDA?
4. Are you constantly connected? Is the internet always on whether you are at home or work? Is your cell phone always with you?
5. How many activities can you effectively engage in at one time?
6. Do you play video or computer games? (Oblinger, "Is it Age" 2.10)

The results from my surveys indicate that the answers to questions like these reflect much less of a divide in the two mindsets than reflected ten years ago by Cindy Selfe and other scholars, which could provide additional support for implementing my blended FYC course.

Becoming comfortable with, and being regular users of, the technologies is the first step in building a departmental culture of support. This first step helps to avoid

Richard Selfe's notion of the dynamic of blame described in chapter 1. For example, I believe that the development of my faculty workshop can prevent faculty members blaming a lack of training in the features of the Angel LMS on the administration or IT department. It may also alleviate some parents' concerns over whether faculty members are up-to-date with current technologies to prepare their students for the future. Perhaps the design of an "in-house" blended curriculum can help avoid placing blame on university administrators in case the curriculum is not formally endorsed. But I believe that designing and implementing a workshop and blended curriculum can help move the faculty members beyond the perspective of users of the technologies to what Richard Selfe suggests is one of the primary goals of developing a culture of support: creating a "sense of agency," so that faculty can participate more fully in technological decision-making that affects their teaching environment (12). This sense of agency can be developed through the workshop and the blended course planning process, where faculty members are encouraged to share their "pedagogical values" and "to make choices" based on those values and their "institutional needs" (R. Selfe 14-17). As the faculty members work together to design the courses, they can "re-examine" their course goals and the needs of their students (60). The workshop and blended initiative can help move the department toward a sustainable "stakeholder-centered design process" which can challenge the current administrative "top-down technology" efforts (R. Selfe 69). The nucleus of the healthy information ecology present in the department can become stronger through these efforts and become the type of environment that

supports “the changing needs of a wide range of students and the changing institutional goals of a wide range of faculty” (R. Selfe 59).

Challenges in Implementing a Blended First-Year Composition Course

The challenges involved in implementing any new course in a university setting are many. These can range from practical considerations, such as following policies and procedures set forth by the curriculum committee, conforming to accreditation standards, budgetary concerns, and many others. I have discussed previously in my dissertation some of these issues, including those relating to theoretical and pedagogical issues in chapter 2 and technical issues in chapter 3. My faculty training workshop outlined in chapter 4 speaks to issues such as these in a coherent way to provide the necessary impetus for implementing the blended composition course. As Richard Selfe notes, an integral element in developing a successful culture of support is the creation of “robust and flexible computer-supported environments designed to support English and language arts classes” (41). Before presenting what I envision as a “robust and flexible” design for the blended FYC course, it is first necessary to briefly address additional issues involved in the course implementation planning process.

I must acknowledge that my dissertation does not constitute a formal proposal to the Humanities and Communications Department or the administration of Florida Tech for the implementation of a comprehensive blended curriculum. A formal proposal requires an in-depth planning process which is beyond the scope of the dissertation. A formal proposal addresses issues such as program relevance, the demand for such courses, academic considerations, and financial issues among many others. Rather, as

previously stated, the responses and results from the faculty survey indicate that an "in-house" trial program of blended courses would be the appropriate first step in the course planning process. For example, 60% of the survey respondents indicated a willingness to teach blended courses if they were offered, and over 70% of the respondents stated that they are already using the Angel LMS in significant ways to support their f2f courses. I envision an informal blended curriculum proposal of one or two courses, such as the two-semester FYC sequence springing from my dissertation; it should provide a helpful training period for participating faculty to become comfortable with the blended design and the features of the Angel LMS. The faculty workshop, running concurrently, would also provide a venue for training and course preparation as outlined in chapter 4.

After a brief trial period of one or two semesters, I envision the next step of the planning process for course implementation to be the submission of a proposal to the undergraduate curriculum committee of Florida Tech. This committee, comprised of faculty members from all of the university's colleges, would review the proposal and decide if it should be sent to the provost for approval. In the case of existing FYC courses, the required number of contact hours for accreditation purposes is 45 hours per semester. In my proposal for the blended FYC course, I would amend the required contact hours to 30 in-class hours and 15 lab hours to include the computer-mediated component; this should satisfy the number of total contact hours required for accreditation.

Before submitting the proposal to the curriculum committee, the proposal would first need approval from the Humanities and Communications department chair and the dean of the college. Then, after approval by the curriculum committee and the provost, the blended course would officially be added to the curriculum and the university catalog. I envision the entire planning process, from instituting the trial program to official endorsement of the blended alternative, to take approximately one to two years.

Designing the Blended Com 1101 Course

The design of the Com 1101 blended FYC course attempts to bring together the essential theoretical, pedagogical, and technological elements that I have discussed throughout my dissertation. The design takes into consideration the results and suggestions from the faculty and student surveys, as well as lessons that I have learned through trial and error from implementing some of these strategies in my own courses. The design also incorporates ideas and suggestions utilized by other faculty members published in current research. My design is not to be viewed as inflexible, perfect, or complete. It is simply a suggested guide for instructors of a blended FYC alternative at Florida Tech or other universities to follow; it can be readily adapted to suit individual needs. Before presenting my sample syllabus and schedule of suggested activities, a brief overview of what I believe to be an effective template to use in the course design process is discussed.

Kelli Cargille Cook's article in 2005 entitled, "An Argument For Pedagogy-Driven Online Education" provides an effective strategy for instructors to follow in designing a blended or online writing course. Cook outlines a five-step sequence that I have found

effective in designing my blended Com 1101 course. She states that her process "is designed to be open to multiple teaching styles, practices, and assessment strategies," placing "effective teaching and learning" over issues related to technological delivery (59). This sequence also conforms to Richard Selfe's notion of concentrating on the people and pedagogy involved before addressing technological issues (which will lead to a culture of support) that I advocate for and present in chapter 1. Cook's 5-step sequence is explained below:

1. Define Course Goals and Delivery Models – I agree with Cook and Richard Selfe that the design process should begin "with careful articulation of instructors' preferred pedagogical theories and practices" (Cook 59). As discussed in chapter 2, the theoretical and pedagogical environment of FYC courses at Florida Tech and today's universities, in general, is an eclectic environment, incorporating elements of social constructionism and collaboration, expressivism, current-traditional, visual rhetoric, and many others. I have tried to integrate a mix of these elements in my blended Com 1101 course design, while also conforming to the overall goals of the course as articulated by the department. The blended course meets f2f two days per week with a computer-mediated component utilizing the Angel LMS replacing the third f2f class meeting.
2. Define Activities for Goal Achievement – One way for instructors to design activities that "will promote student achievement of the course's pedagogical goals" is to list activities they use in their existing courses (Cook 61). This list

can then be analyzed and adapted to determine which activities might be best suited to the blended environment.

3. Evaluate Assessment Opportunities for Course Goals – Early in 2004, the Conference on College Composition and Communication's "Position Statement" noted that "assessment may require new criteria" when instructors incorporate new writing genres in a blended or online course ("CCCC" 17). I provide assessment strategies for electronic peer review and for judging the quality of students' responses in a discussion board in chapter 3 of my dissertation. Richard Selfe also recommends that instructors set up a separate email list, discussion board, or blog where students can assess and hold "open discussions about the technology components used in the class" (R. Selfe 158). Instructors may want to integrate the use of rubrics for various assignments which can lead to an assessment strategy involving the students and the instructor. Garrison and Vaughan describe the process like this:

> A discussion forum can then be used to develop a list and corresponding criteria of what counts in quality work. Students can cocreate the assessment rubric with the teacher by articulating the gradations of quality, describing the lowest and highest levels of quality, and then filling in the middle levels based on their and the teacher's knowledge of common student problems (Garrison and Vaughan 138).

As instructors continue developing new writing genres to fit with their pedagogical goals in a blended or online environment, they should also be creative in designing assessment strategies to cope with the environment.

4. Choose Instructional Technologies that Support the Course's Pedagogical Goals, Activities, and Assessment Strategies – Although my dissertation argues for the use of various features of the Angel LMS in course design, there are other strategies that instructors can utilize in their blended pedagogy. I have highlighted a few of these in chapter 2, including the use of wikis, Second Life simulations, open-source software, and social networking among others. As technological tools continue to evolve, instructors need also to adapt in order to stay relevant in their pedagogies.
5. Consider Student Needs in Terms of Goals, Activities, and Technologies – Cook argues that, after completing the first 4 steps of her course design process, instructors should "reconsider all these choices from students' perspectives" (63). Evaluating the course from the students' perspectives is key to its success because students need to "see the course as valuable" and "be satisfied with the goals they achieve at the course's end" (Cook 64). I have attempted to be aware of the students' perspectives by evaluating and analyzing the results from the student surveys reported in chapter 4 and obtaining feedback from my students as I incorporate blended elements in my f2f courses at Florida Tech.

Employing a design process such as the one envisioned by Cook allows "individual faculty members [to] create their own courses based on their expertise, their subject matter emphases, and their students' needs" (64).

Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

The 2004 "CCCC Position Statement" also encourages faculty members to incorporate the seven principles of best practices for teaching and learning in a university setting. The "Position Statement" notes how these principles "are equally applicable to face-to-face, hybrid, and online instruction" ("CCCC" 16). Originally published by Chickering and Gamson in 1987 before technology had changed delivery methods, the principles were revised in 1996 in Chickering and Ehrmann's article, "Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever," which discusses technology's role and its effect on the seven principles. I believe that the principles work well in the blended format and provide an effective pedagogy for instructors to pay attention to. In reviewing the seven principles, I highlight how certain features of my blended course design apply to each principle.

1. Good Practice Encourages Contact between Students and Faculty – I have noticed that a blended design allows for more contact between instructors and students; having unlimited access to the students through the Angel LMS allows me to extend the f2f classroom beyond the classroom walls. Simple techniques such as posting the class syllabus online, using the email or announcement feature to keep students current with updates and reminders, or posting assignments and reminding students of upcoming due dates and assignment

specifics are examples of how I have applied this principle. Contact between students is also extended beyond the classroom walls during a threaded discussion. Posting a discussion question prior to class and asking the students to come to class prepared for a more in-depth treatment of the subject has worked for me, as well as dividing the students into small groups with each group working and responding to specific issues. The f2f component of the blended design allows me or the students to follow up on these issues talked about in emails or discussion boards more comprehensively. Although an email or threaded discussion allows students to write their thoughts and answers, which helps them gain a sense of purpose and audience, f2f personal conversations can clarify and work through issues more thoroughly, allowing students to communicate verbally as well as in writing.

2. Good Practice Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students – I have noticed as well that effective use of threaded discussion boards lowers students' inhibitions toward each other and increases their cooperation with each other in f2f class meetings. The bonds that are made when the students collaborate online are strengthened in the classroom which, ultimately, leads to more in-depth discussions in subsequent discussion postings.
3. Good Practice Uses Active Learning Techniques – I believe that utilizing components of the Angel LMS prompts students to become more active learners instead of being a passive learner as in some f2f classroom situations. For example, an online discussion board allows students to provide a thoughtful,

measured response to the assigned readings. When the discussion board responses are then carried over to the f2f class meetings, it becomes a more engaging and rewarding class discussion.

4. Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback – Perhaps being accessible to students all the time is a drawback to some instructors, but I have found email to be an effective avenue to communicate with students when the class does not physically meet. Also, if instructors take advantage of other features of the Angel LMS, such as the gradebook feature, students can always have access to their grades. I have set up practice exercises in grammar through the Angel LMS, and I have found students like the visual, immediate, and interactive aspect of the online exercises better than their in-class workbook exercises.
5. Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task – If an instructor takes advantage of features of the Angel LMS, such as uploading the class syllabus, assignments, and keeping the calendar feature current, it helps to provide students a good model to follow in structuring their time more effectively. Also, whether the assignment calls for online peer review of drafts, chatting in groups, or threaded discussions, students are required to spend time on their computers in order to fulfill the requirements of the assignment.
6. Good Practice Communicates High Expectations – I have found myself actually assigning more readings with discussion postings and group work since the integration of a web component in my f2f classes. I communicate to my classes at the beginning of the semester that I do have high expectations for them in

regard to online participation, and I make participation a substantial portion of their overall grade. When their communication becomes visible to their classmates online, I believe their responses and their writing grow richer in substance and style.

7. Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning – A blended learning environment allows the best of the f2f classroom and the online environment if it is designed well. This type of environment appeals to a variety of learners, active or passive, and more technologically savvy students versus the less technically adept.

I believe that the blended course design provides instructors and students the variety available to integrate these seven principles for effective teaching to their best advantage. The blended environment provides a venue for students to be stretched, using their writing, speaking, collaborative, visual, and critical thinking skills in ways that appeal to their individual learning styles. An example of my blended Com 1101 syllabus and course calendar is found in Appendix E. I also provide selected sample blended activities/assignments in Appendix F. Below are brief pedagogical explanations of the sample assignments which I believe fulfill many of the objectives discussed in my dissertation.

Pedagogical Explanations of Assignments

1. Introductory Biographies/Angel LMS Practice – A component of my faculty workshop asks participants to study portions of Stuart Selber's Multiliteracies for a Digital Age (2004) and discuss the implications of his concepts regarding

functional, critical, and rhetorical literacies. Although my blended Com 1101 course does not utilize Selber's concepts in depth, I have integrated some of his ideas in my course design. This assignment, which occurs in the beginning of the semester, correlates with Selber's notion of functional literacy, "helping students confront the complexities associated with computer use" (Selber 31). In my analysis of the Florida Tech student blended learning survey, I discovered that over 60% of the respondents had not used a course LMS prior to enrolling at Florida Tech. Yet since enrolling, over 90% of the respondents stated that they have participated in components of the Angel LMS in their coursework. This *Introductory Biographies* assignment, in addition to establishing a cooperative atmosphere among the students via the discussion board, also requires the students to practice with various components of the Angel LMS. This not only prepares them for continued success with other LMS features used in my blended course, it also prepares them for features utilized by other instructors and departments. As a model for students, I post a brief biography of myself as a way to welcome the students and establish the Angel LMS as a valid communications tool.

2. Reflective Technological Literacy Autobiography – Many current scholars recommend using this type of assignment as a valid pedagogical exercise. Richard Selfe believes that "[the] more we know about our students' past as we integrate technologies into the curriculum, the better" (156). As Stuart Selber suggests, this kind of reflective exercise can begin the critical literacy process,

encouraging students “to recognize and question the politics of computers” (75). In addition to being a valuable recognition exercise for the students, I believe this assignment is valuable for the instructors, not only learning about our students’ past experiences, but also gaining new insights about present and future technologies to help instructors stay current and relevant.

3. Essay 2 – Cultural Perspectives – Catherine G. Latterell’s composition textbook, Remix: Reading and Composing Culture (2010) provides an excellent resource in a chapter on “how technology affects culture and vice versa’ (168). I adapt one of her assignments from the chapter, “*Technology . . . or, what’s so great about progress?”* based on an excerpt from a book by Ellen DeGeneres. I believe that this assignment builds upon the critical literacy component established in the technological autobiography assignment and builds upon the functional literacy component by utilizing electronic peer review in groups established within the Angel LMS. As Latterell mentions, in developing her assignments, the goal “is to get students questioning their own assumptions . . . [of] a technology they might otherwise have taken for granted. Analyzing a personal annoyance will put them in a critical frame of mind . . . “(171).
4. Analyzing Visual Texts and Self Reflection Assignments - The final sample assignments accomplish two important pedagogical purposes. I have already demonstrated in my dissertation how visually literate today’s university students are compared to prior generations of students. The analysis of a webpage assignment correlates with the students’ awareness of visual texts, allowing

them to examine critically the various elements and rhetorical choices that writers and designers make. The end of semester reflection assignment not only provides a forum for students to reflect on their blended learning experience, but also provides instructors feedback and suggestions for future iterations of the course. I believe that both of these assignments move students closer toward Selber's notion of rhetorical literacy, which consists of not only recognizing and reflecting on the "dimensions of human-computer interfaces," but of a place "of social action" as well (Selber 140).

Concluding Remarks and Future Projections

Lessons from Faculty and Student Surveys

Throughout my dissertation, I provide data from numerous research studies in blended learning that demonstrate the need for faculty to integrate sound pedagogical planning in the design of their courses. For example, data reported in chapter 1, in relation to collaborative learning and the use of CMC in a f2f environment, demonstrates how the use of CMC can be a pedagogically valid component. Boyd's study from 2004 discussed in chapter 3 illustrates the importance for faculty to make clear to students the reasoning behind integrating CMC, as well as the importance of making participation in the discussion forums a significant part of the students' grade. An even earlier study reported in 1998 found similar results. Yagelski and Grabill's data explores the relationship of CMC and f2f classroom discourse in two undergraduate writing classes at Purdue University, finding "that the ways each instructor presented and managed CMC . . . played an important role in shaping the rates and nature of student

participation" (Yagelski and Grabill 318). Their data also suggests that successful blended course design should require students "to see the online discussions as a form of academic writing . . . characterized by longer, more formal messages related to course readings and assignments "(325). Results from my faculty and student surveys provide additional data to support the need for sound pedagogical goals in blended course design. In reporting data from my two surveys, I believe it is beneficial to correlate my findings with the results from a more in-depth research study published in *Educause Quarterly* by The Learning Technology Consortium in 2004.

Robin Wingard writes that The Learning Technology Consortium is a collaborative forum consisting of nine major universities across the U.S. The Consortium surveyed and interviewed faculty at the universities who were "involved in varying levels of Web enhancement of their traditional course offerings . . . "(Wingard 27). The surveys and interviews asked faculty about their goals for integrating technological features into their f2f courses. After analyzing the data, Wingard reports that the Consortium found that the faculty's goals fell into two main categories: *Pragmatic and Pedagogical*. The data revealed that most faculty thought of pragmatic goals first, with pedagogical goals a distant second. Pragmatic goals, such as convenience of material distribution through an LMS, easy student access, and ease of communication were three times more important to the respondents than pedagogical goals such as course organization, expanded resources, and individualized instruction. Yet the data also revealed that the "longer faculty work with the Web, the more likely

they are to pursue and derive pedagogical benefits from the technologies . . . "(Wingard 34).

In correlating the results from my surveys to those of the Consortium reported in 2004, I discovered that, more than five years later, faculty members at Florida Tech have made positive steps toward integrating pedagogical goals rather than pragmatic goals. For example, the pedagogical goal of improved course organization cited by 17% of the faculty as a benefit in the 2004 study compares to 60% of faculty declaring it a benefit in my survey. Also, in the "Pedagogical Flexibility" portion of my survey, 70% of the respondents reported that the Angel LMS fits their needs for the pedagogical goal of individualized instruction, as compared to only 6% of the respondents in the 2004 study (Wingard 29).

Although my results are encouraging, and show positive steps toward pedagogical goals, my surveys also highlight areas where faculty are not integrating available LMS features as part of their course design. For example, over one-third of the respondents in my survey do not use the LMS features available to them, such as collaboration tools (blogs, wikis, discussion forums, or student groups) or assessment tools (online tests, gradebook, or attendance statistics). In fact, my results illustrate that faculty still adhere to more of the pragmatic goals, such as convenient material distribution and ease of teacher-student communication; for example, 75% reported consistent use of these LMS features over the integration of the pedagogical goals described above.

I believe the data clearly lends support to my proposal of a faculty training workshop at Florida Tech to aid faculty in implementing additional LMS features available to them. Supportive comments from responding faculty members, such as the examples below, demonstrate the viability of my workshop notion:

- I think the key to having an effective online course and/or web-enhanced course is faculty training.
- Not being a "techie" I know I am not using the full capacity of the system. I would love to see how other faculty members use it. It would be awesome to have live demos.
- I know the Angel has great potential . . .So far, I have barely used the system. I hope to change that next year.

Comments from the student surveys, although frank, are also encouraging to me and support my notion of the faculty workshop:

- Professors don't use [the LMS] often enough
- Professors don't always keep site updated
- Professors are not familiar with the software of the LMS
- Many mistakes and confusion because professors don't know how to use it
- Professors need to be taught how to use the LMS properly

Other data from my student surveys highlight important issues that faculty should consider and be aware of. For example, when I analyzed student comments related to integrating features of the Angel LMS into an f2f course, I noticed that some students seemed irritated if the instructor did not use the LMS properly or overburdened

them with electronic assignments. The students' displeasure shows in comments such as, "some teachers are lazy and rely on Angel [LMS] too much"; "Professors get paid to teach, not have a website teach me"; "too many handouts are put online"; or "There can be too much Angel [LMS] work." Other comments from the student survey allude to the notion that some students resent the fact that their instructors' use of the Angel LMS invades their personal "technological space." Jeff Young, the technology writer for The Chronicle of Higher Education, relates that "some professors have coined the term 'creepy treehouse' to describe technological innovations by faculty members that make students' skin crawl . . . [this use of technology] may repulse some users who see them as infringement on the sanctity of their peer groups" ("When Professors"). Although the "creepy treehouse" term applies mainly to faculty members' use of Facebook, Twitter, or other social networking sites, I believe it applies to the misuse of an LMS as well. Student comments from my survey such as, "Navigating the LMS is stressful and horrible"; "Have to check the LMS regularly to avoid missing deadlines"; and "Sometimes I forget to check Angel and miss assignments" seem to reflect student displeasure with their instructors' use of the LMS. Jason B. Jones, a blogger on a recent educational blog, sees the creepy treehouse issue as "largely one of bad pedagogy. There's a problem when faculty assume that the contribution of social media to student engagement is produced through hanging out with students online, rather than in using those media to make possible new kinds of learning" (1). Faculty members should consider and be aware of issues such as these when implementing

technological features into an f2f environment; as one student commented in my survey, “Professors need to create more balance between f2f and blended assignments.”

Yet the results of both the faculty and student surveys do indicate that faculty members who integrate features of the Angel LMS effectively have success in achieving their goals. The data also indicates that the faculty members seem to be conforming to some of the Seven Principles of Good Practice discussed earlier in my dissertation, such as encouraging contact between students and faculty, giving prompt feedback, and communicating high expectations. This is reflected in the answers from the respondents to questions 18, 19, and 21 of the student survey. Over 50% of the students agreed that their instructor made it clear to them how to use the LMS features, 45% agreed that it was clear how their participation would be graded, and 70% agreed that the online components fit well with the in-class activities. I believe these results indicate support for implementing a blended FYC course at Florida Tech and, although much work is yet to be done, I believe that there has been significant progress toward achieving sound pedagogical goals to create an effective blend of CMC in an f2f learning environment.

The Validity of a Blended Research Methodology

The components of my blended research methodology cannot be viewed as separate or distinct. Institutional Critique, Nardi and O’Day’s Information Ecology, and Selfe’s methodology for developing a culture of support all advocate examining the learning environment through a situated, local lens. Also, one of the primary goals of

each component is measured, productive action which can lead to sustainable institutional change when enacted within an encouraging, “kairotic” atmosphere.

I have demonstrated in chapters 1, 3, and 4 that boundary interrogation, which identifies rhetorical mismatches and zones of ambiguity, can operate alongside the Information Ecology methodology I used to analyze the health of the Humanities and Communications department of Florida Tech. The execution of these components of my blended methodology led directly to Selfe’s suggestions of asking strategic questions, of working from core values, and of reflecting aloud to help develop a departmental culture of support. This analysis resulted in the design of my faculty workshop and the blended Com 1101 course. In addition to many other pedagogical goals discussed in my dissertation, these efforts attempt to bridge the gap between the print literacy backgrounds of some faculty members and our technologically literate students.

Yet, many challenges remain. Institutional Critique challenges researchers to move beyond hoping or recommending change, to “actually enact the practice(s)” and produce “some form of institutional change” (Porter et al. 628). Richard Selfe challenges faculty members to move away from a dynamic of blame and toward a culture of support. To do so, Selfe suggests that we need to first learn the technology and then integrate it into our classrooms. I believe that the faculty workshop and blended Com 1101 course outlined in my dissertation addresses these challenges. Selfe also recommends that faculty members should be aware of new innovations in technology and continue to plan for future iterations that will surely evolve.

As demonstrated in my dissertation, faculty members who are part of a healthy information ecology are aware of new technologies, adapt to them, and plan for future installments. New tools will continue to appear, such as updated learning management systems, social networking sites, Second Life simulations, gaming, and even Twitter; all are being used effectively by today's faculty members to help achieve their pedagogical goals. There will continue to be failures as with most experiments, and no one method will fit all situations. If today's faculty members can focus on creating effective pedagogies, considering our students' needs and goals as well, we will increase our chances for success as we move together into the 21st century.

APPENDIX A--- FACULTY BLENDED LEARNING SURVEY RESULTS

1. Please provide your age

20-29	1
30-39	2
40-49	8
50-59	2
60 and up	3

2. Please provide your gender

M	6
F	10

3. How long have you been teaching at the university level?

0-2 years	0
3-5 years	2
6-10 years	5
over 10 years	9

4. What is your faculty rank?

Adjunct	2
Assistant professor	5
Associate professor	2
Full professor	1
Instructor	5
Visiting instructor	1

5. Which level of courses do you teach at Florida Tech?

Undergraduate only	12
Undergraduate and graduate	5

6. Which subjects do you teach at Florida Tech?

First-year composition	6
Literature	3
Communications	7
Humanities	4
Other	5

7. Are you familiar with the notion of “Blended learning,” “hybrid,” or “web-enhanced” in relationship to courses taught at the college level?

Yes	13

No	0
Somewhat	3

8. If a blended or web-enhanced curriculum was implemented in the Humanities and Communication department at Florida Tech, would you be willing to teach this type of course?

Yes	10
No	0
Maybe	6
Not sure	0

9. Please explain why you prefer, or do not prefer, to teach face-face courses:

- I prefer the face-face interaction with students.
- I prefer face-face format for freshmen and ESL writing courses.
- I prefer face-face courses because I like the real time interaction with students. I also find that I am able to give immediate feedback and better monitor student progress (I understand that some of this can be achieved online, but not to the extent it can be achieved on-site).
- Face-face courses require driving to school at specific times/days. I like the flexibility of online instruction.
- I like student interaction.
- I don't have a preference, per say; if I have to pick, I choose f2f because of "warmth of relationship."
- The interaction you get in f2f is much different than CMC. I prefer the interactivity/engagement of the classroom.
- F2F courses are more student interactive than web courses. Easier to judge students' ability to understand content.
- Ease and speed of direct communication with students and fewer problems about cheating.
- I teach foreign language and [f2f] is more important to have this type of contact to provide controlled input.
- The interactive nature, live audience, what I learn from students, pressure to be "on.'
- The interaction among students as well as between students and professor is an important part of learning process.
- It's a much better position to foster discussion, track student preparation, and engage with a wider variety of physical communication.
- I prefer f2f courses because of the genuine human interaction involved. It gives me the opportunity to know my students better.

10. Please explain why you prefer, or do not prefer, to teach web-enhanced courses:

- I use Angel extensively. I prefer teaching in media equipped classrooms.
- I prefer either all f2f or all web only. I think the "combo" is too much work for the instructor, but I'd do the web-enhanced.

- Web-enhanced courses enable students to complete some of the "rote' or individual work independently, leaving class time available for discussions and team activities.
- Web-enhanced courses offer efficient gradebook options and a convenient way for absent students to participate while out.
- Hard to tell if it's really the student's work.
- I prefer web-enhanced because this is real life. This is what students are used to.
- I like to be able to provide materials and extra resources using Angel. I also like having grades up so students always know their progress.
- Mix of both mediums does allow students optimal choice in learning.
- I never have.
- There is a lot of online material that would allow me to bring the culture and language to the students that they otherwise would not be able to access.
- Paperless-no copies or handouts….Potential to track and evaluate.
- Allows greater chance of cheating, alienation…and computer mishaps.
- It is my firm belief that in today's world, one cannot teach foreign languages without a strong web component. This is how I offer my students cultural exposure.

11. Please explain why you prefer, or do not prefer, to teach fully online courses:

- Because of the lack of interaction f2f.
- Online courses require a lot of preparation by the instructor. Many people do not realize it; it's great for upper level undergrads or grads.
- I do not prefer to teach fully online courses unless they are synchronous (at least partially) and have the ability to stream live video/audio.
- Fully online courses have the benefit of highly organized, accessible content with options for reports, chats, videos, etc. The loss is the intrinsic group motivation/deadline/teacher to face situation. But I am learning to reprioritize somewhat via discussion boards.
- Lots of written work without oral communication.
- I don't teach any because of all the admin. Kinks that have not been worked out yet. I would enjoy doing it if it wasn't an admin. Nightmare.
- Lack of student f2f contact results in lack of student ability/faculty ability to judge satisfactory progress.
- Time consuming. Concern as to who is actually doing the work. But I have no direct experience of online teaching.
- Not sure how this could benefit the students since f2f is very important for the goals of my courses.
- No flexibility to integrate current events.

12. To what extent do you believe that pedagogical approaches for online or web-enhanced courses differ from face-face courses:

Differ greatly 3

Differ significantly	8
Differ somewhat	4
Little difference	0
No difference	0

Please explain:

- In f2f, instructors can clarify everything. Online requires that everything be so clear from the start that very little needs to be re-explained. Also, programs like Web-CT allow for a great deal of student interaction whereas Angel or Blackboard are limited.
- Synchronous online sessions with live audio/visual streaming come close to on-site sessions. However, most online courses I have seen are asynchronous and do not allow real time interaction between the instructor and students or between students. Feedback and teamwork are thus more difficult.
- Online-small bites of info. For frequent ready reference-individual assessment and discussion; f2f-teachers as coach, circulate, engages via presence, blends presentation and personality.
- Lacks oral communication component but helps with written work.
- I think having technology really is beneficial. You can easily prove points, practice skills, see, hear, etc.
- For languages the difference can matter more than for other courses, in my case, because of my teaching approach which requires lots of real time f2f interaction for speaking and listening.
- Web-based courses require significant adaptation because of the nature of the media used, while they can "imitate" f2f interaction, it differs a great deal.
- In my field, practicing speaking skills in foreign languages would be different online than in a classroom environment.

13. How much time do you believe is required to teach an online or web-enhanced course compared to the time spent on a face-face course?

Much more time	4
More time	7
The same time	4
Less time	1
Much less time	0

Please explain:

- I think the preparation would require about the same amount of time.
- It depends on the range of interaction, preparation, etc.
- To select materials and change the type of lessons given, approach taken, and I've never done it before.
- More extensive preparation required; cannot rely on student feedback during class; written communication takes longer than spoken.

- Experience with teaching online courses shows that similar student questions/problems must be answered more times in more different ways.
- The initial creation of the online sections will require more time. However, once that is set up, the time required should be about the same (perhaps less for the online courses).
- More preparation goes into computer setup, but once the documentation is complete, the instructor can focus on enhancements.

14. How many years have you used a learning management system (such as Blackboard, Angel, or Web CT) as a component of your courses?

Less than 1 year	3
1-3 years	6
3-5 years	2
more than 5 years	4
*Never Have	1

15. I use an LMS to (choose all that apply)

Support traditional face-face courses	12
Teach fully online courses	5
Other (please specify)	0
*Do not Use	1

16. Would you be willing to serve on a strategic planning committee to help decide if a blended course program would be a beneficial and/or feasible addition to our department's course offerings at Florida Tech?

Yes	7
No	1
Maybe	8
Not sure	0

17. If a Faculty development workshop providing a "hands-on" approach in the aspects of integrating the Angel LMS more fully into your course design were available at Florida Tech, would you be interested in participating?

Yes	10
No	0
Maybe	6
Not sure	0

The following questions specifically apply to Florida Tech's Angel Learning Management System:

1. Content Management

How comprehensive are the LMS's features for managing your content? Consider the options available for making content available to students, such as the ability to schedule content to appear based on date or other criteria (such as student completion of a course task).

Poor	0
Average	3
Good	7
Excellent	2
Do not use	4

2. Communication

How effective is the LMS in facilitating communication between you and your students (tools commonly include email, real-time chat, and other messaging options)? Consider how easy these tools are to understand, and if these tools function as expected.

Poor	0
Average	4
Good	5
Excellent	4
Do not use	3

3. Announcements

How effective is the LMS in making announcements to your classes?

Poor	0
Average	3
Good	6
Excellent	4
Do not use	3

4. Collaboration Tools

How effective is the LMS in enabling collaboration between students and with instructors? Consider the utility of discussion groups and virtual classrooms.

Poor	0
Average	5
Good	4
Excellent	1
Do not use	6

5. Assessment Suite

How effective are the LMS's tools for assessing student progress in your courses (including tests and quizzes)? Consider availability of question types (multiple choice, ordering, fill-in-the-blank, etc.), options available for deployment of assessments, and how assessments are graded and integrated with the course.

Poor	1
Average	3
Good	4
Excellent	2
Do not use	6

6. Gradebook

How effective is the gradebook tool in the LMS? Consider how the gradebook is organized, the types of views available, options for importing and exporting the gradebook (via Excel, for example) and how well different types of grades (letter, percentage, weighed) are handled.

Poor	2
Average	4
Good	3
Excellent	2
Do not use	5

7. Attendance and Statistics

How effective is the LMS in tracking students' presence and attendance during a course? Consider what types of course statistics or reporting functions are available in the LMS.

Poor	2
Average	6
Good	2
Excellent	1
Do not use	5

8. Usability/Interface Consistency

How consistent is the LMS user interface (consider consistent placement and appearance of controls throughout the LMS)?

Poor	0
Average	5
Good	6
Excellent	2
Do not use	3

How effective is the LMS interface in allowing you to accomplish tasks quickly, with as few steps as possible (consider simple tasks compared to complex tasks, and if there are redundant or confusing steps)?

Poor	2
Average	8
Good	2
Excellent	2
Do not use	2

9. Layout and Navigation

How well does the layout and navigation of functions in the LMS allow you to accomplish your tasks? Considerations: Is the LMS laid out in a consistent and easy-to-understand manner? Is the user always aware of their location within the system? Are all possible options for navigation presented in a predictable way?

Poor	1
Average	7
Good	5
Excellent	1
Do not use	2

10. Social Dimensions of Online Learning

Blogs/Wiki

How effective is the LMS in providing blog and wiki functionality?

Poor	2
Average	1
Good	2
Excellent	0
Do not use	11

Discussion Forums

How effective is the LMS in providing discussion forum functionality?

Poor	1
Average	3
Good	5
Excellent	0
Do not use	7

Student Groups

How effective is the LMS in supporting student group work?

Poor	0
Average	3
Good	3
Excellent	1
Do not use	9

11. Pedagogical Flexibility

Communication

How well does the LMS fit your needs for communication with students during your courses?

Poor	0
Average	3
Good	7
Excellent	4
Do not use	2

Content

How well does the LMS fit your needs for management and distribution of your course content?

Poor	0
Average	4
Good	6
Excellent	4
Do not use	2

Assessments

How well does the LMS fit your needs for assessing student performance?

Poor	2
Average	4
Good	3
Excellent	2
Do not use	5

Design

How well does the LMS match up to the way that you put your courses together and deliver them?

Poor	0
Average	9
Good	1
Excellent	2
Do not use	4

12. Support

How effective is the support functionality of the LMS (consider access to technical support, frequently asked questions, knowledge bases, etc.)?

Poor	1
Average	5
Good	6
Excellent	2
Do not use	2

Thank you for your participation. Please provide additional comments here which may be helpful to this study:

- Two areas I have found lacking are access to attendance "totals" which are needed for mid-term and final grades. The other is being able to view how a new grade input affects the student's overall grade.
- I think the key to having an effective online course and/or web-enhanced course is faculty training. Prior to using any program (I prefer web-CT) a faculty member should be required to take a 12 week training (compensated: $1000 stipend plus a laptop to use at the institution only) and develop the course and materials. Trainers should be available to instructors to assist when questions/issues/problems arise.
- I am strongly in favor of a blended learning approach to fill in some of the weaknesses/gaps in fully online delivery. I think also it gives students a sense of community.
- I know the Angel has great potential. However, setting it up for maximum effectiveness will require significant time. So far, I have barely used the system. I hope to change that next year.
- I like Angel LMS but would like the directions to all features provided up front in a handbook.
- Not being a "techie" I know I am not using the full capacity of the system. I would love to see how other faculty members use it. It would be awesome to have live demos. I find the system to be a little "behind its time" and by that I mean that you have to do a lot of clicking. For example, I cannot write 1 announcement for all my classes. Or I cannot jump from 1 class attendance to the other; the gradebook steps are also too many.

APPENDIX B---STUDENT BLENDED LEARNING SURVEY RESULTS

Please choose the best response:

1. Please provide your age:

17	1
18	16
19	40
20	35
21	18
22	12
23	5
24	1
25	2
26	1
27	0
28	1
56	1

b. Please provide your gender

M	92
F	43

2. How do you define your ethnic identity? (e.g., Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, etc.)

Caucasian	82
African-American	12
Asian	11
Caribbean	1
Pacific Islander	2
Hispanic	11
Indian	3
Middle Eastern	3
Russian	1
Other	5

3. What is your academic standing?

Freshman	12
Sophomore	63
Junior	40
Senior	19
Other	_____

4. How would you rate your overall comfort Level with using computers?

High	92

Moderate	41
Low	2

5. How would you rate your overall comfort level with using the internet?

High	112
Moderate	22
Low	0

6. Are you familiar with the notion of “Blended learning,” “hybrid,” or “web-enhanced” in relationship to courses taught at the college level?

Yes	44
No	40
Somewhat	50

7. If a blended or web-enhanced curriculum was implemented at Florida Tech, would you be interested in enrolling in this type of course?

Yes	28
No	24
Maybe	67
Not sure	18

8. Please explain why you prefer, or do not prefer, to take face-face courses:

Prefer f2f	106
Do not prefer f2f	4
No preference	12

Comments (similar or duplicate responses not provided):

- Interaction between students and teachers
- F2f keeps you on track with assignments
- I learn better by hearing
- Immediate feedback
- More personal and can get direct answers
- A sense of comfort with instructor in front of you
- Individual attention
- I like to see and listen to my peers and their opinions
- Quality of teaching is better
- I learn better through lectures
- It depends on which course is being taught
- Helps to have a set time for organizing my day
- I want my money’s worth-some teachers are lazy and rely on Angel too much
- I like attending class and interacting with others
- Forces me to do the work
- Teacher gets to know you personally

9. Please explain why you prefer, or do not prefer, to take web-enhanced courses:

Prefer web-enhanced	32
Do not prefer web-enhanced	38
No preference	35

Comments (similar or duplicate responses not provided):

- Web-enhanced leaves room for slacking
- Internet goes down a lot
- Online homework is more difficult to complete
- You can work at your own pace
- It makes students lazier
- Easier to keep course materials together
- Professors get paid to teach, not have a website teach me
- Education needs to be supplemented with technology
- Technology is the future, so integration is necessary
- Many resources available online
- Easy access to information
- Web-enhanced can be a good supplement to f2f
- Materials always accessible
- Students are less socially active
- Improves my comfort level with computers
- Would help with scheduling conflicts

10. Please explain why you prefer, or do not prefer, to take fully online courses:

Prefer fully online	12
Do not prefer fully online	90
No preference	14

Comments (similar or duplicate responses not provided):

- Need f2f interaction between students and teacher
- Too easily distracted and tend to fall behind
- Too easily prone to procrastination
- No interaction and difficult to ask questions
- No personal feel
- Requires you to push yourself to do the work
- Online classes are easier
- Technical problems
- More convenient
- I can't look at the screen for hours
- I don't get the full college experience
- Need the physical presence of a teacher
- Too easy to cheat on coursework
- More flexible in regards to students' time
- Need human interaction to learn

- Depends too much on self motivation
- Can set your own schedule
- No intimacy between students and teacher

11. Had you used a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Angel before enrolling at Florida Tech?

Yes	53
No	85
Not sure	2

Please explain your experiences: Used in high school, another college, and Florida virtual school courses

12. As part of your coursework at Florida Tech, have you been asked to participate in the Angel LMS?

Yes	125
No	8

13. If so, which components of the Angel LMS have you used in your various classes?

Course Mail	130
Discussion Forum	52
Blogs/wikis	19
Gradebook	116
Other	19

Please list any components used not given above:

14. What do you think are the advantages of using the Angel LMS in your coursework?

a. Easy access and improved communication
b. Provides grades without bothering instructor
c. Everything is in one place
d. Keeps everything organized
e. Helps keep track of due dates
f. Helps communication with other students and professor
g. Info. Is saved so if you lose something, you have a backup
h. Conserves paper
i. Easier to send/receive coursework
j. Allows you to keep track of course schedule, materials, grades, and overall progress in class
k. Allows reminders to be sent for work missed
l. Answers to questions are faster through email
m. I can move at my own pace
n. Basic information about the course is always available

o. Communication is easier because my online persona is different than my real life persona
p. Receive and send communication during non-class hours
q. Makes classwork more interactive and stimulates learning
r. You don't have to turn in homework in class
s. You can work together without physically being together

15. What do you think are the disadvantages of using the Angel LMS in your coursework?

a. Professors don't use it often enough
b. Lots of errors with Angel
c. Stops f2f communication
d. Have to check the LMS regularly to avoid missing deadlines
e. Professors don't always keep site updated
f. Internet can go down
g. Less interaction between students and professor
h. Not all instructors use Angel
i. Questions are answered too long after emails are sent
j. Sometimes I forget to check Angel and miss assignments
k. Professors are not familiar with the software of the LMS
l. Overly dull, more work, but easier than normal
m. Many mistakes and confusion because professors don't know how to use it
n. Time delays in getting questions answered
o. It allows students to miss class more often and rely too much on Angel
p. Teacher assumes you've read it online and does not discuss in class
q. Navigating the LMS is stressful and horrible
r. Technical difficulties
s. Too many handouts are put online
t. Too many professors use their own webpage and not Angel
u. Course sites are not updated frequently enough
v. There can be too much Angel work

16. Do you feel that the amount of interaction between you, your professor, and your classmates when using the Angel LMS is

Higher than face to face	9
Lower than face to face	92
About the same	32

17. It was clear to me how my instructor expected me to use the components of the Angel LMS:

Agree	72
Disagree	22
Neither agree/disagree	40

18. It was clear to me how my participation in the Angel LMS would be evaluated and affect my course grade:

Agree	62
Disagree	28
Neither agree/disagree	44

19. Compared to courses that do not utilize components of Angel LMS, was the workload in the course that did use the Angel LMS

Too heavy	3
Heavy	21
About the same	98
Light	13
Too light	1

20. The online content/assignments fit with the classroom activities

Strongly agree	21
Agree	69
Neither agree/disagree	30
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	3

21. Overall, how satisfied have you been with the courses that have utilized various components of the Angel LMS?

Very satisfied	18
Satisfied	45
Neutral	58
Unsatisfied	10
Very unsatisfied	3

Please comment on the following questions:

1. What was the most effective aspect of your courses utilizing the Angel LMS?

    - Posting lessons and homework online
    - Convenience-all material in one location
    - Grades easily accessed as well as course materials
    - Gradebook feature was my favorite
    - Having a syllabus online
    - The announcement feature was a godsend
    - Communication was improved
    - Commenting on classmates' responses
    - Time and learning management

- Emailing instructors and fellow students
- Being able to download course materials
- Working at your own pace instead of the instructor's
- Doing presentations online
- Recovering lost notes and handouts
- The blogging group allowed us to communicate together without meeting

2. What was the least effective aspect of your courses utilizing the Angel LMS?

    - Course mail-seems like a duplication of campus email
    - Unorganized course content
    - Discussion board wasn't used
    - Difficult to navigate at times
    - Professors tend to rely on email feature too much
    - Blogs and wikis
    - Decreased interaction between teacher and students
    - The LMS tends to be confusing
    - Sometimes the internet goes down making the LMS unusable
    - Non-technical minded professors

3. What suggestions can you provide to help strengthen any future courses utilizing the Angel LMS?

    - Professors need to link separate websites into Angel
    - Be sparing in quantity of assignment posted to course site
    - Professors need to be taught how to use the LMS properly
    - Grades need to be updated more often
    - More teachers need to use Angel to improve uniformity between classes
    - Teachers need to explain the usage of the LMS better
    - Keep calendar feature updated
    - Software can be unreliable
    - Use more discussion boards and chats
    - The LMS could be simplified
    - Make clearer links on homepage to other assignments
    - Better course organization
    - Instructors should create online study groups
    - Try to standardize the way professors use portions of the LMS
    - Professors need to create more balance between f2f and blended assignments
    - Make participation in discussion board part of class grade

APPENDIX C---BLENDED LEARNING WORKSHOP SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Florida Tech Humanities and Communications Department
(modeled after the 2006 UTEP Technology Leadership Academy, Sunay Palsole and Shawn Miller, Designers)

Facilitators: Bill Leach and Willie Freeman, IT Dept. trainer
Meeting Times/Location: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.-Humanities Dept. Mac Lab
Contact info: Phone - 674-7165, Email – bleach@fit.edu

Workshop Description: The Com 1101 Blended Learning Workshop targets non-early adopters of technology who would like to develop proficiency in common instructional technology based strategies that can improve student learning and increase flexibility of faculty use of time. The workshops are designed to combine theory with hands-on training in an accelerated and intensified format in order to compress the technology learning curve.

Workshop Objectives: By the end of the workshops, participants will be able to:

Understand organization and development of technologically enhanced courses.
Apply and modify the teaching techniques to make effective use of technology in a blended Com 1101 course.
Be better equipped to engage students in an online setting.
Conceptualize basic technologically enhanced course design principles.
Apply practical knowledge of basic courseware management tools in the Angel LMS, including discussion boards, course content, online chat, blogs, drop box, creating assignments, and uploading syllabi.

All of the course content will be delivered via Angel. Participants can access Angel following the steps outlined below:

- Go to the Florida Tech homepage.
- Using the drop down menu in the top right hand corner, scroll down and click on Angel.
- Log into Angel using your password and tracks ID number.
- Click on your course title to access the course.

Course Materials: Online via Angel

Workshop Policies: Participants are expected to attend all workshops, to take part in discussion board postings and any other assignments, and to complete a basic course shell to simulate an active course to be implemented at the end of the workshop.

Discussion Board: Participants will be reading articles and discussing the readings with each other via the Discussion board on Angel. Each day, participants will write a thoughtful discussion posting in response to guided questions that will be provided. Participants will also reply to the entries of at least two fellow participants each day. The deadlines for postings are midnight each day. Replies are due by 8:00 a. m. the next day. Also, an online chat component will be part of the workshop design.

Peer Evaluations: Each participant will participate in peer evaluations of courses. A rubric will be provided for the evaluations. In addition, all participants will be provided self-assessment tools to measure progress through the workshops and a questionnaire to be completed at the end of the workshop for evaluating the effectiveness of the workshop itself.

Schedule: The Workshops take place over a four day period. Each day will include activities and discussion based around theory, LMS features, and techniques which can enhance courses delivered via technology.

The basic schedule is as follows:

9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	Overt Instruction: immediate, hands-on sessions to introduce a core concept for the day.
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Association: Presentations and discussions about the core concept.
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.	Lunch and Individual Discussion Board participation
2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.	Reflection: open discussions and evaluation of the day's activities; homework assignments handed out.
3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.	Mac Lab will remain open as a resource for participants to work on homework, discussions, and course shells.

Core Concepts for each day:

Monday, Day 1	Orientation and introduction to basic features of the Angel LMS.
Tuesday, Day 2	Syllabus and discussion board
Wednesday, Day 3	Team based learning, online chat, assignment planning
Thursday, Day 4	Peer evaluations and self-assessment, suggestions for future

APPENDIX D---BLENDED LEARNING WORKSHOP SAMPLE DAILY ACTIVITIES AND CALENDAR

Day 1- Workshop Orientation Session and Welcome-1:00-4:00 p.m.

- Face to face meeting between instructor and participants – all cohorts introduce themselves with a brief presentation of their experiences and expectations. All participants will pick a partner to work with for the remainder of the workshop for help and encouragement.

- Introduce enrolled participants to the Angel course training website which includes the training syllabus, schedule, workshop materials and resources, and contact information for all facilitators, trainers, and participants.

- Introduce participants to their own course shell which will be provided in the Angel LMS as part of the training process to be tailored individually for future implementation as part of their own blended course.

- End session with a group discussion revolving around questions such as participants' definitions of blended learning, possible advantages/disadvantages of redesigning their courses in this format, and possible challenges they may envision.

- Assign attached files with readings to be studied for the following day along with a discussion question to be responded to within the course training website. Example readings and discussion question to help participants gain a historical/cultural perspective of the Humanities and Communications Dept., which aids in developing a culture of support, are as follows:

    1. Have participants study the last two issues of *The Communicator*, the in-house newsletter of our department which details how the department has evolved over the last 50 years.

    2. Have participants read David Bartholomae's classic essay from 1985, "Inventing the University" which speaks to composition instructors' goals in teaching their students.

    3. Have participants read the recent essay published in 2006 by Marvin Diogenes and Andrea Lunsford, "Toward Delivering New Definitions of Writing" which discusses issues related to digital writing and assessment.

    4. Have participants respond to a discussion question and each others' comments within the Angel course training website. An example discussion question based on the above readings might look like this:

Sample Discussion Question Prompt: Keeping in mind the historical perspective gained from reviewing the background of our department and Bartholomae's position about teaching composition and assessing student writing, do you agree that the definition of writing has changed, as Diogenes and Lunsford argue? If so, how do we redefine our teaching and assessment methods to accommodate the expanded definition of writing?

Day 2	Face-Face Activity	What to bring with you	Online Activity	Readings before next f2f class meets
9-11 am 11-12 pm F2F Session Breaks for lunch 2-3 pm F2F session resumes	*Overt Instruction:* Re-working the syllabus and calendar for the blended learning format *Association:* Building an effective Syllabus, Peer review of syllabi *Reflection:* open discussions, evaluations, and next day's homework	Bring your course syllabus and course calendar.	Upload new syllabus to course shell and create a discussion board with class prompts *Between 12-2 pm Immersion:* Participate in discussion forum on previous day's readings and respond to prompt through the workshop website	"Distant, Present, and Hybrid," by Sands "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class," by Berlin
Day 3	Face-Face Activity	To bring with you	Online Activity	Readings before next class meets
9-11 am	*Overt Instruction:*	Any sample writing		Stuart Selber's *Multiliteracies for a*

11-12 pm F2F session breaks for lunch 2-3 pm F2F session resumes	Learning how to add course content, assignments, and the Chat feature. *Association:* Practicing with the Synchronous Chat feature *Reflection:* Evaluate the day's activities and suggestions for final LMS instruction day	assignments or group projects you wish to add to your course	*Between 12-2 pm Immersion:* Group Chat on assigned prompt Respond to discussion prompt on previous day's readings	*Digital Age* chapter 1
Day 4	Face-Face Activity	What to bring	Online Activity	Suggested future readings
9-11 am 11-12 pm F2F session	*Overt Instruction:* Reviewing other features of Angel LMS such as gradebook, testing, etc. *Association:* Suggestions and helpful hints from cohorts on working with features of the LMS	Any final materials you wish to add to your course shell or discuss in class.	*Between 12-2 pm Immersion:*	"Distance Learning: Promise or Threat," by Feenberg Chapter 2-5 of Selber's *Multiliteracies* "Analyzing Students' Perceptions of their Learning in Online and Hybrid First-

breaks for lunch 2-3 pm F2F session resumes	*Reflection:* Self-assessments and assessment of workshop effectiveness for future iterations	*Workshop Ends*	Final discussion board postings and responses from previous day's reading	year Composition Courses," by Boyd

- *Sample Chat topic for Day 3:* In the reading by Sands, he envisions 3 scenarios in which a hybrid, or blended, course can be arranged. Which of the 3 scenarios does Sands recommend as the better alternative? What is your opinion of the 3 scenarios, and can you envision a better alternative?

- *Sample Discussion Question Prompt for Day 4:* In designing a blended course for our students, Stuart Selber recommends in chapter 1 to integrate components of functional, critical, and rhetorical literacy, his concept of "multiliteracies," which is explained further in the remainder of his book. On page 24, he states that students "who are not adequately exposed to all three literacy categories will find it difficult to participate fully and meaningfully in technological activities." Do you agree with this statement? Do you find chapter 1 of Selber's book appealing, and does it challenge you to want to investigate his framework in more detail?

APPENDIX E---BLENDED COM 1101 SYLLABUS AND COURSE CALENDAR

Florida Tech – Blended COM 1101-01 Composition and Rhetoric
Instructor: Bill Leach, M.A. Email: bleach@fit.edu
Class Times: Monday and Wednesday, 10:00-10:50 a.m. plus Online Component
This is a web mediated class. This means that we meet face-face two days per week and the remaining work is conducted online. Our online environment is the Angel LMS.

Course Description: This course provides a systematic review of English grammar, sentence structure, diction, punctuation and mechanics. It focuses on reading and writing clearly organized, concise and complete essays that delight, inform and persuade. A term paper is also researched, outlined, drafted and edited to conform to prevailing scholarly standards.

Objectives: Firm knowledge of English grammar and rhetoric.
Improved English reading and writing competencies.
Comprehension of college level research requirements.

With the integration of an online component that includes assignments and discussions relating to functional and critical literacies, students will be using technology to become more critical consumers of technology and to acquire a critical sensibility regarding how technology has shaped, and will continue to shape, our culture and ourselves.

Texts: Hacker: *The Bedford Handbook, 8th Ed.*
The Longman Reader, 9th edition.

As noted on the Calendar, there will be 3 in class grammar quizzes. Only those quizzes missed due to excused absences may be made up. Attendance is required; students missing more than 25% of class meetings without excused absences will fail the course.

All essays and Discussion posts are due on dates noted on Calendar.
Research paper is due in class on Monday, April 26, 2010.

Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an "F" for this course. You are responsible for knowing all Florida Tech academic dishonesty policies (www.fit.edu/current/plagiarism.pdf). Further, I may submit-or require you to submit-any or all written work for this course to an on-line plagiarism detection service. By submitting written work in this course, you give me your express consent to: (1) transmit it over the internet, and (2) sublicense it without compensation to any plagiarism detection service on an ongoing basis.

The Mid Term exam will be held in class on Wednesday, March 3, 2010.
The Final Exam will be held exam week.

Note: All students must pass the final exam in order to pass the course.
Mid Term and Final exam dates are inflexible in accordance with Florida Tech policy.
Final grade will be based upon the following weighting of assignments:

Online Component	30%
Grammar quizzes	10%
Writing Assignments	30%
Research paper (8-10 pp.)	10%
Mid Term & Final exams	20%

Course Calendar

	Monday (In Class)		Wednesday (In Class)		Friday (Online)
1/11	Introduction	1/13	The Writing Process (1) (2) (3)- Bedford Handbook	1/15	Angel LMS Practice Introductory Biographies Discussion Board
1/18	HOLIDAY	1/20	The Reading Process	1/22	Website Scavenger Hunt Bedford website
1/25	Writing the Short Essay	1/27	Chps. 19-22 Grammar Review- Bedford Handbook	1/29	Discussion Posting Essay Topic Ideas
2/1	Chps. 14-18 Grammar Review Bedford Handbook	2/3	Short Essay Due	2/5	Online Grammar Exercises via Bedford Website Discussion Posting- Email Due
2/8	Quiz chapters 14-22 Assigned Readings *The Longman Reader*	2/10	Chapters 8-13 Grammar Review	2/12	Discussion Question based on readings
2/15	HOLIDAY	2/17	Chapters 32-39 Class Discussion	2/19	Online Grammar Exercises- Assignment 1 Reflective Tech. Bio. Due
2/22	Quiz chapters 8-13 Assigned Readings	2/24	Quiz ch. 32-39 Assigned Readings	2/26	Research Writing Exercise

	The Longman Reader		*The Longman Reader*		Bedford Website
3/1	Discuss Requirements For Research Project	3/3	Midterm Exam	3/5	Online Peer Review Of Essay 2 assignment
3/8	SPRING BREAK	3/10	SPRING BREAK	3/12	SPRING BREAK
3/15	Assigned Readings *The Longman Reader*	3/17	Essay 2 Due	3/19	*Online Exercise* Research Questions
3/22	Ch. 46- Analyzing Visual Texts	3/24	Research Questions Due	3/26	*Exploring Websites for Visual Analysis Essay*
3/29	Assigned Readings	3/31	*Assigned Readings*	4/2	*Discussion question*
4/5	Writing an MLA Paper	4/7	Research Outlines Due	4/9	Visual Analysis Due
4/12	Avoiding Plagiarism	4/14	Integrating Sources	4/16	*Online exercise*
4/19	Assigned Readings	4/21	Assigned Readings	4/23	Online Reflective Discussion Posting
4/26	Research Project Due	4/28	Review for Final Exam		

APPENDIX F---SAMPLE BLENDED ASSIGNMENTS

Blended Com 1101-01
Introductory Biographies
Angel LMS Practice

Due: Midnight Monday, Jan. 18, 2010

Purpose: To familiarize yourself with the various features of the Angel LMS and start a meaningful dialogue with classmates.

What To Do:

1. Go to our Com 1101-01 Angel course website using your Tracks I.D. number, read any emails (under Course Mail), click on all assignments, discussion boards, syllabus, and calendar tabs to familiarize yourself with the site. Read all the postings.

2. Go to the Course Materials tab and click on the Introductory Biographies Discussion Board link. Post a brief biography of yourself using Com 1101-Biographies on the subject line. Pertinent details about your major, your goals, special interests or abilities, where you are from, or other appropriate details about yourself could be included. This biography serves as an introduction to meeting your classmates when class resumes on Wednesday, Jan. 20.

3. Comment on at least 2 of your classmates' responses. When you have completed the Angel LMS practice assignment, exit the website and send your Instructor an email message through the Course Mail link to let him/her know you have finished the exercise.

Blended Com 1101-01
Assignment 1
Reflective Technological Literacy Autobiography

About the Assignment:

An autobiography is a narrative that tells the story of one's life. This assignment asks you to reflect on the story of your life with technology, the memorable experiences you've had with technologies such as writing technologies, household or media technologies, or electronic and gaming technologies. The concept of this reflection is to think about the role technology has played in your life, sharing your views with others, and learning from your classmates' perspectives.

What To Do:

Review the questions below to jog your memories and get you started. You should not try to answer all of the questions. Use the questions as brainstorming tools, choosing those that are relevant and interesting to your life. Construct your narrative in chronological order. Post a 200 word response to the Discussion Board area of Angel by midnight Feb. 19.

Questions to Consider:

1. What childhood experiences with technological devices do you remember?
2. As you were growing up, how would you describe your contact with various technologies in the home, at school, with friends, or other places?
3. What types of values or attitudes were expressed by family, friends, or others about the uses of technology, and how did these attitudes contrast with yours?
4. What various forms of technology do you most utilize in your life today? What role do these technologies play in your life?
5. In the next five or ten years, what technological skills will be the most important for students to acquire? Why?
6. If you could change anything about the way you learned about various technologies over the years, what would it be?

Please provide a brief response to at least 2 of your classmates' postings.

Blended Com 1101-01
Essay 2-Critical/Cultural Perspective

I. General Requirements—Read the excerpt from Ellen DeGeneres's book *The Funny thing Is…* entitled "This Is How We Live." In the excerpt, Ellen questions the value of technologies, discussing how inventions such as drinkable yogurt and moving sidewalks have made people lazy. She also contrasts how certain technologies create more work for us, citing some of the negative side effects. Like Degeneres, identify a specific technology or technological issue that frustrates or annoys you. Write a critical narrative that describes your experience with the object or issue and reflect on it. As you draft your narrative, consider these questions:

1. What is the technological object or issue that causes you frustration? When and where did you first encounter it?

2. Was your frustration caused by an intended or unintended consequence of the technology's design?

3. How could this technology or technological issue be improved?

4. How does the technology reflect or reinforce specific cultural values or biases? (Latterell 643)

II. Format—3-4 pages in length, typed, using MLA format.

III. Peer Activity—Exchange drafts via the Angel LMS with 2 members of your assigned peer group. The goal is to read each other's drafts and comment on their effectiveness in terms of stylistic elements. Revise the narratives, incorporating suggestions from peers. The goal of this activity is to forge a deeper understanding of multiple viewpoints in a discourse (Due by Friday 3/12).

IV. Essay Due by Wednesday, March 17.

Blended Com 1101-01
Analyzing Visual Texts: The Webpage

Due: April 9, 2010
Purpose: To understand how the system of rules of visual rhetoric operates. Students apply these rules in interpreting a commercial webpage, referencing design elements such as text, images, color, and overall design with how these elements contribute to persuade the audience.
What To Do:

1. Navigate through the web and preview commercial webpages advertising a product or service that you are interested in. Consider how the various elements work together to persuade an audience. Here are some pointers for previewing:

    A. Do you have an opinion regarding the product or service? Is it positive, negative, or neutral?
    B. What is the demographic group that might be the target of the webpage?
    C. What is the purpose of the advertisement? If its persuasive claim isn't stated in words, what do you believe it to be?

2. After you have considered your own opinion of the topic and its argumentative purpose, examine how the various visual elements work together. Think about how each piece of the argument (text, image, color, overall design) contributes to the overall persuasive purpose. Use the following guidelines to understand how the elements work together:
    A. Text—How much is included? Why is a particular font style, color, or size used? Why do you think the text that is present was used? Why not more or less? Does it appeal to the target audience?
    B. Images—what kinds of images are included? Why do you think those particular images were selected? Are the images persuasive?

3. Once you have thought about the various pieces that make up the visual argument of the webpage, frame your response to the overall effectiveness of the design:

    A. Do the elements complement each other, or do they have a more contrastive relationship?
    B. Are there elements of the design that you would change? How or Why?
    C. What do you consider the greatest strength and weakness of the overall design?
    D. Does the webpage accomplish its purpose? Will it persuade its target audience?
4. Construct your analysis of the webpage as a formal essay in MLA format, 3-4 pages in length. Your analysis should include an Introduction that summarizes the content of the webpage, with a thesis stating your interpretation of how effective the overall design is in achieving its purpose. The body of the essay is your analysis of the various components and how they work together as a whole. Your conclusion should include a re-stated thesis.

    Post your essay with a hyperlink to your selected webpage in Angel by 4/9/10.

Blended Com 1101-01
End of Semester Discussion: Self Reflection

Assignment

Post a response to the Self Reflection Discussion Board and discuss your learning experience this semester. First, take a few minutes and reflect on how well the blended course design helped or did not help you in attaining your goals. Some areas to reflect upon include:

1. Self-confidence: How well did the course help build confidence in various writing situations.

2. Which learning experience was most successful in relating to your particular learning style?

3. Which readings and assignments were most useful and interesting?

4. What topic or concept covered this semester relates most to a "real world" application?

5. What improvements, changes, or suggestions would you make to the overall design of the course?

Note: Please don't hesitate to be honest in your evaluation. This is an ungraded assignment and is used to solicit your suggestions for future installments of the course. This assignment is due by the end of the semester, April 28.

APPENDIX G---IRB APPROVAL LETTER

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Notice of Exempt Review Status

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board**
FWA00000351, Exp. 10/8/11, IRB00001138

To: **Billy P. Leach**

Date: **May 29, 2009**

IRB Number: **SBE-09-06161**

Study Title: **Prospects for Change: Creating a Blended Learning Program through a Culture of Support**

Dear Researcher:

Your research protocol was reviewed by the IRB Vice-chair on 5/29/2009. Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.101, your study has been determined to be **minimal risk for human subjects and exempt** from 45 CFR 46 federal regulations and further IRB review or renewal unless you later wish to add the use of identifiers or change the protocol procedures in a way that might increase risk to participants. Before making any changes to your study, call the IRB office to discuss the changes. **A change which incorporates the use of identifiers may mean the study is no longer exempt, thus requiring the submission of a new application to change the classification to expedited if the risk is still minimal.** Please submit the Termination/Final Report form when the study has been completed. All forms may be completed and submitted online at https://iris.research.ucf.edu.

The category for which exempt status has been determined for this protocol is as follows:

2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures, or the observation of public behavior, so long as confidentiality is maintained.

(i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that the subject cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject, **and/or**

(ii) Subject's responses, if known outside the research would not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or reputation.

The IRB has approved a **waiver of documentation of consent** for all subjects. Participants do not have to sign a consent form, but the IRB requires that you give participants a copy of the IRB-approved consent form, letter, information sheet. For online surveys, please advise participants to print out the consent document for their files.

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 05/29/2009 09:05:12 AM EDT

Joanne Muratori

IRB Coordinator

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