

# **I9-Writing with Video: What Happens When Composition Comes Off the Page?**

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This chapter traces the pedagogical and theoretical development of Writing with Video, a new advanced composition course at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Throughout this discussion, we seek to underscore the importance of the institutional and infrastructural partnerships that were created between the Department of Art and Design and the Center for Writing Studies in realizing the Writing with Video initiative. While much of the scholarship on teaching composing with new media focuses on specific pedagogical implementations, we believe that this chapter introduces a new direction in the discussion—the necessity of forging interdisciplinary relationships with colleagues who have an expertise in the visual and verbal. Fully embracing multimodal communication requires such partnerships. Although this discussion clearly privileges the local conditions that gave rise to the Writing with Video initiative, the approach outlined in this chapter can provide insights into the development of courses on new media composing at many institutions.

## **Introduction**

In the academy and the professional workplace rhetorical messages increasingly are built utilizing multiple forms and modes, altering every area of communication. Professors are using PowerPoint to deliver lectures. Chemists are using visualization techniques to engineer new drugs. Lawyers are using multimedia to argue cases. Entrepreneurs are researching new markets by collecting data on videotape. Social scientists increasingly archive video as qualitative

data. MBAs are incorporating images and sound into business plans in order to bring their ideas alive and find investors.<sup>i</sup>

Writing with Video, a composition course at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), was inspired by this proliferation of multimodal texts in our academic, workplace, political, and popular cultures. Modern universities are faced with the challenge of honoring tradition, while at the same time embracing change. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of visual literacy and undergraduate composition courses. As universities strive to address the needs of tomorrow's citizens, there is a conflict deeply rooted in the origin and history of university culture: how to preserve connection to the written word while accommodating new technologies that privilege the visual. We live in a world that has moved well beyond the technology of ink and paper; a world in which, increasingly, words come off the page. Today's communication landscape is intensely electronic and hybridized.

NCTE acknowledges this shift in its Resolution on Composing with Nonprint Media (2003), and Writing with Video responds directly to this resolution. It states,

Today our students are living in a world that is increasingly non-printcentric. New media such as the Internet, MP3 files, and video are transforming the communication experiences of young people outside of school. Young people are composing in nonprint media that can include any combination of visual art, motion (video and film), graphics, text, and sound—all of which are frequently written and read in a nonlinear fashion.

Writing with Video is a course that allows students to build on these “outside of school” communication experiences in the production of “non-printcentric,” multimodal<sup>ii</sup> texts. It values these texts as writing that does work in the world, signaling an understanding of the

ways in which writing is evolving in our society and how the university can best react to these changes.

### **Course Curriculum**

Writing with Video helps students to develop these skills through a comprehensive exploration of video as a rhetorical narrative medium, with emphasis on the process of video production work. The most important word in the title Writing with Video is the middle term: *with*.

Different media are often compared in adversarial terms, the assumption being that authors are faced with an either/or scenario. We believe, however, that writing and video can serve to reinforce and strengthen an overarching intellectual journey whose end result is video, but whose process is writing-intensive. The goal of Writing with Video is to present video production and writing as a creative and intellectually rigorous symbiotic process. When they are fused into an integrated whole, something synergistic occurs—the writing feeds the video, which feeds back into the writing.

Writing is an organic part of all media production. Students in Writing with Video write extensively--not only through directed assignments, but also as an integral part of the video production process. Composing through video production is typically made up of four stages: pre-production (reflection, research and critical thinking), production (scripting, interviewing and capturing video/audio material), post-production (organizing and editing material and constructing the narrative) and distribution (announcing and sharing finished material in a public forum). Writing is integrated into all aspects of this process—brainstorming and conceptualization, research, drafting and storyboarding, revision, critique, and reflection—positioning it as an integral part of thinking, problem solving, and creating processes.

Each stage in the production process provides multiple opportunities for writing, and it is our contention that incorporating writing methodologies stands to improve the quality of work produced at each stage and deepen the intellectual process that drives all communication. All assignments begin with directed writing exercises to facilitate the translation of lived experiences into audiovisual compositions. Students draw from their own knowledge, interests and curiosities to write with the video camera. Keeping detailed journals, students pose questions and conduct research to investigate their topics. In the field, students are situated as visual anthropologists or ethnographers, where the camera serves like the pen—a means to collect field notes—but captures visual data a pen cannot. Later assignments incorporate reflective writing about the entire production process. Students recount their experiences: What worked well and what did not? What are the challenges that exist in composing in a visual form? How did capturing data with the camera during the production stage and analyzing it in post-production change your understanding of the subject? What ethical dilemmas did you confront when representing others? In addition, students engage in peer reviews of work-in-progress and completed projects. Finally, students write responses to their finished videos. Because Writing with Video is designed for students with little or no prior experience producing video, early assignments are meant to help students begin building a visual vocabulary, create links between written language and visual language, and also encourage students more comfortable with writing to feel comfortable using video and vice versa. Each assignment builds upon the previous and becomes progressively more complex and ambitious.<sup>iii</sup>

The first project comprises two parts: a “motif” assignment and an “adjective” assignment. The goal of this project is to give students the opportunity to learn to use images metaphorically

and symbolically as well as become comfortable with video camcorders and the basic editing features of iMovie, the editing software used throughout the course. The second project, the “writing to video” project, asks students to write about a lived experience and then translate that experience into video. In their written compositions students are encouraged to capitalize on all of their senses. Students are asked to make use of this multi-sensory articulation when translating their essay to the screen. This project thereby serves to introduce students to the significant relationship between image and sound. The third project, “representing others,” asks students to create a portrait of a place through another person’s eyes rather than their own. “Representing others” builds upon the previous project by exploring the responsibility and ethical issues related to representing another person through/in video as well as the parameters that make up the documentary genre and the complexities in representing “actual” life. The final project, the “visual argument,” asks students to adopt a point of view on a timely social issue and then create a piece that argues in favor of this view. In contrast to the previous project where students are asked to consider an “objective” position, for this assignment students are asked to share a subjective viewpoint. Once students select a topic, they are asked to research and investigate the issue from multiple points of view, culminating in a five-to-eight-minute visual argument. As these descriptions illustrate, this specific attention to the process of communicating with video as a rhetorical device separates it from traditional film and video production courses. The course seeks not just to have students write more or create slick videos but to have students recognize the multiple modes available to them in making meaning.

The emphasis on process is fundamental to the pedagogy supporting Writing with Video because it makes the cognitive process of translating experiences, perspectives, and ideas into a product utterly explicit and conscious for students. We see this as a path towards creating

citizens who are critical authors and consumers of media. While numerous scholars (e.g., Davis, 2001; Kent, 1999; Trimbur, 1994) now consider writing studies to be in the post-process era, the notion of process for Writing with Video is crucial in emphasizing that the primary goal of the course is not to produce filmmakers—that is, not only to equip students with the necessary skills to make video productions (i.e., a particular product)—but rather to raise students’ awareness of video as doing rhetorical work. When students become producers of rather than simply consumers of new media texts, they gain a fuller understanding of the ways in which new media shape how information is structured, organized, understood, and evaluated. They learn to look at rather than simply through such texts.<sup>iv</sup> Diana George (2002), Mary Hocks (2003), Steve Westbrook (2006), and Anne Wysocki (2004) emphasize the importance of having students produce rather than only analyze new media texts. Writing with Video puts that call into practice.

### **Video as New Media**

The process of creating these video projects teaches students about the process of textual creation in new media—which entails the symbolic-analytic work<sup>v</sup> Johndan Johnson-Eilola (2005) places at the heart of his new theory of online work. For him such work involves the processes of rearranging, abstracting, connecting, and transforming information, in short, skill in “searching for information, breaking bodies of information apart, and recombining disparate pieces of information,” including “the ability to gather, filter, rearrange, and construct new texts” (pp. 29, 112, 134; see also pp. 97-101). Successful video work entails such processes: researching through gathering footage, breaking down footage and reassembling it through editing, and ultimately creating a new text that communicates meaning its individual parts did

not. Writing throughout this process helps students identify various assemblage choices, explain the ramifications of these choices, and make rhetorical decisions about their final texts.

In his project, Adam,<sup>vi</sup> a student in the fall 2005 Writing with Video class, provides an example of this process. His project illustrates how composing with video can help students engage in primary research and reflect on their processes of composing in new ways. For the “motif” project Adam chose to capture reflections and shadows in a corridor. His use of light, framing, and focus resulted in a painterly piece illuminating details often overlooked. In his journal Adam writes,

The initial idea for my motif project stemmed from a series of shots that I took of the reflections in the floors of the art building. Working with the idea of reflections being a type of portrait, the focus of my shots became capturing actual portraits of people that interacted with the reflections on the floors... I sifted through almost twenty different shots, all over five minutes in length, trying to find these really true moments of portraiture and reflection. I was challenged to cut down these lengthy shots into a cohesive one-minute piece that could best describe my motif. Using soft focus and skewed angles, the shots become abstract views of our world, much like the actual reflections. The piece then acts as a reflection on reflections. Here I believe it stands as a strong piece in capturing these fleeting moments and providing a not-so-often seen view of something that seems so trivial within our everyday lives.

Key here is not only Adam’s sense that his video piece helps him reexamine something we tend to overlook every day, but also Adam’s focus on the process of primary research—of gathering, organizing, compiling, and editing his own video to produce a “cohesive one-minute piece.” He

selects a perspective with which to view reflections—he presents them as portraits—and uses this to guide his video capturing and composing processes.

Connecting among and assembling from multiple sources are processes that Lev Manovich (2001) argues characterize creation of new media texts. He explains, “new media objects are rarely created completely from scratch; usually they are assembled from ready-made parts. . . . in computer culture, authentic creation has been replaced by selection from a menu” (p. 124). Valerie, a spring 2006 student, for example, draws from multiple sources in constructing her “writing to video” project, “Dis-Orient-Asian.” Discussing her process and decisions, Valerie writes,

I inserted 30 second shots of me studying with a five frame shot of the *Glamour* magazine, a few frames of me screaming and throwing books and a ten frame shot of me nude and curled up in the bathroom. I chose to have the nude shots last five frames longer than the magazine shot in order to convey that the character/viewer feels more exposed when seeing magazines which glamorize a population which doesn't represent her. It exposes an already marginalized group to further insecurity about body image and anxiety about being a part of 'mainstream culture' as legitimate citizens.

. . .

Generally, the stereotype is that Asian Americans are a quiet, studious, hard working [group]. So to contrast the clips of quiet studying with the others I decided to use black and white for the studying and color saturation for the shots of overexposure and vulnerability. Also the shots of advertising and magazines will remain in color to maintain the everyday inundation of color information processed in human sight. I adjusted the brightness for the bathroom shots to emphasize the homogenized surrounding of



whiteness, both of the space and the metaphor being brown, feeling naked and vulnerable in a white world.

Valerie's final project was assembled from her recorded imagery and ready-made parts in two ways: from sections of *Glamour* magazine and from the post-production choices made available to her in iMovie. Valerie uses shot duration, color (or its absence), and lighting in communicating the alienation she feels in trying to conform to Caucasian norms of female beauty. It is through the integration of these multiple parts that Valerie creates a new text.

### **New Media and Interdisciplinarity**

New media provide not only conceptual models with which to think differently about composing and researching in the university, but also technologies with which to more easily accomplish interdisciplinary work. At the opening of his acknowledgements for *Digital Ground: Architecture, Pervasive Computing, and Environmental Knowing*, Malcolm McCullough (2004) makes this claim pointedly: "Although the university still expects isolated brainwork of its professors, the Internet makes it nearly impossible for work on any but the most narrow primary data-gathering to seem original, comprehensive, or complete" (p. xi). While universities may still privilege singular authorship and rigid disciplinary boundaries, new media technologies are pushing us beyond them. The capabilities of new media technologies ask us to think about our intellectual pursuits and our composing processes in new ways: drawing from available composing materials and connecting across disciplinary boundaries become crucial. The ability to make fruitful interdisciplinary connections models these composing processes.

Interdisciplinary sharing is a strength in a world where new media composing involving searching, selecting, and assembling multiple modes is increasingly prevalent. Students benefit not only when they have the opportunity to engage in these composing processes with new

media, but also when they see these processes modeled at institutional levels. Writing with Video provides such a model.

Because multimodal composing is used in a variety of disciplines, intellectual, infrastructural, and institutional partnerships from across campus and beyond are crucial in order to further new media scholarship. To put this approach into practice, this chapter is co-authored by teacher-scholars from across multiple disciplines: at the time of the original drafting of this chapter, a documentary filmmaker doing graduate work in Educational Policy Studies (Lovett), three graduate students from the Center for Writing Studies (the Center) doing work on various areas of new media and composing (Gossett, Lamanna, and Purdy), and a studio artist and professor in new media from the School of Art and Design (Squier). Lovett and Squier created the curriculum for the Writing with Video course. Gossett, Lamanna, and Purdy took courses in the School of Art and Design and participated in long-standing discussions with Squier and other faculty in both Art and Design and the Center about composing in/with new media and multiple modes.

The teaching of these hybridized electronic languages require partnerships between art and design and writing studies programs because owning the technology to produce new media compositions is not the requisite credential for teaching new media. Visual composition is a discreet expertise, as is written composition; the end result of pursuing new media instruction in isolation can be a pedagogy that promotes ineffective and incomplete methodologies.

Understanding the hybridized electronic languages of new media requires knowledge of how these are languages, as well as the ways in which the technologies of production shape the texts that can be created. A partnership between writing studies and art and design teacher-scholars

allows for a course that more completely explores the multiple dimensions of these hybridized electronic languages.

In the case of *Writing with Video*, Squier and Lovett have deliberately sought a partnership that fuses genuine expertise in visual production and literacy with proven practices from the field of writing studies. Their strongest ally in this, particularly in getting *Writing with Video* approved as an advanced composition course, has been the Center and colleagues like Gail E. Hawisher and Paul P. Prior. Squier and Lovett developed the concept and initial proposal, and the mentorship from the Center helped them align their ideas with the teaching of writing.

The origins of this collaboration go back to the mid 1990s when Squier took a *Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)* seminar taught by Hawisher and Prior. His interest in the conjunction of images and written language had always been embedded in his practice as a studio artist, but the *WAC* seminar proved pivotal in his emphasis on writing as a process across a wide array of analytical, critical, and creative endeavors. It helped Squier understand the centrality of writing in his own methodology and inspired him to formulate strategies for deploying directed writing in his studio courses. This practice, along with continued guidance from Hawisher and Prior, led to closer ties with the Center. In 2000 the Center jointly sponsored Squier's *Words + Images* discussion group, which brought students and faculty in the School of Art and Design into more formal contact with colleagues in the Center. Although the formal events lasted for only one year, it engendered a dialog that has continued up to the present—its latest formal instantiation being the *Media Group*, a cross-disciplinary reading and video production group exploring issues of new media composing.

The interdisciplinary partnership established through these events was just the beginning point. A course like *Writing with Video* also requires a whole variety of administrative partnerships across traditional institutional boundaries. Making this course a reality has required the development of multiple partnerships involving individuals, administrative units, and a major corporation. Administrators in the School of Art and Design and in the College of Fine and Applied Arts connected with their counterparts in the Center and in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The colleges' deans advocated on behalf of *Writing with Video* in the Office of the Provost. Together, this group tackled many of the obstacles a course like this faces: how will students gain access to computers? What about cameras and other production equipment? What software will be used? Who will teach the course? And, of course, who will pay for all of this?

The complex challenges posed by *Writing with Video* were negotiated by starting with small pilot courses as a way to progressively build the necessary infrastructure. In the fall of 2004, Squier and Lovett developed the course and submitted an advanced composition proposal to the university. In the summer of 2005 Lovett taught a small pilot course of *Writing with Video* to six students for eight weeks under an already existing course number, Art 199. Upon the completion of the summer pilot course, the curriculum was redesigned into its current form. During the following academic year, while awaiting advanced composition approval, the course continued to be taught, expanding from one full course in the fall (co-taught by Squier and Lovett) to two full courses in the spring (one course co-taught by Squier and a Center graduate student and the other co-taught by Lovett and a second Center graduate student).

## **A New Lens for Composition Pedagogy**

Because composition courses enroll students from across the university, Writing with Video has helped bring art and design expertise in the visual to a wider cross section of students. Students have enrolled from art and design, education, communications, computer science, cinema studies, English, psychology, business, and engineering. The interdisciplinary reach of the course allows students to re-visit what they are learning in other courses and explore it in the visual form. This cross-disciplinary aspect of the course reinforces how important it is for students to continue to make use of what they know and push themselves to further develop critical thinking skills.

Erin's visual argument project exemplifies how this course pushed her to more deeply explore a controversial topic in education. Her project also illustrates the significant research, writing, and enthusiasm students often invested in their projects. For her visual argument Erin created "No Child Left Behind?," a ten-minute video that brings together archival images, news clips, interviews, text, and classroom footage. Her extensive research into the topic is evident in both her video composition and her written journal. In over 20 pages of written text, Erin recounts her process, research, and reflections. She begins with her motivation for the piece, recalling a treasured teacher who left her high school after nine years because No Child Left Behind regulations would impact his teaching strategy. As she reflects in her journal, she took the opportunity of constructing a visual argument about an issue that was important to her to better understand the "No Child Left Behind" policy. Erin's final video includes interviews with six educators. She inter-cuts these interviews with supporting material to highlight the themes she wanted to address, topics such as accountability, testing, impact on teachers, and impact on specific disciplines such as the arts and humanities.

Erin's visual argument required her to use outside material to support her assertions. In composing through video, Erin had to shoot or collect visual and audio data to support her argument. She writes,

This truly was like doing a research paper. You have to do some original research on your topic. Then you have to gather your primary sources. In this case they were my interviewees. I actually found myself thinking it was easier to do a paper because when you pick the part you want from your primary source you can use your own words to tie the quotes together, introduce the people, sum things up, and transition all while making the information clear and obvious to your reader.

At the conclusion of her journal entry she wrote, "For all of its complications, frustrations, and problems I don't think the impact of seeing the issue visually can be matched by even the best writer." Class response indicates her success. One student remarked after viewing her video, "That was the best explanation of No Child Left Behind I've heard. I never really understood what it was before." The School of Education agrees. It is now using this video to introduce pre-service teachers to No Child Left Behind.

Erin, in her journal, indicates an understanding of video as a public medium and how she approached the work with a larger audience in mind. Erin's thorough investigation of the topic and constant revising of her video was motivated by more than a desire for a good grade in the Writing with Video class. For her video provided an outlet to communicate with a broad range of people on an issue she felt passionate about. She wrote:

I knew that I didn't want to just have a piece that I could show someone and be like, "Here's something I made for this class I was in that got an A. Go me." I wanted something that I could show the people that were involved, friends that were at BG

[her high school] with me when the “explosion happened,” friends that don’t know much about NCLB, people that don’t think they have any reason to be interested in the education system, and whoever else, and really draw them in and kind of hit them over the head with reality. I wanted something that would almost without fail wake people up and be like, : “Holy crap we gotta do something.” Visual media is that powerful, I wanted to take advantage of it.

As Erin’s project illustrates, Writing with Video aims to give large numbers of diverse students pursuing a broad range of academic studies and career trajectories the ability to use video in making meaning, creating sophisticated authors and media consumers across the university. As media composers students are creators, teachers, and co-researchers in the learning process. Situating students as authors of media combines the development of critical literacy skills with action-oriented assignments. Writing with Video is pedagogy as intervention, expanding the analytical to include the participatory. By “intervention” we mean that Writing with Video intervenes in pervasive forces of representations and instills in students, as cultural producers, a capacity to listen to the voices that have been systematically silenced. Writing with Video challenges students to question how we negotiate and make meaning from popular texts in all modalities. Students confront the commodification of culture and the widening gap between the producers and consumers of such popular texts. To teach criticality without also providing our students the skills and tools to re-present their stories fails to intervene in oppressive cultural conditions. Writing with Video seeks to disrupt the disconnect between what students experience in and out of traditional learning environments. As a point of departure, the course utilizes a sincere appreciation for lived experience and what students already know. The interventionist pedagogy of Writing with Video situates students as researchers. Data is

collected through written text, images and sound. Students reflect upon, share, and discuss this material. Intersecting pedagogy and research through video production situates students as media-arts based inquirers to investigate the world in which they live, critically articulate their own knowledge, develop visual literacies, and actively engage in the issues most vital in their lives.

Student projects also fuel class discussion of emerging technologies. Adam's "representing others" project about blogs, for instance, resulted in a lengthy conversation in class on larger issues of identity construction in digital spaces. In his journal Adam summarizes the ensuing class discussion: "After showing the class it was extremely apparent how much this type of media affects a population. All addicted to a personal drug that was Facebook. Some bought it, others defended their lifestyle. How can you hate something that connects so many different worlds, miles away? If anything, it opens new doors that otherwise we couldn't reach." When students compose about topics important to their lives in a medium that is familiar in their lived experience they become both more invested in producing their projects and in critiquing the projects of others.

Students are experts of their own experience and educational pursuits, and when given the opportunity, they are often eager to share what they know. The course encourages students to demonstrate new technologies they are using, such as podcasting or sound editing techniques. As the discussion following the showing of Adam's project illustrates, students sometimes lead discussions on contemporary topics such as blogging, text-messaging, or web-based environments like "Facebook." These technology-enabled social spaces are aspects of our



students' lived experiences, and this often makes them the resident experts. Consequently, Writing with Video instructors frequently find themselves being educated by their students.

### **Collaborative Partnerships for Composition Pedagogy**

The success of Writing with Video indicates it is a step in the right direction to meet the needs of future students. The interdisciplinary and participatory approach of the course inspires new considerations for visualizing composition in the university. Writing with Video offers one answer to Richard Lanham's famous question: what business are we really in? When Lanham asked, this question referred most directly to English studies in the early 1990s. The question continues to resonate for writing studies in the 2000s. The answer we posit here is that we are in the business of preparing students to be effective communicators and textual producers in multiple modes—that we have a responsibility to follow where the expanding field of composition leads, even if that pushes on the boundaries of our existing expertise.

This answer calls for changes in the ways we conceive of and justify our work. Steve Westbrook (2006) points to how professionals in writing studies tend to “redeploy the lore and paradigms that we have inherited—the advice, warnings, or ways of knowing that the authorities of print culture have given us—whether or not these are entirely appropriate for and ultimately beneficial to writing students of the twenty-first century” (p. 459). Embracing courses like Writing with Video as part of the future of composing asks us to move past “the lore and paradigms” that privilege singular disciplinary expertise above cross-disciplinary collaboration, conceptions of composing as best when limited to words, and writing pedagogy as most appropriate when focused on student analysis instead of production of multimedia texts. Thus we reject Sharon Crowley's (1998) argument that composition must define itself as

an independent and discrete discipline. We argue instead that we assert our relevance in the academy by partnering with other disciplines that study hybridized electronic and multimodal discourses. Good pedagogy in the modern composition classroom no longer resides in a single department.

Writing with Video at UIUC is unique from other initiatives in that from the outset the course has relied on cross-disciplinary connections between art and design and writing studies. Multiple programs, instead of only English, partner together in the development and delivery of the courses. The University of Southern California (see Monaghan, 2006), Stanford University (see Lunsford, 2006), and The Ohio State University (see Dewitt et al. this volume) are also developing programmatic explorations of new media composing. These initiatives also acknowledge the changing nature of writing in a digital world. Though these programmatic enactments within composition at the undergraduate level are not widespread, they ask us to challenge head-on the perception that technology is peripheral to what we do, that writing studies should get off its “hobby horse” and be about something else (Wooten, 2006, pp. 242-244). Seeking out the infrastructure necessary to support new media composing in courses like Writing with Video asks us to justify our research and teaching as requiring—indeed, as inseparable from—new media technologies.

### **The Challenge of Sustainability and Infrastructure**

Because the changing nature of writing in a digital world requires that we no longer see writing studies as separate from technology, we must attend to the sustainability of the infrastructures courses like Writing with Video require. In “Infrastructure and Composing: The When of New-

Media Writing.” Danielle DeVoss, Ellen Cushman, and Jeffrey Grabill (2005) call for increased attention to the infrastructures necessary to teach and compose with new media. In their discussion they expand the definition of institutional infrastructure to include how computer hardware and software, as well as the policies, standards, support networks, budgets, and surveillance that surround that technology, come together (or, in many cases, don’t). This broader definition of infrastructure has become particularly visible to us in the development of the Writing with Video course since it has constantly challenged many of these reified structures within our university.

This expanded definition of infrastructure points to how important it is that the human and institutional components of infrastructure be recognized and maintained. Traditionally, a course must live in one particular department. However, locating a course such as Writing with Video in one department automatically privileges that discipline over the other. A true interdisciplinary course requires an integration of all levels of infrastructure; decisions affecting curriculum, assessment, training, and funding must be made jointly. For example, Writing with Video has required an integration of writing studies and art and design pedagogies and assessment practices, which has raised several questions: how do those trained in written discourses teach and evaluate visual and aural aspects of moving images? How do those trained in moving images teach and evaluate rhetorical and discursive aspects of video? Given these different perspectives, how do we integrate the strengths of each field to develop a unified assessment system for video? Once a curriculum has been developed the next key issue that needs to be addressed is instructor recruitment and training: how do we identify and train qualified instructors? From what disciplines will instructors be recruited? What type and length of training will instructors be required to complete? Who will provide such training? And finally,

who will fund the training and salaries of instructors once they are identified? Currently, art and design and writing studies instructors are training each other through co-teaching, but this option may not always be feasible, which will require us to revisit these issues in the future.

The technological component of infrastructure, of course, also requires sustained attention. Writing with Video challenged traditional technological infrastructures in several ways. What we learned is that courses like Writing with Video that rely upon new media composing practices require portable technologies and widespread wireless access. The course began with laptops lent by Apple Computer, which afforded students the flexibility and mobility to edit video whenever and wherever they chose. In the spring of 2006, however, laptops were not available for the students and this dramatically changed students' composing practices, which affected the pedagogy of the course. Although students followed the same syllabus as the fall course, reliance on lab environments for editing and the inability to keep multimodal journals altered the experience. When the students had laptops they were able to review and edit video anywhere at any point without needing to work around lab availability and the lab environment. The current lab model, with computers chained to desks, is based on a fixed, linear composing process that composition studies has long acknowledged does not exist. As we know, research, invention, and composing do not happen in discrete places or times (Purdy & Walker, 2007); therefore, composing technologies must support the integration of these practices. The integration of all of the tools (e.g., video, image, and sound editing software; word processing software; internet access; and even email) and research materials (e.g., documents, raw video footage, images, and bookmarked websites) together in an immediately accessible space such as a laptop allows students to forget that they are "writing" or "producing video" but that they are

using a suite of available tools to make meaning, using the most appropriate available resources to achieve desired goals.

To embrace new media composing, then, we must be prepared to secure and maintain this mobile, networked technology. We discovered with Writing with Video that there were no policies in place that could regulate or fund such a program. As the course grew, so did the demand for technological infrastructure, and these demands exceeded what Apple and the University were able to provide. As a result, instructors have had to adapt to the changing availability of technologies. Moreover, because the course was initially funded across two colleges, Liberal Arts and Sciences and Fine and Applied Arts, which have separate funding and maintenance systems for computer technology, the sustainability of funding has been an issue from the beginning. Neither college had funded student laptops so they have had to devise and implement new procedures and policies—and decide where long-term funding will come from. Currently, funding for the course comes from the Provost's office, but it is unclear how long such monies will be available.

Not all universities or colleges have ready access to the cutting edge technologies required for new media composing, and seeking corporate partnerships is one way to address this issue. The use of proprietary technologies, however, can also be complicated since students and instructors come to depend on specific corporate partners. Supporters of open source technologies may question the necessity and ethics of reliance on proprietary technologies when open source products are available. These are valid concerns, particularly as specific hardware and software become increasingly ingrained in pedagogies and educational initiatives. If corporations dictate what happens in our classrooms, we lose the freedom to develop our

own curricula. But new media composing, like all composing, requires particular technologies. We must, therefore, find ways to obtain these technologies without sacrificing pedagogical autonomy. Open source technologies offer one solution. The open source community is developing software equivalent to commercial software, but much of it is still in its infancy and can require a high level of technological savvy to use. In addition, in solving one infrastructure problem, it may raise another: IT staff are sometimes reluctant to install open source software because they see it as incomplete and bug-ridden. Open source technologies also raise concerns about sustainability and maintenance: how long will they remain available? Who will provide support for technical problems?

Resolving the issues we have identified in this section requires firm dedication from all invested parties, which is why such a course cannot be developed overnight. The Writing with Video partnership began with the sharing of interdisciplinary knowledge through reading groups and informal discussions and continued for over a decade before manifesting itself in this course. Even though working cross-disciplinarily can be more difficult and time-intensive, such an approach is necessary for the sound pedagogical development and long-term viability of such a course. The exigency of new media composing now situates us at a place where these connections are crucial. We hope what we have outlined here isolates key questions and strategies others can use in developing similar initiatives that provide institutional spaces to explore more fully what happens when composition comes off the page.

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<sup>1</sup> Computers and composition scholars have explored the presence of such multimodal texts in the workplace; for example, see Clay Spinuzzi (2001). Scholars in technical communication in particular have studied such multimodal texts, but, as Amber Lancaster pointed out in her Computers and Writing 2006 talk, they have yet to fully

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embrace video as a communication form, although this is becoming an increasingly sought after skill in the workplace.

<sup>ii</sup> Video is not a single mode; it incorporates word, image, and sound.

<sup>iii</sup> For a complete syllabus and all writing prompts, see [www.writingwithvideo.net](http://www.writingwithvideo.net).

<sup>iv</sup> The value of the oscillation between looking at and looking through is discussed by Richard Lanham (1993) and Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999). For a complication of this oscillation, see Collin Brooke (2002).

<sup>v</sup> Johnson-Eilola (2005) adopts the notion of symbolic-analytic work from labor theorist Robert Reich.

<sup>vi</sup> All students consented to the use of their real names in this chapter.

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