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The First Time Print Died: Revisiting Composition's Multimedia Turn (1967–74)

IN A 2004 ARTICLE IN *CCC*, Kathleen Blake Yancey asserts that compositionists are living in a unique moment in which literacy "is in the midst of tectonic change" (298). Placing a particular emphasis on the ways that shifts in communication technologies are transforming definitions of writing, Yancey argues that "never before has the proliferation of writings outside the academy so counterpointed the compositions inside. Never before have the technologies of writing contributed so quickly to the creation of new genres" (298). Of course, Yancey is far from being the only contemporary scholar to argue that we are living in a moment when shifts in communication technologies are causing a disconnect between the composition classroom and the literacy practices of students. Within the past ten years, we have seen many calls for compositionists to engage students in using digital technologies to compose multimodal texts that blend images, words, and sounds in associative ways (D. Anderson; George; Kress; Takayoshi and Selfe; WIDE; Wysocki). Clearly, many in the field are in agreement with Yancey that we in composition "have a moment" (297).

In this chapter, I seek to turn our field's attention to a previous moment—1967 to 1974—when many teachers of writing were concerned, like Yancey, that shifts in communication technologies necessitated a rethinking of composition's exclusive focus on linear, alphabetic text. Just as Yancey suggests that emerging digital technologies have resulted in a proliferation of multimodal genres of writing, compositionists in the late 1960s and early 1970s were concerned that the electronic revolution had produced a generation

of students who were more interested in multimedia forms of composing—the film, the television program, the comic—than in writing conventional print texts. Indeed, in journal articles and composition textbooks published from 1967 to 1974, we can uncover numerous compositionists engaging similar concerns and making similar arguments to the ones many scholars are making today.

At the turn of the 1970s, numerous compositionists argued that writing courses would cease to be relevant unless they paid attention to visual and multimedia texts (Briand; Clare and Ericksen; Corbett; Frank; Hutchinson; P. Mahony; Murphy; Sego). Although most compositionists of the late 1960s and early 1970s focused on visual and multimedia texts as objects of analysis, some scholars in this time period also proposed that writing teachers engage students in *producing* visual and multimedia texts (Clare and Ericksen; Burnett and Thomason; Kytle; Murphy; Sparke and McKowen; Wiener). Furthermore, a few compositionists of the early 1970s suggested that the electronic revolution necessitated a rethinking of the field's conventional privileging of linearity and originality in print texts, arguing instead that writing teachers should engage students in analyzing and/or producing participatory, associative texts that made meaning through juxtaposition, incorporated found images and words, and enabled audience interaction (Kytle; Lutz; Sparke and McKowen).

Although I agree with Yancey that our current digital moment is unique, I nevertheless would contend that contemporary compositionists have much to learn from our field's previous electronic moment—much to learn from the mostly forgotten ways that writing teachers sought to transform their pedagogical practices and materials to account for the seemingly "new media" of film, television, and Xerox machines. In these past pedagogical experiments, we can find some "lost threads" (Dunn) that can help us reimagine our digital work; we may not be able to adopt past pedagogical practices unaltered, but we can use past practices as inventive heuristics for rethinking our contemporary digital pedagogies. And, at the same time, we can (with the advantage of hindsight) see some of the limitations in arguments that past compositionists made about the new media of their day, causing us to question the limitations of some our own quite similar claims about the new media of our current moment. Finally, by recovering writing teachers' past experiments engaging new media before the rise of the personal computer, we can better elucidate the unique disciplinary expertise that we *as compositionists* bring to crafting new media texts that blend words, images, and sounds in associative ways.

Although the term "new media" is popularly used in reference to contemporary technologies such as digital video, blogs, and social networking sites, many scholars have argued that the study of new media should not be confined to the contemporary digital moment alone—that we can better understand new(er) digital media if we contextualize them in relation to old(er) media (Banks; Baron; Bolter and Grusin; Gitelman; McCorkle; Reid). As Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey Pingree assert, we must be mindful that "all media were once new" (xi), and thus scholars will better be able to understand the contemporary dynamics of "new media" if we look back to past moments when other forms of media were first introduced. At moments when media are new, they tend to "pass through a phase of identity crisis, a crisis precipitated at least by the uncertain status of the given medium in relation to established, known media and their functions" (Gitelman and Pingree xii). As we once again face a moment of "crisis" as we encounter a generation of so-called "digital natives" (Prensky; Palfrey and Gasser) in the classroom, it can be instructive to investigate ways past composition teachers responded to the "crisis" of teaching a generation of students who had grown up watching television.

Seeking to historicize our field's current attempts to respond to technological change, I present here four multimedia tracks from turn-of-the-1970s composition—four tracks in which compositionists grapple creatively with the waning significance of print literacy in the lives of their students. In track 1, "Classical Rhetoric for the Electronic Student," I listen carefully to the ways Edward P. J. Corbett engaged with Marshall McLuhan's theories of new media.

In particular, I suggest that Corbett's revival of classical rhetoric pedagogy reflected his *ambivalent* response to emerging technologies such as television. On the one hand, Corbett sought to demonstrate that classical rhetorical theories were particularly relevant to the multimedia forms of communication valued by youth. Yet, on the other hand, Corbett's revival of linear forms of oratory also represented an attempt to resist what he saw as they unnecessarily fragmented and illogical nature of much new media discourse.

In track 2, "Current-Traditional Multimedia," I explore how Esther Burnett, Sandra Thomason, and Harvey Wiener worked to integrate collages, photo essays, and cassette slideshows into composition courses—highlighting ways that multimedia composing could be used to enhance the invention of alphabetic texts. Although I consider how contemporary teachers might productively build upon this past multimedia work, I also turn a critical lens on how Burnett, Thomason, and Wiener at times employed new media in order to reinforce traditional (and sometimes problematic) pedagogical practices.

In track 3, "Inventive Juxtapositions," I analyze the multimedia turn in composition textbook design, focusing especially on the innovative integration of visual and alphabetic materials in William Sparke and Clark McKowen's *Montage: Investigations in Language* (1970). Whereas many multimedia textbooks in this period used visuals in supplemental ways, *Montage* usefully engaged students in both analyzing and *producing* visual texts, highlighting especially the inventive possibilities of juxtaposing words and images.

In track 4, "Composition as Assemblage," I engage Ray Kytle's largely forgotten 1972 *Comp Box* (a boxed collection of photocopied materials that students were invited to remix and extend). In particular, I argue that Kytle usefully crafted a multimedia pedagogy that engaged students in critically interrogating and challenging the ways that media texts construct reality—a pedagogy that might usefully inform contemporary attempts to integrate digital media production and cultural studies critique. In addition, I explore ways that Kytle's *Comp Box* productively destabilized conventional notions of "originality" and "linearity" in print texts.

TRACK 1: CLASSICAL RHETORIC FOR THE ELECTRONIC STUDENT

In addition to advocating for the integration of speaking and writing in composition classes, Edward P. J. Corbett also argued that rhetorically minded compositionists should pay attention to "how electronic media have radically altered the ways in which we acquire, structure and express our knowledge of the world around us" ("Rhetoric in Search" 174). In seeking to understand how the teaching of rhetoric might need to change in light of emerging electronic media, Corbett frequently drew on the work of Marshall McLuhan ("Rhetoric of the Open" 289, 292; "Rhetoric in Search," 174–175; "What Is Being Revived," 172). Although Corbett at times expressed skepticism about some of McLuhan's more radical claims, he nevertheless also asserted "that Marshall McLuhan's book *Understanding Media* be made required reading for all teachers of English" ("What Is Being Revived," 172)—suggesting in particular that McLuhan could help teachers understand how the ubiquity of television was transforming the rhetorical practices of youth.

In many ways, Corbett's famous 1969 essay, "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist," represents his attempt to come to terms with his ambivalence about how shifts in communication technologies were influencing rhetorical practices. In this essay, Corbett compares the rhetoric of the Renaissance (the Gutenberg era) with the rhetoric of the 1960s (the electronic era). In contrast to the Renaissance focus on the linear printed text as the central form of persuasion, Corbett notes that 1960s youth privileged nonverbal, fragmentary means of persuasion in their attempts to argue persuasively for social change. Enumerating the many ways that young protestors employed music, visual posters, costumes, and other nonverbal modes of persuasion, Corbett notes somewhat regretfully that "words, of course, do play some part in these demonstrations, but words clearly play a subsidiary role, and it is notable how fragmentary these verbal utterances are" (292). Although Corbett is personally ambivalent about what he sees as the declining centrality of linear, alphabetic text in political discourse, he also tends to follow McLuhan in viewing the shift to nonverbal modes of

communication as an effect of the proliferation of electronic media. In particular, Corbett asserts that the young demonstrators' turn away from the printed word "serves to confirm Marshall McLuhan's claim that the electronic media have expanded and intensified the human sensoria. Aural, visual, and tactual images have an immediacy, an intensity, a simultaneity about them that words strung out one after the other on a page can hardly achieve" (292).

As a rhetorician, Corbett knows that he has to adapt his message about classical rhetoric to the concerns of 1960s students, taking into account their "emotional disposition, aspirations and prejudices" ("A New Look" 18). Thus, Corbett sets out to demonstrate to students that classical rhetoric is in fact uniquely relevant to the electronic generation—that there are striking similarities between the world of Aristotle and the world of 1960s youth. Drawing on McLuhan, Corbett asserts that the electronic media are increasingly returning U.S. society to the "the audio-visual world in which rhetoric had its beginning. Technology, of course, has made it a different audio-visual world from what the Greeks knew, but it is still fundamentally the time-world of sound and icon that the Greeks knew rather than the space-world of graphic symbols that we have become accustomed to ever since Gutenberg invented the printing press" ("Rhetoric in Search" 174–75). In other words, classical rhetoric presents a viable model for the electronic age precisely because it was not initially designed for print—because it was developed in an age when auditory forms of communication were supreme.

In considering how classical rhetorical theories might inform the analysis and production of electronic media, Corbett focuses especially on elucidating the transferability of classical conceptions of audience analysis:

> If as McLuhan claims, electronic media are replacing typographical media as the principal means of informing, persuading, and entertaining the citizenry, we shall certainly have to develop a new rhetoric to serve this age. But I propose that a rhetoric of "hot" and "cool" electronic media has some valuable lessons to learn from Aristotelian rhetoric. And the most valuable lesson it can learn is Aristotle's insistence that the audience is the chief informing principle in any kind of communicative discourse. ("A New Look" 19)

In Corbett's view, theorists of new media such as McLuhan focus so much on how communication technologies shape society (on how the medium is the message) that they neglect to consider the important role of audience in shaping electronic discourse. A student reading McLuhan might gain a heightened sense of how communication technologies are reshaping her social world, but she would not be likely to gain a strong understanding of how she might shape communication technologies to persuade particular audiences for particular purposes. In this way, Corbett implicitly asserts that the classical rhetorical techniques for analyzing an audience of a speech are not necessarily substantially different than the techniques required for analyzing the audience of a print or electronic composition. If students could become sensitive to the need to adapt to audience in one form of media, they might transfer that understanding of audience adaptation to their composing of other forms of media.

Although Corbett frequently called for compositionists to apply classical rhetorical principles to the analysis and production of electronic texts, it is important to note that his foundational textbook, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, remained quite conventional. Indeed, the first two editions of the textbook (1965 and 1972) contained no images at all and largely avoided mention of electronic forms of discourse. While lack of time and space is certainly one reason Corbett didn't substantively engage new media in his textbook, it is also the case that Corbett was deeply ambivalent about the transformation in communication he was witnessing, at times even nostalgically wishing for a return to the Gutenberg era ("Rhetoric of the Open" 295). In many ways, Corbett seemed to want to use new media analysis as a creative hook for convincing students of the value of studying the classical rhetorical tradition, but he wasn't quite ready to use new media as an inventive method for rethinking the fundamental assumptions of the composition textbook or the writing assignment.

Although Corbett's conception of the influence of new media on writing instruction was somewhat limiting, I still would contend

that it is important that we as field engage more deeply with the role that new media played in the classical rhetoric revival. When we look back at Corbett's writing from 1967 to 1972, we can come to recognize that compositionists have a long history of seeking to adapt the teaching of writing to shifts in communication technologies—a long history of exploring how we might draw on rhetorical theories to teach students to analyze and produce multimodal texts that blend images, words, and sounds. In other words, Corbett's work can remind us that considerations of new media should not be left to "computers-and-writing" or "technical communication" specialists alone; rather, we can come to see engaging new media as a central part of the disciplinary heritage and ongoing work of all scholars and teachers of rhetoric and composition.

TRACK 2: CURRENT-TRADITIONAL MULTIMEDIA

Whereas Corbett frequently called for compositionists to engage with new media in their classrooms, he provided very few practical pedagogical examples for how this might be accomplished. In contrast, numerous other compositionists in this period (Burnett and Thomason; Murphy; Wiener) published articles offering detailed descriptions of how they incorporated multimedia assignments (slideshows, photo essays, collages) into their composition pedagogies. In outlining and justifying their strategies for introducing multimedia production in composition, these scholars often positioned their work as an attempt to adapt composition instruction to respond to the visual preferences of a new generation of students who had grown up watching television; yet, at the same time, these multimedia advocates also worked hard to demonstrate that their technological innovations could ultimately serve the traditional goals of the writing class.

In a 1974 article in *College English,* Harvey S. Wiener offers a compelling discussion of ways to integrate multimedia composing (photo essays, collages, tape recording) into a traditional "modes of discourse" curriculum.[1] In particular, Wiener details how composition teachers can employ informal multimedia composing to help students invent ideas for modes-based writing assignments in

personal narrative, description, and comparison/contrast. For example, in his classes, Wiener asks students to create a visual photo collage (using found images from magazines) in response to the question, "What Am I?"; he then asks the students to translate their imagistic collages into a personal essay on the same topic (569). In another exercise, Wiener suggests that students might take photos of a place as a way to gather specific details to include in a "descriptive" essay (573). In addition to discussing numerous ways that visual photography and collage might help students develop ideas for papers, Wiener also encourages the use of audio tape recording as a research technique. In particular, Wiener suggests that students might tape-record and transcribe interviews with high school students and college students—using quotes from these interviews as the basis for an alphabetic essay that "compares and contrasts" the experiences of the two groups (573).

In making the case for the value of integrating multimedia composing into the modes-based writing class, Wiener focuses especially on detailing the changing interests and backgrounds of young students. Positioning the 1970s as a moment of a crisis in print literacy, Wiener begins his article by boldly asserting:

> It is no news to anyone teaching college English today that students sitting before us make up a non-literary generation. . . . To the youngster plugged in to his transistor radio, transfixed before the technicolor ghosts of the tv screen, bombarded by magazine pictures of wild and erotic action—in all but a very transitory sense, for him the word is buried in a landslide of visual and aural excitement. (566)

In addition to noting that many students had grown up in a technological environment where visual and audio media increasingly seemed to be supplanting the written word, Wiener also suggests that many students have come to fear the act of alphabetic writing as a result of past school experiences when they were penalized (with the red pen) for making errors. Recognizing that students fears about "correctness" might make it difficult for them to employ the written word as a tool for developing ideas, Wiener argues

that media compositions such as the visual collage "can involve the student in an unthreatening medium which gives him the chance to express his thinking without fear of penalty . . . it helps reduce self-consciousness and allows the growth of an element of creative expression that is often lost in the student's panic for correctness" (567). In this way, Wiener productively suggests that media compositions (collages, photo essays, tape-recorded interviews) can be a kind of bridge to print literacy for students who have had negative experiences composing with alphabetic text in the past.

In explaining why multimedia composing is a particularly powerful way to enhance students' creative expression, Wiener intriguingly emphasizes the potentially positive effects of the reality that most English teachers do not have any experience "correcting" or "grading" multimedia texts:

> as English instructors looking upon a student's collage or photo essay, which of us will say, "This is right" or "This is wrong"? Our responses are essentially emotional: although we would surely correct a dangling modifier or a misspelled word (as would every one of the student's previous English teachers) there is not much in a visual presentation that we would know how to grade or correct. Committed so to words, we are much less rigid in our responses to non-verbal impressions offered by students. (567)

Although Wiener celebrates multimedia composing for the ways it can encourage a focus on idea generation over error correction, he ironically never seems to consider that English teachers might also employ informal, low-stakes writing as way to help students overcome their panic for correctness. In Wiener's worldview (not uncommon at the time), it appears almost unthinkable that an English teacher could look past the errors in an alphabetic text to focus mostly on responding to the ideas; the only way Wiener can imagine to move beyond error-centered pedagogy is to incorporate visual and auditory invention activities that (temporarily) remove print from consideration.

While Wiener's advocacy of multimedia production in composition was certainly quite radical and innovative, his broader writing

pedagogy was paradoxically quite conservative and traditional. After all, he made sure to demonstrate that multimedia composing could be used to help students learn to write relatively formulaic, modes-based essays; he assured teachers that the ultimate goal was still to teach students to produce error-free prose (and that of course English teachers must always "correct" every error in any piece of alphabetic writing that students complete). By demonstrating ways that his multimedia exercises could easily be integrated into current-traditional, modes-based curricula, Wiener strategically enhanced the likelihood that conventional teachers might be willing to adopt aspects of his approach.

Similarly seeking to show how new media composing could fit with traditional pedagogical goals, Esther Burnett and Sandra Thomason published an article in *CCC* in 1974 describing how they asked students to create multimedia presentations as a way to teach traditional research writing skills. As part of a course in which students both analyzed and produced examples of life writing, Burnett and Thomason gave students the opportunity to compose a cassette slideshow biography that included "a written story of about 1,350 words, a 10–15 minute audio track, and 50–70 slides" (427). For slides, students would take pictures of images from books, periodicals, and postcards, create their own sketches and title slides, and sometimes compose original photographs (427–28). For audio, students might include voiceover, background music, or historical audio clips (428). Students with access to audio mixing equipment might layer sounds on tape, while others might play a tape of music while reading their "voiceover" script live (429).

In explaining their choice to teach students to compose cassette slideshows, Burnett and Thomason emphasize that incorporating multimedia production could be a way to engage students who otherwise tend to find alphabetic writing boring—a way to make composition "relevant to their [the students'] world of movies and TV" (426). Revealing the ways that the multimedia slideshow can be motivating for students, Burnett and Thomason tell the story of one of their students, Jim Baker, who had "found English composition uncongenial" (426) until the slideshow project. Not

only did Jim report that he really enjoyed producing a slideshow that was well received by peers and instructor; he also noted that "never have I worked so hard for any project" (429). This argument that students are often more motivated by multimedia projects is one that frequently recurs in twenty-first-century case studies of students' multimodal composing (D. Anderson; Ellertson; Ross). Although contemporary multimodal teachers tend to suggest that today's "digital natives" are unique in their preference for new media forms of composing, the 1970s work of Burnett and Thomason can remind us that students have long welcomed multimedia alternatives to conventional writing assignments.

In addition to highlighting the ways that cassette slideshow projects can enhance student motivation and engagement, Burnett and Thomason also seek to demonstrate that their project still teaches "the research and writing methods required for the term paper: the thesis sentence, outline, footnote references, and bibliography" (426). Although Burnett and Thomason strongly emphasize that the cassette slideshow can be used to teach conventional forms of alphabetic citation, they also suggest that their multimedia project can help the student develop additional technical "skills, with the camera, tape-recorder, and projector, even the copystand and mixer, so that he can produce a multimedia show on his own for other college classes and later, perhaps, for teaching, public relations, salesmanship or community service"(426). In this way, Burnett and Thomason position the cassette slideshow assignment as a way both to help students develop conventional research writing skills *and* to enable students to gain experience with the multimedia technologies of composing that were becoming increasingly common in school, civic, and workplace contexts.

In discussing the process of teaching the multimedia slideshow, Burnett and Thomason emphasize that the English teacher's role is primarily to help students with the development of the scripted narration for the presentation. (For assistance with the audio-visual technology, students were assigned to go to the "learning center" in the library). Demonstrating ways that English teachers' conventional expertise is still relevant to the project, Burnett and Thomason suggest that composition instructors can help students learn to write a script "for a listening rather than a reading public" as well as to consider how their images should be arranged to complement their spoken words (428). Finally, Burnett and Thomason insist that the student should be instructed "to clear his script with his English instructor for grammar, clarity, and pronunciation of difficult words" (429). In this way, Burnett and Thomason (not unlike Wiener) seek to demonstrate that their unconventional slideshow project can still ultimately serve the "current-traditional" goal of teaching students to compose error-free products. Although the English teacher may not be an expert in the technology of slideshow composition, Burnett and Thomason assert that the writing instructor should still remain the ultimate arbiter of correct grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. In this sense, Burnett and Thomason's "innovative" slideshow pedagogy can be seen as somewhat conservative—especially when we consider that their article was published in *CCC* in the same year as the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" statement (coauthored by Smitherman).[2]

In recovering the history of the cassette slideshow, I seek on the one hand to demonstrate that compositionists have a rich heritage of teaching students to craft scripted narration for multimedia narratives—a heritage that substantially predates the contemporary digital turn in the field. Yet, I also think that the history of the cassette slideshow can remind us to be wary of the ways that multimedia projects can be problematically designed to "force the new media to do the work of the old" (McLuhan and Fiore 81). After all, Burnett and Thomason conceived of the cassette slideshow primarily as a way to teach the conventional term paper by other means. Rather than viewing the multimedia turn as an opportunity to rethink the assumptions of their seemingly error-driven, product-centered pedagogy, Burnett and Thomason instead sought primarily to use new media as a way to make writing term papers more interesting for students. Similarly, Harvey Wiener worked hard to fit his media composition assignments into a traditional "modes of discourse" approach, neglecting to consider ways that new media might cause us to question the rigid categories of modal pedagogy. Although it

certainly can be useful to employ new media as way to make existing composition pedagogies more engaging, it also can be important to remain open to the ways that new media might enable us to reinvent what it means to teach composition—as the teachers I discuss in tracks 3 and 4 did.

TRACK 3: INVENTIVE JUXTAPOSITIONS

At the same time as scholars such as Wiener, Burnett, and Thomason were publishing academic articles about electronic rhetoric and pedagogy, many compositionists were composing "multi-media textbooks" (Sego) for use in writing classes. Especially in the period from 1970 to 1972, there were numerous composition textbooks published that incorporated a wide range of media texts, such as photographs, film scripts, comics, cartoons, advertisements, music scores, and paintings (Clare and Ericksen; Dunstan and Garlan; Frank; Hutchinson; Kytle; Mahoney and Schmittroth; Sparke and McKowen).

Although these multimedia textbooks were unusual for the diversity of visual and alphabetic selections they included, most of them remained quite conventional in arrangement, consisting of a series of separate units with accompanying pedagogical apparatus (commentary on selections, assignment prompts, questions to consider). In contrast, William Sparke and Clark McKowen's 1970 *Montage: Investigations in Language* greatly pushed the boundaries of conventional textbook design, seeking to create an interactive, nonlinear experience that could enable students to invent ideas through creative juxtaposition. In contrast to conventional methods for organizing textbooks, *Montage* includes no table of contents, no chapters or unit divisions, and no conventional headnotes explaining the selections. The central premise of the book is spelled out on the second page: "There is only one way in which a person acquires a new idea: the combination or association of two or more ideas he already has into a new juxtaposition in such a manner as to discover a relationship among them of which he was previously unaware. AN IDEA IS A FEAT OF ASSOCIATION" (Sparke and McKowen 2). These sentences are so clearly central to the book that they are repeated a few words at a time from pages 3 to 41 (often in large colored font superimposed

over other alphabetic and imagistic selections).[3]

Whereas most multimedia textbooks in this period tended to separate imagistic and alphabetic selections (or to use images to illustrate alphabetic concepts), *Montage* often juxtaposed images and words in more complex, nuanced ways. For example, throughout the first thirty-nine pages of the book, the authors occasionally include roughly cutout images of common objects—plate fragments, locks, soap bubbles, wood—that seem to have no obvious relation to the text on the pages where they appear. On page 44, however, all of these objects are reassembled to make a human head that appears along with the caption, "combination." In this way, the "montage head" demonstrates the importance of reading the text in a nonlinear manner, looking not just at how everything on one page or in one chapter is connected but rather looking at how fragments from diverse pages might be reassembled to create new compositions. Of course, in the case of the "montage head," the authors of the book have already done the reassembling for the student. Later on in the book, however, the authors offer a blank "do it yourself head" that they encourage students to fill with images that represent their experience of engaging the textbook (292). In many ways, the recurring image of the "montage head" (or brain) presents an implicit argument about the associational nature of cognition—an argument that the process of invention involves making connections among disparate words and images in our minds.

In addition to emphasizing the ways that visual images (photographs, drawings, paintings, film stills) may be juxtaposed to create new ideas and compositions, *Montage* also seeks to heighten students' awareness of the rhetorical aspects of typography. Throughout the book, the authors juxtapose a relatively standard, black sanserif font (for body text), with diversely colored, large, script and serif fonts (often layering words in one font directly over words in another font). Breaking standard conventions for typographic alignment, *Montage* often features blocks of text that are slanted or even upside-down. Whereas typographical choices might pass unnoticed in more conventional texts, *Montage* almost demands that its readers consider the rhetorical effects of typography.

Revealing their strong interest in teaching students to analyze the visual aspects of printed texts, Sparke and McKowen encourage teachers to engage students in producing their own magazines. In addition to suggesting that students could write and edit magazine articles, Sparke and McKowen note that

> students can also gain insights into the visual aspects of a magazine by creating layouts. Teams of students can be assigned to suggest photographs and artwork (including cartoons) and to decide on the content, size, and placement of the illustrations. Type should also be considered. A printer can be invited to the class to discuss and demonstrate the various type families. (*Teacher's Manual* 46)

In this way, Sparke and McKowen quite radically assert that the teaching of writing necessarily entails the teaching of visual design—that students should have the opportunity to consider how choices of typography and/as image might alter or enhance the writing that they compose. Although many scholars have pointed to the rise of digital technologies as an impetus for compositionists to pay attention to the visual design of texts (Ball; George; Hocks; Wysocki), it is worth noting that the electronic era of the early 1970s was also a time in composition studies when scholars began to question the privileging of black letters on a white page as the most valued form of discourse.

In addition to highlighting the importance of visual design in print texts, *Montage* also suggests that paying attention to film and television could ultimately help students and teachers invent new ideas for composing alphabetic writing. In explaining why they frequently juxtaposed film scripts and movie stills with more conventional printed texts, Sparke and McKowen note that teachers should strive to make students aware of the ways art forms influence one another, suggesting that teachers engage students in exploring how "Chagall may have paved the way for our understanding of montage in movies, but TV in turn may have made novels such as Ulysses more understandable . . . Newer 'non' books [such as the Montage textbook] may have been influenced by quick cuts on

TV" (*Teacher's Manual* 49). Indeed, the very title of the textbook, *Montage*, represents a way to resee the process of writing through a cinematic term. Whereas film theorists and practitioners such as Eisenstein and Vertov used the term montage to refer to the ways that new concepts could be created through the dialectical juxtaposition of conflicting moving images, Sparke and McKowen employ the notion of montage to name a process of invention that could guide the production of alphabetic texts.

At the current moment when numerous compositionists are experimenting with incorporating still- and moving-image production into our courses, it can be instructive to revisit Sparke and McKowen's attempt to reconceptualize writing in terms of montage theory. Rather than seeing images as purely illustrative of words, Sparke and McKowen remind us that the dialectical tensions between and among images and words can provoke new insights. Challenging the notion that we should focus solely on teaching students to use images to make linear, "coherent" arguments, Sparke and McKowen encourage us to engage students in employing the juxtaposition of words and images as a tool of invention.

TRACK 4: COMPOSITION AS ASSEMBLAGE

Although *Montage* may have deviated greatly from the conventions for arranging materials in textbooks, it was still similar to other more conventional composition readers in that it presented a series of materials organized in a bound book. In contrast, Ray Kytle's radical 1972 *Comp Box: A Writing Workshop Approach to Composition* offers students a box of *unbound* photocopied materials as well as an author's guide that explains ways that students might draw upon the materials (cutting, pasting, rearranging, adding, deleting) to make their own texts. Seeking to provide students and teachers with an inventive "multimedia sampling of our culture" (19), Kytle includes photographs, drawings, advertisements, comics, poems, articles from mainstream publications, articles from underground publications, transcribed interviews, and instructions for making films.[4]

Rather than writing conventional papers in response to the materials in the box, Kytle instead suggests that students could draw upon

the materials to create an edited anthology, a magazine, a rhetoric text, or a "mixed bag." In creating their own publications (magazines, books, boxes), students could include some of the texts from the box, though they would likely also add some material that they composed themselves. In considering the kinds of texts that students might create to supplement the selections in the box, Kytle proposes that students should be able to choose any modality and medium that they wish: "it might be a page on which visual media heighten or interpret printed media, it might be a collage, it might be a cartoon or comic strip, it might be an original essay or narrative, it might be an edited tape of an interview with accompanying photographs—it might be anything" (Kytle 16–17). In addition to the many kinds of texts enumerated above, Kytle also suggests that students might compose photo essays, films, or multimedia slideshows.

In rejecting the material form of the bound textbook, Kytle ultimately seeks to challenge modes of education that place the student in the role of the passive recipient. Arguing that the bound textbook inherently reinforces the model of the teacher who fills the student with knowledge, Kytle asserts that "if the medium is the message, then the bound textbook—linear, inflexible, static—cannot encourage nonlinear, flexible, and dynamic response. Furthermore, whatever its intrinsic excellence, a bound textbook necessarily forces the student into a passive role. Using a bound book, the student is recipient, not participant; he is audience, not actor" (2). Even though the bound textbook might incorporate texts relevant to students' lives and might experiment with associative models of arrangement, the bound textbook is still ultimately a collection of texts selected and arranged by an expert author. A student might be able to write a critical response to the text, but the student couldn't alter the text in any substantial way beyond perhaps writing or drawing in a few designated blank spaces (as in *Montage*). In contrast, the presentation of a box with *unbound* pages encourages students to actively create their own boxes by cutting up, rearranging, adding to, and deleting materials.

Reinforcing the notion that the *Comp Box* should be treated as a fluid, alterable text, Kytle reminds students and teachers that "the comp box is not a book. It is source material for a book or magazine.

But not mine, yours. Whatever you do, don't treat the comp box with respect. Cut it up, throw parts of it away, rearrange the bits and pieces" (Kytle 77). Further emphasizing the fact that the *Comp Box* should not be treated as a conventional book, Kytle also informs his readers that he instructed the box's designer to organize the selections in a completely random fashion (77). Rather than asking students to figure out the authors' intent in juxtaposing particular items (as *Montage* often did), Kytle seeks to encourage students to rearrange the text to create their own inventive juxtapositions.

In addition to striving to make students active participants in creating knowledge, Kytle also seeks to heighten students' critical awareness of the ways that media texts construct reality. In particular, Kytle suggests that teachers might help students learn to critically analyze news coverage by assigning them to compose "media collages" (39–40). To make a collage, students would first research and photocopy the ways diverse publications represented an event. Once students have gathered a wide variety of photocopied material, Kyle then instructs them that "you can juxtapose articles that present widely different accounts and interpretations; you can juxtapose conflicting and incompatible headlines; you can juxtapose headlines or excerpted passages with incongruous photographs" (40). This collage would then serve as the basis for an introductory essay that analyzes how and *why* the variations in coverage occurred. For Kytle, it is not enough to have students look at media texts and write about them; rather, it is essential that students actually physically transform media texts—through collage—so that they can gain more complex insights about media manipulation. Accentuating this point about how making collaged media can lead to critical insight, Kytle also suggests that students try to compose "a slanted collage of news coverage . . . to illustrate how judicious selection and editing can slant the way an event is perceived" (40). If students go through the process of selecting and editing images to represent an event in a particular way, Kytle surmises that they might be much less likely to see visual images as presenting undistorted truth.

In addition to challenging conventional notions of media objectivity, Kytle's *Comp Box* also offers a radical critique of the composition

field's traditional privileging of individual authorship and "originality." Although Kytle suggests that students will likely want to create some of their own materials in order to include perspectives not present in the box, he also leaves open the possibility that students might create a new composition based in large part on remixed fragments from the box itself, from other published sources, or from both. In Kytle's view, the act of placing a found image and a found text together was in itself an act of writing to be valued. By drawing very little distinction between the act of arranging found texts and the act of composing "original" words and images, Kytle implicitly suggests that all composing is ultimately a kind of remix or assemblage—that the notion of the wholly original, wholly individual text is a myth.

Although Kytle's work offers a strong critique of conventional notions of original authorship, he never specifically addresses the related concerns of copyright and intellectual property; curiously, however, the front matter of the author's guide does include a rather conventional copyright notice, which states "no part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means . . . without permission in writing by the publisher." Ironically, if students and teachers actually followed the instructions that Kytle gives in the author's guide, they would likely be violating the law. Of course, it seems clear that Aspen Communications (the publisher) was not all that terribly concerned about students remixing the work since they signed off on the guide in which Kytle encourages the practice; furthermore, the people who owned the copyrights to the individual pieces in the box would be unlikely to ever find out about the students' remixed compositions as they would likely only be shared with friends and peers. In contrast, the contemporary rise of digital publication would make it somewhat more likely that a student could receive a "cease and desist letter" imploring him or her to take down a remixed work (Lessig). Although Kytle was able to ignore intellectual property concerns in his teaching of remixed composition, I would suggest that contemporary instructors should make discussion of the politics and ethics of intellectual property a central part of their

pedagogies (DeVoss and Webb; DeVoss and Porter; Johnson-Eilola and Selber; Rife). Ultimately, in order to be able to productively build upon Kytle's vision of composition as assemblage, we will need to become vocal "fair-use" activists who vigorously defend students' and teachers' right to remix copyrighted materials for the purposes of analysis, parody, and critique (Center, "Code"; Digirhet; DeVoss and Webb; Faden).

Although Kytle's advocacy of composition as assemblage occurred in a very different context than the contemporary digital environment, it is important to remember that we have a long history in our field of questioning the ideal of the original text—a history that predates both the rise of digital technologies and the so-called "social turn" in scholarship. Whereas many contemporary scholars point to computer technologies as contributing to the development of a remix culture (DeVoss and Porter; Johnson-Eilola and Selber; Sorapure), we might remember that the Xerox machine was also a technology that propelled compositionists to reconceptualize writing as visual and alphabetic assemblage. Indeed, McLuhan (writing a few years before Kytle) offered a compelling analysis of the ways the Xerox machine was causing people to question notions of original authorship. After noting the fact that the invention of printing led to the development of copyright and emphasis on writing as individual expression, McLuhan then suggests that

> Xerography—every man's brain picker—heralds the times of instant publishing. Anybody can now become both author and publisher. Take any books on any subject and custom-make your own book by simply xeroxing a chapter from this one, a chapter from that one—instant steal. As new technologies come into play, people are less and less convinced of the importance of self-expression. (McLuhan and Fiore 123)

In many ways, Kytle's *Comp Box* can be considered an inventive attempt to explore how the technology of xerography might change the teaching of writing. After all, Kytle authored his *Comp Box* by making extensive use of Xerox technology, and he seemed to imagine that students would do the same in creating their own anthologies,

magazines, rhetoric texts, or mixed bags. In addition to telling the story of the development of the field of computers-and-writing (Hawisher et al.; Inman), we might also begin to tell the story of *xerography and/as writing.*

Although Kytle's belief in the inventive power of xerography may seem dated in the contemporary era of the "paperless" classroom, many of his pedagogical ideas remain strikingly relevant to the current moment. After all, digital technologies greatly increase the possibilities for creating "media collages" and other critical remix compositions. Whereas Kytle's students were limited mostly to remixing printed texts, students today can now download and remix a wide range of audio and videotexts available on the web (Jenkins; Lessig). Rather than just teaching students to write papers analyzing the rhetoric of digital media, Kytle reminds us that students might best learn to critically analyze media if they have the opportunity to *remake it.*

TRACK 5: REPRISE

From 1967 to 1974 we *had* a moment in the field—a moment when many scholars and teachers were rethinking what it meant to teach writing in light of proliferating new media technologies (television, photocopiers, slide projectors, cassette recorders). This sense of "crisis" propelled compositionists to innovate in designing pedagogical materials, course assignments, and theories of composing. For some scholars such as Corbett and Wiener, attention to new media remained mostly a creative hook to engage students in more conventional forms of pedagogy; for others, such as Kytle, new media offered an opportunity to rethink pedagogy in more radical ways. Although this past technological moment was certainly different from our own, I nevertheless would suggest that contemporary digital composition teachers can learn much from critically revisiting the successes, failures, and contradictions of past compositionists' approaches to new media. To this end, I offer here three critical refrains culled from the composition library at the turn of the 1970s—three refrains that might help us productively resee contemporary digital writing pedagogy.

Refrain 1: Multimedia Can Be Used to Reinscribe Conventional Pedagogies

In order to persuade teachers to consider incorporating new media, it can be helpful to demonstrate that employing a new technology can help them meet their traditional pedagogical goals. Yet, when we remember the ways that new media was sometimes used to support current-traditional, modes pedagogies in the 1970s, we can be encouraged to question what problematic practices may be reinscribed by our contemporary new-media experiments. Too often, advocates of digital pedagogy (myself included) tend to position multimodal composing as inherently progressive. When we incorporate still image, audio, and video production into our classes, we tend to imagine that our technological innovations are necessarily transformative because they seek to make our courses more relevant to the lives of students and because they ask us to rethink what counts as "writing." But, we must pause to question in what ways our new multimodal assignments might also continue to reify old (and perhaps problematic) assumptions. For example, if we assign students to craft an audio public service announcement, we may inadvertently end up suggesting that they make a kind of simplistic thesis-driven argument that ignores the complexities of the issue they are tackling—a kind of canned five-paragraph essay in a new medium. If we assign students to craft an autobiographical digital story (combining voiceover with pictures), we may unwittingly end up encouraging them to compose a kind of simple "what-I-did-on-my-summer-vacation" essay that lacks depth even if it includes numerous compelling images.[5]

Quite simply, we must remember that new technologies and new forms of composing will not in and of themselves transform or improve our teaching of composition. In fact, if we are not careful, we can quite easily employ new technologies in order to reinscribe potentially ineffective pedagogies. Of course, I recognize that numerous "computers-and-writing" scholars have (at least since the early 1990s) been eloquently making the argument that we must be critical of how new educational technologies can be employed in problematic ways (Eldred; Hawisher and Selfe; Selber); nevertheless,

I think this important caution is worth restating and revisiting in the light of much of the enthusiastic discourse that has surrounded discussions of multimodal pedagogy in recent years.

Certainly, there is much value in considering how new media can help us meet our traditional pedagogical goals, but I contend that we should also stay alert to how emerging technologies might encourage us to radically rethink our assumptions about teaching. For example, when Ray Kytle encountered the photocopier, he didn't merely consider ways it could support his current pedagogical practices—perhaps by making it easier for him to create a "reader" of essays for students to use as models. Instead, Kytle asked how the photocopier could help him rethink the very notion of a teacher-selected textbook; he asked how the photocopier might be used to encourage students to participate in developing pedagogical materials; he asked how the photocopier might encourage us to question our traditional valuing of "originality" in student writing. In other words, Kytle employed the new technology of the photocopier as a kind of inventive heuristic to help him reimagine the teaching of composition. And, to this, I say, "Right on."

Whenever we consider incorporating a new technology into our pedagogy, we should use this moment as an occasion to ask again such crucial questions as:

What is the role of the teacher in the classroom?
What is the role of the student?
How do we evaluate the quality of student texts?
How do we conceptualize such key terms as audience, invention, revision, process, originality, style, editing, and research (to name a few)?
How might our learning outcomes need to be revised to account for this newer form of writing?

Although I am arguing we should engage these kinds of fundamental questions in response to emerging technologies, I most pointedly don't mean to suggest that we should immediately jump on every technological bandwagon—haphazardly shifting our pedagogies to keep up with the latest digital fads. After all, my central project

in this book is to argue that we should value and build upon our multimodal heritage—that we should be wary of valorizing new technologies so much that we forget the useful elements of our past. Ultimately, then, I would suggest that we should view new technologies not as a force that calls us to jettison our heritage, but rather as a force that encourages us to *resee* and *reimagine* our disciplinary past (as I attempt to do here).

Refrain 2: Juxtaposition and Assemblage Are Powerful Composing Strategies

In order to help students generate ideas for writing, we should consider following Sparke, McKowen, and Kytle in encouraging students to collect a wide variety of "found" words and images and then to explore numerous ways of arranging (or juxtaposing) the visual and alphabetic materials that they have gathered. Instead of focusing multimodal composition instruction solely on teaching students how to combine images and words to make coherent, linear arguments, we should also engage students in employing associative juxtaposition as a heuristic strategy for reseeing and reimagining the world in which they live.[6]

Although it certainly is important to teach students how to focus their inquiries and arguments, we should be careful also to allow ample time for students to collect a wide variety of visual and alphabetic materials so they can employ associative juxtaposition as an invention technique. To this end, we might assign students in a course to keep a digital commonplace book (using free visual mapping software such as Prezi.com or free blogging software such as Wordpress.com). In creating their digital commonplace book, students would be encouraged to collect snippets of material (still images, alphabetic quotes, video clips) drawn from a wide variety of print and digital sources. Although students might develop a broad theme or question to guide their collection, they should be encouraged to search widely in gathering their materials—to include samples and snippets that they find intriguing even if they don't initially seem to be all that relevant to the project. Once students have amassed a substantial collection of found words and images,

we can then ask them to experiment with composing associative juxtapositions of the words and images they have collected (perhaps making a simple collage with PowerPoint or Prezi). Once students have created their word-and-image collages, we can then ask them to write or audio-record a reflection about the juxtapositions they have created—to consider ways their associative collages might lead them to develop a novel inquiry question or analytical claim that could spur their alphabetic writing.

As we consider possibilities for integrating associative juxtaposition into composition, we might especially explore ways of adapting Kytle's notion of "media collage" to the contemporary digital classroom. In teaching media collage, we could ask students to conduct extensive web and library research into how a particular event was covered in multiple forms of media: online newspapers, blogs, twitter, television, YouTube, and so on. I especially think it useful to assign students to investigate how an event (a war, a summit, the Olympics) has been represented in media outlets from differing countries. Once students have gathered a wide variety of digital samples of coverage (alphabetic quotations, still images, video clips), they can then experiment with arranging their samples into a media collage using free online software such as Prezi.com or Vuvox.com. Following the advice of Kytle, students might compose a collage that attempts to highlight the differences between various news outlets' coverage or they might compose a collage that specifically seeks to offer an ideologically slanted representation of the event. While I believe this kind of digital media collage could potentially be a valuable assignment on its own, I also think it could serve as a robust multimodal invention activity for an alphabetic essay in which students would rhetorically analyze the ways that diverse media outlets strategically select and arrange words, images, and sounds in order to reinforce a particular ideological view of a news event. In this way, the associative practice of media collage could ultimately work to enhance students' ability to compose the kinds of linear analytical essays that are often required in the university.

Refrain 3: We Should Be Skeptical of Narratives of Technological "Crisis"

Finally, a look back at composition at the turn of the 1970s can remind us to take a critical perspective about utopian and dystopian narratives of radical technological change. After all, the printed book did not disappear as Corbett feared and Kytle celebrated. Some of the generation of children who were "raised on TV" grew up to be composition teachers who continued teaching linear print essays; the idea that composition is assemblage is still a somewhat radical claim debated in the pages of our journals. Certainly, the teaching of writing has changed a good deal since 1974, but it hasn't changed exactly in the ways scholars variously predicted, desired, and feared. With this in mind, let us all remember to be humble in our claims about what role today's new media will ultimately play in transforming writing instruction.

When we look back to the turn of the 1970s, we can be reminded that compositionists have a long history of worrying about the declining significance of alphabetic literacy in the lives of young people. In analyzing the influence of emerging technologies on writing pedagogy, turn-of-the-1970s compositionists too often set up a simplistic binary opposition between an older generation that valued print literacy and a younger generation that preferred electronic multimedia. In hindsight, of course, these constructions of generational difference seem somewhat overstated. After all, as the television generation grew up, they continued to read and to write many alphabetic texts (both in print, and more recently, online). Certainly, the cultural production, distribution, and consumption of alphabetic texts has changed quite a bit in the past forty years, but the written word remains a powerful form of communication, and it is likely to remain so in the coming years.

As we analyze the influence of emerging technologies on teaching writing, then, we should be wary of simplistic tales of generational divides such as Marc Prensky's popular distinction between younger "digital natives" and older "digital immigrants." After all, we must remember that age is but one of many social factors that influence the

ways people employ communication technologies in their everyday lives. Rather than drawing simplistic divisions between young and old, we need to consider more carefully the ways that interlocking structures of race, class, disability, and gender influence individuals' abilities to access digital composing technologies (Banks; Kirtley; Grabill; Moran; C. Selfe; Selber; Slatin).

As we explore ways that emerging technologies are influencing young students' communication practices, we also must remember that simple "material access" to a computer is only a small part of what it takes for a person to develop a robust and critical technology literacy—only a small part of what it takes for a person to be able to effectively use, critique, and ultimately transform emerging digital composing technologies (Banks).[7] For example, even when teachers encounter classes of students who all have material access to relatively new personal laptops (as I often do), they will still likely find that there are great differences in the functional, rhetorical, and critical literacies that students bring to digital forms of composing (Selber). Despite the rise of "participatory culture" online (Jenkins), I still often encounter many young students who have never made a digital video, never posted a comment on a blog, never played an online game. Despite the proliferation of digital reading and writing technologies, I still encounter numerous young students who prefer to handwrite rough drafts and invention notes, who prefer to read extended text in print rather than online, who prefer to read alphabetic articles rather than watch online videos. Rather than painting all young students with the same broad brush, we instead need to make time to have robust conversations with our students about the diverse ways they *do* and *do not* employ technologies (both analog and digital) in their everyday lives.

In order to engage students in reflecting critically about the politics of technology and literacy, we might ask them to write literacy narratives in which they analyze the role that diverse technologies have played in shaping their communication practices (Kitalong et al.). We might also assign students to research and compose video documentaries in which they interview their peers about the ways diverse technologies are influencing their lives. By asking students

to conduct research about the complex and diverse ways that their peers are using and transforming communication technologies, we might ultimately help them come to complicate and challenge the often overly simplistic narratives that have been used to characterize the so-called "digital generation."