

DIY!: DO-IT-YOURSELF ALTERNATIVES TO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND TEACHING MATERIALS

Miles McCrimmon

Professor of English

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

mmccrimmon@reynolds.edu

(804) 523-5606

AGENDA

A Clip

A Brief Intro to DIY

Intro to some Alternative Course Management Systems:

- + PBWorks: <http://pbworks.com/>
- + courseDocs: <https://sites.google.com/site/coursedocs2011/home>

Intro to some Free and/or Open Educational Resources:

- + Flat World Knowledge: <http://flatworldknowledge.com/>
- + Writing Spaces: <http://writingspaces.org/essays>
- + The Community College Open Textbooks Collaborative: <http://collegeopentextbooks.org/>
- + The College Open Textbooks Community: <http://collegeopentextbooks.ning.com/>

Two examples of DIY Assignment Sequences in Composition

Practicum

FIRST, THE CLIP...

From *Dead Poets Society* (1989)

× Measuring Poetry

What do you notice about:

- × the teacher?
- × the students?
- × the text?
- × the classroom?
- × the administrator?

THE TEXT-INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT HIERARCHY

Text

Instructor

Student

THE STUDENT-TEXT-INSTRUCTOR HIERARCHY

Student

Text

Instructor

DEFINING “DIY”

- ✘ DIY derives its energy from the failings of the *status quo* and the “one-size-fits-all” ethos of standardization.
- ✘ DIY militates against “lowest-common-denominator/worst-case-scenario/fear-of-malpractice” thinking.
- ✘ As a form of appreciative inquiry, DIY asks us to find what’s already working well and to figure out how to do more of *that*.

IDEOLOGY OF DIY

- ✘ Multinational corporations and state apparatuses derive much of their power and control over our daily lives from their promise of *convenience*.
- ✘ Individuals or small groups are much more self-sufficient than they give themselves credit for.
- ✘ In fact, we all already do DIY as a natural act of self-preservation.
- ✘ DIY ultimately saves time, money, human and natural resources.

DIY IN ACTION

- ✘ From Ellen Lupton, *D.I.Y. Design It Yourself*. Princeton Architectural Press, 2006. p. 18

“Around the world, people are making things themselves in order to save money, to customize goods to suit their exact needs and interests, and to feel less dependent on the corporations that manufacture and distribute most of the products and media we consume. On top of these practical and political motivations is the pleasure that comes from developing an idea, making it physically real, and sharing it with other people.”

- ✘ From Amy Spencer, *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture*. Marion Boyars Publishers, 2008. p. 11

“The DIY movement is about using anything you can get your hands on to shape your own cultural entity: your own version of whatever you think is missing in mainstream culture. You can produce your own zine, record an album, publish your own book - the enduring appeal of this movement is that anyone can be an artist or creator. The point is to get involved.”

SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT DIY (W/ BRIEF REBUTTALS)

- ✘ DIY is more work and it takes more time than simply taking something “off the shelf.”
- ✘ *In the short run, yes, but in the long run, you control your work product instead of letting it control you.*
- ✘ DIY is duplicative because it “reinvents the wheel.”
- ✘ *It’s supposed to “reinvent the wheel” because (a) the wheel we’re using is square and (b) the process of reinvention encourages reflective practice.*
- ✘ DIY is amateurish, something only dilettantes do.
- ✘ *It actually requires more discipline and more logical design, because it does not inherit any preconceived notions or traditions.*
- ✘ DIY operates according to lax, loose or relativistic standards.
- ✘ *It has to meet higher standards of performance to make up for its lack of “expert” status, authority, and social sanction.*

SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS (CONT.)

- ✘ DIY is all about chasing down the latest technological fad or gadgetry.
- ✘ *DIY uses technology pragmatically and organically, as a way to emancipate ourselves from more top-down, received technologies.*
- ✘ DIY doesn't transfer well to teaching students how to operate in the world as it is.
- ✘ *DIY, especially when done in the presence of our students and with their help, models critical thinking by challenging our assumptions and making us consider the implications of the tools and lenses we use in our everyday lives.*
- ✘ Institutional supervisors responsible for “compliance” need to be on red alert against DIY and DIYers.
- ✘ *Visionary leaders understand that DIY is the mother lode of innovation; DIYers aren't out to destroy the system; they just want to make it work better.*

WHY IS DIY PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO FACULTY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES?

- ✘ Our professional status (or lack thereof) places us precariously on the cusp between K-12 and “real” higher education. How we project ourselves to others and to ourselves is crucial. If we continue to accept the master narratives that control us, we should not be surprised if, in ten years, we awake to find ourselves “teaching to the test” and “teaching to the text” as our colleagues in K-12 have been doing in the era of standardization created in the wake of NCLB.

MASTER NARRATIVES (CONT.)

- ✘ We use such a high percentage of part-time faculty that we can't possibly expect to do much more than aspire to some measure of "quality control."
- ✘ *The diverse background and experience of our teaching faculty, full-time and part-time, is our greatest strength, and the horizontal nature of our organization (the idea that no one full-time faculty member commands the uncritical fealty of 50-60 GTAs) is our saving grace.*
- ✘ Our students can't handle truly college-level work. Our job is to prepare them to take that step after they leave us.
- ✘ *Every time our core curriculum is regarded as "College Lite," every time we make an accommodation to "meet our students where they are," we do a disservice to ourselves, our graduates, the workforce, and the rest of higher education.*

MASTER NARRATIVES ABOUT TEACHING COMPOSITION IN CCS (W/ BRIEF REBUTTALS)

- ✘ We're too busy teaching 5/5s to do research in the field of composition.

Thanks to our 125 students a semester, we have more research data than anyone else working in composition in higher education.

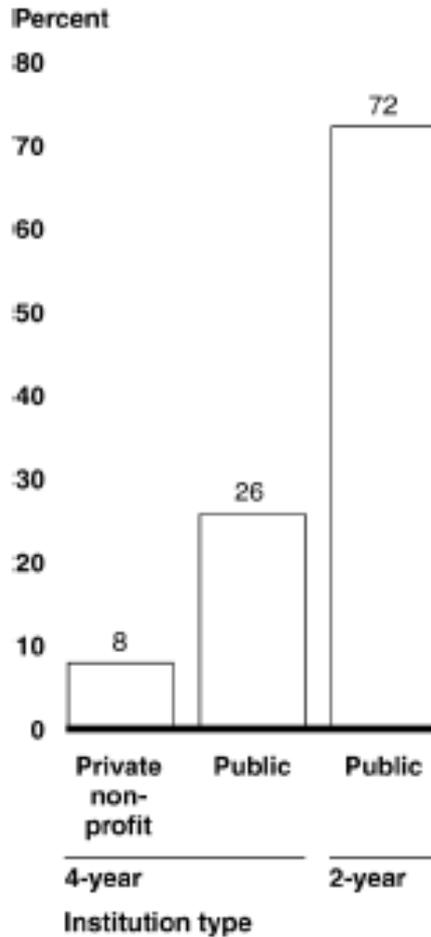
- ✘ We are practitioners in the field, not theoreticians.
- ✘ *Every time we reflect on what went well (and not so well) with a class or an assignment, every time we tweak an approach, take a detour, find a fix, improvise our way through a dicey teaching moment, we're theorizing.*
- ✘ We apply the work of others in the field who have more time, more prestige, and fewer students.
- ✘ *Most major figures in composition teach perhaps two sections a year of first-year college students, most of whom, by virtue of the selectivity of their institution, can already write.*

ALTERNATIVE COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Recent examples from PBWorks (free accounts available to educators):

- × <http://survivingsarge.pbworks.com/>
(ENG 111/O3CP in Fall 09)
- × <http://withsen10rity.pbworks.com/>
(ENG 111/AT63 in Fall 09)
- × <http://eng112at63.pbworks.com/>
(ENG 112/AT63 in Spring 10)
- × <https://writinganthropology.pbworks.com/>
(ENG 112/O1CP in Spring 11)
- × <https://atleegoesto11.pbworks.com/>
(ENG 112/AT63 in Spring 11)
- × <https://1112dual.pbworks.com/>
(ENG 111/AT61 in Fall 11)
- × <https://fall11clue.pbworks.com/>
(ENG 111/O3CP in Fall 11)

Figure 3: Estimated Cost of Textbooks and Supplies as a Percentage of Tuition and Fees, Academic Year 2003-2004



The Pain is not evenly distributed.

Source: Department of Education.

Those who did not complete had trouble balancing work and school in their first year of higher education.

Thinking about your first year in school, please tell me if the following describes you:

Did not graduate

 A lot

 A little

Graduated

 A lot

 A little

The cost of textbooks and other fees besides tuition affected me financially

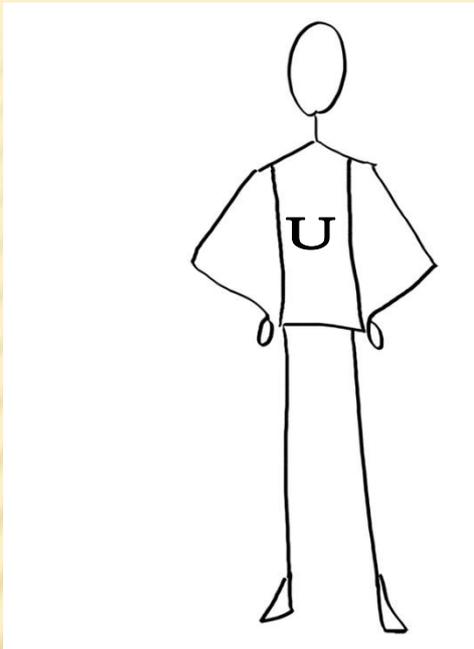
36% 24% 60%

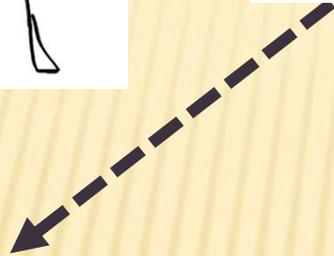
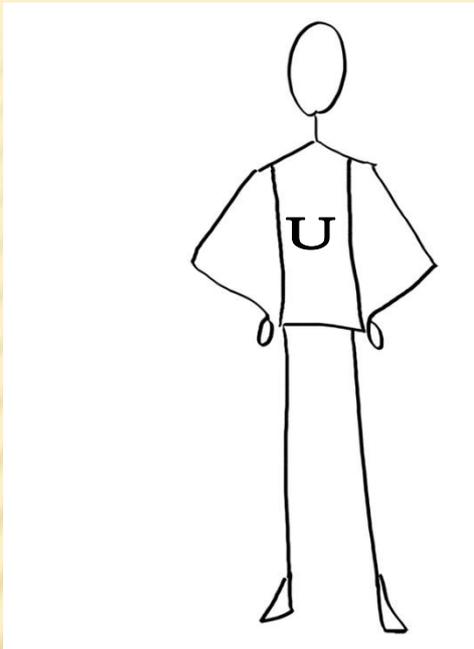
23% 35% 58%

I had to work as well, and it was too stressful trying to do both

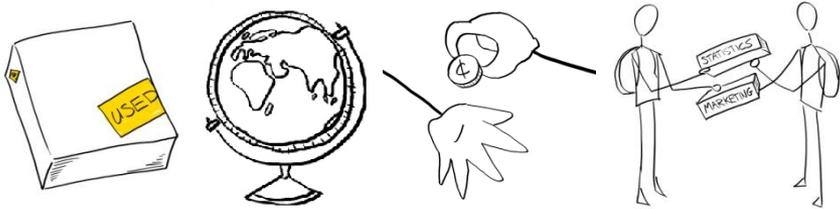
35% 28% 63%

26% 26% 52%

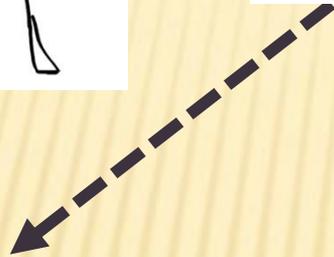
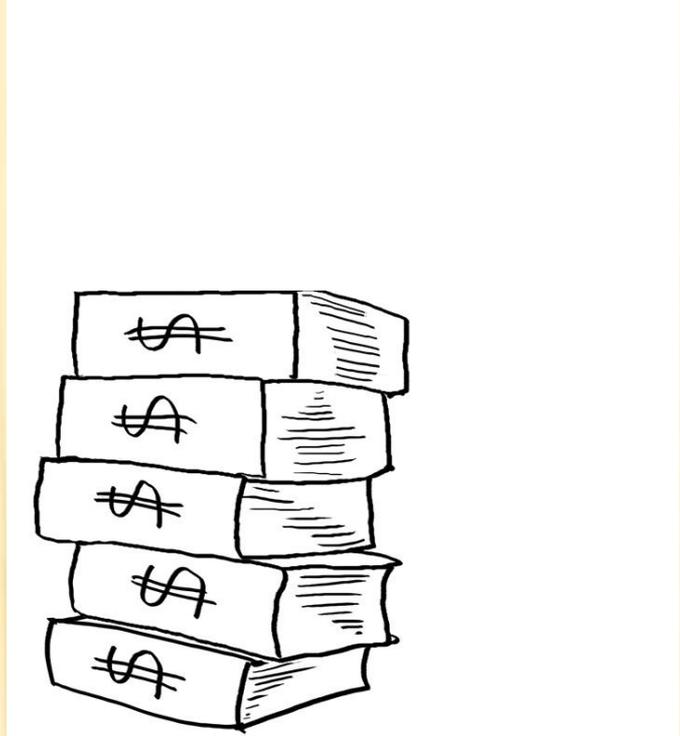
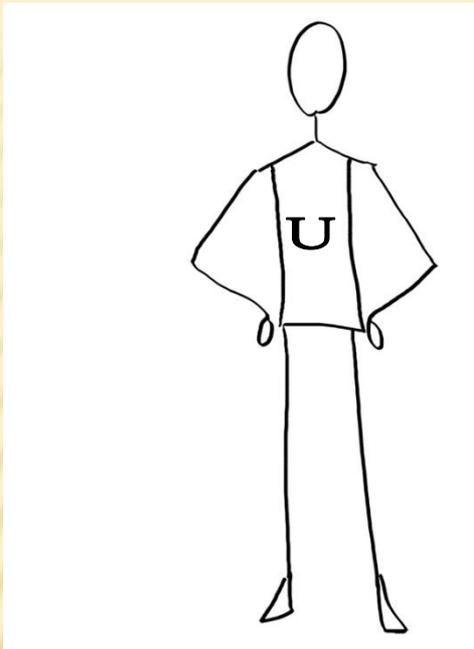




Students React



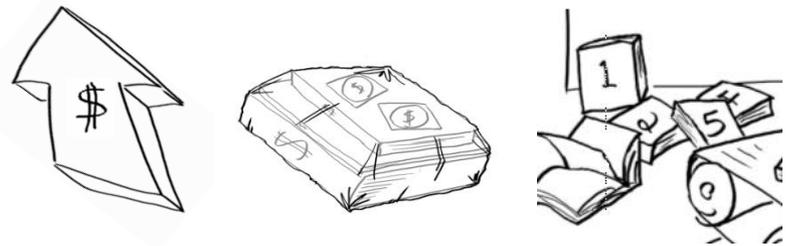
(internet's disruptive impact on textbook industry)



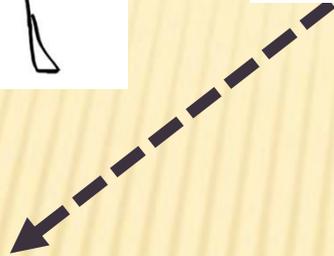
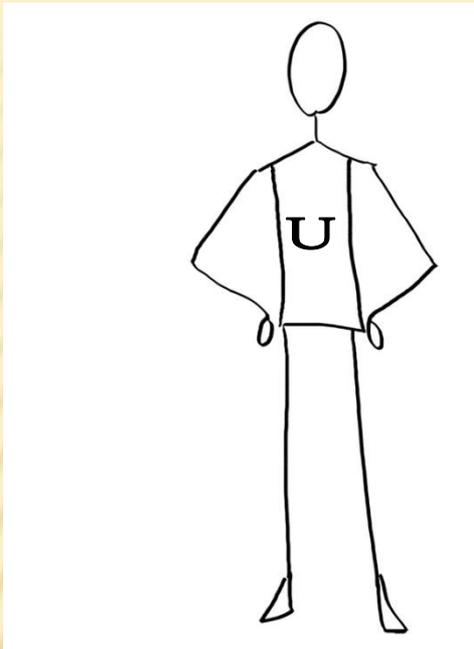
Students React



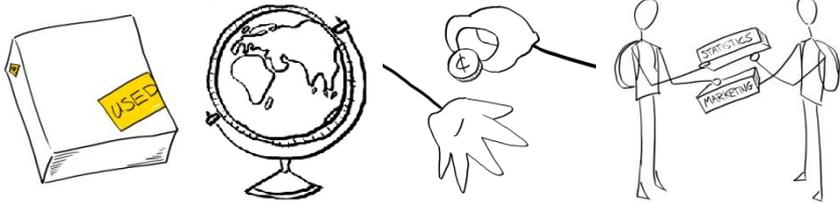
Publishers Respond



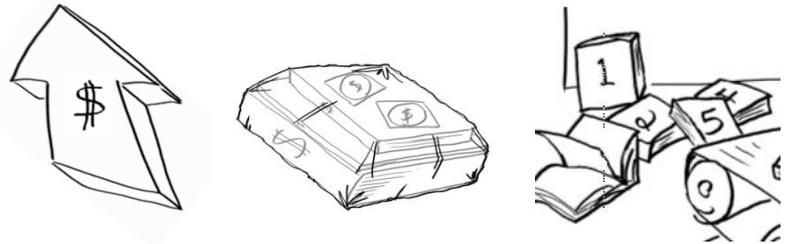
(internet's disruptive impact on textbook industry)



Students React



Publishers Respond



(internet's disruptive impact on textbook industry)



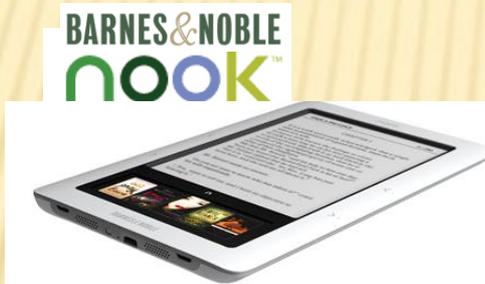
Open



Rental



eReaders



eBooks

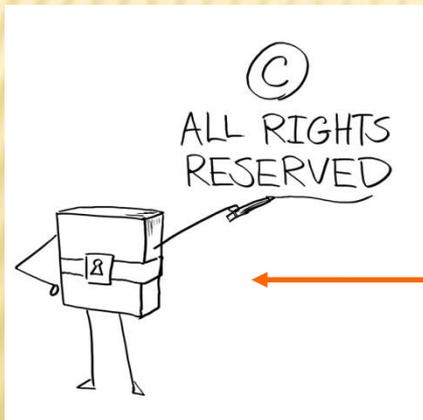


Legislation

Higher Education Opportunity Act Affects Textbook Publishers/Supplement Bundling with Textbooks

by JOHN SOARES on APRIL 30, 2009

WHAT IS "OPEN"?



"No Rights Reserved"
**Public
Domain**

“4R’S OF OPEN-NESS”

- ❖ **Reuse** – right to copy and use verbatim copies
- ❖ **Revise** – right to adapt, rework, and improve
- ❖ **Remix** - right to combine into new OERs
- ❖ **Redistribute** – right to share copies

AN ALTERNATIVE: FREE AND OPEN TEXTBOOKS

<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com>

Published (2011):

The Flat World Knowledge Handbook for Writers

<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/printed-book/356439>

Coming from Flat World Knowledge in 2012:

Open for Knowledge: Readings for College

<https://openforknowledge.pbworks.com/>

DIY ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCES IN COMPOSITION

AN EXAMPLE OF A DIY ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE

**Creating and Curating a Collection
of Reading and Writing Assignments
for a Future College Composition Course**

RATIONALE FOR ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE

- ✘ Open educational resources movement
- ✘ Creation and curation of course readings
- ✘ Engaging students in the process of knowledge and discipline construction
- ✘ Unpacking and unpackaging anthology-style collections of readings
- ✘ Encouraging digital literacy

BROWSING THE GALLERY

- × <http://www.adcouncil.org/>
- × <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/>
- × <http://www.aldaily.com/>
- × <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/>
- × <http://www.templeton.org/signature-programs/big-questions-essay-series>
- × <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/videoLibrary/>
- × <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/index.htm>
- × <http://www.gallup.com/home.aspx>
- × <http://books.google.com/>
- × <http://www.archive.org/>

BROWSING THE GALLERY (CONT.)

- × <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>
- × <http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>
- × <http://docsteach.org/>
- × <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/>
- × <http://oyc.yale.edu/>
- × http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page
- × <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>
- × <http://collections.si.edu/search/>
- × <http://thisibelieve.org/>
- × <http://www.census.gov/>

BROWSING THE GALLERY (CONT.)

- × Edge: <http://www.edge.org/questioncenter.html>
- × Google Art Project: <http://www.googleartproject.com/>
- × Librivox: <http://librivox.org/>
- × Merlot: <http://www.merlot.org/>
- × Tufts Open Courseware: <http://ocw.tufts.edu/>
- × Wisconsin Learning Online: <http://www.wisc-online.com/>
- × Open Learning Initiative:
<http://oli.web.cmu.edu/openlearning/>

Note: See Concurrent Session in the Virtual Symposium:
Using Open Content Resources to Enrich Learning ~ Tasha Brown

LOW-STAKES ASSIGNMENTS

- ✘ Individually or in a group, go on a scavenger hunt for another web-based archive of texts that could be useful to your composition class as part of a no-cost alternative to a pricey print collection of readings. Try to meet the same criteria this handbook uses: the collection of texts should be free of charge, free of copyright restriction, free of partisanship, and free of advertising (except for sponsorship information in the case of nonprofit organizations). Write up an annotated entry on what you find, following the same format used in the **Gallery of Web-Based Texts**.
- ✘ Individually or in a group, get to know the **Gallery of Web-Based Texts** in more detail. Find and critically analyze five to ten individual texts from one archive. Your critical analysis should include answers to at least five of the questions in the list of questions about **speaker, audience, statement, and relevance** in the next section or at least five of the **Twenty Questions about Self, Text, and Context** in Chapter 1. Be prepared to present your findings in a class discussion, on the class discussion board, or on a class-wide wiki.
- ✘ Find two texts from two different archives in the **Gallery of Web-Based Texts** that explore a similar theme or topic in different ways, either from two different ideological perspectives or through two different genres or media. Write an essay that compares and contrasts the two different texts.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- ✘ **Voice:** *I am writing as...*a second-semester college composition student.
- ✘ **Audience:** *I am writing to...*first-semester college composition instructors.
- ✘ **Message:** *I am writing about...*a collection of texts on the Web that I think students would benefit from using as a basis for their writing, and I am writing to demonstrate that a DIY, home-made collection of readings is a viable alternative to a pricey, published collection, and I am writing to prove that students can and should have a hand in determining the readings for their introductory college composition courses.
- ✘ **Tone:** *The relationship I am establishing with my readers is...*one of mutual respect, tinged with a sense of urgency and an emerging sense of independence from being told what to read and what to write.
- ✘ **Attitude:** *My attitude toward my message is...*positive, cost-conscious, semi-revolutionary, empowered, cutting-edge, and determined to prove that my collection of readings is just as valid and challenging and useful as any other a first-year, first-semester student might encounter.
- ✘ **Reception:** *I want my audience to...*try out these suggested reading and writing assignments with their future students.

POSSIBLE ORGANIZATION

- ✘ **Intro:** Write this last, but present it first; make it a convincing argument or rationale for the specific collection you've chosen. What does this collection have to offer entering college students? Presumably, you're interested in the collection because you chose it, but will it interest other students?
- ✘ **Section 1:** Present the collection itself, providing links and brief annotative descriptions; present the items in the collection in the recommended order in which you want the students to read them.
- ✘ **Section 2:** Present the minor and major writing assignments you believe would be appropriate for students to complete; minor assignments could include a few prompts for weekly 250-word blogs, and the major assignment could be for a longer essay asking students to do something with the readings.
- ✘ **Section 3:** Give a demonstration of an exemplary student performance by providing an excerpt or two of "student" writing.
- ✘ **Conclusion:** Discuss how the reading and writing assignments will help students to meet the course goals and objectives of the first-semester college composition course.

CRITICAL HABITS OF MIND ACTIVATED

- ✘ Invitation to think like a teacher, even while writing as a student.
- ✘ Reflection about what students learned or didn't learn from the readings and writing assignments in their previous composition course.
- ✘ Balance between choosing texts out of self-interest with a concern for whether their specific subject matter will engage the majority of entering college students.
- ✘ Understanding of the contingency of canonicity in composition specifically and higher education in general.

PEDAGOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- ✘ for collaboration, from the low-stakes writing assignments in Chapter 2 through the major project itself, which also lends itself to group work.
- ✘ for dissemination and publication of recommendations students make for reading and writing assignments (for example, on a class-wide wiki, there could be a page with links to the best collections produced by students, and that wiki could be made publicly available to other professors, employers, etc.)
- ✘ for public speaking, if students are required to present their projects.
- ✘ for narrower tailoring depending on the setting of the specific section: Is this course part of a learning community or linked with a course from another discipline? Is this course being taught off-site, perhaps at a high school as part of a dual enrollment program? Is this course being taught through distance education (whether entirely online or through a hybrid schedule)?
- ✘ for tailoring a peer evaluation protocol (adapting the Twenty Questions for Peer Review in Chapter 11 of *FWKHW*).

STUDENT EXAMPLES

Internet Movie Data Base:

<http://www.imdb.com/>

All Music:

<http://allmusic.com/>

Outside the Lines:

<http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/otl/index>

ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE 2: WEB PRESENCE ANALYSIS

Perform a detailed, multi-faceted search on a subject of your choosing. Let's call that subject X (it could be a corporation, a college, a celebrity, a non-profit organization, or a governmental agency).

Your job is to analyze how and why X is presented differently in different sites and contexts on the Web. What aspects of X's web presence fall under X's control (things like X's own "official" website), and what aspects fall somewhat or entirely outside X's control (things like social networking sites, Google, Wikipedia, etc.)? What could X do differently on the Web to affect its web presence (without leaving too many fingerprints that would indicate the kind of media manipulation that turns people off)?

WEB PRESENCE ANALYSIS (CONT.)

- ✘ **Voice:** I have been hired as a web presence consultant by the public relations department (if a corporation), the recruiting, alumni relations, or student services department (if a college), the publicist (if a celebrity), or the public awareness/outreach department (if a non-profit organization or governmental agency).
- ✘ **Audience:** The corporation, college, celebrity, non-profit organization, or governmental agency.
- ✘ **Message:** I'm giving my client an unflinching look at their current web presence and suggesting ways to improve it.
- ✘ **Tone:** I'm a second pair of eyes giving an outside perspective, employed only on a temporary basis in a consulting capacity.
- ✘ **Attitude:** I can be objective about what's right and wrong in the current web presence, and tough about what needs to be done moving forward.
- ✘ **Reception:** I want X to learn from and act on my analysis of its web presence, and I want other X's to hire me based on the quality of my work.

STUDENT EXAMPLES

- ✘ Corporations: Nike; Adidas; Louisville Slugger; Taco Bell
- ✘ Colleges: VCU; Univ. of Tennessee
- ✘ Celebrities: Zoe Saldana; Charlie Sheen; Chris Brown; Justin Bieber
- ✘ Non-Profits & Govt. Agencies: Center for Disease Control; United Way; US Olympic Committee

PRACTICUM

- ✘ Sign up for a PBWorks account:
<http://pbworks.com/>
- ✘ Sign up for a courseDocs account:
<https://sites.google.com/site/coursedocs2011/home>
- ✘ Sign up for a Flat World Knowledge account:
<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/>
- ✘ Sign up to join the College Open Textbooks Community:
<http://collegeopentextbooks.org/>

PRACTICUM (CONT.)

- ✘ What proprietary, copyrighted materials do you absolutely need your students to buy?
- ✘ What open educational resources do you already use in your teaching?
- ✘ Are there others you could begin using?
- ✘ Where is DIY happening in your teaching?
- ✘ Where would you like it to happen?

OPEN FOR KNOWLEDGE: READINGS FOR COLLEGE

- ✘ Now that Flat World Knowledge has given the green light for this project, what would you like to see in the collection?
- ✘ Send your suggestions and ideas to me at mmccrimmon@reynolds.edu.
- ✘ Thanks!