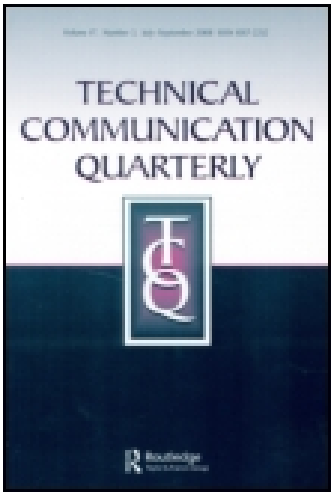

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Assessing Scholarly Multimedia: A Rhetorical Genre Studies Approach

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Assessing Scholarly Multimedia: A Rhetorical Genre Studies Approach

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This article describes what scholarly multimedia (i.e., webtexts) are and how one teacher-editor has students compose these texts as part of an assignment sequence in her writing classes. The article shows how one set of assessment criteria for scholarly multimedia—based on the Institute for Multimedia Literacy's parameters (see Kuhn, Johnson, & Lopez, 2010) for assessing honor students' multimedia projects—are used to give formative feedback to students' projects.

Keywords: assessment, Dynamic Criteria Mapping, genre, *Kairos*, scholarly multimedia, values, webtexts

Scholars in digital writing studies have been publishing webtexts since at least 1996, when *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* was first published. *Kairos*'s mission is to offer scholars a place to transfer their knowledge of linear, print-based, academic writing into multimedia-based scholarship that enacts the author's argument. In other words, authors compose the equivalent of a peer-reviewed article for *Kairos*, but instead of relying only on words (and maybe a few figures), they use whatever media and modes of production they need, such that the media and modes complement, if not create, the point the author wants to make. As editor of *Kairos*, I see on an everyday basis how form and content are inseparable in authors' scholarly multimedia—an important concept for students to learn and practice in an age when multimedia is ubiquitous. Based on my editorial experience with *Kairos*, I teach students at Illinois State University to read, analyze, and assess authors' scholarly multimedia projects as well as to propose, compose, revise, and peer review their own webtexts, which they can submit to peer-reviewed venues such as *Kairos, C&C Online, X/Changes,* and *The JUMP* (*Journal for Undergraduate Multimedia Projects*).

WHAT IS SCHOLARLY MULTIMEDIA AND HOW DOES IT WORK? A PRIMER

The webtexts that journals like *Kairos* publish have been called new media scholarship, born-digital scholarship, scholarly multimedia, digital media scholarship, digital scholarship, and many other names. Although I may have coined the term *new media scholarship* in the past (Ball, 2004), I also see that term's limitations for current and future use in that the term does not explicitly point to the multimodal nature of the texts under discussion here and may wrongly imply (as Shipka, 2009, stated) that *multimodal* has to be digital, which is not true, except in the case of webtexts. Thus, although I use terms depending on my audience (e.g., funding

agencies like digital scholarship and scholarly multimedia[1]) in most cases, here I use the term *scholarly multimedia* when I need to emphasize the multimodal nature of this scholarship. At other times in this article, I prefer to use the term that *Kairos* itself uses: *webtexts*. This term also has the benefit of being much simpler and easier to say. I vacillate between these terms here.

When teaching multimodal composition to students who have never heard any of these phrases before, I begin by defining the kinds of texts we are focusing on. Until one answers the *what*, one cannot answer the *how* (do we assess?). Scholarly multimedia are article- or book-length, digital pieces of scholarship designed using multimodal elements to enact authors' arguments. They incorporate interactivity, digital media, and different argumentation strategies, such as visual juxtaposition and associational logic (see Purdy & Walker, in press), and are typically published in online, peer-reviewed journals (e.g., *Kairos, C&C Online, Vectors*) and presses (e.g., Computers and Composition Digital Press). Scholarly multimedia cannot be printed and still retain the author's argument because such texts are composed of Web pages with links, animations, images, audio, video, scripting languages, databases, and other multimedia and interactive elements, including but not limited to written text.

To show what scholarly multimedia looks like and how it functions, see Figure 1, which includes semirepresentative screenshots (i.e., they do not show the interaction, animation, or audio, if there were any in this piece) from a recently published webtext in *Kairos*. Obviously, these screenshots do not look like typical scholarly articles. The one on the left includes the webtext title, author's name, and a splash page that graphically represents the navigation system that the author, Susan Delagrange (2009a), used throughout. In this webtext, the navigation system draws on visual and experiential metaphors of *wunderkammern*, or curiosity cabinets, on which the author's argument is based. Delagrange explained the four major sections of this Flash-based piece in a Preview node. I quote it here at length to explain how the design of the piece enacts the author's argument:

> In ''Wunderkammer,'' I argue that these 16th-century cabinets of wonder are models of visual provocation in which objects were manipulated and arranged in order to discover new meanings in their relationships. ''Visual Analogy'' expands the concept of arrangement as heuristic, because analogy is a trope that lends itself particularly well to the discovery of unexpected affinities in the

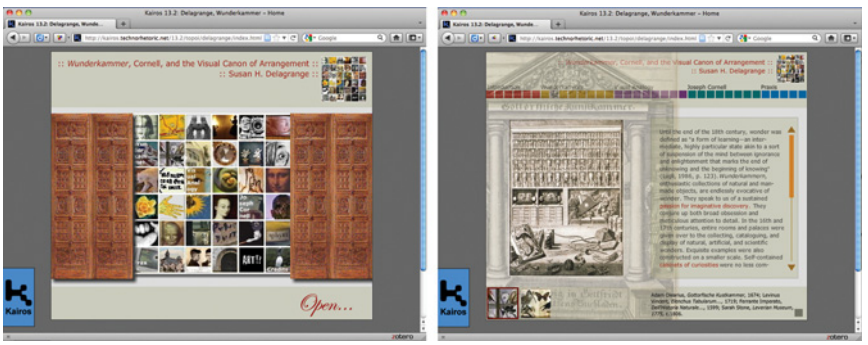

FIGURE 1 Susan Delagrange's (2009a) webtext, ''Wunderkammer, Cornell, and the Visual Canon of Arrangement'' juxtaposes visuals, sometimes using animation to superimpose visuals on written text, to show the power of invention across multiple modes. (This figure is available in color online.)

> juxtaposition of seemingly disparate objects (and ideas). ''Joseph Cornell'' explores the mobile assemblages of 20th-century artist and bricoleur Joseph Cornell, whose refined use of repetition and small variation predicts the epistemic possibilities of 21st-century interactive digital media.

The last section of the piece is called ''Praxis,'' and the author explains her motivation for this webtext by describing how her praxis is connected to the theoretically supporting sections that come before it:

> Much of my current digital media work with undergraduates at Ohio State involves using the techné of visual arrangement described here as a heuristic to shape nuanced proposals for the use of urban space. The ''Praxis'' section of this article describes that work in more detail. The intervening sections develop a rationale for this pedagogy.

Thus, Delagrange's self-described purpose in this webtext is to develop a rationale for teaching visual arrangement as a heuristic. However, one need not read the (literal) writing on the wall of this wunderkammern to understand Delagrange's scholarly aim. The design of the webtext argues just as much as any linguistic text does: A reader must engage with the wunderkammern on the opening page to read the piece, and the reader can click on any of the 36 thumbnail images (see screenshot in left column of Figure 1) to proceed to a node (or page) that displays an animation and a chunk of written text (see screenshot in right column of Figure 1), both of which work together to make Delagrange's argument. As Kress (2010) has said, ''Design is the servant of rhetoric—or, to put it differently: the political and social interests of the rhetor are the generative origin and shaping influence for the semiotic arrangements of the designer'' (p. 50), which, in Delagrange's case, means she has purposefully arranged the webtext's multimodal, semiotic elements to serve the political and social interests of her argument. Further, she accomplished this task with the aid of peer reviewers and editors, and the piece has been published in a venue respected for scholarly multimedia, so we as readers should assume that each design element belongs, is purposeful, and works to make an argument. We just need to figure out what that argument is. Other texts (Ball, 2004, 2005; Ball & Arola, 2004) have described what such a reading strategy might look like, so I will proceed with the point of this article: how to ask students to compose scholarly multimedia and how to assess their work.

Readers may be expecting me to provide a transferable rubric for reading, analyzing, assessing, grading, or evaluating scholarly multimedia—particularly a rubric that could be useful for tenure and promotion purposes. I hope readers keep in mind that each of these interpretive and evaluative verbs (reading, grading, assessing, evaluating) indicates a different audience—randomly and overlapping: pleasure readers, students, scholars, hiring committees, tenure committees, teachers, and authors—each of which has different needs from, and comes to the reading experience with different value expectations of, such a piece of scholarship. I would like to say that the criteria I discuss in this article would serve all those readers' needs, but it likely will not, and I offer this practice with the caveat that I have used it only in a handful of classroom settings for one specific kind of assignment sequence, which I discuss below.

A WEBTEXTUAL ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE

The major project that I assign students in multimodal composition courses is to compose a webtext, which can include many possible genres, technologies, media, and so forth, but will always

be scholarly-creative and aimed at an academic audience. I basically ask students to compose webtexts for possible submission to a journal like *Kairos,* and we spend the entire semester discussing the rhetorical, technological, ideological, institutional, professional, social, and other issues that arise when one chooses to undertake such a task. I use a similar assignment for both undergraduates and graduate students, tailoring the details of each issue (above) to the audience. Both groups share one quality with a majority of *Kairos* authors: They are composing scholarly multimedia for the first time. These three groups (undergraduates, graduate students, and first-time *Kairos* authors) are all developmental writers in the sense that they are not yet confident or do not yet have expert technological, multimodal, or rhetorical abilities. The assignment sequence for their webtext projects includes a genre set that starts the semester with their own reactions to others' webtexts and ends with their telling me what they learned about multimodal composition and how they can transfer that rhetorical, technological, and multimodal knowledge to other writing situations.

The cumulative assignments for the webtext project can include the following:[2]

- reading responses to published webtexts
- values-based analysis of digital media texts and webtexts
- audience and venue analyses
- genre analyses of webtexts
- review presentations of technologies available for composing webtexts
- project pitches
- proposals to flesh out the project idea
- storyboards and scripts
- workable or rough drafts
- peer review of classmates' rough drafts
- annotated versions of peer-review letters
- completed webtexts.

I will not detail all of these assignments in this manuscript,[3] partly because some of these assignments will be familiar to readers who teach any kind of writing and partly because I want to focus on how the values-based analysis guides most of the assessment practices throughout the semester. This values-based analysis might be better known to writing studies scholars as dynamic criteria mapping (DCM; Broad, 2003), the outcome of which has been dubbed by students in my classes as ''Kuhn + 2.''

BUILDING WEBTEXT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Despite my editorial familiarity with assessing webtexts, I realized through teaching this assignment that *Kairos* has no standard set of criteria that the editorial board uses to evaluate webtext submissions. In some ways (that I do not discuss here), that lack of criteria is purposeful. However, when teaching webtext production, I needed to push my assessment methods beyond my initial I-know-it-when-I-see-it brand of evaluating scholarly multimedia. I found what I needed in several locations, including a methodology for combining several assessment methods in Broad's (2003) *What We Really Value: Beyond Rubrics in Teaching and Assessing Writing*. In this book, Broad explained the use of DCM as a method of articulating values that assessors

(sometimes unknowingly) use in evaluating writing portfolios. From that data, readers can create a set of assessment criteria that can be used heuristically. This method is transferrable to any number of compositional situations, including scholarly multimedia. (For other examples, see Broad, Adler-Kassner, Alford, et al., 2009.)

A few semesters ago, I began to build this set of criteria by asking students to articulate the criteria that they valued (or did not value) in digital media texts. To their criteria, I added three rubrics for assessing scholarly multimedia as a particular subset of digital media texts that students would need to become familiar with in the class. The three rubrics included

- Warner's (2007) assessment tool for evaluating webtexts
- *Kairos*'s peer-review criteria written for the Manifesto issue (DeWitt & Ball, 2008)
- Kuhn's (2008) ''The Components of Scholarly Multimedia,'' elaborated on in Kuhn, Johnson, and Lopez's (2010) follow-up piece, ''Speaking with Students: Profiles in Digital Pedagogy.''

I will briefly address each of these rubrics, focusing in particular on Kuhn's criteria, as that formed the basis for the short list of criteria that students in my Fall 2009 class decided upon as their assessment criteria for the major projects.

Kuhn's Criteria

In ''Speaking with Students: Profiles in Digital Pedagogy,'' Kuhn, Johnson, and Lopez (2010) described the goals in creating assessment criteria for the University of Southern California's Institute for Multimedia Literacy (IML) honors program. All students in that program have to complete a scholarly multimedia thesis in their respective major. The parameters were introduced to digital writing studies as an assessment method in Kuhn's 2008 webtext, ''The Components of Scholarly Multimedia,'' in which Kuhn provided a reading of a collaborative student video to ''discuss [scholarly multimedia] in terms that are understood . . . by the larger academic community.'' The four parameters she used were conceptual core, research component, form/content, and creative realization. (These will be explained in detail below.)

''The key [with these parameters],'' Kuhn (2008) wrote, ''is to strike a balance between convention and innovation, even as the line between image and text, between orality and literacy, between art and critique and, indeed, between scholarship and pedagogy grows ever more fuzzy.'' It was Kuhn's application of these parameters to her students' video in the webtext that first drew my attention to this assessment framework and her 2010 work with Johnson and Lopez, in which they interviewed 12 graduates from IML's honors program who reflected on their multimedia projects using these parameters, that showed how this assessment framework can be used in classroom assessment practices. In fact, Kuhn, Johnson, and Lopez directly addressed assessment as one purpose for documenting the students' reflections of their multimedia projects:

> Although it is unpopular to talk about grading, at least at the faculty level, since that is the terrain of the ''bean counters,'' we ignore our institutional constraints at our peril. Not only is it a disservice to students to fail to inform them of the criteria by which they will be judged . . . given its relative newness, digital work is subject to the charge of lack of academic rigor. Without the sustained analysis that comes from assessment criteria, digital work can be dismissed as bells and whistles. These criteria give us a lexicon with which to discuss digital work among ourselves and our students, even as

> explaining digital work in language that is familiar to traditional academics helps them appreciate its nuances and sophistication. And although institutional constraints can prove frustrating, this is something that academic institutions do well: They force a type of rigor that pushes us towards excellence. At the IML, we feel our project parameters help to highlight aspects that may not be immediately apparent in the piece itself—they approach each project on its own terms. As such, there is far more freedom to be innovative with emerging platforms while maintaining high quality work.

Their goals for including assessment speak to a typical set of ''institutional constraints'' for needing to ''count'' digital media work and for showing the rigor of digital media against the supposed bells-and-whistles–only view under which digital media is often seen—all issues that faculty members also face. Although I disagree that rigor should be the touchstone for assessing the value of scholarly work,[4] it is invaluable having a set of criteria that allows for open-ended expansion into and discussion of multimedia in terms that are recognizable by teachers who do not yet know how to read and assess such work. This particular set of criteria has proven invaluable to my students, who have taken it up with unabashed enthusiasm after reading Kuhn's (2008) webtext, which is one of the first webtexts that I usually ask students to analyze using the four parameters embedded within it. Students used these parameters to analyze existing, successful (already published) webtexts from the venues they are interested in submitting to, as well as non-peer-reviewed venues that publish digital media texts they liked, such as music videos on YouTube.

In addition to reading Kuhn's parameters (see Table 1), students read and assess two additional sets of criteria specifically created for scholarly multimedia: Warner's (2007) assessment tool for evaluating webtexts and the peer-review criteria written for the Manifesto issue of *Kairos* (DeWitt & Ball, 2008).

TABLE 1
Institute for Multimedia Literacy Honors Thesis Project Parameters[a]

Parameter	*Description*
Conceptual core	• The project's controlling idea must be apparent. • The project must be productively aligned with one or more multimedia genres. • The project must effectively engage with the primary issues of the subject area into which it is intervening.
Research component	• The project must display evidence of substantive research and thoughtful engagement with its subject matter. • The project must use a variety of credible sources and cite them appropriately. • The project ought to deploy more than one approach to an issue.
Form and content	• The project's structural or formal elements must serve the conceptual core. • The project's design decisions must be deliberate, controlled, and defensible. • The project's efficacy must be unencumbered by technical problems.
Creative realization	• The project must approach the subject in a creative or innovative manner. • The project must use media and design principles effectively. • The project must achieve significant goals that could not be realized on paper.

[a]From Kuhn, V., Johnson, D. J., & Lopez, D. (2010). Speaking with students: Profiles in digital pedagogy. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy, 14*(2). Retrieved from http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/14.2/interviews/kuhn/index.html.

Warner's Assessment Tool

Warner's (2007) tool comes from her dissertation study, in which she examined how webtexts that won the *Kairos* Best Webtext Award made their arguments. She compared the webtexts to current standards in print scholarship such as content, documentation, and tone. Then she studied all the nonprint features comprising the webtexts' webbed affordances such as navigation, links, design, and media features, and created an assessment tool that tenure and promotion committees could use to evaluate the scholarly worth of webtexts. This rich and detailed rubric contains 27 criteria. The number of criteria, which include technical terms that outsiders to scholarly multimedia may not understand (e.g., ''nodes,'' ''lexia''), tended to overwhelm students so that they avoided listing any of Warner's criteria on their values-based short list. Thus, due to space restrictions and lack of relevance for this study, I will not detail this heuristic any further here.

Manifesto Heuristic

The third set of criteria that I provided to students was written by DeWitt and Ball (2008) in the *Kairos* special issue on manifestos that DeWitt and I coedited. Because manifestos serve a different scholarly function than most webtexts that *Kairos* publishes, DeWitt provided the editorial board with his rubric that outlined how the manifesto webtexts should be evaluated. It was similar in its flexible approach to the assessment goals later laid out by Kuhn, Johnson, and Lopez (2010), and we described our goals for these criteria in the issue's introduction:

> Our goal was [to] create review criteria that reflected the Call For Manifestos while also allowing approaches that we really couldn't have imagined until we received submissions. The questions were intended to help reviewers generate a response that would consider the manifesto form while also allowing for flexibility and openness, since not all of the questions would be relevant to all submissions. The criteria were crafted around four major considerations: Readership, Form, Media, and Response.

Students did not choose any of the criteria (as such) from the manifesto issue, so I will skip ahead to the criteria that they did end up choosing.

Creating Kuhn + 2

After assessing the value of these three frameworks by using each of them to analyze published and unpublished webtexts, we used the DCM methodology to choose a delimited set of criteria that the class could agree were the most useful for scholarly multimedia. In addition to a slight modification of the four parameters outlined in Kuhn's (2008) work,[5] the class wanted to add two components to our assessment criteria: audience and timeliness. These two parameters evolved from three contexts: (a) the students' knowledge of rhetorical principles from their rhetoric and writing classes; (b) the readership parameter in the manifesto peer-review guidelines, which they thought was too vague a term to use by itself; and (c) their simplification of the word *kairos*. We ended up with a set of six criteria:

- creativity
- conceptual core

- research/credibility
- form/content
- audience
- timeliness.

Because we had been distinguishing between the three rubrics by shortening their names or purposes (i.e., Warner, Kuhn, or Manifesto), and because the students' choice of terms so heavily relied on Kuhn's four criteria, they labeled this portmanteau of parameters ''Kuhn + 2.''[6] We used Kuhn + 2 as a heuristic for building the student projects over the next few weeks, and I constantly reminded them that these criteria would be similar to what the editorial board would use to assess their webtexts when (or if) they submitted them at the end of the semester.[7]

The important thing for teachers to remember here is not that Kuhn +2 is the rubric you should use to assess scholarly multimedia or other kinds of digital media, but that the rubric needs to be created fresh, with students, for each kind of project you assign. For the courses I taught in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010, this meant adding audience and timeliness to the IML's base criteria. In Fall 2010, it meant not requiring the three heuristics (while still providing them for some early analytical assignments) and asking students to create their own values-based criteria for assessing their and others' projects. The students then had to justify why they used the criteria that they used during peer review. As my understanding improves regarding how webtexts move through authors' and editors' and publishers' processes and as I expand my theoretical understanding of multimodal composition (i.e., writing) teaching, my pedagogy changes and so must my assessment criteria. This is why my values system for assessing webtexts may not, cannot, will not necessarily be yours. (And this is most certainly not what the *Kairos* editorial board uses when they evaluate submissions. In fact, there are no set criteria for *Kairos* submissions, as each piece must be evaluated on its own terms in relation to that moment and to technology and media and genre, in time. This is also why I was so opposed to writing this version of this article: because I am worried that Kuhn +2 will be adopted without exploration or understanding the need to consider an assignment within its historical, technological, cultural, and social framework. See Prior et al., 2007.)

USING WEBTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

But I also understand the need to start from somewhere, which is why I am hedging my bets and providing a few examples of how I use some of the above criteria to provide formative assessments to first-time authors (in this case, students) of scholarly multimedia. I do that by focusing on two primary areas of difficulty that student-authors have when applying the criteria to their actual composition process. The two areas I want to focus on in particular come from the IML (Kuhn's) criteria for scholarly multimedia as outlined above: form and content, and creative realization. These are often the most difficult for student-authors (and teachers) to deal with because these criteria present mandatory new ways of composing wherein linguistic, discursive forms are not the primary means of communication. As readers will see from the examples below, these criteria are not easily divorced from one another. Just as form and content are inseparable in multimedia texts (Ball & Moeller, 2008; Wysocki, 2001), they are not separable from a text's conceptual core or its creative realization.

I am purposely skipping the conceptual core and research component outlined in the IML criteria because it is too similar to what writing teachers already handle in regard to brainstorming topics, writing thesis statements, forming purposes in an essay, and so on. The research and the main concept still have to be strong in a multimodal composition, and writing teachers do not need me to cover those topics in detail here. (We know those topics, even if we do not always know how to cover the details in multimedia terms, but just in case, see again Ball & Moeller [2008] for a useful discussion of how to assess the research component of scholarly multimedia.)

Issues in Creating Form-and-Content Relationships

I am focusing on two criteria that fall within the IML's form-and-content category, difficulties that can arise at multiple stages of the composing process. The trick of the form-and-content category is that it cannot be assessed separately from the purpose, or conceptual core, of a piece. The conceptual core (e.g., the controlling idea) is usually what readers would call the content or purpose or even the thesis of a piece, so in the case of Kuhn's criteria, the form-and-content category relates explicitly to the piece's conceptual core. If the concept is not clear, the form/content relationship will not usually be clear either. Formative feedback on the form/content of a piece can be given at any stage in the compositional process, but is best—as always—caught early, such as in the proposal or storyboard stage of the project. Still, sometimes, the conceptual core of a piece sounds great in the proposal and their form/content description in the proposal sounds like it could work, but until an author presents a storyboard or rough draft well into the compositional process, the problems the author had in carrying out the form and content relationship do not become evident. (Also, no one wants to revise a multimodal project, which usually involves reenvisioning the project and starting from scratch—not something any teacher wishes on a student with only 3 weeks left in a semester.)

"The Project's Structural or Formal Elements Must Serve the Conceptual Core"

Recently, one student group[8] produced a webtext called ''Facebook Activism,'' in which they wanted to critique Web users' unreflective ability to ''like'' or ''attend'' a Facebook event intended as a nationwide activist event or movement when, for the most part, that kind of activism stops at the level of the click. In particular, the students were interested in the Wear Purple event that was promoted during the fall of 2010 to stop bullying lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students at schools across the U.S. In my students' proposal for the project, they planned to interview LGBT activists from several U.S. universities who had created local Wear Green Facebook events, accompany those interviews with statistics of online activism from several sources, and embed all of this into a Facebook page that would contain some of the written support for their arguments as status updates and notes (both features of Facebook). The interviews and Facebook page never materialized, so for the peer-review workshop, the video consisted of a 5-minute voice-over of their research (pulled mainly from one book, *DigiActive*), which was accompanied by only a handful of still images that were used as visual examples of Facebook events. The students acknowledged that they had not been able to complete their intended work, but it was time for the peer reviewers to critique the piece.

In discussing the form-content relationship in the piece, one student wrote at length in her peer-review letter:

> One concern that I do hold with this piece is whether or not the media form used is fitting to the project that was given to me to observe. The piece is in video format with audio voiceovers supplying the information. The visuals in the video, however, were not entirely effective to me. Throughout most of the video, there was simply the Facebook logo, and even when some Facebook screen shots were given, they just did not seem to be enough to cover up for the lack of visuals throughout the rest of the text.
>
> One idea that I have to provide is that if there are not any other strong images to add—although I'm sure that there are—the group could add blurbs of text or quotes on the screen at the time that they are being said. Not only will this be more visually appealing and more interesting to view, but also if you highlight important information so that it is visual and aural, then the audience has a better chance of not just hearing the information but also understanding it.
>
> There is a YouTube video that I think could be helpful as far as making actual text effective visually—it's under Stephen Fry Kinetic Typography Language. This piece is actually a prezi, which after viewing the ''Facebook Activism'' project would be extremely effective (but I know that time is sparse and re-doing the project to that extent is not the best option). And, if adding these extra visuals does not seem appealing or necessary, then I think it would be best to make the project audio only rather than a video piece.

Although the kinetic typographic piece that the student mentioned is not actually a Prezi (a zooming presentation tool), it does look like one to students who had just learned what Prezi was—an interesting moment of technological and designerly uptake. Students had studied Prezi, among 15 other technological choices for making webtexts that semester, in part to learn how authors need to choose their technology depending on what arguments they want to make. That choice is intimately related to the form/content criteria for composing and assessing webtexts. In this case, the student-reviewer offered a relevant suggestion that would have aligned the form and content more closely with the conceptual core. This is the same suggestion I (or perhaps a *Kairos* reviewer) would have made had the piece been submitted for consideration at the rough draft or query stage of the publication process.

"The Project's Design Decisions Must Be Deliberative, Controlled, and Defensible"

One of the biggest obstacles to teaching multimodal anything to first-time multimodal authors is that the instructor may forget to get them to detail how their form and content work together from the very beginning of the process. Without a design concept as part of the proposal stage of a webtext, the conceptual core will never be realized in anything besides a paper-based, traditional format that we have been trained—hardwired, it seems—to write. (This is also an issue of creative realization, which I address below.) To that end, students should be articulating their design choices (form/content relationship) as rhetorical, aesthetic, technological, and other choices that make sense for the conceptual core of a piece given the medium they have chosen as best to present their concept. Again, the issue is not usually with the conceptual core, that is, students have a good idea what they want to say; they just do not know how best to say it in multimedia. Sometimes the author's message does not need to be said in multimedia or—more often—the message can be said differently in multimedia than how the author can envision a

scholarly article or seminar paper, in which the author knows how to assess the deliberative, controlled, and defendable nature of every word, paragraph, and transition. How, however, does one evaluate (and inevitably defend) how one's design works? It must all be tied to the genre (or subgenre) of text the author is composing.

In this example, a student created a presentation for a funding organization on her campus. This organization had previously donated money for her to start a studio-based writing center at her 2-year college. Her presentation needed to show the funders what the studio had done with the money previously donated, how the studio does its work (which differs significantly from an archaic conception of a writing center as a skill-and-drill center), and for what the studio would need future funding. To best show what the studio does, the student decided (and I agreed, based on her proposal for this project) to videotape several brief writing-center interactions in this wildly kinesthetically designed studio. She had to show, not just tell, what happened in the studio to get the point across.

At the storyboard-and-script stage of the project, she presented me with several scripts for the seven videos she wanted to shoot for her presentation, which was supposed to be an 8-minute presentation. The length was a problem because each script was 2 to 3 minutes long. So we started to edit (see Figure 2) to accomplish two things: (a) ensure that the objects she had described in the script were shown in the video instead of spoken by tutor-actors (e.g., ''~~See the beanbag chairs!~~''), which would take advantage of the medium of video so that at least two modes (visual, voice-over) could multiply the amount of rhetorical work that each video accomplishes, thereby (b) shorten the overall length of the videos so the presentation could be accomplished in the allotted time. This was a genre consideration that we needed to address during the storyboard-and-script stage, so the student could succeed in the actual presentation. Editing the uncontrolled, indefensibly discursive scripts (per this criterion's requirements) prior to her filming helped her form/content relationship to deliberately and quickly express the conceptual core of the project. (After this presentation, the student garnered another small grant from the foundation to buy iPads for the studio.)

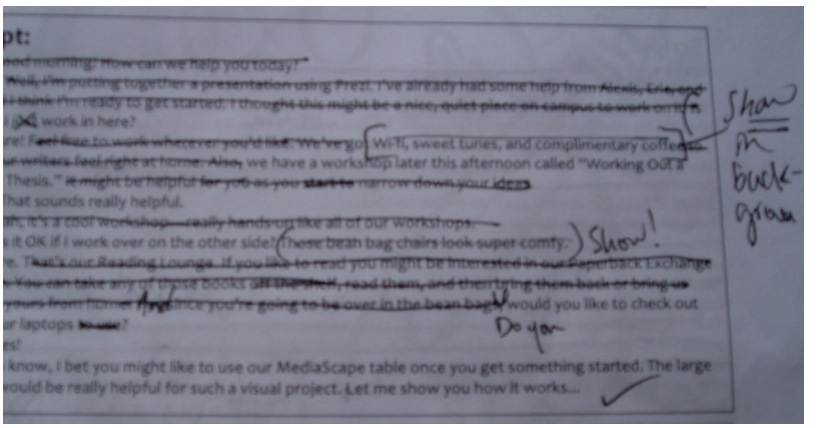

FIGURE 2 The script has been significantly edited to meet the genre expectations of this multimodal presentation. (This figure is available in color online.)

Issues in Creative Realization of Webtexts

One of my favorite dictums for first-time authors of scholarly multimedia is, ''If you start with Word, you'll end with Word.'' Of course, Microsoft Word is a stand-in for any kind of linear, scholarly thinking or any word-processing program. Authors are so accustomed to drafting scholarly and academic projects by writing them out (see, e.g., any PowerPoint presentation that relies on words to convey its bulleted points or the mandatory word counts inherent in academic articles or badly theorized first-year writing curricula). So, when I work with authors, I want to shout ''Awaywithwords!'' (Wysocki, 2005). At stake is the creative realization of a project that ''could not be achieved on paper,'' as the criterion I want to focus on here indicates.

"The Project Must Achieve Significant Goals That Could Not Be Achieved on Paper"

How an author comes up with a project that cannot be achieved on paper is far beyond the scope of this article, although other texts have addressed the topic (Arola, Sheppard, & Ball, in press), including in classroom practice and digital authoring workshops such as those at Computers and Writing and the Digital Media and Composition summer institutes.[9] Generally speaking, however, I offer two suggestions to webtext authors: (a) Your design should enact your argument, and (b) To come up with that design, think of a visual metaphor for your argument. Delagrange's (2009a) piece, detailed at the beginning of this article, did just that: It used the visual metaphor of a wunderkammer as the main navigational design of the webtext, which helped her enact her argument that juxtaposing items in proximity (as wunderkammern require) will aid in the invention process. Perfect. And not replicable on paper.[10]

Nothing excites me more as an editor or teacher than witnessing the moment when an author realizes that a webtext needs to be presented on-screen. As Kalmbach (2007) has so rightly said, the majority of webtexts published in *Kairos* look like hyperlinked seminar papers. Some pieces fit the mission (rhetoric, technology, and/or pedagogy) and use minimal-but-necessary webtextual features (e.g., links, some reader interplay, maybe an embedded student video) that make the pieces unsuitable for submission to a print-based journal. That kind of webtext is *Kairos*'s bread and butter, but it is not the stuff that makes me giggle with editorial delight. I discourage students from producing next-button hypertexts even though that is what they usually veer toward, usually because they lack practice with anything else and because with next-button hypertexts, they feel safe and thus confident. Being able to teach scholarly multimedia requires lots of reassurance for students, lots of reminders that it is not about the finished product but about the trying.[11] The formative feedback they get from me at each major stage of their projects helps guide students through their efforts. And during those feedback sessions (usually in one-on-one conferences during which I first view their projects, just as I would for an author submitting a query about a webtext), I hope for the ''Wow'' moments when the student realizes that a piece should be on-screen.

Recently, in one of my classes, most of the students had chosen Prezi in which to build their webtexts. Prezi seemed easy, and it would allow them to practice building multimodal scholarship without too much hands-on support from me. (In this graduate-level theory class, they were responsible for learning much of the technology on their own, with my help for troubleshooting as needed.) I conferenced with one student who expressed concern about the appropriateness of her design and how it would work (or, was not working, she thought) in Prezi. Her project was a

creative nonfiction piece about her fibromyalgia diagnosis and her struggle to fit the accepted notions of that diagnosis in relation (or opposition) to its portrayal in medical media, such as Pfizer ads. In the storyboard for her project (a poster board), she had drawn the front of a woman's body (the predominant gender diagnosed with fibromyalgia, I learned) and placed short selections of her creative writing about her lengthy process of diagnosis and the pain she experienced that did not match the trigger points that most people felt with the ''disease'' or ''disability.'' (This is in scare quotes because there is some contention over its categorization as either, which is also part of her project.)

Peer feedback on her storyboard suggested that she needed to show the back of the body as well as the front because the trigger points also appear at the back. She found an image that represented the front and back trigger points on the outline of a woman's body and used that as the basis of her design in Prezi (see Figure 3), which we then discussed. Her concern with

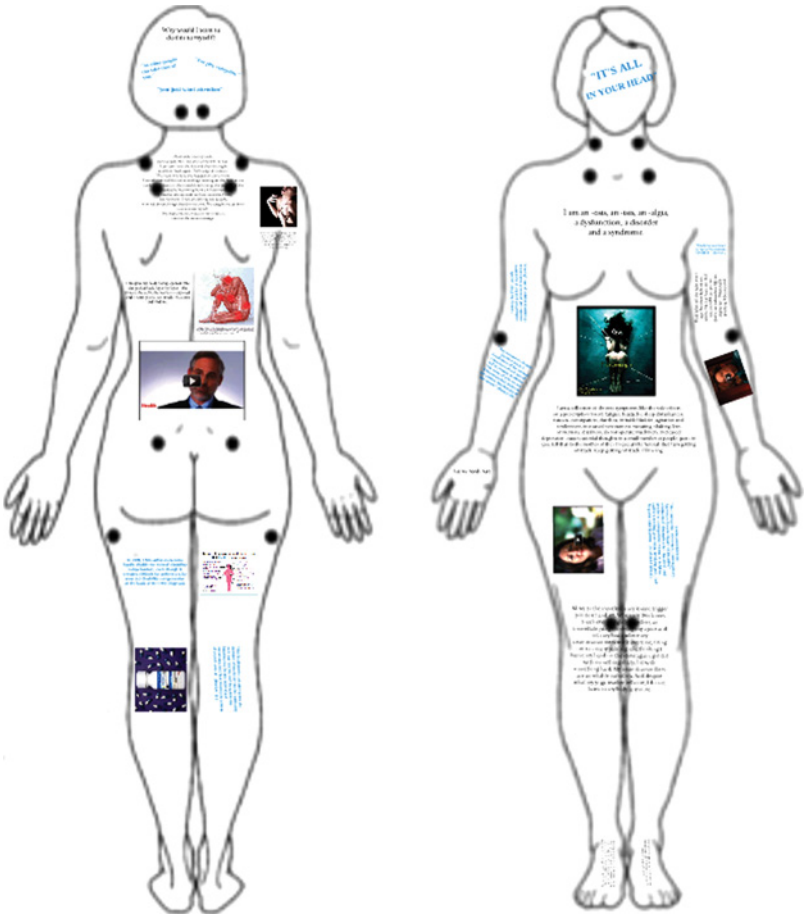

FIGURE 3 The trigger points for fibromyalgia are shown as large black dots in the drawing. (This figure is available in color online.)

using Prezi and with the background image arose when we were discussing what path she should implement. Prezi, like PowerPoint, wants to follow a sequential path that the author determines. Prezi, unlike Powerpoint, does not require a linear slide-show-like path but can navigate in and out of any straight or curving or jutting path on-screen; the author has only to create stopping points along the path for each frame she wants to show. For this student's project, it seemed obvious at first that the stopping points should correspond with the pain trigger points on the woman's body. But the student explained that she wanted to make sure readers could access material she was placing on parts of the body that corresponded not with the known trigger points but with *her* pain. Her experience with fibromyalgia was different from the norm, which was part of her argument in this creative nonfiction piece. If she added a path in Prezi that followed the trigger points, readers would miss some of the most important frames in the piece.

We then realized how this piece needed to be on-screen, neither on paper written as a series of narrative snippets with a few print advertisements and screenshots of commercials thrown in as illustrations nor as a next-button hypertext with the videos embedded. Just as the 17 doctors whom she saw over several years struggled to diagnose her condition, readers would need to struggle to find order and potential closure in this piece. The Prezi needed no path. The author needed full freedom from any limiting, directive series of stopping points for readers so she could reinforce her argument that nothing with fibromyalgia represents a norm. I got goose bumps from this idea. She would use Prezi's affordances against itself, hacking the system in one of the most powerful ways to adapt a technology to make an argument. Readers would be confused, but that was part of the point. This piece needed to be difficult to navigate, so that readers had to figure it out, thereby recreating the diagnosis process. Hilary Selznick's (2011) piece, ''Fibromyalgia: The (In)visible (Dis)ability'' was later published in the premiere issue of *TechnoCulture: An Online Journal of Technology in Society*. Selznick told me that Keith Dorwick, *TechnoCulture*'s editor, provided her with excellent feedback that took the piece from a classroom project to a published webtext, showing exactly how webtexts have viable public trajectories.

R&R IS THE NEW A: REVALUING GRADING SCALES

Although this article shows some strategies that I have used for providing formative assessment feedback for students' scholarly multimedia projects, it is more important to me that students can assess each others' work through the peer-review letters they write to each other after their rough draft workshops (such as the example from the first form and content criterion). I do not grade students' completed webtext submissions because too many smaller assignments are part of the larger project's requirements. I assign one grade to each student's entire body of work for the whole semester. Each student's grade is based on one thing: participation. However, my definition of ''participation'' includes several key aspects: Did the student

- do all of the work I assigned?
- turn it in on time?
- do it with excellence?

(For a full discussion of my grading scale, see Ball [n.d.].)

Excellence, of course, is easier said than graded, so I will remind readers that this system of grading is built on a class's producing a particular set of genres in a particular moment in time. Having taught students to compose webtexts five semesters in the past 3 years, I feel that this assignment sequence (much modified since the first time I taught it) may finally be getting close to what first-time *Kairos* authors actually use when submitting to the journal. I also hope to be getting closer to creating a fluid method of assessing students' webtexts that equally values

- their in-class peer reviews
- the constantly shifting genre conventions of scholarly multimedia work
- my expertise (and time) as teacher-editor
- students' everyday interests in digital media
- the audiences and venues (e.g., editorial boards and scholars) that students' work might actually reach.

Yet, I am not dumb enough to expect that students could design excellent, publishable work in one semester. I can only expect them to complete their projects in similar fashion and scope to what most first-time *Kairos* authors complete: a webtext that

- is suitable to the subject matter of and audience for the journal
- is submittable via a URL or Zip file
- functions without breaking
- is far enough along in its thinking that the first round of reviews would suggest the author revise and resubmit, as nearly all first-time (and most second-time) submissions to *Kairos* receive.

Once I articulated these expectations to myself, I realized that I had to change the standard by which I assessed student work. It was not feasible to judge students based on any finished product (or the process they used to complete the work) given that many first-time scholarly multimedia authors need a reasonable amount of feedback on their webtexts before those pieces are considered ready to resubmit. If my expectation was a semifinished product, why not have revise and resubmit be the standard by which I assess the students' projects? As an editor, I cannot expect *Kairos* authors to produce perfect (i.e., accepted for publication) work the first time around, nor as a teacher should I expect students to produce at that level the first time they compose in multimedia. That is not to say that as editors or teachers we must lower our standards. When students who take a multimodal class for the first time can produce work that is on par with much of what first-time *Kairos* authors produce, that is a bar-raising event, yet my grading of their work must shift to accommodate what that work means in relation to the academic world of peer-reviewed scholarly multimedia.

NOTES

1. The latter term, ''scholarly multimedia,'' was brought to prominence by the USC School, that is, the collective of the Institute for Multimedia Literacy and *Vectors* journal, both of which are located at the University of Southern California.

2. Although I usually assign this entire sequence only to undergraduates, I have discovered that graduate students need this disciplinary-knowledge breakdown just as much as undergraduates so they can better understand the disciplinary conventions of publishing in their field. During a recent semester teaching graduate students in a multimodal theory

seminar, I discovered during the proposal stage (having skipped everything prior to that as, mistakenly, being too pedestrian for the graduate students) that they had no idea how to articulate the scope, audience, or values of a particular journal. I should not have been surprised, given that students at this point have usually recently entered the field or may not even be in rhetoric/composition or technical communication but might come from linguistics, creative writing, literature, and so forth. Next time I teach graduate students, I will be much more explicit in my directions, following those I use for the undergraduates, which includes all the assignments above.

3. For details on these assignments, please see http://www.ceball.com/classes/239/fall10/major-assignments/ for an undergraduate example or http://www.ceball.com/classes/495/assignments/ for a graduate example.

4. If we rely on rigor as our scholarly touchstone, we miss the value that supposedly nonrigorous (e.g., nondiscursive, affective, imagistic) meaning-making strategies can have in our scholarship. (I think Kuhn would agree.) O'Gorman (2006), Murray (2009), and Kress (2010) all discuss the problems of assigning rigor too much value in a dichotomous comparison to affect (or just interest, which is the term Kress uses). Both O'Gorman and Murray particularly engage with the necessity of including image in our discussions of the value of digital media work.

5. When I first conducted this assessment strategy, the four parameters that Kuhn (2008) outlined were not yet being attributed in scholarship as the assessment method used at IML. Not until Kuhn, Johnson, and Lopez's (2010) work was published—a year after my students starting referring to our set of criteria as Kuhn +2—that the connection to the IML's Honor's Program, which Kuhn directs, became clear. In addition, the four parameters were created with the previous honor's director, Steve Anderson. For more information on the history of this criteria, please see Kuhn, Johnson, and Lopez's webtext.

6. The name stuck, for good or ill, in that it is nondescriptive of that for which the heuristic exists, although it also appreciatively recognizes the author who wrote about the heuristic convincingly enough for students to see its absolute-use value.

7. Students are not required to submit texts, but they must go through all the genres of submitting, including writing a query or proposal e-mail to the editors, which they can send to me as the teacher if they do not actually submit their work.

8. Undergraduate students work in groups of three or four in my multimodal composition classes. Graduate students work independently, unless they prefer to work in small groups.

9. Public Service Announcement: If you have never authored scholarly multimedia and you try to assign that writing to students, you will struggle to guide students through the rhetorically and technologically intensive troubleshooting process that this assignment requires and struggle more when you assess their work. Try to accomplish the assignment yourself first. Start small. These workshops and institutes give you quality time with experts and can help you quickly learn the standards of multimodal composition.

10. Delagrange took 3 years, and no less than three designs, to get her piece ready for publication. (See her discussion of the revision process in Delagrange, 2009b). Obviously, in a classroom setting where that process may last anywhere from 10 to 18 weeks, a publication-ready piece will not be possible. (I discuss how this process impacts assessment and grading in the conclusion of this article.).

11. For the language that I use to introduce students to the concept of ''trying,'' see the Scope section on my assignment page (Ball, 2011).

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