5-6-2020

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DIGITAL NATIVE TONGUE: BRINGING MULTILINGUAL,

MULTIMODAL CURRICULUM TO COLLEGE COMPOSITION FOR

BEGINNING LATINX WRITERS

A Thesis

by

FRANCISCO ENRIQUE ZAMORA

Submitted to Texas A&M International University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

DECEMBER 2019

Major Subject: English

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Approved as to style and content by:

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ABSTRACT

Digital Native Tongue: Bringing Multilingual, Multimodal Curriculum to College Composition

for Beginning Latinx Writers (December 2019)

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Young Latinx students are struggling with composition when they enter college, and the performance and completion gaps are widening (Ybarra 89). Multilingual education offers insights into language pedagogy and practice, while new, multimodal education offers solutions that make use of digital techniques. This thesis proposes combining activities, frameworks, and theories from both of these education camps in order to update college composition curriculum that may to be more effective for American Latinx students in the 21st century.

Multimodal education is the process of composing in multiple media (written, aural, visual) simultaneously. In the modern world, it is often intertwined with digital media, which is disseminated and accessed through the Internet. Students are already composing in some form. College composition must channel these digital composition techniques. Simultaneously, multilingual education asks students to use all of their language skills at once. Multilingual students have skills in writing, but not always in English proficiency. This project will apply practical uses of bilingual education theory of Ofelia Garcia, Min-Zhan Lu, and Paul Matsuda, as well as multimodal theories from Marc Prensky, Cynthia Selfe, and Gunther Kress. It will consider the specific pedagogical and cultural needs of multilingual Latinx digital native students as well as the role of technology in the college composition classroom for digital natives. This project examines how multilingual and multimodal theories are already working together, how they can synergize more effectively, and how to fit these new practices into existing policy and curriculum. This culminates into the development of multimodal-multilingual assignments and activities to use in college composition in the form of new writing projects.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1 - Introduction: How is Multimodal, Multilingual Education Relevant to College

Composition?

In the United States, more Latinx students are attending college than at any other time in

history.[i] In 2017, 36% of U.S. Latinxs aged 18-24 were enrolled in college, a rate that has

increased from 22% since the year 2000. This rate is expected to continue to increase with the

Latinx population in this country (*The Condition of Education 2019*, 155). However, this college

growth spurt has not been without growing pains for the incoming Latinx students. Despite

increases in the amount of Latinx students who attain an associates or bachelor's degree, the

college completion gap is widening between Latinx students and their ethnic counterparts, and

Latinx students are taking longer to attain a college degree (associates and bachelors) than nearly

all other ethnicities and races in the U.S. (*The Condition of Education 2017*, 45). In particular,

composition and writing presents a significant problem for these Latinx students entering the

college setting, especially for English learners, second-language students, and first-generation

immigrant students. College composition research is increasingly focused on these achievement

gaps. Although language and communication by themselves are not as great a barrier as they

might be, these students do not feel *confident* in their writing abilities, and the current

composition curriculum is not always designed to address their insecurities. Therefore, college

composition must consider a paradigm shift in its curriculum, one that makes full use of the

students' funds of knowledge for communication and language rather than leaving developing

writers to feel inadequate about their writing abilities. To this end, multimodal education theory

must be combined with bilingual education theories of language since these are areas where

younger students tend to already be in practice. These dual theories, when examined side-by-

side, are remarkably similar in their ethical practices, as well as in their base theories of language

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This thesis follows the style of *College, Composition, and Communication.*

and communication. It is the hope of this project that bringing these theories together will bolster the confidence, experience, and writing technique of incoming Latinx students who may be struggling with college composition.

What has been termed "multimodal education" is a collection of theories and practices that have been considered new for the last two decades, since Gunter Kress developed the term in 1996 (Kress 89). Technically, multimodal communication has been in use longer than language itself. Communication occurs through a variety of "mediums," such as written, oral, visual, and tactile.[ii] In composition studies, written and aural communication has been privileged over the others for the last century or so (longer, if rhetorical studies and literature are to be considered). However, education theorists have begun to recognize, particularly in the last two decades, that communication does not (and has not) *only* occurred in the written medium. Because of new technologies, particularly the Internet, communication in the 21st century occurs on a global, instantaneous level, and this communication is not bound to a single medium. The Internet enables communication in multiple mediums at once.

This trend toward multimodal communication has been ongoing for decades. The march of technology has allowed people to get news via print, radio brought instant aural communicative listening, and television popularized the combination of visual and aural media. However, the Internet transcends these technologies because it makes the media *multiple*, a communication that is a mix of these formats. A tweet, for example, might consist of a line of text, several emoticons, and a hyperlink for a video. Some might ask why a Twitter message of less than 280 characters is more revolutionary than moveable print, radio, and television combined. Beyond the obvious implications of instant communication and revolutionary globalization, the tweet and other new media make *composing* in multiple modes easy and

accessible to (most) young people for the first time. The importance of this must not be understated; this generation of students is learning the tools of composition well before they may ever be challenged to use these skills in a classroom.

Multimodal education is not new, but it is newly-recognized for its close connections to digital literacy and the increasing influence of the Internet on average daily life. However, multimodal communication has been prevalent in style in minority communities and culture before academia began to recognize the value of multimodality. For Latinxs in particular, storytelling has a rich history of aural listening, incorporation of visual elements, and a mixture of written words (Selfe 119). Though often historically overlooked in composition studies, Latinxs in the United States have utilized multimodality as a cultural expression through collective storytelling, *cuentos*, *corridos*, and other aural practices (Selfe 119).[iii] It is unfortunately not uncommon for writing teachers to overlook their Latinx students' composition skills because these students may not communicate effectively in the dominant written language, despite communicating in other media or other languages effectively and clearly (Self 119).

Many teachers do not know what to *look for* when it comes to seeing the skills that their students already possess. It is not unusual to hear teachers in 2019 talk about their students' lack of interest. Their students suffer not merely from lack of interest in the subjects of the school but rather in *everything*. According to many of these teachers, students have no motivation for anything; they can't name their own opinions, they do not have concrete hobbies, and they have no literary preference to speak of. This is because, so say certain educators, kids these days don't do anything except post on Facebook, check Snapchat, and watch YouTube. Except, somehow, these teachers fail to recognize that each time a student engages with one of these sites, they are

learning how to write. Students these days are mastering multimodal composition right under the noses of their teachers.

These teachers are correct about at least one aspect of the Internet: Their young students *are* obsessed with social media. However, this does not necessarily have to be a detriment to the students' learning. These young students are "digital natives," individuals who have grown up with the Internet for their entire lives (Prensky 1). Because of the massive shifts in how communication and culture are disseminated in the 21st century, the educational needs of digital natives may be remarkably different from their 20th century predecessors. These students communicate much faster, using rules of English only so far as they need to in order to get their meaning across. Their interests are in social media "clout," how much popularity and influence they can gain online, as well as mass produced image and video macros that convey humor and relatability, otherwise known as "memes." These fast interactions are inherently multimodal in their use of multiple media to convey meaning. While these interactions at a glance seem like shallow attempts at communication, they are meaningful to the students, and the levels of communication at play in these media demonstrate the students' understanding of advanced composition techniques such as audience awareness, genre awareness, and editing, in many cases. There are two key components necessary in order to channel these mass-produced compositions into competent, consistent writing tools for college composition.

First, the students need to be *made aware* of their existing "funds of knowledge," which are "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al. 133). These funds of knowledge are include both learned behaviors and ideas as well as skills and cultural practices that students bring from their home and community into the classroom. As will become

abundantly clear, incorporating these funds will be essential to reexamining Latinx college students' experiences with culture and composition, which are inseparable aspects of their education experience. Second, their teachers need to acknowledge the *meaningfulness* in these compositions. After the students acknowledge their digital composition and multimodal composition skills, they may use those compositions in scaffolding academic writing techniques.

If the goal of multimodal education is the incorporation of digital composition with traditional written composition in order to provide beginning writers with an awareness of their existing funds of knowledge, this is a goal that is shared with multilingual education in the 21st century. While previous attempts at multilingual education have set standards to either outright erase and replace the incoming students' language and culture with the dominant one, multilingual education theorists now advocate for incorporating the students' existing culture and language into their learning of the dominant language. This is what multilingual education theorists such as Ofelia Garcia have termed "translanguaging," a process by which all language-users draw from a personal knowledge pool that contains the basis of their acquired languages and uses context and knowledge to interpret and communicate meaning (45). Translanguaging suggests that bilingual individuals make use of all of their language skills together. However, previous policy toward bilingual education has conflicted with translanguaging, effectively limiting the existing knowledge and skills of the students who are learning English. Current bilingual education aims to bring translanguaging awareness through updated curriculum and language exercises that utilize the students' culture and language in learning and using English.

Multimodal education is directly connected with multilingual education. Translanguaging builds on the existing language skills of the student, while multimodal education builds on the existing composition skills of the student. For the purposes of this project, both of these

educational theories, which are more connected than they appear at first glance, are meant to be used together to help the increasing numbers of Latinx college students learn that they already know more about composition and English than they have been led to believe. This thesis will examine multimodal and multilingual theories and practices with the goal of updating first-year college composition curriculum to be more aware of the language needs of *all* students, particularly Latinx students, drawing from multimodal composition activities and bilingual education paradigms that have previously been kept separate. In doing so, it is the hope of this project that educators, theorists, and policy-makers will become more aware of the meaningful composition skills of these underserved students.

The issues surrounding multimodal education compared with bilingual education are nuanced; this is not to say that either of these educational camps is more important than the other going forward. However, multimodal education has seen a tremendous surge of academic interest in the last two decades, increasing in popularity as Internet communication has become a more integrated aspect of average daily life. There exists far *more* research and nuance around bilingual education, its applications, and the camps of its theorists because bilingual education has been an important research area in the United States as long as there have been immigrants. Bilingual education is considered a mainstay within the field of composition research. Multimodal education on the other hand, is just recently gaining traction as a viable research area in college composition, and thus there is much more to say about multimodal education that has been left unexplored. In the following section, theorists and researchers who are exploring multimodal and bilingual education will be examined in order to provide a thorough overview of the state of these educational frameworks and their applications through the years.

Chapter 2 - Lagging Policy and Misunderstood Expectations: A Literature Review of the

Historical Challenges of Bringing Bilingual and Multimodal Education Together for College

Composition

Although Latinx students entering college composition have some challenges that are

unique to them as a growing minority group, many of the challenges of beginning writers in

college composition are similar across the United States. Policy, particularly in the public

education system, continues to lag behind the needs of students, since it is still built on

expectations and goals around traditional written composition and standardized testing. The pre-

college and college policies and standards for beginning composition education hardly

acknowledge bilingual language and multimodal education theories, let alone allow flexibility

for practice for the students. Despite this, bilingual education theorists and multimodal education

theorists continue to critically examine the changing needs of curriculum, producing new theory.

However, neither bilingual education nor multimodal education have significantly realized their

shared linguistic education goals or made lasting strides toward unified applications of their

theories and resources. The following section is an overview of the distinct theories, research,

and application of bilingual and multimodal education that separately demonstrate shared goals

for composition while only seldom crossing paths.

Language Theories in the 21st Century

Because bilingual education has continued to expand for decades, addressing various

needs of the times, bilingual theorists in the United States have grouped together into multiple

camps of thought. Some are more focused on the practical applications of the English language,

believing that its mastery should be the primary goal of bilingual education. Other bilingual

theorists, such as Stephen Krashen in his second-language acquisition theories, have sought to

focus on "building up" the learner's home or native language skills, seeing languages as "acquired" in pieces; these acquired pieces are then scaffolded on to teach the student English as a secondary goal of the language acquisition process (Krashen 8). Most current theory tends more towards the second camp than the first, seeing English language skill as an important academic and social resource for the students, though not at the complete cost of their native language. Despite emergent theory becoming more aware of the sociocultural and developmental needs of the English learning students, bilingual education policy continues toward goals of language and culture erasure, which in turn harms the academic performance of the bilingual students overall.

Ofelia Garcia is one bilingual education theorist who advocates for practical inclusion of the bilingual students' native language as a tool for learning English, so that the skills of both the home language and English may be built together. One of the most important of these concepts included in Garcia's book *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective* (2009) is "translanguaging," the action of whole-language theory, wherein bilingual language users draw from a single pool of language skills and determine context later through usage (45). Garcia explores models of bilingual education, examining how most bilingual education frameworks are shifting from *monoglossic frameworks* of bilingualism (which erase or ignore the original language in favor of the dominant English) toward *heteroglossic frameworks* (which seek to return students toward their lost language or other otherwise make use of home-languages as an existing culture and skillset) (51). Although this author is mostly focused on language learning as a developmental process involving children, her writing also spends time examining the neurological and psychological development of bilingualism, particularly when discussing the differences between child vs. adult bilingual education. She notes that the needs of adults are far

more complex than those of children, not so much in the way that language is *processed* but in the needs, biases, and language competence skills that incoming adult populations may need compared with those of children (Garcia 66). Garcia's work on bilingual education provides a strong reference point for the current theories and goals of multilingual education.

Like Garcia, Paul Matsuda is a bilingual education theoretician reflecting on the shifting paradigm goals of bilingual education policy. His work "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition" (2006) discusses how policy has lagged for language and composition, and has generally favored *unidirectional monolingualism* (a monoglossic framework of bilingual education), or teaching and usage of only one language (English) (637). Matsuda asserts that the needs of second-language English writers remain underrepresented in college composition, with these students often being overlooked or locked out of the loop of progress altogether. The author argues that although college composition seeks to make students into "better writers," this feat is challenging because second-language students do not enter the classroom at the same skill level and with differing privileges and differing needs (640). Matsuda argues that focus on second-language college composition must shift away from addressing the surface-level needs of sentence structure and grammar in writing and instead address the cultural needs of academic composition. He argues that a policy of "linguistic containment" (641) has historically prevented second-language writing students from making significant use of their home languages in composition. Linguistic containment seeks to overwrite or correct these other languages into a contained, "neutral" academic English; however, this containment favors English-native students over those who are multilingual or still developing in English language. *Linguistic homogeneity* is the idea that college composition students in the U.S. *should* and *could* be writing only in a standardized English language (641).

Matsuda concludes that language differences ought to be embraced in order to truly meet the needs of second-language and English-learning students--not only because linguistic homogeneity can never truly be achieved but also because of the harm that unidirectional monolingualism does to these students' academically and culturally. Matsuda's thoughts on updated pedagogy are supported by the likes of Garcia and some multimodal theorists.

Policy Challenges in Bilingual Education

Not all research is focused on places where education theory can be improved; much of the research into the challenges of the current state of bilingual education is focused on the policies which shape language education curriculum. Dylan Conger, whose study of the bilingual education of Puerto Rican elementary students in New York is detailed in "Does Bilingual Education Interfere with English-Language Acquisition?" (2010), argues that the language education policy in 2010 reflected desire for English language *proficiency* as its main goal (1106), noting that bilingual teaching that includes that native languages can be reductive for the students' learning of this proficiency. Conger's studies suggests students "disproportionately attend schools with services or characteristics that lower their likelihood of obtaining proficiency...Bilingual education still appears to harm English-language development" (1115). Conger states this is a significant issue because "Immigrants who never fully gain proficiency in English drop out of high school at higher rates, earn less in the labor market, and experience greater social isolation than those who reach proficiency (1118). Interestingly, Conger is less interested in understanding the ways *how* the native-language instruction harms proficiency as it is in showing that the data suggest that there is a link between the two. Although English language proficiency is a goal with worthwhile benefits, it is not the *only* goal of bilingual

education. However, it is one of the only goals on which policy is focused surrounding bilingual education curriculum implementation.

Other researchers claim that proficiency as a goal needs to be reexamined in more recent bilingual education policy. In "Bilingual Education and English Proficiency" (2010), Christopher Jepsen says that the tools and measures for determining if bilingual students are really acquiring English and gaining proficiency are inadequate in their measures (205). Jepsen's study of the K-12 California public schools that suggests that students in ESL classes have lower English language proficiency than their monolingual English counterparts (202). This data seems somewhat obvious at first glance--students who are not yet proficient at English tend to speak English less efficiently than those students who only speak English. However, the data suggests that this problem with language does not carry across subjects but is instead focused specifically on the language skills of the bilingual ELL student. As with other writing on bilingual education policy in the 21st century, Jepsen's study acknowledges that English proficiency is a necessary, obvious goal toward which educators should work when teaching ELL students. Proficiency in this case is measured through a particular statewide test, California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and measures the students' progress and proficiency over years through pre- and post-testing (205). Through the data collected from the CELDT, analysts have suggested that ELL students who remain in native-language and bilingual education classes do not demonstrate English language proficiency at the same pace that they "should" compared to their monolingual English peers, who gain proficiency at a faster rate (222). Jepsen argues that this data is misleading, claiming that while ELL students may not perform well on the CELDT (which is administered all in English), this is not to say that these students do not see positive returns on English proficiency (222). Instead, the returns are simply diminished compared to

their peers'. The author acknowledges the limitation of using only one test to measure proficiency, and he also notes that bilingual education native-language classes may have benefits beyond proficiency that are not measured in this analysis (222). However, if policy remains focused only on English language proficiency and measures it the same way every time, the curriculum cannot be updated to include more recent theories of bilingual education and some multimodal practices may also provide more enlightening results than these tests and measures of proficiency.

Still other theorists take a more practical approach to bilingual education, using the data collected through research like Conger's and Jepsen's to examine the specific problem areas that bilingual students struggle most with beginning composition. In "Understanding Writing Contexts for English Language Learners" (2004), Sarah J. McCarthey, Angela M. López-Velásquez, Georgia Earnest García, Shumin Lin and Yi-Huey Guo use research data from a longitudinal study of 4th and 5th grade Spanish and Mandarin bilingual English learners at a Midwestern US elementary school and their learning experiencing speaking, writing, and reading English to pinpoint areas of particular struggle. The writing process, which remains a fundamental element of composition education, is one such area where these bilingual students experience difficulties (354). Another major concern for the students is their cultural identity, particularly since a goal of the schools of McCartney's study are to help students navigate their new, American culture while not erasing their first one (352). In learning the basics of audience, drafting, and personal writing, as well as language literacy and vocabulary, the students were treated as beginning writers and faced the same challenges as other beginning composers (360). One very important aspect of this research is its focus on the students' individual perspectives, rather than merely report on the data and methodology of the educational study. Interviews with

the students revealed their greatest worries: purpose*, audience, and their emerging *bicultural identity* (380)*. Ultimately, this research suggests that although ELL students in this context still experience difficulties learning writing and navigating biculturalism without having their language and culture erased, there are steps that might be taken in order to both preserve culture and teach writing more effectively to these students at the same time. The research suggests, among other possibilities, treating these students as *multicompetent learners* to better make use of their entire language skill set, rather than ignoring skills and competency that they have already developed (387). Multi-competency and building on existing funds of language knowledge will remain an important focus for this project and those connected to multimodal education.

Challenges of Bilingual Students in Higher Education

However, it is not enough to focus on elements of pedagogy, according to researchers such as Myra Goldschmidt and Thomas Seifried. In "Mismatched Expectations among Developmental ESL Students in Higher Education" (2008), these authors suggest that the problems of ESL teaching are largely sociocultural negligence that affect policy rather than the policy itself. Goldschmidt and Seifried present a research study on a group of ESL students at a higher education institution designed to measure the students' expectations of university, as well as the university's (faculty's, instructor's, and curriculum's) expectations of these students. While other studies and data sometimes report the lower performance of ESL students compared with English-native students as suffering from a "gap of understanding" or a difference in skills, the authors argue that these ESL students are capable and skilled but do not have the experience of academic culture (27). Likewise, the institution often misinterprets these students' silences as unwillingness to engage with material or academic culture and does not look deeper at the

linguistic and cultural needs of these students. Pre-and post surveys revealed that most of the faculty believed that these students were not performing to the standards of other academic students and remained unready for the rigors of academic writing (31). Additionally, most of these faculty members were untrained in how to teach linguistically diverse students, even though more than half reported that they adjusted their teaching style for these students (31). Most of the students themselves reported that they could write fluently in English, despite the scores of the SAT which was used to place them into the developmental course (29). As more essay assignments were assigned to these students, their belief in their writing ability dropped, with only 4/58 students actually showing an increase in this regard (30). ESL college students are often disappointed with college, as well as their own results in college, leading to heightened insecure and diminished academic returns (32).

Although most universities are engaging with ESL students through developmental composition classes and other language classes that are meant to address the needs of this growing population of college students, performance and disappointments continue to mount. ESL students often feel that they cannot meet the needs of the programs, feel that they are unskilled or stupid. The Goldschmidt and Seifried state, "Additional support should come from academic advising and career service staff, who need to ensure that students have an understanding of the academic requirements of their chosen vocations and to counsel students who have unrealistic career goals" (32). They finish that in addition to helping students "instill a sense of reality" and set realistic goals and standards for themselves, the university must also "[re]define their philosophy of success" (32). Although students might not perform to a standard that they themselves nor their professors feel is "acceptable" for the level of college students, they must come to the understanding that the academic levels will not initially be the same as

those of other students, and that these standards serve as barriers to educate, rather than elevate students in any meaningful ways. The institutions themselves must instigate a paradigm shift toward bilingual student success to combat the problems of mismatched expectations between ESL students and their teachers.

The composition insecurities of bilingual English students are at the forefront of many writer's research, including theorist Raul Ybarra. His research in "Writing as a Hostile Act: A Reason for Latino Students' Resistance to Learning" (2004) demonstrates how Latinx students carry insecurities about their language, writing abilities, and intelligence into college composition. Ybarrra points out that while the population of Latinx-Americans was continuing to increase faster than any other population in the U.S. in the early 21st century, their numbers in college were not increasing at a pace on par with other ethnicities (89). He argues that a major cause may have been writing, specifically in the way that academic writing asks Latinx students to shed their own cultural identities in order to communicate in the demands of the institutions (89). Ybarra's study on the *discourse* of higher education academia reveals the details about the Latinx students' negative feelings about writing--their own writing, and composition in general. He names a discursive problem he dubs "essayist literacy" (97), the style of writing favored in academic writing, which locks out Latinx students, who do not arrive into the higher education knowing this discourse, compared with their white counterparts. He argues that in order to have these students "become" part of the institution's culture, their own culture is chiseled down and rebuilt in this structure, which negatively impacts the students' performance and self-esteem. Many refuse to enter this system at all. As far as solutions go, Ybarra maintains that non-mainstream students should be "acculturated" (106) but also suggests that changes to writing course syllabi could be altered to be more culturally aware of the needs of the Latinx students.

However, the most substantial changes to the academic atmosphere are cultural, with increased instructor awareness that Latinx students, who have been culturally challenged and discriminated against--inside and outside of higher education--are frequently told that their writing must be *fixed* (105). It is not that Latinx students are inherently hostile toward writing; it is that writing and academia has been hostile toward them. Ybarra's research is now 15 years old, and enrollment for Latinx bilingual students has increased significantly in the last 10 years. However, the problems he discusses are still highly relevant to the academic culture of now.

While the challenges and needs of Latinx students are important to consider (and are a major consideration of this thesis project), bilingual education researcher Todd Ruecker in "Here They Do This, There They Do That: Latinas/Latinos Writing across Institutions" (2014) suggests that there is no universal solution to solving all of their challenges in college composition. This is due to the fact that Latinx students face different challenges in different parts of the United States, in addition to their own individual trials (113). Ruecker's research focuses specifically on the multimodal practices, writing experiences, and struggles with language that Latinx students encounter across the U.S (105). Most significantly, Ruecker emphasizes the philosophy of individualized attention in the classroom, especially since each Latinx student enters college with vastly different exposure to educational resources, expectations, and experiences (93). Ruecker contextualizes the challenges of language, the gap of educational resources that exist between different generations of Latinx immigrant students, English language-learners, and connections between those who might struggle with financial and cultural resources in the United States of America as well. Ultimately, Ruecker suggests that there are many *different* needs that must be met, rather than one set of composition education solutions that can be given to all Latinx students in this country (113). However, Ruecker suggests that there are many different ways in

which the needs of these students can be addressed similarly, perhaps through their shared culture and language, as well as through universal goals of rhetoric and composition in the college setting (114). Teachers and students must, *together*, find ways for students to compose in ways that are meaningful for the individuals. To this end, students should be allowed to draw on their individual experiences with language and culture.

Challenges of Bilingual Students as Individuals

Individual experiences are another major component of this project's philosophical approach toward equitable composition curriculum. Even seminal composition theorists such as Min-Zhan Lu have contributed to the conversation about bilingual education, emphasizing the individual experiences and needs of the students in composition. In her essay, "From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle" (1994), Min-Zhan Lu highlights the individual problems of language-learning and composition, openly discussing her own experiences with being a Chinese student learning English in China, a bilingual student, and the common struggles of such students in the basic composition classroom. Lu lists the personal experiences she brought to her bilingual classroom as a major influence on her insecurities as a beginning composer, as well as the sociopolitical dynamics of language, and other political-class struggles of living in China in the 1950s. In particular, social class and the political implications of speaking English in China, in and out of the classroom had to be navigated by Lu in order to learn to compose effectively in English. Secondly, *discourse* and the dichotomy of language uses within discourse communities had to be navigated by Min-Zhan Lu, especially in school and at home with her parents. Of note, Min-Zhan Lu says, "Acquiring the discourse of the dominant group was, [to my parents and teachers], a means of seeking alliance with that group and thus surviving the whirlpool of cultural currents around them" (172-173). The author describes an environment in which

discourses are kept very intentionally separated, as opposed to the massive open discourse of academia that education theorist Kenneth Burke describes (173). The dynamics of power, politics, moves these discourses and creates anxiety and inner-conflict about writing ability and writing acceptability in students like Min-Zhan Lu. Finally, she describes her experiences after coming to the United States, noting some similarities in her daughter's experience with language, discourse, and power (176). Overcoming the barriers of separated discourses, Min-Zhan Lu concludes, requires awareness of the problem, its historical and political influences, and "effort and choice" to actively struggle with reading and writing and overcome the barriers (177). Min-Zhan Lu's experience is widely applicable, as it is shared by most immigrant and ESL students entering college composition as beginners.

While Min-Zhan Lu and others write about their personal experiences with composition and bilingual education, education theorists Trudy Smoke writes about her students' experiences navigating academic discourse, culture, and bilingual education. In "Lessons from Ming: Helping Students Using Writing to Learn" (2004), Smoke writes about an individual college student named Ming Liang, a Chinese immigrant in a US college, who managed to grow as a student *through* composition while also struggling with it (61). Smoke records Ming Liang's challenges and triumphs as a writer. Although Ming's writing reveals her deep, personal connections to the assignments that she is asked to write early on, she becomes confused by *lack of detailed and specific feedback* (64). In later assignments, as Ming was encouraged to use advanced writing techniques beyond personal experience (research, interviews, critical analysis), the author notes positive, consistent changes in Ming's writing (69). As Ming is encouraged as an independent student and is allowed to make personal connections with fellow writers who communicate with her effectively, she develops writing skills more quickly (70). Ming's

experiences as a writer and as a language learner helped the Trudy Smoke develop a better understanding of the deep connections between effective pedagogy, language acquisition, communication, and, of course, composition. In this case, the author concludes that clear communication of expectations are key to helping students develop their skills as writers, as opposed to oral-only pedagogy (72), which in turn helps them develop all of their other skills as they explore the medium. Smoke demonstrates that composition can be a powerful tool for bilingual students struggling with college academic culture, which can often be just as difficult for these students to traverse as the language itself is.

Language, Multimodality, and the Digital Age

Finally, bilingual education and its school of theoretical work is not the only framework through which bilingual Latinx students compose and learn. Anthropologist Maria Teresa De la Piedra analyzes the multimodal connections between sociocultural Mexican arts and linguistic composition expression. In 2013, De la Piedra wrote "'*Consejo*' as a Literacy Event: A Case Study of a Border Mexican Woman" (2013) about a trip to El Paso, where she considers the multimodal experiences of composition in Mexican-American culture and the literary movement of *Consejo*. *Consejo* speech genre, which she translates as "nurturing advice," is examined as a builder of community for Latinx people (339). De la Piedra explores the history of this literary and artistic movement, as well as its multimodality in print, music, and space (art and performance), which are composed and performed in multiple modes. The author also gives advice about what *consejo* can show educators about teaching in the ELL classroom, as well as about multimodal education as a resource for students. For Mexican-American students, this movement's arts and text can be significant in preserving culture, or else in conveying the value of multimodality in ones' own culture (349). This falls in line with Garcia's theories about

heteroglossic framework of bilingual education. For other students, the author advocates for *consejo* as an examination of the surrounding world, the values of composition beyond the written (both in and outside of one's culture), and as a method for teaching genre (349). The cultural-linguistic Mexican art phenomenon *Consejo* provides a perfect example of how Spanish language and culture have already been multimodal and multilingual long before multimodality was at the forefront of digital literacy theory.

Even with all of the considerations of bilingual education and its uses in college composition, there is still more to consider on a pedagogical level. Bilingual education and its focus on the Latinx student population in the United States has been ongoing for decades, and thus has several methodologies and theories in place. Multimodal education, on the other hand, while not new, has seen a surge in terms of research and theory-craft due to Internet-enabled globalization and new technology that has made multimodal composition much more accessible. Multimodality, in its current academic form, has only existed for about twenty years. As such, many of the history and challenges of the movement have only arisen and increased with advanced digitalization of composition; unlike bilingual education, which has many problems with many proposed solutions, multimodal education has many problems and few solutions.

An ideal starting point for understanding the challenges of multimodal education are found in the works of Gunther Kress (who passed away just this year), whose early identification of multimodality and multiple "literacies" were written in *Before Writing: Rethinking Paths to Literacy.* In chapter 2, "'My Gawd, I Made it Like Australia': Making Meaning in Many Media," Kress discusses signs and meaning-making that will form the bulk of later theorists' ideas on multimedia and its relationship with literacy. If literacy is a means of communication and comprehension, Kress argues that children begin attempting this complex communication early

through many modes, especially images and drawings, even beyond words and letters (18). Kress willingly interprets acts of physical communication as a medium of itself, by which children's build later contexts and meaning. These modes of communication are tools for communication in exactly the same way that *language* is ('My Gawd, I Made It Like Australia' 43). While language helps to facilitate cognition and communication, meaning and expression can be conveyed readily through multiple media, sometimes more effectively than the language itself might. Literacy, according to Kress, is built on those communicative attempts, where the written language is merely an additional mode in the same way that physical objects, spoken language, and drawings are (59).

Later in chapter 7, "Teaching Literacy, Learning Literacy," from the same book, Kress links ideas of language, communication, semiotics, composition, rhetoric, teaching, and technology and anticipates future problems that are still developing in the present (139). Kress defines literacy as "no place, no thing, no stable set of forms to be copied. Nor do children see it that way. Their approach is a multiple one: things are always more than one thing, and have different logics, different uses, depending on where you stand when you are looking" (139). Later writers who discuss Internet and global language issues discuss Kress, as do bilingual education theorists and language/literacy educators. Kress anticipates this trend toward digitalization and multimodal communication, saying, "Globalization will inevitably produce new social situations and therefore new forms of writing, new genres...Electronic forms of communication will make greater use of directly iconic signs, and will, inevitably use multimodal texts" (146). In order to shape curriculum and pedagogy around media and literacy, Kress calls for, at the very minimum, awareness of *meaning* and *design* as they are attempted to be communicated by developing writers (154). However, present-day teachers and policy-makers

continue to dismiss their beginning writing students' innovations in composition and do not

attempt to interpret deeper meaning in multimodal compositions.

Other theorists writing in the early Digital Age warn about the perils of not trying to find

meaning in their beginning writers' multimodal and digital compositions. Henry Jenkins is one

of these advocates, writing about the challenges of minority students access to new technology,

as well as responsible media education in the digital age in his *Confronting the Challenges of*

Participatory Culture (2006). Although the entire work has critical implications for media

education and theory, the most significant section of Jenkins' focuses on the "participation gap,"

or the visible trend of cultural and ethnic minority participants (those creating and engaging with

digital media) to engage compared to population majorities (12). The first of these problems is,

of course, *the participation gap*, the noticeable trend of lower income students to be able to

access digital technology such as high-speed internet. Despite historical efforts in the 90s to

bridge this gap, technology continues to surpass the rate at which government organizations are

able (or perhaps willing) to provide such services to students who increasingly need them (13).

This leads to a significant performance gap in the capabilities of the students with access

compared with those without, where they dominate in the classroom regardless of subject, which

in turn shapes perceptions of lower-income students compared to middle-class ones (13). The

second major problem, *the transparency problem*, involves students' willingness to take ideas

presented in digital media as facts without question (14-15). This is an issue across multiple

media, including video games, digital publishing, digital pedagogy, and other texts and videos.

Cultural and ideological influences and biases aside, this has been seen to be an increasing

problem, not only for students, but for all digital media consumers (15). However, it is especially

significant for students due to a heightened responsibility to teach them how to question and identify alleged facts presented in digital media (16).

The final problem, *the ethics challenge*, is about the shifting sociocultural lines that globalization, digitization, and multimedia are bringing to students at a relatively early age (Jenkins 16). These young people are at the forefront of a cultural shift, experiencing technical and moral issues that their elders have never encountered or ever considered. One major ethical concern on the early Internet was the spread of lies and false information (Jenkins 17). Indeed, teaching this concern as an ethical issue in the classroom is *still* a major concern of digital communication. As these professional, ethical lines shift and move, it is extremely important to examine them and have students reflect on their ethical choices in order to make the internet (and other digital spaces) a safe, responsible environment (17). Although Jenkins is not the only author writing about the "three problems" he identifies in his writing, he is one of the first to identify and name them, and many later theorists writing about digital literacy and multimodal education reference this work in order to explain the still-persisting problems and try to find solutions to them. Jenkins suggests that the problems are sociocultural and must be solved at a systematic, societal level (17). However, he stresses the important role that educators and policy-makers play in shaping those society-level changes, citing a willingness to reevaluate skills and goals as one of the most important steps toward solving these problems.

Initial Multimodal Concerns and Digital Tools

Some educators working in this early Digital Age were early adopters of multimedia in the classroom. One, Peggy Albers, wrote about this in "Imagining the Possibilities of Multimodal Education Design" (2006), which took the ideas of multimodal education and put them into practice, at least as far as they could go at the time. Its significance comes in its consideration of

personal inquiry and inquiry-based composition teaching style. In other words, this article

advocates for having students ask questions about media they consume, engaging the students at

their level, using their interests. Most importantly, this article includes an entire breakdown of

the curriculum-creation process with multimodal education in mind (Albers 83). The curriculum

design are broken into *Initiating Engagements* (for reflecting on personal experience and

knowledge) (Albers 82), *Demonstration* (for featuring text and media to the class) (86-87), *Text

Study/Literature Study* (for in-depth examination of media and small group discussion) (88),

Invitations for Inquiry (for generating personal questions and examining personal interests on the

deeper insights of the media) (89), *Opportunities for Organization/Sharing* (for having students

create and present projects and thoughts based on their inquiries and research) (89-90), and

Reflective Action Plans (for giving students the opportunities to apply understanding of new

ideas, revisit previous beliefs, or change attitudes or practices) (93-94). The curriculum for which

Albers advocated may be broadly applied in a classroom setting; indeed, this seems to be a

media-conscious modified version of a standard composition lesson plan formula.

However, these early theorists' search for improved curriculum that incorporated

multimodal composition was met with some resistance at the onset. Aaron Doering, Richard

Beach, and David O'Brien documented some of these challenges in "Infusing Multimodal Tools

and Digital Literacies into an English Education Program" (2007). This article provides an

effective overview of so-called Web 2.0, next-generation composition tools such as social media

and other collaborative online communities that challenged how composition occurs and is

distributed globally (41). Their research used a variety of digital tools and multimodal

composition techniques that students were (and are) using, noting how they can be incorporated

in the classroom, including hypertext as a multimodal process and Instant Messaging as a

collaborative tool (47). Their goals in teaching composition with these tools in mind was *awareness* of these technologies' applications. Notably, the authors discuss Jenkins's "transmedia navigation" (Doering 44) or the ability to recognize the tools necessary for a given media, closely related to genre awareness. Their students all drew on social and genre knowledge specific to their experiences to analyze and compose, regardless of mode, making use of rhetorical devices with multimedia to reach an audience, establishing awareness through the students' interests (53). Their students were tasked with using digital critical inquiry for both research and dissemination of compositions, presenting research in multiple modes to present research to specific audiences (local communities, classrooms, globally, etc) (49). By engaging students with activities that were meaningful to *them*, they were able to consider critical analysis and rhetorical devices of multimedia, as well as moving toward traditional text-based composition (42). There are still questions about how much or how little a role digital literacies and multimedia should play in the classroom, but there are effective methods for using each in composition theory when considered across time.

Other educators focused less on multimodality of technology than on the availability of the technology itself. Stephen R. Acker and Kay Halasek made use of collaborative composition technology to ease the challenges of college readiness in "Preparing High School Students for College-Level Writing: Using ePortfolio to Support a Successful Transition" (2008). Continuing the discussion on the challenges of college composition and student preparedness, Acker and Halasek researched a unique, digital solution, describe "ePortfolio" as a transitional composition tool (2). ePortfolio itself is a digital platform that allows students to receive and access feedback on their writing quickly (2). Students provided sample essays that were then given feedback from instructors, emphasizing the writing process in a demystified, readily-available, accessible digital

platform (2). This project had university students and faculty communicating through the ePortfolio platform with nearby high school faculty and students over a four year period (3). The easy shareability of the project was designed to create simple but effective communication between the parties, with particular emphasis placed on the needs of the high school students moving forward toward college composition readiness (3). Of note, the author states, "High school and college writing teachers do not so much look for or respond to different elements of writing as much as they *emphasize* different elements" (7). While high school writers tend to frame their compositions in one format with a thesis and conclusion, college instructions may require multiple kinds of essays. Ultimately, the author believes that the significant performance growth was due not to the ePortfolio technology as it was about effective, specific, frequent feedback (8). Additionally, the creation and facilitation of collaborative communities between the university's faculty and students and the high school's faculty and students was also described as a meaningful tool in this educational effort.

Despite promising early results of incorporating digital composition and multimodal education in the composition classroom, curricula and policy lagged unnecessarily due to what Marjorie Siegel identified as "accountability culture" in the early 21st century in "New Times for Multimodality? Confronting the Accountability Culture" (2012). So-called "Accountability Culture," closely associated with public education after NCLB (No Child Left Behind and resulting policy) and the curriculum that centers around standardized testing, remained a challenge in incorporating multimodal composition and pedagogy into policy and curriculum (672). Because of the rigid structure of accountability culture, the increasing narrowness of public education curricula, and the emphasis on composition as written and literature as text-only, Siegel notes that multimodal education was not as common in the composition classroom

as it *must* be, especially as students continue to compose and communicate in multiple modes

(673). As technology and the Internet continue to allow students to communicate, disseminate

information, and compose on a rapid, global scale, the author notes that the curricula produced

by public education's accountability culture cannot keep up with the needs of the students to

whom it has a responsibility to education (675). These challenges persist into the present.

Recent Multimodal Concerns and Theories

The challenges of policy against multimodal education persist, even as technology

marches onward and become even more prevalent to student composers. Frank Serafini writes

much about multimodal literacy theory, especially in "Multimodal Literacy: From Theories to

Practices" (2015). This article's primary focus is on sociocultural texts as "artifacts," semiotics

and signs, and the specific challenges of stagnating curriculum that continues to ignore

multimodal composition (419). Writing as a composition method is privileged over images,

video, and sound, a commonly discussed problem in composition education (420). Serafini

proposes that *teachers* as well as students must be made more aware of the multimodal

opportunities that are available in the practice of composition (417). While students are often

eager and already making use of multimodal composition techniques through digital media and

mass media, many teachers rigidly stand by traditional curricula. This is because, as the author

notes, the time and skill investment into multimodal composition may be steep (420). The stigma

around non-traditional compositions like graphic novels or video games may also act as a

deterrent for teachers learning about multimedia, as well (420). The author provides multiple

insights into how some of these previously overlooked "problems" with multimodal composition

may really be opportunities for educators to learn new techniques or expand into previously

unlearned literacies (421). Merely being more aware of the theory and practice that is available

as composition seeks new ways to connect with students may be key to the development of composition and multimodal theory in the near future.

Some multimodal education theorists, such as Steven Fraiberg, take this digital literacy awareness and go further with curriculum, citing a need for language awareness in the developing atmosphere of globalization through the Internet. In "Composition 2.0: Toward a Multilingual and Multimodal Framework" (2014), he discusses how the accessibility of multimedia and language, both online and in real-life spaces, is reshaping English globally. According to Fraiberg, this means that language education must develop a new framework with these changes in mind (497). ESL and inter-generational language-learning are exhibiting needs that cannot be met by current monolingual education policies, but multimodal education can be one way to aid composition teaching with these struggles (497). Due to the multilingual nature of the Internet, multimodal communication is transforming global languages (particularly English) through neologisms, loan words, or cultural ideologies. Fraiberg cites *knotworking* as an important concept, or "the continual tying and untying of genres, objects, texts, and people," essentially a form of meaning-construction related to rhetorical studies that is exacerbated by the Internet (502). The networked world is contributing to convergence of culture, language, and thought that facilitates and necessitates the growth of new ways to think about, discuss, and produce composition. Images, text, language, symbols, websites, blogs, and so on are all in play in the development of language, each of them bending genres as they are produced (508). While none of these modes are meant to completely replace traditional composition, each of them demonstrates that composition *is* changing. These global shifts in multimedia and multilinguistics are also representative of the modern classroom, where shifts in composing in particular genres, forms, and languages are changing.

Christoph Hafner is another multimodal education theorist who is examining how the Digital Age is affecting language and composition. In "Remix Culture and English Language Teaching: The Expression of Learner Voice in Digital Multimodal Compositions" (2015), Hafner examines "Remix Culture" and the compositions that students *bring* into the classroom. *Remix culture*, wherein students are composing quick-copy, quick-production multimodal works, produces digital compositions distributed through mass-media and social media, use images, audio, and visual composition to riff on or *remix* elements of existing familiar composition (such as Shakespeare or other literary classics) in order to compose something new (486). Memes and social media status updates among other multimodal compositions are products of this culture. The arguments surrounding the boom of these types of multimodal composition techniques tend to focus on these compositions as amateur at best and a potential detriment to truly effective composition at worst (491). Hafner offers insights on encouraging students to produce these compositions in order to develop an awareness of voice and audience (491). He notes that composition comes in multiple forms, and that although students' remixed compositions may come off as amateurish distractions to many educators, they are indications that students are seeking outlets for composition and taking an active interest in composition, which may be particularly important for teaching students who struggle with traditional writing through other avenues.

More recently, educators are beginning to change traditional curriculum, molding their teaching techniques to the needs of newer students. Troy Hicks and Franki Sibberson are two such educators. In "Conversation Currents: Students as Writers and Composers: Workshopping in the Digital Age" (2015), they discuss the applications of digital literacy and multimodal education theory to a commonly used writing activity: the writing workshop (223). Hicks and

Sibberson examine methods to update this writing exercise for the modern, digital age. By taking the multimodal practices of modern English students and applying them to core goals of composition teaching, they hope to design an activity that is relevant to their students' established digital skills while teaching them techniques that they will carry over into later composition learning (227). Sibberson uses multiple modes of composition to have students consider audience and genre, with communication quickened by online-based reading and writing workshops (228). Because more students are entering the classroom already using technology, the hardest learning curve is for the educators to listen and develop new techniques based around these technologies (225). Hicks further elaborates on *mentor texts*, or texts that serve as examples of effective writing for beginning writers, used in writing workshops (225). For this, he makes use of multiple media, from YouTube videos to tweets to teach the students about effective audience awareness, narrative, and purpose (226). Hicks is balancing and incorporating these new media and mentor texts with traditional ones. It can be difficult to incorporate and teach with new modes when some students struggle with text-based composition; therefore, the multimedia should always be used with the mindset of working *toward* and *with* text-based composition. Naturally, digital technology brings new ways to teach, but it is still a frontier with unknown challenges that must continue to be navigated and researched.

Still other educators focusing on multimodal education concentrates on a specific mode to pair with traditional written composition, rather than what the digital brings to modality. Steph Ceraso is one of these, advocating for "bodily listening" or listening itself as a multimodal practice. In "(Re)Educating the Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning, and the Composition of Sonic Experiences" (2014), Ceraso asks how composers incorporate and make

use of sound, both as a written strategy and in music and speech compositions. The creation and interpretation of sound acts both as a digital media and as an aspect of aural and oral tradition. She considers *multimodal listening* itself as an act of composition, where the student is encouraged to explore how sounds, music, and words evoke emotions so that they may reproduce these sounds in their own compositions in the classroom (103). Many of Ceraso's composition activities are centered around personal response, modeling, and making written compositions multimodal through presentation and examination (115). The sense of sound, the author argues, may be a better way to encourage students to write if they struggle with these traditional modes.

Pluralingualism and Multimodal Together

Unsurprisingly, most multimodal educators seem to agree that a *both/and* approach to language and technology-based education will be most important in composition education. Cynthia Selfe, in "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing" (2009), while using multimodal composition based around aurality and meaning, still notes that students *should* still be taught traditional written composition. For theorists like Selfe, multimodality and technology are tools toward effective written composition, such as through the use of the *digital environment* as a source of composition tools (636). Music, podcasts, open-source media software such as Audacity, and calling software such as with Skype and Facebook allow for dissemination and acquisition of information, in many cases erasing the previous barriers that existed for students of lower socioeconomic classes in the past (638). Giving students an awareness of aurality as a form of composition helps them produce and consume media based in this mode, making them more responsible and active students of

rhetoric, especially as the world becomes more global through the use of the Internet. All of this, in and of itself, is demonstrative of the composition power of multimodal education together.

However, Selfe's other thoughts on the cultural and linguistic applications of multimodal education are even *more* poignant for this project. Selfe provides a historical background for the exclusion and inclusion of aurality in composition as a branch of education. This history, beginning with the early rhetoric, continuing with the split of written composition and speech as branches of education, and settling into the near-present wherein students continue to utilize, learn through, and understand aurality as a form of composition just as much, if not more than they do with their written works (623). Much is said about the history of aurality in composition, but of particular note is its intertwined connectivity with people of color. Selfe says, "Hispanic/Latino communities...managed to retain, to varying extents and in a range of different ways, an investment in collective storytelling, *cuentos*, *corridos*, and other aural practices developed within a long--and continuing--history of linguistic, educational, economic, and cultural discrimination" (623). The forcing of a single, privileged written education has, according to the author, also contributed to the persistence of aurality with other ethnic and racial minority communities in the United States. Additionally, the author points out that just as there are many connections between rhetoric, composition, and pedagogy as forms of discovery and education (even outside of composition education), much pedagogy is given and received *aurally* and shares many commonalities with composition theory.

Despite the similarities in the academic goals and uses of bilingual education and multimodal education, there are surprisingly few educators using these two theories in the classroom intentionally. In "Plurilingualism as Multimodal Practice" (2013), researcher Diane Potts, details her discovery of the multimodality in her students' pluralingual composition

activities, although this was not something that Potts was trying to discover intentionally. Potts' ESL students attempted to recreate *meaning* from English language text into audio form in their primary language for a specific audience (their native-language-dominant parents) (627). These attempts combined the media of audio, visual, and text in order to distribute meaning for their parents at an open house event. Potts writes, "The students' knowledge of their audience and their perceptions of their parents' concerns are realized in their design and in the spatial relations of the written, audio, and visual components" (627). These ESL students used multiple media *as well as multiple languages* to communicate across language with their parents so that meaning could be preserved and conveyed effectively.

After instructing the students in the preparations of these languages and modes, Potts notes that plurilingualism and multimodality are not simply tools that can be mixed together effectively; rather, they are *frequently* used together. She writes, "Students' plurilingual resources are made, remade, and augmented in relation to other semiotic resources" (Potts 628). Most significant, at least as far as Potts expresses, this activity was a clear demonstration of the mix of semiotic, multimodal, and bilingual education theories in the ESL setting.

Language and the Digital Age

Other research combining linguistics with multimodal techniques focus less on multimodality so much as digital literacy and technology. Although multimodality and digital literacy are separate areas of study, they are often conflated through widespread digital use enabling multimodality. Martha C. Pennington furthers this intentional combination in "The Impact of the Computer in Second-Language Writing" (2006), focusing on composition, second-language learning, and the ways in which computer technology is shaping English language communication and acquisition. Pennington describes dual literacies: English language literacy

and computer literacy. In the case of both literacies, composition and writing tools are becoming increasingly necessary aspects of education (297). Word processing enables ease of writing process strategies of prewriting, here called "planning," as well as revision and editing (300). Other features, such as networking, email, bulletin boards, and instant chats enable free use of English as a language, are symptoms of globalization as well as enablers of communication and globalization. Fast, unregulated forms of these media, such as chat, are contributing to personalization of the English language, or else an overall shift in English as a language, for better or worse. As such, Internet speech is gaining discourse(s) of its (their) own (Pennington 308). Hypermedia and hypertext allow for text to be paired directly with multimedia that incorporate sound, video, and image, allowing for more creative compositions. Internet data resources ease access to language and grammar rules, technical resources such as TESOL, as well as available language-checks and references. In order to have students learn effectively enough to use language without the use of technology, limitations of the technologies' uses should be considered. Pennington stresses that technology *will* continue to develop and be used for better or worse, and educators need to keep up and be aware of what their students are doing.

Considering College Composition Education for Latinx Students

Continuing to look ahead at the yet-unknown challenges of the 21st century is a particularly poignant topic for many theorists. In "What Does Vygotsky Provide for the 21st-century Language Arts Teacher?" (2013), Peter Smagorinsky manages to look ahead while learning from the past. Examining the written works of Lev Vygotsky for applications to modern Language Arts teaching, Smagorinksy looks beyond Vygotsky's widely-read theories from the Zone of Proximal Development and attempts to find other theories that can be applied to the pedagogy of language arts in the present. Smagorinsky examines Vygotsky's conceives of

speech as a tool, something that is both written and spoken and which develops with use. Smagorinsky writes, "Teachers thus overlook the potential of classrooms to encourage the development of thinking through the unfettered opportunity to use speech as a tool for generating new ideas through the process of speaking" (194). Because *speech* for Vygotsky has a single set of rules for both writing and oral communication, teachers should make use of both forms in the language arts. Some specific classroom activities are touched on, such as group work narratives, role-playing, and emotional reader-response speech. Focusing briefly on the challenges of culture in the United States, Smargorinksy writes, "Mexican American students...tend to be treated as stupid and incompetent, and frequently experience dysphoria that leads to low levels of personal worth, at least in the context of school" (197). Finally, Smagorinsky focuses on how meaning is developed by students not only through their environments but by their personal experiences, the tools that they use (eg. computers, speech), and their personal levels of engagement with the coursework. The need for "meaningful academic experience" needs to be addressed on a personal level for the students, bearing these other things in mind (199). Rather than view development as a stage-by-stage process, Vygotsky argued that meaning and significant development must be brought on individually. The last section focuses on Zone of Proximal development as applied to the 21st century classroom. The author notes that the social, cognitive, cultural, and technical factors that play into pedagogy are all working in tandem to develop student learning (199-200). In addition to merely working with students, teachers have a responsibility to think in the students' perspectives in ways that are meaningful for both of them. Familiarity with a students' individual experiences, needs, and cultural factors are all important considerations for their learning development.

Clearly, there are many working parts that have to be considered when bringing together multimodal and bilingual education techniques for composition. Composition has its own pedagogy and theory that must also be considered. Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu put some of these considerations together in "Working Rhetoric and Composition" (2010). Composition heavyweight authors Horner and Lu provide an examination of the uses, demands, interests, approaches, and alternative approaches of the field of rhetoric and composition, focusing particularly on how it *is* developing and the resistance these alternative uses have garnered. The most significant contribution of this article is its attempt to define (or "redefine") rhetoric and composition for the needs of current academics and students (Horner 476). One of the most important places where rhetoric and composition are used purposely in conjunction is in *pedagogy,* the intentional communication-as-instruction that occurs between teachers and students (478). This is especially true in the *teaching* of English writing, which returns to the authors' beginning discussions and arguments about composition apart from rhetoric. Horner and Lu state, "'Rhetoric and composition' as such is almost a U.S., English monolingual phenomenon without parallel elsewhere, a field that anyone attempting to explain its work to those outside the United States must needs explicate" (488). They go on to say that because many people globally are learning English to do business in the language and do not technically qualify as native-English speakers, the act of "writing in English" is rapidly shifting in as many directions as there are languages of the world (488). The un-standardization of English is occurring even as rhetoric and composition purists continue to pursue English standardization in the United States higher education institutions. Through rapid globalization, outside of this country, no standard English can be enforced. However, educators, theorists, and policy-makers

in the U.S. institutions will certainly continue to stake their ground on what is and isn't standard within rhetoric, composition, and rhetoric and composition.

While composition theorists like Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu examine pedagogy and policy as they affect each other politically, Anmarie Eves-Bowden considers the needs of these writers at the classroom level in "What Basic Writers Think About Writing" (2001). Surveying beginning writers (young students who have no experience writing, college students whose English composition education has been neglected or is lacking, and bilingual English students who are merely at the beginning part of their composition education) Eves-Bowden determines that beginning writers tend to feel the same fears of insecurity in their ability (Eves-Bowden 80). They also tend to have some amount of overconfidence in what they can accomplish, and they do not usually believe that their own writing skills can be improved (Eves-Bowden 80). However, she also concludes, "I have come to the conclusion that basic writers do not think in fundamentally different ways than advanced writers do. Nor do they simply lack the skills to write. In a sense, what they lack most of all is the experience of a successful composition, not as a paper, but as a process" (83). The author's emphasis on writing as a process mirrors education as a process; although beginning students may feel that their writing cannot be improved, if they can be provided an awareness of writing as a process, rather than a single event or a product that must be produced wholesale, then their own *feelings* about writing may shift, as well as their abilities. If the students' feelings about their writing can shift, the Eves-Bowden feels that they will improve not only as writers but also as students overall.

Multiple Goals, Multiple Media, Multiple Theories of Composition

Finally, the overall philosophy of composition, the heart of the discipline and its place in higher education must be considered when putting bilingual education and multimodal education

to work together. The heart of college composition is excellently summarized in Patricia Bizzell's "Composition Studies Saves the World!" (2009). In this article, composition theorist Patricia Bizzell responds to criticism of the college composition classroom, particularly ideas that college composition is unnecessary and does not actually teach writing. The concept of "saving the world" (ie. making the world a more *just* place for all individuals) is the major theme of this article (174). Bizzell's experience teaching highlight the difficulty that Black and Hispanic students in particular had in connecting with college writing, not due to their own development (which was not impeded or challenged by their linguistic abilities) but by the exclusionary goals of academia in the 1980s (175-176). Bizzell asserts that the role of composition and other humanities fields has been *and should continue to be* focused on social inclusivity, searching for truth and finding novel, meaningful ways to continue to include underrepresented academic voices. Literature studies, diverse readings, and further research into cognitive and social pedagogy and rhetoric and composition all make significant contributions toward this end.

One of the major goals of this project is to challenge assumptions of language-learners' composition and linguistic abilities as they navigate college in the 21st century. In order to demonstrate that these students are not only capable but *actively* composing in meaningful ways, their compositions and experiences in academia must be thoroughly explored and encouraged, lest they become lost within traditional academic writing that often erases the students' meaning and cultural individualism. In the next chapters, this project will examine specific places in education where students mix modes to compose, discussing along the way how we must follow their lead.

Chapter 3 - Speaking Spanish, Writing English: Multilingual College Composition in the 21st

Century

Bilingual education and composition are separate schools of education. For the purposes of this project, *bilingual education* refers to the instruction of students for whom English is not their first or primary language (as opposed to the teaching of a second language to English-native speakers). Bilingual education may take on several distinct forms and may refer to various methodologies and theories that can be applied to many different academic subjects. Composition is one of the subjects most frequently associated with the broad academic field known to students as "English," so naturally the field has strong ties to bilingual education through their linguistic connections. In general, composition also refers to the academic field involving writing, although, as this project emphasizes, composition makes use of more media than the written. Bilingual education in college composition, then, will refer to the teaching of composition to Latinx students who are bilingual English learners or who do not compose in English as their primary language.

In the United States, American English is generally valued as the dominant language of communication, having the most social and political power for its uses in government, business, entertainment, and, of course, education. In institutionalized education, Standard American English (SAE) is privileged over non-English academic language and over other varieties of American English. This has led to the academic *discourse* in U.S. higher education being shaped by and shaped around SAAE, effectively excluding multilingualism, non-standard Englishes, and discourses that are non-academic. In looking at discourse and language, as well as the multilingual process of using multiple languages, bilingual theorists Ofelia Garcia connects these concepts together in *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century* (2009). For Garcia, discourse are

"ways of talking or writing within a context" that "conceives languages as a form of social practice that naturally occurs in connected speech and written text with those who participate in the event" (32). Specific discourses take place in specific contexts and are shaped by the groups of people who make use of the communications between them. For Garcia, discourses occur across media and across languages. Garcia notes that certain theorists acknowledge discourse as an aspect of *languaging*, which goes beyond context and users to also consider the languages that are used to make meaning (32). Languaging considers contexts, people, and language; Garcia's idea of *translanguaging* considers this process yet further wherein communicators "language bilingually" or use multiple languages at once as if they were one language (43-44). Translanguaging occurs across discourses as well as languages, and for bilingual speakers, and with the increasing number of bilingual speakers (and students) in the United States, teaching students to make use of translanguaging will be important to have them learn new languages and discourses.

Of note, some education theorists believe that it is the exclusive nature of discourse that has caused both the linguistic and composition performance gaps for Latinx students in the U.S.. Lilia Bartolome in "Understanding Academic Discourse" (2012) claims that research data shows exactly this, also noting that the "Standard English" discourse has excluded Mexican-American students in particular from joining the larger field of academia, especially where English is involved (343). Academic discourses may refer to "less easily measured language components such as cultural knowledge about rhetorical structure" which is "the ability to create text whose logic and structure reflect academic mainstream ways of organizing text" (Bartolome 343). Academic culture and organization of texts must be taught; however, access to these teaching frameworks is often restricted by social class and other barriers of privilege and means. If these

students are exposed to academic discourse through their bilingual education classes, it might be in an academic version of Spanish, and if students are not exposed to academic language, they likely use a non-standard English or Spanish (Bartolome 344). These challenges cause many Latinx students in the U.S. to be unfamiliar with SAAE at the time they enter higher education. Additionally, having their own language(s) rendered unusable or else significantly undervalued causes further reduction of their academic performance and personal self-esteem (Bartolome 351). These effects and some potential counters that may be applied in the classroom have been further addressed in more recently decades.

Although not all, many Latinx students entering college composition are English learners. In the 21st century, the overall goals of bilingual education for Latinx students are focused on the aspects of composition with which these students struggle most. These are "academic English proficiency" (Conger 1106), contextualization of "cultural knowledge" and language (Bartolome 350), purposeful writing (McCarthey 371), and practice. These students grapple with English language proficiency (grammar, syntax, usage, as well as rhetorical and idiomatic uses), especially when they are second-language writers (Bartolome 343). They become frustrated with limited cultural knowledge, both when trying to retain their home culture both also when navigating the culture of American academia (Bartolome 351). They have difficulty understanding the purpose of their assignments, especially when they are unfamiliar with the academic discourse, which has a culture of its own (Bartolome 343). Lastly, they struggle with the practical uses of college composition, simply due to lack of opportunity to practice advanced composition. However, each of the elements can be considered and countered when building composition curriculum around the needs of Latinx students in the 21st, allowing students the

opportunity to practice composition that targets those aspects of college writing that they struggle with the challenge them most.

Given Garcia's and Bartolome's contributions to this issue, it is now necessary to examine the practical uses of bilingual education theory in college composition, looking both at its present uses and its potential uses. Bilingual education in college composition is not as common as in primary and secondary schools. By the time that students enter college, most institutions seem to operate on the expectation that students should have sufficient language proficiency to compose in the dominant English language. Despite this, bilingual Latinx students remain underserved by the composition curriculum. Indeed, several exercises and activities that work in these beginning education levels can also work for beginning college writers. In order to understand how these curricula might better serve the bilingual Latinx student population, it is important to understand the current goals of these composition curricula and the ways in which they are already focused on the needs of bilingual Latinx students.

Before moving on to examine the needs of second-language Latinx college composition students, two major considerations must be made. First, it is crucial to make a distinction between second-language writers and basic (developmental) writers. The CCCC recognizes an important distinction between three groups of students who learn English composition. These groups are the mainstream group, basic writers, and second-language writers ("CCCC Statement"). Each group has their own needs when learning college composition. Basic writers are those writers who struggle to compose at all at the higher education placement level; often these students are placed in special classes that "remediate" their writing and working process for higher education (Eves-Bowden 70). The second-language writing group are students whose ability to compose in English may be inhibited by the challenges of using a language that they

are still not entirely familiar with but whose composition abilities are at an appropriate level for college. This is determined through testing. According to the CCCCs standards for student placement in these groups, students should be placed based on their "writing proficiency rather than their race, native-language background, nationality, or immigration status. Nor should the decision be based solely on the scores from standardized tests of general language proficiency or of spoken language proficiency" ("CCCC Statement"). The ability to compose is not directly affected by their linguistic or multilingual abilities. A student may be able to compose with very high skill in their own language while compose less skillfully in their second language. This lack of language proficiency does not supersede the students' composition skills, nor does it make the student a basic or developmental writer. (Although some second-language writers may *also* be basic writers, their placement in a basic group must reflect their needs as a writer and not simply be due to their status as a second-language writer.) For that matter, bilingual Latinx students in America are sometimes miscategorized as basic or developmental writers when in actuality, their composition skills may be considerably higher in their native language than in English. The overall goal of this project is to make full use of the existing composition skills of the incoming Latinx students in the 21st century, whether those composition skills be overlooked due to the punidirectional monolinguistic nature of Education in U.S. higher education or due to the students not being taught the transferability of their composition skills through a multilinguistic education framework.

Second, the objectives used to consider the needs of higher education students must be considered. What all of these theorists are contributing to is a greater exploration of how multimodal and multilingual education for college composition leads to two particular sets particular sets of learning objectives and standards will be considered when examining these

theories. In order to fully consider a multimodal-multilingual college composition curriculum, the first essential education resource to consider is the College Composition and Communication (3Cs) and their "Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing." This statement, produced and distributed by 3Cs, contains many standards and procedures for the teaching of college composition. Many of these are standards that are used across institutions in the United States, but these standards do not always consider multilinguistic or bilingual standpoints. For this purpose, another resource from 3Cs, "CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers" will be considered instead. This resource *does* consider the standards for bilingual education and multilingual practice for college composition in this decade. One final consideration of standards that will be used in this project are the Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) First-Year Writing Program student learning objectives, which are in part based on 3Cs standards for the teaching of college composition. TAMIU's objectives and practices have been implemented at an international Hispanic-serving institution (HSI), and this university's education objectives have been used to teach thousands of Latinx students with bilingual heritage backgrounds. Using these two sets of objectives, the theories and exercises for modern multilingualism and college composition can best be developed for Latinx students.

Composition Toward Multilinguistic Proficiency

The key element of multilingual education remains language proficiency, at least in research. For most education institutions, English proficiency is the primary goal of language education, placed far above cultural knowledge and purposeful writing skills. Most composition activities and assignments at this level reflect this hierarchy of goals, which is why composition instruction is provided and expected in English. Composition assignments that are designed to allow students to practice writing in English enable language proficiency, generally. When

students practice writing in English, they gain valuable language experience. All-English language classes tend to differ from ESL or native-only language classes in that all-English classes focus on "gathering information from secondary sources" while all-native-language classes emphasized "procedural and mechanical aspects of writing" and expository writing (McCarthey 378). However, it is essential in higher education for students to learn both research and language mechanic skills for composition at higher education. Fortunately, practicing English in general should improve proficiency. General composition and bilingual education share the goal of English proficiency improvement, which is being met in practical ways.

Although bilingual education maintains the goal of English proficiency, it has a secondary goal that is less frequently discussed: increased native language proficiency. Researchers like Dylan Conger in "Does Bilingual Education Interfere with English-Language Acquisition?" (2010) ask if the goal of English proficiency is being properly assessed and measured in American education. Language proficiency yields too many benefits to give up on, such as increased jobs, increased satisfaction, and increased education performance (Conger 1106). Studies such as Dylan Conger's suggest that bilingual education in K-12 does not significantly increase English language proficiency, though this method does not seem to have a harmful impact on English proficiency either (Conger 1119). However, the research to determine if native language proficiency is increased by integrated bilingual education is quite sparse. This is likely due to the elevated importance of English proficiency, since it is the more politically powerful language in the U.S. There are many shapes that bilingual education may take, with a general division between monoglossic and heteroglossic frameworks of language education. For theorists like Ofelia Garcia, monoglossic language frameworks desire the outcome of "either proficiency in the two languages according to monolingual norms for both languages, or

proficiency in the dominant languages according to monolingual norms" (114). In either

scenario, separate language proficiency is expected as the norm, and since English is the

dominant language of discourse in the United States, English language instruction and

proficiency is given priority. Even within sub-frameworks that are monoglossic in nature, this is

the case. Most U.S. education in English seems to be *subtractive* at worst (asking bilingual

students to not speak their native language) (Garcia 115) and *additive* in better scenarios (adding

English as a second language but still treating the languages and cultures as compartmentalized,

separate) (Garcia 116). In some classrooms, instruction is provided in a primary language but

tested in English; in others, equal time is given to both languages. Still in others, instruction is

given entirely in English, with little or no accommodation provided for secondary language.

In either case, most standard, beginning college composition classes follow the

monoglossic framework in the U.S. In "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College

Composition" (2006), Paul Matsuda discusses how language is shifting in general, and he also

provides some background information on why colleges in the U.S. need to do more to promote

non-English languages in composition. Some supplemental composition is occasionally provided

to underprepared or developmental students into "remedial" classrooms (Matsuda 642).

However, research into the amount of development and the degree to which such courses are

impactful has so far been limited. Furthermore, Matsuda asserts that these classes may provide

students useful language skills for learning composition, but they "also reify the myth [of

linguistic homogeneity] by making it seem as if language differences can be effectively removed

from mainstream composition courses (Matsuda 642). However, native language proficiency is

almost *never* a stated goal, or even secondary goal, of college composition at U.S. institutions.

Again, this is likely due to the large emphasis on English and the benefits gleaned from its

mastery. No mainstream college composition curricula promote native language proficiency, or even awareness or practice. This should be something to consider when building future composition assignments because of the benefits of multilinguistic proficiency.

The multilinguistic framework that would best benefit bilingual Latinx college students would be a *heteroglossic*, *dynamic* framework of language education. Heteroglossic frameworks of language education make use of "the realization of multiple co-existing norms which characterized bilingual speech, of bilinguals' translanguaging" (116). In other words, this language education acknowledges that bilingual students learn and use all of their language at once, as opposed to in separate language compartments. Educators in this framework "use bilingualism as a way to more effectively teach a dominant language and to add an additional one and "to adapt to the complex bilingualism of the students" in a way that adds agency to students as they practice these new language techniques (Garcia 117). If such a language framework were to be implemented in college composition (as it is already being implemented in some programs in secondary education), it would need to acknowledge not only multilinguistic practices but also the complexity at the heart of translanguaging.

This is where *dynamic theoretical framework* comes into play. The dynamic framework is a subset of heteroglossic language framework that "supports language interactions taking place on different planes including multimodalities, and other linguistic interrelationships" (Garcia 118). Dynamic framework's willingness to consider language instruction that is *multimodal* is particularly significant for the needs of this thesis, which ties together linguistic and multimodal communication in composition instruction. The dynamic framework reaches across various languages and means of communication to create a form of instruction for students that also considers their cultural needs *and* their plurilinguistic needs (Garcia 118). Dynamic framework

also "promotes *transcultural* identities; that is, the bringing together of different cultural experiences and context generating a new and hybrid cultural experience" (Garcia 118). These cultural experiences as being extremely necessary, vital aspects of composition education will be further explored in this and the next chapter as multimodal composition theories are explored. Language teachers in Asian and African countries, as well as teachers of deaf students, already make use of heteroglossic frameworks (Garcia 116). For such teachers, the complexity of multimodal, multilinguistic communication provided in dynamic language education is undoubtedly beneficial. The linguistic benefit of the dynamic framework, as far as language by itself is concerned, is that it provides students with language experience while not stopping them from using their native or home language.

In addition to the benefits of a dynamic multilinguistic composition curriculum, growing number of bilingual students in the U.S. curriculum will undoubtedly continue to shift the needs of student populations as more students enter the classroom as bilingual, non-native English speakers. Continued unidirectional monolingualism and insistence on English proficiency leads to sociocultural problems that go on to influence academic performance for minority students (Matsuda 637). Causes and case studies aside, there remains a question of *how* to bridge this problem in the classroom. Matsuda advocates for a more inclusive, differently-paced curriculum, which does not attempt to "contain" English as a language and skill that is "untainted" by other languages but which is instead growing. As Matsuda points out, there *are* some additional courses or educational tracks that can teach students English proficiency skills, but these tracks serve as stopgap measures that socially Other the students. If unidirectional monolingualism is at the root of policy that keeps curriculum and academic culture from evolving, polydirectional multilingualism should be the answer under consideration.

Ofelia Garcia advocates that most multilingual education should be focused on polydirectional language acquisition, which understands that language is not limited to "A or B" or "dual languages" but rather is a complex use of all of the students' language skills at once (129). Rather than think of the student as speaking one language while learning another, polydirectional multilingualism considers language use as having multiple directions and expectations, going back and forth between language. As student populations become more diverse in America, the languages that they bring into the classroom will continue to expand not only the languages that must be taught to them but also the languages that they should be allowed to use in this learning process. In polydirectional multilingual education programs, students learn new language skills by building on existing languages and being encouraged to use languages that they already know (Garcia 129). This is not to say that English Only courses should be done away with altogether or that *all* composition should be taught in students' native language. Logistically, this could never be facilitated by the number of bilingual professionals in the current state of education, in the first place. As has already been mentioned, instruction provided in English with practice in English enables English language proficiency. What is merely being asked, instead, is that *more* polydirectional multilinguistic courses be considered, especially for bilingual students who are not proficient in English or students who are still learning English. However, as will become clear in this chapter, there are many considerations that must be made before a completely dynamic, multilingual education framework could likely be implemented across college composition.

Meaningful Composition

The second goal of multilingual education that is under consideration for the shifting needs of future beginning composition Latinx students is the *purpose* of their writing

assignments. Students who struggle to understand the purpose of the curricula may struggle when more advanced assignments attempt to scaffold upon this educational foundation. Writing with *purpose* is already a consideration in college composition, as enshrined by the 3Cs. 3Cs alternatively refers to "sound" writing as writing that engages students "in study of and practice with purposes, audiences, and contexts for writing" ("Principles"). In this college writing program, students practice identifying these elements of sound writing as well as putting these skills into practice in their own writings. Emphasizing the purpose of writing as well as the purpose of assignments themselves for the students helps them to understand their meaning and use, both during and after the students put these skills into practice. However, there are still deeper considerations that can be made for the more specific population of Latinx college students.

First, it is important to consider *how* 3Cs uses purpose in creating curriculum. Evidently, the needs of purpose are largely rhetorical; that is, purpose enables the principle of "sound writing" for the rhetorical needs of both writers and readers. In their 2nd Principle for Postsecondary Teaching of Writing, 3Cs notes:

> The assertion that writing is "rhetorical" means that writing is always shaped by a combination of the purposes and expectations of writers and readers and the uses that writing serves in specific contexts. To be rhetorically sensitive, good writers must be flexible. They should be able to pursue their purposes by consciously adapting their writing both to the contexts in which it will be read and to the expectations, knowledge, experiences, values, and beliefs of their readers. ("Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing")

The consideration of purposes and expectations of writers and readers in specific contexts refers to *audience awareness* and *discourse*, wherein beginning writers are asked to consider the time, place, and rhetorical needs of their reader when writing "sound" compositions. Audiences are as varied as their writers, and one of the most useful skills that beginning writers will learn will be how to write with these audiences many needs in mind. This also calls to mind *genre awareness* and the need for beginning writers to determine the forms their writing may take in a given context for a given audience, as well as the discourses and rules of that genre of composition.[iv]

Again, because Garcia's dynamic linguistic education emphasizes the specific *cultural* needs of the learner, such as Latinx writers, composition education that is focused on specific language-learning groups should also consider the cultural needs of these students in their writing. Fortunately, composition can also consider those needs with its *purposeful* writing. The 3Cs emphasizes that the *purpose* of writing extends beyond a single course or subject. Writing is a skill applicable across curricula and courses. In their 8th Principe for Postsecondary Teaching of Writing, they say. "Instructors emphasize that writing development is continuous and supports learning, engagement, and critical thinking by using activities and assignments to help students learn and engage with information, ideas, and arguments within specific courses" ("Principles") The critical thinking, social engagement, and personal learning opportunities built into writing assignments is utilized not only in the courses of writing but in the students' other courses, as well as beyond the academic. The writing should be *meaningful* to the student, not merely incidentally (as many writing skills may be creatively applied to a variety of outside contexts) but also *intentionally*, where students can apply it to their outside contexts. The 3Cs explicitly applies this transference of skills to courses, but it should just as well apply to careers, if this is a goal of academic skills acquisition, as well as the students' personal culture, since this provides

students with additional knowledge of audiences and contexts that they are already aware of before they enter the classroom.

Toward Purposeful Multilingualism

Multilingual students struggle with many facets of the American education system and the writing process, and many of these disconnections are related to culture as much as they are related to the English language. Some of these difficulties are addressed by researchers Sarah J. McCarthey, Angela M. López-Velásquez, Georgia Earnest García, Shumin Lin and Yi-Huey Guo in "Understanding Writing Contexts for English Language Learners" (2004). English-learners who are beginning writers, be they young elementary students or first-year college students, are challenged by the *purpose* of their writing assignments (McCarthey et. al. 371). McCarthey and colleagues found that for many young students, translation tasks, especially for family members who are not proficient in the target language, is a motivating, purposeful activity for beginning composition (355). "Students saw literacy as a language-specific activity as they engaged in teaching younger siblings, translating for the family, and acting as 'brokers' in Spanish and English" (McCarthey et. al, 355). For these beginning students, literacy and proficiency carries a social weight and a specific use beyond the skills of the language and composition by themselves. This is a feature of language and composition that is absent from monolingual students and monolingual education. To contrast, students' misunderstanding of the purpose of an assignment may also be cultural unfamiliarity with social custom, as with a particular student who did not understand the significance of thank you notes (McCarthey 372) or with other countries' writing education focusing on elements that do not exist in the U.S. system, such as Chinese character writing. An educator working with English learners cannot assume that the students have an inherent familiarity with the purposes and features of a given

genre or writing assignment. The reasons why students are asked to do certain tasks must be explicitly given to these students. Additionally, "Students infrequently saw a purpose beyond fulfilling an assignment for the teacher" (McCarthey 372). Even monolingual beginning writers struggle with understanding the purpose of assignments at times, but this is corrected for in many possible ways.

One of the challenges that McCarthey's team faced was that "the settings rarely provided opportunities to talk extensively about the purposes and audiences for writing, nor about the students' own writing" (385). Clearly purpose of assignments must be made as clear as possible if the student is expected to understand the meaning, but giving the student the opportunity to discuss their writing and how they feel about the process itself is *just as important* for students to understand the purpose of the activity. Also, by having an opportunity to discuss their writing, especially with peers, writing classrooms may become *collaborate* spaces that allow students to participate in discourses and share elements of their own writing with their peers, a process that is both important for the students culturally as well as linguistically (McCarthey 385). One other way the authors suggest making the writing purposeful is by encouraging students "to write about the experiences of learning a new language and the challenges they face coming to a new country" (387). These are admittedly heavy-handed cultural experiences that the students may or may not have personal experience or willingness to write about. Some of this might be reworked into asking the students about other cultural challenges, such as experiences with family members, stories that they have heard from them, or personal experiences in general.

There are many opportunities in composition for students to write about personal experience, but for multilingual, language learning students, personal experience is a particularly purpose-rich element of composition. McCarthey and team also recommend that the students be

"allowed to use their native language in ESL classrooms as well as their all-English classes, and be prompted to share other features of their backgrounds within meaningful contexts" (387). The many possibilities for improved language proficiency for its own sake have already been explored, but its inclusion here as a feature of enhancing purpose in student composition should also not be understated. Overall, McCarthey's data suggests purposeful content that is, in some form or other, already in use by the 3Cs Principle Practices. The key component moving forward is the importance of contextualization and specific instructions for these students. Moreover, the writing must have some importance for the student if it is to be "sound" or purposeful, whether it be related to their personal lives, cultures, or other academic goals.

Of course, beginning, bilingual college composition students misunderstand more than the purpose of their assignments. Myra Goldschmidt and Thomas Seifried in "Mismatched Expectations among Developmental ESL Students in Higher Education" (2008) assert that students misunderstand the expectations of higher education on several fundamental levels. The reasons why students attend college in the first place are varied, comprised of many more social, political, and cultural components than this thesis is equipped to tackle. However, the reasons why they practice writing (beyond the obvious requirements of the university) are more straightforward. However, institutions and the overall goals of the 3Cs may not always align with the objectives and expectations that these students bring with them to the classroom. If the students' expectations are just as misunderstood as their instructors' expectations, it is no wonder why these students struggle so much with the purpose of their assignments. Students generally enter the classroom with at least motivation for college, seeking to "learn new things" (Goldschmidt and Seifried 30). These students expect some increased rigor in higher education compared with previous education, yet they tend to overestimate their fluency and written

abilities in English (30). "Their expectations far exceed their academic abilities at the time they enter college," which sets the students up for failure, disappointment, and schedule setbacks (32). This is more of an issue for academic advisors and the culture of academia at large than an issue that can be solved in a single classroom. Ultimately, both typical English faculty and ESL beginning college students believe that they should be capable of achieving good grades in college if they make an attempt, but both instructors and students become dissatisfied by the diminished results. Therefore, the author also recommends that instruction should be provided in developmental courses by instructors who are specifically trained to teach culturally diverse or ESL students development (32).

Goldschmidt and Seifried's findings are from 10 years ago, and developmental English courses and instructors with at least some cultural diversity specialization, are now somewhat more commonplace. Beginning ESL students are given either additional instruction, or are instructed at a level that is appropriate for their developing skills. The 3Cs does not say much about the treatment of developmental composition students, except to say that classes comprised of these populations should be capped at 15 total students with no more than 45 in a given semester ("Principles"). This will certainly be a challenge as more students enter higher education with a need for properly trained, rigorous, culturally diverse instruction that will prepare them for the challenges of more advanced composition. As for the creation of assignments and curriculum that address the mismatched expectations of these students, more may be done for them in administration and individual communication than the composition classroom. The 3Cs notes that sound writing instruction "provides students with the support necessary to achieve their goals" ("Principles"). Although the expectations of these students may be mismatched compared to the institutions' expectations of them, the institution has an

obligation to *attempt* to meet the goals of the student, which 3Cs lists through writing classes, resource centers, placement programs, targeted content, and instructors who are properly trained ("Principles"). For the most part, the composition curriculum in place reflects the need to address the students' expectations. As it stands, developmental courses designed to address these students needs as beginning composers should present students with a challenge appropriate to their level without lowering the expectations of the institution. Rather, students must be encouraged to see these rigors as opportunities to develop skills, lest the students become bogged down by their own frustrations and the expectations that are potentially placed upon them.

Bilingual Latinx Students in Academia

Setbacks and frustrations aside, research data suggest that Latinx students are seeking higher education for similar purposes as other U.S. students. Latinx students are looking for, more or less, the same things as their non-Latinx, non-immigrant peers. They are looking for high-paying careers, continued learning, and social recognition (Ybarra 90). In "Chapter Five: Writing as a Hostile Act: A Reason for Latino Students' Resistance to Learning" (2004), Raul Ybarra argues that the major real difference is the Latinx students' frustration with the "marginalization and cultural implications" of the hostility of academic writing. In the same way that students become disenfranchised when their developing abilities set them back in their grades, Ybarra's data suggests that these students are frustrated by the erasure of their cultural identity through the style of writing they are tasked with doing (90). The goal of academic writing is to get students to engage in academic discourse while navigating what Ybarra refers to as "cultural dissonance" (90). 3Cs, itself an academic institution that is heavily influenced by academic discourse and theory, does not necessarily address cultural dissonance except to note that there are many contexts in which writing should be practiced, "including academic,

workplace, and community settings" ("Principles"). While some courses may specifically address workplace- and community-based composition, it is not a mystery why most writing in higher education institutions is carried out with an academic style in mind.

Logistically, the emphasis on academic discourse cannot be shifted without changing the entire nature of college composition. It seems almost impossible, then, to reconcile Ybarra's attempt to combat Latinx student cultural dissonance with the hostility that these students experience in writing in an academic discourse that they feel erases aspects of their identity. However, Ybarra is not so much suggesting that writing be made less academic so much as he advocates for an increased awareness of the cultural struggles of the Latinx students, especially when it comes to their frustration with college composition. The best practice is to have ESL Latinx students understand, to the best of academia's ability to explain, that the purpose of higher education is not erasing the students' cultural identity so much as offering them skills that they can bring to their careers, communities, and cultures, whatever their goals may be beyond composition. Of course, then the curriculum must also reflect this in actuality, not merely in words.

Perhaps the best demonstration of the disconnect between academic discourse and the beginning student's awareness of that discourse is seen in Min-Zhan Lu's "From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle" (1994). She says, "I assumed that once I had 'acquired' a discourse, I could simply switch it on and off every time I read and wrote as I would some electronic tool" (443). Min-Zhan Lu's experience suggests that students struggle with navigating culture and language, of course, but also power and identity. By engaging in a discourse, it shapes the identity of the user, potentially much more than it is shaped by the user. Students may enter the discourse with some awareness of the shape of power and its effects on culture, but they are

much more likely to become overwhelmed by the discourse than to incorporate it or "switch it off" as Min-Zhan Lu once thought she could. She adds, "To use the interaction between the discourses of home and school constructively, I would have to have seen reading or writing as a process in which I worked my way towards a stance through a dialectical process of identification and division" (446). This is, more or less, how Latinx ESL students view college composition; it is an action which is kept separate, compartmentalized from their own identity, useful only in academic spaces and not truly applicable to their home and community lives. This is understandable considering the erasing power of culture and their experiences with the academic discourse as an entity that is separate from their culture identity. Lu goes on, however, "To help these students[...]we might encourage students to explore ways of practicing the conventions of the discourse they are learning by negotiating through these conflicting voices" (447). Lu's proposed solution to navigating multiple, conflicting voices is to bring them together in such a way that students are aware of the differences and conflicts between the discourses while still exploring ways in which they might be able to work together.

In the case of U.S. Latinx students just beginning college composition, they should be first made aware of the uses of their separate discourses and then made to use them together in a way that is meaningful to their identity and experience. If students can use academic discourse to discuss elements of their own cultural identity without erasing it, for example, this would be an example of purposeful composition. If the student is able to transform concepts within the high academic discourse and apply them to their cultural-community discourse, this would be another way to make that writing purposeful for the students. However, this must begin by giving students an awareness of discourse, not merely as separate entities that have the potential to erase each other, but instead as languages of power that speak to and shape each other and are shaped

by repeated use by the students. Composition should be working to empower students and give them to tools to navigate unfamiliar, hostile discourses, which it mostly attempts to do. If college composition is going to be able to bridge the divide between discourse, it should be in assignments and curricula that are built to make use of the discourse that the students bring to the classroom.

The principle of college composition maintain the goal of increasing the students' use of the digital and multimodal techniques that are becoming increasingly common in the 21st century. As with multilingual education theories, some of these goals are already in practice in some form within the principles of 3Cs, while others still need to be addressed to meet the needs of the increasing Latinx student population in America.

Composition Toward Cultural Proficiency

The final objective of bilingual education being analyzed by this project is the one that is the most challenging to measure: Culture. Specifically, bilingual education in the 21st century must retain the goal of aiding students in navigating the unfamiliar culture of American academia while emphasizing the importance of their own culture at the same time. In much the same way that writing assignments should strive to convey meaning that is relevant to the goals of the students, they should also be culturally relevant to the students. Fortunately, meaningful assignments often overlap with cultural ones, since one *purpose* of the assignments is to retain culture, and culture is meaningful for the students. However, there are clear difficulties in navigating two cultures simultaneously, especially in considering how much of one ought to be emphasized over the other. One obstacle that language-learning students face in beginning composition is retention of their own culture while navigating the dominant, Americanized culture of academia (McCartney et al 352). If these students cannot navigate living in one culture

while retaining their own, their confidence in their academic abilities (especially English-based social abilities such as composition) will suffer (Ybarra 89). Although more recent literature analysis and composition studies are becoming increasingly culturally diverse, there are still strides that must be made before the cultural disconnect can be appropriately bridged. The proposed solution is to have students analyze cultural compositions and produce compositions about their own cultures. This allows students to both retain and emphasize those elements of their personal cultures that are most significant to them while also practicing the academic culture. It will become necessary to build composition assignments in such a way that the student can choose to write about their culture using standards and words that are academic.

There are many ways in which writing about specific cultural practices may be done in academic ways. For example, within the literary movement *Consejo*, as detailed in María Teresa De la Piedra's "'Consejo' as a Literacy Event: A Case Study of a Border Mexican Woman" (2013), students can practice academic composition, cultural composition, and multimodality at the same time. *Consejo* is just one example of a literary movement that also encompasses the ideals of a multilinguistic culture. It highlights the cultural significance of multilingual composition. *Consejo* emphasizes heritage through the passing of stories and advice from one generation to another (De la Piedra 340). As a movement, it emphasizes community through its social, locally publicized element (De la Piedra 340). In this case, *Consejo* also happens to demonstrate the multimodality of Latinx composition through its varied use of media to convey the composition meaning of the artists and writers. However, it is largely overlooked on a national level, with only a handful of academic articles having ever been written about it over the decades. Despite a surge of interest in cultural heritage for Latinx artists, the most popular

writers are included repeatedly in canon, while smaller, locally-based artists are either unknown (because not enough research is being done into this area) or ignored completely.

In a way, *Consejo* offers some kind of remedy for cultures that go overlooked; just as artists composing in the *Consejo* movement write about their personal lives and community in order to connect to their culture, individual experience, and movement as a whole. Similarly, a greater emphasis should be placed on college composition with personal response as it relates to culture. Encouraging students to engage with culture on some level would evoke the same experiences as composition within the *Consejo* movement. Some programs include Memoir composition assignments in lieu of narrative, personal writing, or creative writing assignments, yet these genres tend to be put off for more advanced academic work, especially when so many other writing skills must be taught to beginning writers. However, a personal composition with an emphasis on culture (or an allowance for culture) could still fit within the learning objectives of college composition and meet the cultural needs of Latinx students at the beginning level.

Another consideration that must be made is that for some students, navigating their own culture may be less of a personal priority than navigating the standard academic discourse with which they may be eager to engage. In "Lessons from Ming: Helping Students Using Writing to Learn" (2004), Trudy Smoke writes about how her student Ming did not necessarily write about her own culture so much as explore the cultures of others. However, Ming navigated the academic discourse by practicing researching and writing about a variety of cultural topics available to her. She was encouraged to explore her own interests in composition in such a way that these assignments were meaningful and purposeful for her because she was interested in them. Culture, like education in general, is not universal, and students undoubtedly have their own personal goals that may not always match up. This is yet another factor that the curriculum

should consider before implementing blanket assignments about culture. Although it might be academically sound for some students, it will not be for all of them.

One way to consider culturally significant writing assignments is to remember that the personal needs of the student *are* a facet of their cultural needs. This is an idea that Todd Ruecker emphasizes in "Here They Do This, There They Do That: Latinas/Latinxs Writing across Institutions" (2014). Ruecker's text makes clear that although there are growing numbers of Latinx students in the United States, their needs vary from state to state, region to region, and year to year. Some enter as English language learners, while others may be several generations removed from even speaking any language but English. Some students might be first-generation immigrants who are completely unfamiliar with the demands of higher education while their fellows may be from families that had the means to make them familiar with academic discourse from an early age. Still others may reside on the U.S.-Mexican border in largely homogenous populations where their needs as students are at the top of considerations while others reside in large cities where the resources for individual attention may be difficult to come by. The needs of the population at the institution should be carefully considered in building assignments around culture and purpose. Ruecker provides the example of a city in Texas whose school, Samson High School, had a student body that was 99% Latinx, 80% at risk, over-tested with standardized tests, underprepared for college composition, and frequently harassed by Border Patrol and overly-politicized for their culture (98). In this situation, Rucker notes that the divide between high school preparedness for college was less about not understanding the needs of the student population and much more about not being allowed the state-provided resources necessary to elevate these students (101). In cases such as these, rebuilding assignments and curriculum seems almost like it would have a negligible effect on assisting the students with composition.

However, no matter how drastically students may be challenged or how limited resources may be, educators must persist in their efforts to assist these students to the best of their ability. In those situations, not all problems might be solved in the classroom, but it remains the instructors' responsibility to be aware of the sociopolitical challenges of the student population, especially as they relate to culture.

The cultural needs of Latinx college composers must be further explored. However, as will be quickly evident, there are many ways in which cultural needs are shifting for younger Latinx students when it comes to the digital environment and multimodal composition. In the 21st century, Latinx students have a culture that sometimes works in tandem with the digital while other times is impeded by barriers to technology created by class. Access and lack of access to technology is shaping Latinx student culture in ways that must also be carefully considered when exploring their needs as new composers.

Chapter 4 - Digital Education in Multiple Modes: Acknowledging Meaning in Students' Writing Endeavors

Bilingual Latinx students compose in multiple media, yet this process could be better facilitated by *College Composition and Communication* objectives and curriculum. These Latinx students, if they are entering college as first-time students, are unaware of these skills because they are not emphasized by the curriculum. Due to their bilingual language abilities, these students possess existing funds of knowledge of which they must be made aware through specific practice. Additionally, these same students, in the current year, are also possessed of skills from the multimodal and digital compositions that they practice daily by virtue of being digital natives.

Digital natives--individuals born after the widespread use of the internet who have grown up always using the digital elements of composition--are becoming the norm for new college students as time passes (Prensky 1).[v] By now, it should be clear to all who have access to the internet that there are few aspects of modern life that cannot be made digital in some way. Composition in particular has been a key part of life on the digital frontier for at least two decades now, and every social media platform, entertainment site, and personal blog is to thank. Due to the many media in which communication now occurs digitally, most communication is inherently multimodal, or at the very least, can easily be made multimodal. The digital, composition, and multimodality are now so intertwined that it becomes difficult to separate them. However, in order to understand just how students learn how to use and navigate each of these elements of communication, it becomes necessary to separate the components of multimodality, the digital, and composition for the sake of education. Multimodal and digital composition each have their own individual challenges that must be considered. Most

significantly, the needs of the Latinx population of students who are composing digitally should be considered, since these students have their own needs and challenges that are both helped and hindered by the widespread use of technology, in and out of the classroom. Finally, the role of multimodality without the element of the digital should be considered in Latinx college composition, since Latinx culture sometimes includes multimodal composition outside the context of the digital.

Before moving on to examine the complex relationship between these emergent composition fields and new Latinx students, it should be noted that digital and multimodal compositions are only recently being studied and accounted for in *official* composition objectives and only within a subsection of the principles and objectives for the teaching of this subject. By contrast, multilingual education has clear expectations for its teaching within college composition studies. 3Cs's 7th principle iterates that college composition "emphasizes relationships between writing and technologies" ("Principles"). It recognizes writing as "inherently technological" due to its place at the forefront of communication in whatever the most modern form is ("Principles"). The 3Cs advocates for instructors to provide students with an awareness of technological composition tools ("Principles"). It does not mention specifically multimodality, but it does recommend composition of "other types," such as video and podcast. Digital composition techniques and tools are important, of course, and they naturally lead themselves to multimodal composition and mixed media. 3Cs principles sees these tools, genres, and media as "evolving," and suggests that instructors should let their students know that their technology use will continue to evolve beyond what is currently available and understandable at present ("Principles").

Likewise, TAMIU's SLOs do not mention digital composition or multimodality specifically. Still, one could make the argument that because multimodal and digital composition are extensions of composition as a whole, the nature of the TAMIU SLOs does not necessarily exclude these composition frameworks either. For example, SLO #5 has students "compose texts that effectively employ the features of a given genre" ("Student Learning Outcomes"). Since 3Cs acknowledges genres as an evolving component of composition, emerging genres that employ multimodality or are composed in an "other" digital media not specified by 3Cs or TAMIU *could* be said to apply to such assignments. Most of the other existing SLOs could be applied in this way, too.

Latinx Digital Culture

Just as this project has already examined the effects of college academic culture on the existing culture of bilingual Latinx students, this section will examine the effects of emerging digital cultures on these students. Digital culture is not a clearly defined concept with a universal set of applications. Rather, it is taken here to mean cultures that have either emerged as a result of the widespread use of the internet (directly or indirectly) or which exist offline but which are highly prevalent online. These cultures may be the result of several factors such as: existing cultures and discourses becoming digitized (i.e. British vs. Chinese communities online having very different uses), a product of existing cultures, languages, and discourses intermingling via the Internet (i.e., globalization and vast exportation of American entertainment culture), a byproduct of new media or technological innovation building user communities that are joined through the use of this media (ex. "Youtuber" culture, "remix" culture, and "meme culture"), or an existing type of "culture" that exists offline but is growing due to the Internet (ex. a participatory culture).

The first digital culture impacting Latinx college composition is not a single entity but rather a type of culture. In "Why We Should Teach Media Literacy: Three Core Problems" (2005), Henry Jenkins identifies emerging *participatory cultures* with which young students are engaging on the Internet. Unlike an ethnic or social culture (such as Latinx cultures or U.S. cultures, for example), participatory cultures are a type of culture. A participatory culture is "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices" (Jenkins 2). Unlike academic culture, in which artistic, scientific, and civic engagement are exclusive and restricted by institutional barriers and discourse, participatory cultures have "low barriers," often meaning that they can recruit, advertise, and engage with new users at a much faster pace than high-barrier cultures. A large emphasis is placed on creative expression or on shared interest or engagement, and there is usually some element of learning (either craft, trade, or insight) passed on (Jenkins 2). These participatory cultures have an array of characteristics, such as being social communities, places of collaborative expression where ideas and compositions are distributed and shared (Jenkins 2). Despite Jenkins describing participatory cultures as *relatively* low-barrier, he identifies the "participation gap" problem, which is "the fundamental inequalities in young people's access to new media technologies and the opportunities for participation they represent" (12). In 2005, Jenkins' problem referred to access to computers, the Internet, and new media composition tools such as video cameras; this gap refers to students who are unable to access this technology due to lack of private or community funding, disproportionately affecting racial and ethnic minority students (Jenkins 14). By 2019, this gap seems to be largely closing, as in 2015, 94% of children (ages 3-18) had a computer at home, and this number increased with higher ages and with higher

levels of education ("Fast Facts"). Indeed, it is very common for institutions in the United States to have internet-enabled computers for students to use freely, and blended-technology classrooms are also common. However, the gap remains, to some degree; "in remote rural areas the percentages of students who had either no internet access or only dial-up access at home were higher for Black (41 percent) and Hispanic students (26 percent) than for White (13 percent) and Asian students (11 percent)" ("Fast Facts"). Of course, this number reflects rural student populations, but it cannot be discounted as data that has no meaning or that will resolve itself with time. The fact is that the participation gap remains, in some form or other.

More importantly, the participation gap is not the only problem that Jenkins addresses. The "Transparency Problem" and the "Ethics Challenge" discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis are also emerging problems brought about by digital culture that affect incoming Latinx college students. Unlike the participation problem, which is largely addressed through social change and policy, the transparency problem and the ethics challenge are problems within the teaching of digital communication and use. The transparency problem is about the potentially deceptive nature of media on the internet and about how educators should go about teaching students to "assess the quality of information" that they receive (Jenkins 15). TAMIU standards *do* address the transparency problem. It is addressed in SLO 3 in clear terms; "Evaluate, thereby identify, appropriate sources" (TAMIU). The 3Cs does not explicitly address the transparency problem in composition instruction. It asks students to practice and analyze a variety of genres and sources used in them (in Principle 4), but it does not ask them to evaluate the information provided by other works ("Principles"). Secondly, the ethics challenge, which refers to the shifting or heretofore yet unknown ethical concerns of technologies, communities, cultures, and media that may arise in the digital age, is a moving target, or as Jenkins refers to it, "murky" (Jenkins 17).

TAMIU's standards refer to ethical decision making and ethical information use in SLOs 1 and 7 respectively, which at least offers a potential place for ethics to be addressed should the need arise. However, the 3Cs principles for composition does not refer to ethics at all. Presumably, since the 3Cs does address composition as a social act that must be navigated through its rhetorical and communal aspects, the idea of ethics is not inherently excluded from its teaching. Still, the idea that technology use is shifting and may continue to do so with regard to composition was alarming to Jenkins, who felt the need to address it as one of the major challenges to the teaching of communication in the digital age. Most students who enter college for the first time begin to compose with new media or identify compositions, yet they are likely unaware of the ethical uses of the media or information that they may wield. This of course applies to all students, not merely the Latinx ones. Jenkins felt that it was the responsibility of communication educators to at least have an awareness of his concerns, especially as digital technology continued to advance globally.

Clearly, access, analysis of information, and ethical use were cultural concerns in 2005, yet they persist today. Jenkins also anticipated digital cultures that would arise as a product of participatory culture, which would develop larger sub-communities within the Internet. One of these was "Remix culture" as seen in Christopher Hafner's "Remix Culture and English Language Teaching: The Expression of Learner Voice in Digital Multimodal Compositions" (2015). A *remix culture* is a collaborative culture "in which the amateur creation of cultural artifacts--often remixes, mashups, or parodies based on the creative works of others--has proliferated" (Hafner 486). Remix culture is a kind of participatory culture that Jenkins was identifying. Due to increased student access to composition tools (video editing software, photo manipulation software, and global awareness of other cultures), remix culture is readily

accessible not merely as a single participatory culture but as, practically, a widespread form of communication on the Internet. Hafner further identifies this as an area of interest for composition and TESOL studies because of its use as a "process of digital multimodal composition, focusing not only on language proficiency as it is traditionally conceived but also on the strategic level of multimodal resources and collaborative tools to reach a wide authentic audience on the Internet" (486).

As has previously been discussed, composition's and education's important relationship with language proficiency, and remix culture allows for students to build on this proficiency. The ease of expression and the potential ease for analysis of so-called *remixes* gives students something to both create and decode using their existing funds of knowledge of language. Additionally, the multimodality of digital composition granted by creating remixes allows students to experiment with composition through new media. They can use artifacts that they might find interesting and through which a broad audience would identify easily. In this way, remixes allow students to learn about audience and genre, if the remix is created and distributed ethically. As Hafner notes, students already engage with remix culture, whether they are taught to do so in a classroom or not (486). Although Remix culture allows students to engage with and practice composing in genres specific to the participatory culture, these cultures are part of a discourse outside of the academic one. However, it is entirely possible and likely to have students remix academic discourse and create new compositions through new media. No existing principle or objective in college composition acknowledges remix culture (likely due to its existence outside of the academic discourse), but this is certainly a developing field that young students bring with them into the classroom.

At last, Marjorie Siegel addresses a different kind of culture--an *accountability culture* of academia--in "New Times for Multimodality? Confronting the Accountability Culture" (2012). For Siegel, accountability culture has to do with over-assessment, intense testing, and frequently shifting policies, and the blaming of failed (new) curriculum design on teachers (672). In spite of this, Siegel tries to reconcile multimodality in its full digital use and context with new curriculum design, despite the obvious resistance to new media in the classroom. Most of what Siegel has to say is about the evolution (or stagnation) of education policy with regard to multimodality (as seen in Chapter 2 of this thesis). However, Siegel does address the intersectionality of multimodal composition teaching. She expresses concern that teaching students awareness of multimodal composition "cannot by itself lead to critical readings and social action" (Siegel 674-675). Critical reading (and critical thinking and critical analysis) is advocated by the 3Cs 8th and 9th Principles ("Principles). Siegel's concerns about a potential disconnect between the teaching of critical reading and the teaching of multimodality is valid; after all, providing students with a particular tool is no substitute for sound, responsible instruction. Siegel elaborates that "invitations to design digital stories or redesign commercial advertisements without also considering issues of domination, access, and diversity" may have the consequence of reproducing "designs that reflect and reinforce the status quo" (Siegel 675). To demonstrate this case, Siegel references visual multimodality as composed by Latinx students, termed "*Latino visual discourse*" by theorist Peter Cowan (Siegel 675). Siegel reminds educators of "the importance of considering modes as shaped by history, culture, and power," remarking on how Cowan's view of his Latxin students' "doodles" of Virgin of Guadalupe erased how these media were "saturated with social, cultural, and political meanings" for these students (Siegel 675). As has been explored in Chapter 3, students commonly compose using sociocultural and political

ideas that are personally meaningful to them, and Siegel's example demonstrates that the cultural influence on composition also applies across students' use of media. Educators ignore the potential cultural significance of their students' multimodal compositions at risk of missing out on key components of the students' cultural identities, as well as they may miss out on having the students explore existing skills in composition. Encouraging cultural composition is important for the college composition curriculum, perhaps *especially* when multimodality is concerned, since this is such an accessible gateway to student composition.

The most important element to consider when building multimodal curricula with Latinx students in mind is that their experiences are shaped by sociological and cultural factors. Those cultural experiences apply both online and offline, and online, digital compositions reflect cultural practices, needs, and interests as extended aspects of Latinx culture. Although the cultural needs and experiences of Latinx students are varied and multiple, differing in various places throughout the United States, the Internet has created hubs and points of access for many Latinx students. However, there is still work to be done in terms of access and education so that students will be able to communicate their cultural experiences and needs when using the digital landscape as a tool to assist with composition. Responsibly assessing websites and information, ethical communication, and the ability to evaluate other sociocultural experiences will all be necessary aspects of Latinx digital composition. Once these objectives are communicated and taught to students in new curricula, the students will be better able to navigate their own cultural experiences and communicate their expectations within higher academia.

Digital Technologies and Latinx Students:

While it is important to consider the broad applications of culture in a multimodal composition curriculum design, the realities and challenges of a digitally-rich curriculum must

have their own practical applications as composition and literacy are evolving all over the world.

Stephen Fraiberg addresses some of the changes that digital media bring to composition in

"Composition 2.0: Toward a Multilingual and Multimodal Framework" (2010). Fraiberg's work

studies *cultural ecologies,* "literacy practices as shaped by and shaping a constellation of

historical, economic, social, and ideological factors," and their effects on multilingual-

multimodal curriculum design (Fraiberg 101). These cultural ideologies are deeply connected to

the ideas in the previous section. No composition is created in a social vacuum; each is shaped

by and shapes culture once it is created by the composer. Multilingual works draw from the

existing languages of the composer, while multimodal ones incorporate media in order to convey

meaning in a form that cannot be divorced from culture. Fraiberg's work also involves the

examination of "knotworks," which are education activities and group exercise through which

"knotworking" occurs. Knotworking is "the continual tying and untying of genres, objects, texts,

and people" (105). As has been demonstrated, genres are evolving on the Internet, facilitated

through remix culture, language, and new media, and each of these components is also tied to the

subjects, the people who make use of them, and the compositions that they produce therein.

Fraiberg goes beyond just the study of cultural ecologies in the 21st century, instead seeing how

these factors are applied (or may be applied) where digital tools are concerned. Fraiberg engages

with a number of multimodal theories that can be applied to an entirely multimodal curriculum,

in theory. However, for the interests of this project, it is more important to consider the practical

applications that Fraiberg recommends toward multimodal-multilingual design rather than try to

build an entire college curriculum.

Generally, the practical elements of Fraiberg's multimodal and multilingual design are

found mostly in the *way* he suggests using technology to build on existing multilingual skills,

while allowing for multimodality as the need arises. The theorist describes an instance in which his work necessitated his communication with two Israeli individuals so that all might understand their culture, context, and most significantly, their language. The author argues, "this cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary engagement is key to forming new disciplinary 'knotworks' necessary for moving our understanding of literacy practices beyond North American contexts" (110). Fraiberg continues to examine the interplay of culture, composition, media, and genre, emphasizing that these works are not rooted in a single country, language, or culture. As language evolves and is influenced globally through the use of the Internet as a tool, Fraiberg suggests that it will be more and more important to understand not only the cultural contexts and languages of North American (U.S.) culture, but rather, all cultures and languages. He adds, "Attention to this process also suggests the need for composition and rhetoric programs to more strongly emphasize learning world languages" (110). This is the multilingual component of Fraiberg's work. The practical study of world language is connected to the study of their people's rhetorical and composition artifacts, and this is an area that is overlooked in U.S. college composition, according to this theory. At the very least, his work suggests a need for increased *awareness* that these elements are globally expanding via digitalization.

Fraiberg calls for an awareness of 'convergence culture' or "the point at which global scapes converge in local contexts" (Fraiberg 117). "Scapes" here suggests a digital environment or "landscape." For Latinx students, especially students who are closer to being first generation immigrants or who are English language learners, this convergence culture will likely involve global scapes that are much more obviously localized than they would be for U.S. students who are situated in spaces that are less culturally diverse. This would be an area of composition in which Latinx students may be able to engage and gain a better awareness of cultural convergence

than some other students. Regardless of the background of students, the Internet creates great opportunity to draw awareness to convergence culture, which in turn calls awareness to multimodal-multilingual composition. Furthermore, he calls for instructors to work with multilingual writers who are already in their classrooms, in order to facilitate knotworking. He says:

> We might, for instance, integrate multilingual-multimodal texts into our assignments by seeking out assistance from native speakers of other languages to perform rhetorical and situated analyses of everything from cereal boxes to street signs. Incorporating our students' multilingualism into the classroom could help move them from deficit positions by (re)locating them as experts in their own language with knowledge and experience that they can share and contribute to the class" (111).

The sort of rhetorical and situated analysis for which that Fraiberg advocates is not unlike the analysis of genre and rhetorical situation that is already in place for college composition in English. The key difference is in having multilingual students perform these analyses in their native languages, using cultural compositions and other artifacts that are familiar to them. There has already been much discussion about the potential and actual deficits that language learners, including bilingual Latinx students experience in the composition classroom. The author's suggestion creates opportunity to work around this problem, giving students an awareness of their existing skills as rhetorical analysts, as well as composers. More specifically, Fraiberg recommends, "We might study how textbooks, blackboards, and classroom conversations become knotted into new genre and cultural ecologies (and vice versa) in libraries, homes, emails, Facebook, Twitter, instant messages, text messages, and more" (118). The artifacts and media that Fraiberg lists are commonplace in the modern classroom, and students bring some of

the familiarity of these genres and cultural ecologies with them into the classroom. This work lists only a few of the potential media and genres that students may already be using and subconsciously analyzing outside the classroom.

Beyond media, the author also recommends that the same cross-cultural awareness can be applied to compositions that are themselves inherently multilingual, such as Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands* (118). Giving students an example of texts that are multilingual to start, rather than made multilingual through analysis, provides them possibilities that can be applied to their own, local compositions. On a more global level, Fraibger suggests partnering with international classrooms using digital communication software and encouraging collaboration "by having students conduct mini-ethnographies in their own local contexts and cultures and target this research toward international audiences as part of a cross-cultural exchange" (119). Students could then share knowledge about their own cultural experience, as well as have the opportunity to learn about the experiences of other cultures and ethnicities globally. Finally, this design advocates for the use of new media to facilitate research and composition, such as screen captures, digital photos, and digital audio and video recording (119). Depending on availability and the amount of technological awareness with which the students enter the classroom, any of these digital technologies could lead to digital composition that is both engaging for the students and gives them opportunities to share compositions in forms that they may already be doing as amateurs through remix culture.

Many of the forms of digital technology that Fraiberg recommends for college composition are already in place in some form for several years, and they have benefited bilingual education and composition alike through their collaborative effects. However, In "Preparing High School Students for College-Level Writing: Using ePortfolio to Support a

Successful Transition" (2008), Stephen R. Acker and Kay Halsek describe their use of a collaborative "ePortfolios" to facilitate collaborative feedback between a local high school and college in order to prepare students for the transition between high school writing and college writing. The networking tool allowed for quick communication of ideas, as well as specific feedback for the students to engage with revision. Collaborative feedback spaces are becoming increasingly common in present day college composition classes. It is for the benefit of the students that such tools are in place, since the 3Cs recognizes writing as a social act, which is facilitated through feedback, to name but one method of collaborative learning ("Principles"). However, Digital tools such as these, while certainly useful for collaborative composition and digital literacy, do not make best use the multimodal nature of composition in the 21st century.

Other educators have made use of digital tools that *do* consider the multimodality of texts. In "Infusing Multimodal Tools and Digital Literacies into an English Education Program" (2007), Aaron Doering, Richard Beach, and David O'Brien discuss *transmedia navigation*, the ability to create and understand digital and multimedia, an important concept first discussed by Jenkins (44). Of course, in 2007, Doering, Beach, and O'Brien were having students navigate Instant Messaging, MySpace, and early hypertexts. Remix culture has expanded well beyond these media, and now Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube are among the most popular media-sharing websites and apps, each with its own digital culture and media to be shared virally. Doering and fellows had students navigate these media in order to compose autobiographical texts in as many media as the students desired. They say, "In using digital storytelling to construct multimodal autobiographical narratives, adolescents need to know how to mesh images, music, popular culture texts, and their own autobiographical writing" (44). Students are already asked to engage with autobiographical narrative as one genre in the composition

classroom, with the emphasis largely placed on identifying elements of genre as identified by 3Cs, that they "emerge from particular social, disciplinary, and cultural contexts" ("Principles"). Additionally, these principles emphasize the idea that genres change over time, springing from the sociocultural contexts that make composition and culture so intricately intertwined.

Although Doering and others asked students to examine media and application that is not as widely popular now as it was in 2007, this reflects the shifts in culture and genre in a short amount of time. The important elements that Doering emphasizes are the images, music, pop culture, and self--in other words, the media and content that students know best. Each of these elements is influenced by culture and expressed through the media of the time, and they are composed through multiple means. Asking students to analyze these elements will emphasize those elements of composition that are most important and which are *still* found in emerging genres and media, new though they may be. Latinx students, especially those who are younger, engage with these multiple media and evolving genre just as their peers do. In turn, these compositions reflect relevant culture of the students who produce them. This is particularly true for Latinx students over their peers, however, not because they use digital media differently from their peers but because their culturally-influenced compositions are frequently multimodal, even before they become digitally distributed.

Latinx Students and Offline Multimodal Composition

Although digital composition and multimodality have become heavily conflated in the last two decades, multimodal composition has existed since before the participatory cultures and remix culture of the Internet made composition so accessible. Additionally, these offline multimodal compositions are just as tied to the sociocultural backgrounds of the students who write them as digital compositions are. In Chapter 3, this project examined how Latinx cultural

compositions such as those created through the *Consejo* literary movement, can be multilingual and multimodal while not making use of digital literacy at all. This section will continue to examine the culturally-influenced multimodal compositions that are not explicitly entwined with the digital. Although 3Cs emphasizes the importance of composition with technology ("Principles"), it does *also* consider compositions in "other" or new media, in order to have the students access the widest range of composition available.

One of the earliest media (other than written media) to be considered for offline multimodality was the visual medium. In his book *Before Writing: Reinventing the Paths to Literacy* by Gunther Kress (1996), the author became one of the earliest education theorists to consider meaning in multiple media. In Chapter 2, "'My Gawd, I Made it Like Australia': Making Meaning in Many Media" Kress considers beginning writers (i.e. children), multimodality, and how language skills develop. However, Kress considers language beyond the written, examining visual texts as an aspect of language-learning as well. He writes, "Pictures, images, are not usually subjected to the same analysis for meaning, not seen as being as much a part of *communication* as language is for instance. Images of most kinds are thought of as being about *expression*, not *information*, *communication*…" (Kress 36). Kress notes that in *his* day, there was no question about a separation between language and visual because it was understood that only *written* language was actual language (Kress 143). Just as there are many literacies (ex. digital literacy, cultural literacy, media literacy), language and meaning are not confined to a single media. Kress points out this is partially due to the increased use of images, icons, logos, etc. that convey visual meaning in advertising offline as well as online (Kress 143) This visual shift in global society is increasingly true since the time of Kress's publication, in fact.

Like Kress, Frank Serafini also mainly focuses on the *visual* part of multimodal composition in "Multimodal Literacy: From Theories to Practices" (2015). However, one major advantage of Serafini's theoretical framework on multimodal composition is that it does not conflate digital composition with multimodal composition. The author notes, "As the texts students encounter shift from print-based to digital or screen-based, the range or possible modes employed expands even further to include sound effects, moving images, and other digitally rendered resources" (413). While he acknowledges that texts are becoming increasingly digital, the *modes* in which they are produced are also becoming *multiple*, making use not only of one particular media but many at once--both on the screen and off of it. For Latinx students whose multimodal compositions do not *need* to be digitally composed, this is a significant consideration.

Serafini also outlines a general need for *multimodal literacy*, "a process of generating meanings in transaction with multimodal texts, including written language, visual images, and design features from a variety of perspectives to meet the requirements of particular social texts" (413). As has already been explored alongside traditional literacy, as well as digital literacy, multimodal literacy requires the student to become familiar both with the practical elements of the forms that so-called multimodal texts may take as well as the contexts and applications of these texts. Serafini emphasizes that multimodal texts vary based on their social dimension. The social nature of texts, including digital and multimodal texts, has already been thoroughly explored throughout this chapter, but Serafini's inclusion of the perspectives as a practical element of multimodal literacy is significant for building a functional multimodal curriculum. Serafini lists 3 parts that are essential to his framework of multimodal literacy. The first two parts, *Perceptual Analytical Perspective* and *Structural Analytical Perspective* are both

concerned with visual multimodality, focusing solely on the analysis of visual composition. Their overemphasis on visual text undercuts Serafini's own assertion that multimodality is expanding beyond visual and textual media; nevertheless, these analytical parts of the framework consider the visual multimodal texts on more or less equal footing with written texts, giving these visual compositions the same analytical consideration that written text have been previously been privileged. These analyses are focused on visual elements of composition such as image position, borders, text boxes, color palette, orientation, font, and so on (415). The Perceptual Analysis and Structural Analysis asks students to ask *how* and *why* these visual elements are composed.

The third, *Ideological Analytical Dimension,* however, has much stronger implications for Latinx students. This third piece "focuses on the sociocultural, historical, and political contexts of the production, as well as dissemination of visual images and multimodal texts." (413). Just as digital compositions are steeped in the culture and context of the people who create them, offline multimodal compositions are sociocultural artifacts that cannot be divorced from the context and circumstances under which they are produced. The Ideological Analysis considers multimodal composition decisions such as the work's intended audience, its purpose of creation, the people it represents, the people who created it, and other contextual information necessary to understand the meaning within the visual text (419). Serafini's acknowledgement of the ideological part of the framework as being *equal* to the perceived and structural analysis of compositions is crucial in having Latinx students analyze academically appropriate multimodal compositions but also for giving Latinx students practice for composing in multiple media.

One significant area where Latinx composition has been and remains multimodal even offline is through aural storytelling. Cynthia Selfe analyzes Latinx/Hispanic aural storytelling

traditions in "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing" (2009). The *cuentos* and *corridos* composed in Latinx aural tradition have been used as forms of preservation of culture as well as resistance to imperial American erasure or academic exclusion (Selfe 623). Selfe does acknowledge and examine some digital aural artifacts, along with tools that students may be using in order to compose and distribute aural compositions (637). However, she is more interested in the rhetorical elements of aural multimodality. Selfe identifies student group work and oral explanations (633) as well as the instructor lectures (634) to be significant aural components of the composition classroom that are not so much taught or emphasized as written composition, despite their obvious contributions to learning and communication. Despite its use in the classroom, there is surprisingly little emphasis on teaching *aural* or *oral* modality as aspects of a complete composition curriculum. As Selfe explains, this is because "the profession's bias against aural forms of expression was also evident in the works of scholars who implied that students' reliance on the conventions of oral discourse resulted in the presence of problematic features in their written work" (629). In other words, aural composition is frequently discouraged because many rhetoric and composition instructors feel that allowing students to engage aurally with composition without correcting for errors in text generates *more* grammatical or rhetorical errors for text later. Despite this bias, Selfe does not believe this to be the case (630). Instead, she notes, "Our profession has come to equate *writing* with *intelligence*" (644). Because writing is highly privileged in composition studies, it is seen as the ultimate goal, as well as the signifier of worth in the field. Even so, as Selfe and other writers (Bizzell, Garica, Matsuda, Ruecker, Ybarra) have pointed out, engaging in this line of privileged thought willfully ignores the cultural struggle and often outright discrimination of which Latinx, Black, Native American, Asian, and other ethnic/racial minority

students have been subjected through imperialistic academic practices that were designed to exclude either their contributions or bar them from engaging in the discourse (Selfe 623).

Ultimately, Cynthia Selfe is advocating not only for an inclusion of aurality as a legitimate form of composition but for a total reexamination of literacy and the incorporation of space in the rhet/comp curriculum to discuss and practice these literacies in the classroom (Selfe 643). She asks for space to let students learn "to create texts that combine a range of modalities as communicative resources: exploring their affordances, the special capabilities they offer to authors; identifying what audiences expect of texts that deploy different modalities and how they respond to such texts" (643). As discussed, 3Cs principles insists on the instruction of genre and audience as shifting ideas in composition, and the "special capabilities" of aurality as a modal composition technique reflect on these ideas for instruction, feedback, and understanding. Selfe further elaborates that the responsibility of instructors is "to teach students effective, rhetorically based strategies for taking advantage of *all available means* of communication effectively and productively as literate citizens" (Selfe 644). All means of rhetorical communication and literacy must include digital literacy and composition (as already discussed), aural composition, as Selfe has put it forth, but also future media and literacies that are being developed in the present but which will undoubtedly be available to students of the future.

Looking a little closer to the present, Steph Ceraso's work "(Re)Educating the Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning, and the Composition of Sonic Experiences" (2014) defines a concept closely related to Selfe's aural modality. In Ceraso's case, this is *multimodal listening*, the practice of "listening as a situated, full-bodied act" as "opposed to something that is heard exclusively through the ears," especially as sound is related to manipulation and understanding of emotions in composition (103). Ceraso's contribution to the discussion at hand

is largely in how her interpretation of another dimension of a particular medium helps define what Selfe means by the "special capabilities" or rhetorical elements that a medium may be. While Selfe examines aurality for its pedagogical and sociocultural applications, Ceraso examines *multimodal listening* for its rhetorical practices for composition. Ceraso's take on multimodality also looks *explicitly* at multimodal composition *without* incorporation of digital media, so as to broaden notions of multimodality (104). She says that the body-experience of sound is a good explanation for multimodality "because unlike visual or tactile experiences, interactions between sound and the body depend on vibrations...a multimodal event that involves the synesthetic convergence of sight, sound, and touch" (104). The involvement of multiple senses allows for a thorough explanation of what a multimodal experience is, which in turn might give students a better sense of how to create compositions that engage audiences with multiple senses for a fuller effect and a better chance of being understood. This is especially true if the student is asked to engage with performance or to elaborate on written composition orally; they should have a critical understanding of how audiences perceive multimodal explanations and experiences (Ceraso 119). As this project moves closer into designing multimodal activities for college composition students that may or may not make full use of digital literacy (depending on the students' level of engagement), Ceraso's non-use of the digital in a multimodal landscape that is almost all digital will become important to keep in mind.

Chapter 5 - We Are All Multiliterate: An Equitable Multimodal Multilingual Composition Assignment Design

Now that both multilingual and multimodal composition historical contexts, theories, and techniques have been thoroughly examined in the previous chapters, this chapter aims to apply the theories together into a composition assignment with first-year Latinx college students in mind.

First, this project must acknowledge some sources that may not have contributed directly to the invention of the Multimodal Communication Memoir assignment and potential surrounding curriculum but which certainly contributed to the discussion of this work's philosophical approach to composition, education, and composition education. Peter Smagorinsky's work "What Does Vygotsky Provide for the 21st-century Language Arts Teacher?" (2013) provides some discussion about pedagogy (in general), cultural theory of learning, and meaning-making in 21st century language education. Smagorinsky's examination of Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development," where students move from being able to work collaboratively to being able to work individually if they are granted enough scaffolding and purposeful assignments (192). Smagorinsky looks at the *entire* education system as a zone of proximal development, writing, "Presently it is administered in a top-down fashion, with teachers' and students' emotional engagement in meaningful learning of little concern to those in power" (Smagorinsky 202). Policy-makers and politicians who set curriculum standards and who continue to ignore the obvious shifts in composition and language in the United States--that is, the shift away from homogenized English and *monomodal* composition that only engages with written texts--make it more challenging for students to successfully navigate the systemic Zone of Proximal Development that Smagorinsky proposes by way of Vygotsky. Naturally, he

proposes shifts in education policy that focus on meaningful assignment creation, and this, by examination of the current issues in composition education *must* include multicultural, multilingual, multimodal practice. This will only become more important to consider as more Latinx students enter higher education, since their cultural, linguistic, and media-driven composition needs will necessitate a tilting of the goals of language education.

Moving from generalized pedagogy and the entirety of the American education system, this project is a response to the ongoing conversation about higher education composition studies as a specific field. The article "Working Rhetoric and Composition" (2010) by Bruce Horner and Min-Zhan Lu examines the frequently integrated field of rhetoric and composition, giving special attention to current practical issues in the field. Due to the dichotomous split of *rhetoric* and *composition*, especially for students just entering higher education who are unfamiliar with nuances between the two, the authors note that first-year students are taught mainly *composition* without *rhetoric*. The authors imagine a completely different first-year curriculum, one focused on rhetoric rather than composition. In this hypothetical curriculum, Horner and Lu emphasize the teaching of social, cultural, and political *discourse* to students, emphasizing historical writing and contextualized analysis that does not shy away from these discourses (Horner and Lu 477). By itself, this does not change much from the curriculum in place at TAMIU, since TAMIU's own first-year writing program currently has students compose a rhetorical analysis as their first semester final project. What *is* significant to see from Horner and Lu is that 10 years ago, they proposed a shift in curriculum toward rhetoric in order to raise awareness of academia's longstanding attempt to divorce composition from the composers and contexts that they were teaching. This shift is still ongoing, even as additional shifts are being proposed. Horner and Lu's style in creating this recommendation, citing problems in the field, analysis of the discussion,

and potential solutions, is something of a spiritual predecessor for this project's advocacy toward multimodal composition for Latinx students.

One last education theorist, Patricia Bizzell writes about the role of composition in higher education "Composition Studies Saves the World!" (2009) in a way that contributes to the discussion of its historical context. Bizzell's work responds to other composition theorists who perceive changes in composition curriculum toward multiculturalism as stemming from a desire to appeal to political correctness (186) or else overstep the designated role of composition studies (i.e., to teach *writing*). Bizzell contributes to the larger discussion about rhetoric (being socially-, culturally-, and politically-conscious) and also makes reference to the work that has been done to undo the racist, imperialist nature of a (white) English composition curriculum that had focused on one language, mode, and culture for decades before educators (Bizzell included) advocated for change (177). As Bizzell argues, composition plays a larger role than *merely* teaching writing, since writing, being a social, communicative act, can never be separated from the social, cultural, and political contexts or the people who compose these texts. Following from this idea, it should be noted that shifts in educational frameworks, whether they are large or small, not only *are* rooted in politics and social dynamics of the time and place in which they are proposed but that they *must* be considered in such contexts for the sake of the students who will be exposed to these curricula. In the case of Latinx students and this multimodal assignment, their needs as well as the barriers they face in entering higher education have been considered in the creation of the assignment.

The following section will consider instructors and theorists who have acknowledged the relationship between multilingual and multimodal composition, the importance of acknowledging meaning in students' writing, and the full importance of purposefully building

opportunities for culture into such assignments. This will lead directly into the assignment itself, which makes use of each of these frameworks. Although under ideal circumstances, an entire multimodal/multilingual curriculum would be built for consideration in this project, in an attempt to focus on those elements of a multilingual/multimodal curriculum that best anticipate the needs of incoming Latinx college students, only one assignment of such a curriculum will be designed and considered in this section due to the vast complexity of examining every aspect of curricula.

Drafting the Multimodal Assignment

First, the most necessary part of multimodal composition curriculum must be selected for the Latinx students. In "Imagining the Possibilities in Multimodal Curriculum Design" (2006) by Peggy Albers, the author considers multimodal curriculum design, looking at some techniques, though she is mostly building on theoretical *possibilities* of multimodal composition. Her curriculum design is split into six parts: *Initiating Engagements*, *Demonstration*, *Text Study/Literature Study*, *Invitations for Inquiry*, *Opportunities for Organization/Sharing*, and *Reflective Action Plans*. However, of these parts of Alber's proposed framework, only *Opportunities for Organization/Sharing* and *Reflective Action Plans* shall be considered for the invention of this assignment. This is because all of the previous parts of the curriculum are essentially teaching opportunities to inform students about multimodality and its applications in composition, as well as analysis of other composers' multimodal texts. While these are obviously essential elements of educating students about multimodal composition, they are not assignments so much as they are lessons that must be fostered before the students put these skills into practice in a larger project.

As far as *Opportunities for Organization/Sharing* go for Albers, the author initially begins by advocating for multimodal compositions that have become more or less commonplace

in the classroom: powerpoint presentations, Internet blogs, journals, cultural heritage projects, and so on (90). All of these are relevant potential elements that this project's assignment could have students use in their compositions. However, what's more interesting is Alber's idea *transmediation*, "a literacy strategy in which learners retranslate their understanding of an idea, concept, or text through another medium" (90). The example that Albers uses is of a student who *transmediates* a composition about cultural heritage and the Harlem Renaissance from a written text into a 3D sculpture (90-91). By changing the medium through which the composition is presented, the new composition accompanies the text and the students' composition becomes multimodal. This idea of *transmediation* takes place in a multimodal composition process that is meaningful to the student, allowing them to express ideas in a new form. Its likening to a "translation" links it to multilingual compositions that are also reworkings of a particular composition or communicative experience in another language. In this case, the new media acts as the new language instead. Albers describes several other applications for transmediation, including having students draw images to accompany literary analysis or using visual slides on a powerpoint to present a text. She notes that this is especially useful with cultural heritage projects, noting that they become "especially moving" (93). What the author does not note is the potential this transmediation allows cultural heritage projects to undergo where it allows students to explain elements of culture that may otherwise be difficult to navigate linguistically.

On the linguistic side of multimodal applications to composition, instructors must consider the meaning-making multilingual compositions that students navigate across multiple modes in order to both be understood and help others be understood. Diane Potts stumbled across this multimodal multilingualism during a performance with which her students engaged, as described in "Plurilingualism as Multimodal Practice" (2013). Potts explains how a group of 11-

year old students explained their in-class activities to their Chinese-speaking parents using a combination of plurilingual translating and multimodal composition. These students put together a document that combined "linguistic and visual elements to provide viewers with a fuller description of students' activities" (627). The need for linguistic interpretation is obvious in the consideration of their parents' understanding of language; however, the students' inclusion of multimodal composition techniques established through visual images and video adds a dimension of meaning to their composition. The author goes on, "Writing, oral language, visuals, and spatial arrangements combine to realize a sophisticated account of student achievement, one that would be impossible to achieve through language alone" (Potts 627). The students *wanted* to be understood by their parents, an audience of whose needs the students had a very personal and deep understanding. Potts asserts that the students' interpretative attempts use elements that are somehow beyond language, establishing meaning both through multilinguistic composition but also through the multimodality of the composition.

One of the main challenges the students faced in this endeavor, according to the author, was in incorporating plurilingualism into the composition, since the students had to navigate home and native languages, either of which they may have had limited experience, or which their intended audience may have had difficulty understanding. She says, "Preparing the audio files required consulting with peers and occasionally parents, and these consultations were themselves rich episodes of translanguaging" (Potts 628). However, this meaning was evidently supplemented with the multimodal elements of composition, as previously noted. The multilinguistic workshopping recalls Fraiberg's call for multicultural/multilinguistic collaboration between classrooms (Fraiberg 119). However, for Potts, the source of culture and language was a much more accessible, available audience that could be consulted--other students

from within the class, or the parental audience themselves. The bolstering and practice of translanguaging within the composition process of this assignment also recalls Ofelia Garcia's repeated advocacy for such linguistic opportunities and awareness in bilingual classrooms (Garcia 45). Potts acknowledges throughout the article that this fortuitous meeting between multimodal composition and multilingualism was unintended. However, if instructors were to build on such an assignment with intention, they would need to pay close attention to having students compose with multimodal techniques on purpose, giving them access to a number of tools to record and accompany the compositions they put together. In the same way, instructors must make intentional use of all existing multilingual and cultural skills that students bring to the classroom for such an assignment. The purpose of such an assignment must ultimately be to enhance the meaning of the students' composition, rather than take the place of written medium composition practice. Together, multilingual and multimodal composition skills can do more to convey meaning and understanding than one or the other separately.

Potts' experience with multimodal composition and language demonstrates the relationship that multimodality and multilingualism have in an offline setting. However, educators in the 21st century *must* also consider the digital aspect of multimodal composition, especially with regard to multilingualism. This relationship is examined in "The Impact of the Computer in the Second-Language Writing" (2006), Martha C. Pennington analyzes digital technologies for composition. Although she begins the essay by discussing the applications and needs of these technologies for ESL writing education, this analysis is broadly applicable to the writing classroom at large, even over a decade after publication. Pennington states, "The modern ESL writing teacher needs to understand the nature of electronic writing media, the kinds of impacts these media have on students' writing, and the ways they can best be employed in the

teaching of writing" (297). The overlying nature of language is that it is evolving, both due to its interactions with other languages and cultures, a process facilitated by the Internet (as seen with Fraiberg's work), but also that writing in that language evolves as well, enabled by the digital tools themselves that change the way that students might interact with the writing process and its linguistic elements. Pennington argues that the digital tools that are having the greatest impact on composition are word processing software, networking capability, email, readily available news, instant chat, hypertext, and the nearly excessive availability of websites as sources in general. Much of the discussion about these technologies and their effects on writing discourse has already been analyzed in this project. However, Pennington's discussion on "Potentials and Issues" is worth considering before the final development of a student composition activity that tries to reconcile some of these digital composition tools with language(s) that are rapidly evolving.

Pennington writes, "The value of the computer for the L2 writer is considerable for helping to automate the production and revision of text, to encode ideas, and to spark and energize the writing process" (312. In a figure within her text, Pennington lists the potential uses of the computer for L2 writers; these include, "More *effective use of language*. *Creative potential*. *Interactivity and collaboration*. New modes and genres of writing. *Flexibility of access* to tools, texts, helps, and partners. *Expanded access* to writing resources, information, and the world" (Pennington 313). New modes and genres of writing have already been considered *ad nauseum*, though Pennington's consideration of this enhancement to ESL writing is interesting, since it hints at the link between the emerging genres, shifting language, and the computer. Certainly interactivity and collaborative potential are likewise evident in the sorts of instant communication offered by the Internet. The most interesting elements, therefore, are increased

effectiveness of language and access to writing resources for L2 students. Although Pennington does not go into extreme detail about these potential uses, she certainly presents the understanding that the information and potential for research online grant students the potential to not only revise and edit their written compositions using informational websites to learn about language but also to have unlimited potential to *practice* that language as well, with other native language users constantly. However, alongside these excellent uses for digital composition, Pennington would have educators consider the pitfalls. One of these is the digital divide and access, as discussed in Chapter 4's analysis of Jenkins. Others include the replacement of the computer with human interaction, the potential for "group-produced" student writing, the potential for over-emphasis of creativity compared to technical linguistic and written composition technique, and the potential for the Internet as a distraction in the classroom (Pennington 313). Pennington, as well as other ESL composition theorists, see the exciting collaborative potential of digital composition, but they also stress an awareness that too much collaboration is not *always* for the benefit of the learner. It is important, therefore, to consider L2 composition instruction both collaboratively and individually. If educators intend to make the best use of digital composition tools such as and beyond those mentioned by Pennington, perhaps it is best to think of the needs of language-learning, especially L2 composition as having several of the same potentials and risks as English-only composition. Although ESL education and non-ESL education certainly have different needs that must be considered for students to learn and apply language skills, the technological resources for both kinds of composition education have very similar applications.

In the following section, the theories and practices involving digital composition, multimodal composition, L2 composition are demonstrated in one potential assignment that

attempts to make best use of these ideas and uses in the classroom in order to give first-year Latinx composition students practice for using these techniques in a higher academic setting. Such an assignment would be part of a larger composition curriculum that teaches students about the usages of multimodality and multilingualism while also navigating digital composition. This assignment would therefore *need* to be accompanied by instruction that emphasized multimodal composition as well as multilingualism before and after the Latinx students put these composition skills into practice. Although the assignment is tailored with the cultural and linguistic considerations of first-year Latinx college writers and is designed to make full use of cultural discussion that addresses the needs of this particular student population, this assignment has also been designed with the philosophy of broad application for all students to write about socially significant experiences and practice multimodal *and* written composition.

Multimodal "Communication" Memoir

Genre/Form:

This is a memoir essay composed and presented using multimedia with a fixed topic.

Topic:

Using new media format of their choosing (ex. short video, audio recording software, a series of images), the students will compose a memoir about communication within their own personal culture to an unfamiliar audience (i.e., a hypothetical international audience who does not share their cultural experience).

Content:

The memoir is about personal experience(s) that allow the student to reflect on the subject matter while also considering how to explain elements of culture to an audience that is unfamiliar with the experience. While the student may compose with any media of their choosing, they must also compose an accompanying word processed essay that acts as a companion to their multimodal composition(s). The multimodal component should *accompany* but not replace composition elements found in the text, and these additional media should be used to enhance the audience's understanding of the text(s). No outside sources should be cited for this assignment.

Purpose:

This assignment allows the students to practice audience awareness, develop written composition skills, develop multimodal composition skills, and develop an awareness of their existing composition skills. Digital and multimodal composition use many of the same considerations of written composition, such as using media to convey meaning for an audience. By practicing multimodal composition skills, the students should gain an understanding of

multimodal composition. Examples of such techniques range from making choices to appropriately balance images with texts for audiences, considering audio accompaniments that convey emotions that complement the students' writing, or managing video in lengths that their audience will be able to understand. In addition to practicing these multimodal composition skills alongside academic style of writing, the student will be tapping into multimodal composition skills that they may already possess from time spent outside of the classroom. The student should be able to practice multimodal composition in a higher academic setting due to the changing nature of composition; as digital composition use expands and as academics become more aware of composition taking place in multiple media at once, skills for addressing audience needs in multiple media will be increasingly important in and out of the classroom. In the classroom, multimodal composition will become increasingly blended with written media composition. In a larger context, writing *and* reading multimodal composition is already very common in digital careers, everyday communication online, and amongst cultures that compose in aural and visual media.

Goals and Student Learning Outcomes: This assignment assists in meeting the following TAMIU SLOs:

1. Write reflectively about texts or ideas, connecting choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision making;

2. Understand and apply several invention, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation strategies;

5. Compose texts that effectively employ the features of a given genre;

7. Compose texts that effectively address audience, purpose, style, and content. (This includes: clear focus, structurally unified development of ideas, appropriate rhetorical style, correct use of Standard American English (SAE), and ethically appropriate use of research.)

Features of the Form:

       The main element of memoir writing is to draw on personal experience, usually a single moment, using written details, dialogue, and real life people whom the writer has known. The written composition should be styled like a traditional memoir essay. It should have a clear introduction that introduces the memory or event (the topic) to the reader, and it should be accompanied by body paragraphs that make use of a dialectical style of writing. This composition will explore the memories of the student-author through dialogue, anecdotes, and vivid details that contribute to the overall topic. Multimedia—images, audio recordings, or video recordings—may also be used to *enhance* dialogue, vivid images, or anecdotes. The student should bear in mind that these additional media are meant to accompany their written details but not replace them altogether.

       Because multiple media are required for this assignment, the student may also choose to include photographs to accompany a memory, or to enhance audience visualization alongside the details from the written composition. Media that should accompany the memoir may include audio clips from a particular place, a video recreation of a person, place, or event, Another option to consider as the multimodal component could be to include *new media* remixes that are composed for the purposes of accompanying the student text composition. These multimodal components should be imbedded in the written text. For example, images should be embedded in the word processed text document alongside written media. Links to audio and video media should be *included in* the text document. The text should make reference to these additional media, either explaining them or else referring to the media directly (as opposed to having these media go unreferenced and become tangential to the text).

The composition will provide an opportunity to present a reflection of the themes of their experience that assists audience in determining the meaningfulness of their experience (the "so-what"). This reflection should be placed near the ending, akin to a traditional essay conclusion.

Parameters:

Standard MLA document design for word processed composition. This document should be at least 650 words and at most 1000 words.

For the multimodal component, at least 1 other media (media other than the written medium of the essay) must be incorporated into the presentation. If a video or audio recordings are used, either should be at least 3:00 minutes and may use a variety of sounds and/or images related to the topic. Compositions may incorporate free use or remixed images, but the majority of new media compositions and recordings used in the presentation must be original compositions that accompany the text document composition.

Justifications

Genre Justification:

The memoir in general was chosen as a familiar form of the first-year college composition curriculum that can be easily modified. Its current use gives students the opportunity to practice written composition in a context to which they are still adjusting. The memoir genre does not make use of advanced academic discourse, allowing these students who are still becoming familiar with this discourse to practice the writing process without becoming overwhelmed by discourse lockout. As seen with Min-Zhan Lu's personal essay, the students may have a rudimentary awareness of various discourses, but they are still "negotiating" discourses with this assignment (Lu 447). The memoir genre allows students to reflect on personal experiences, and this is the ideal gateway to allow the students to reflect on their own experiences with culture. It is important for these Latinx students to be able to write about their own culture in an academic context because academic discourse generally excludes use of their home cultural discourse (Bartolome 343). Additionally, the memoir allows these students to explore a topic that is interesting and meaningful for them on an individual level, thereby allowing students to have a deeper level of engagement with the writing process.

Topic Justification:

Rather than have students confine the topic of their own memoir essays to either culture or a specific cultural experience, their theme is "communication" instead. This theme was selected in order to have students examine their own social experiences in which they communicated with others either in multiple languages, in multiple media, or across discourses. Featuring these specific elements of the students' personal experience as part of the topic aligns with McCarthey's suggestion of improving the multilingual/bilingual students' understanding of

purpose and meaning with personal interest (343). Any one of these topics individually would certainly allow students to practice awareness of their language skills, their multimodal composition skills, and practice discourse awareness. Awareness and practice of these skills is a central goal of this assignment. However, selecting "communication" as the topic for the students' memoir essays allows for the examination of any combination of these skills through the lens of the students' experiences.

In an ideal situation, this assignment would come after other activities and lessons about discourse and its multiple uses, as well as genre and its forms. These readings are as follows:

1. Amy Tan - "Mother Tongue"

2. Gloria Anzaldua - "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" (excerpt)

3. Judith Ortiz Cofer - "The Myth of the Latin Woman: I just Met a Girl Named Maria"

4. Bharati Mukherjee - "Two Ways to Belong in America"

5. Richard Rodriguez - "Aria" (excerpt)

This selection is from a small pool of writing that the author of this thesis has previously taught to students who are entering college composition. These readings best address the themes of multiculturalism, multilingualism, or identity in some way, in addition to being personal essays (i.e., being in the memoir family of writing). These readings on multiculturalism and multilingualism would also accompany this assignment. The students should style their memoir after the following culturally-themed memoir readings. The students *are not* required to reference these texts themselves in their writing, but they should be aware of the themes that they are addressing for use in their own writing.

Content Justification:

Students writing about personal experience allows them to practice writing in a more traditionally academic discourse while also discussing a topic that is meaningful and interesting for the student. Having students compose "meaningful" texts is a central goal for this project; meaningful texts are those that students compose based on their personal interests, often related to their culture, experiences, or goals (Smagorinsky 199). The assignment is meant to foster an understanding of academic culture by way of letting the students explore some of the demands of composition by way of using their own culture. Smagorinsky refers to this development as both personal growth and academic growth, saying, "Growth takes place within the contours of social interaction and is therefore channeled in a particular cultural direction" (199). Particularly for Latinx students, having content be meaningfully centered around their experiences helps with this process. This assignment is designed to have students consider audience as well; in this case, the students are explicitly asked to consider an audience that is *unfamiliar* with their cultural and linguistic experiences. This cultural navigating, akin to translating, is intentionally reminiscent of Potts' accidental experience with her young Chinese students, who used multimedia to create meaning for their non-English speaking parents (Potts 627). Regardless of the level of familiarity the reader might have with a particular cultural and linguistic experience, the student is meant to practice reflection and analysis of their experiences with more detail than they might do if they were translating or transmediating for a more familiar audience. As for the multimodal element of this assignment, the student is tasked with including both traditional written media (the essay portion) as well as other media of their choosing in order to purposefully emphasize the connection that various compositions may have in multiple media. Although students may be familiar with composing with video media, aural media, or image media by likelihood of being digital natives (Prensky 1), they are still practicing their academic textual composition skills.

Also, many of these students are likely still developing digital composition skills as well, thanks to the digital "participatory gap," which is still a reality for many minority students (Jenkins 12).

Additionally, the student should have an awareness of the sociocultural communicative experiences of other academics (the texts that they are meant to read leading into this assignment) so that they might distinguish how their experiences may be meaningful yet distinct from those of others. This is because these students have trouble navigating their own culture and reconciling it with the hostility of (white) academic culture (Ybarra 90).

Purpose Justification:

In addition to practical composition skills, this assignment allows students to practice an awareness of key features of academic writing: audience, discourse, and their own existing multimodal composition skills. This takes Hafner's idea of remix culture and its use of existing compositions to give students opportunity to consider a text's elements and add another medium (or media) to the text, which develops the students' awareness of their voice as well as the audience they must be considering (Hafner 491). In this case, the students are not remixing another text but rather transmediating their own (Albers 90). However, the reason *why* remains the same in both cases.

The assignment also allows for opportunities already touched upon, such as composition skill practice. However, this assignment goes beyond traditional written composition into digital literacy and the navigation of new media. As Serafini points out, there are *many* literacies, and students are almost always asked to focus on traditional English literacy at the peril of missing out on digital literacy (Serafini 421). Having the students compose in at least one additional media gives them the opportunity to practice digital literacy with their own texts, though the degree to which they do so will likely range, depending on the student. Like other memoir

assignments, it allows the student to practice reflective writing that explores personal narrative elements that draw from experiences and ideas that are meaningful for the student. The topic allows for flexibility in cultural and multilingual topics that allow the student to become further aware of discourse in general, making use of their own home discourse toward a more academic discourse in preparation for more advanced academic compositions. Additionally, through multimodal composition, the students have the opportunity to practice digital literacy and navigate new media, incorporating various media in order to add details that engage audiences depending on the media that they select for the composition. It also gives the instructor insight into the cultural multilingualism that is important to the students' composition skills, as well as allows the instructor to become more immersed in media with which they may be otherwise unexposed or unfamiliar. The comparative element of the assignment also allows the student to measure their experiences with culture against the experiences of other writers who are also considering culture.

Goals Justification: The assignment makes uses of TAMIU's Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) due to the theoretical applications and implications of the techniques of multimodal-multilingual composition and its effects on Latinx students being based on a theoretical analysis of Latinx students in the TAMIU setting. This is partially due to TAMIU's status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), its high population of Latinx students, and its high population of multilingual students. TAMIU's first-year composition program makes use of these specific SLOs with which the assignment also aligns.

SLO 1: "Write reflectively about texts or ideas, connecting choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision making." The assignment meets this objective by letting students determine the meaning in their writing through their topical choices and connections of ideas. The nature of

memoir writing is to reflect on personal experiences, and in this case, the student is meant to make connections between personal experiences with culture and communication and the experiences of other writers, their choices and actions. The process of composition—the development of the writing and other media together—should also foster meaning-making through the composition decisions of the students, i.e. how to best convey meaning through multimedia.

SLO 2. "Understand and apply several invention, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation strategies." The assignment meets this objective by having the students practice the writing process and its techniques, letting the student go through each stage of the process. The traditional written essay, of course, makes use of the writing process, but multimodal composition also asks students to incorporate other media into this process.

SLO 5. "Compose texts that effectively employ the features of a given genre." The assignment employs *memoir* as a genre that allows for reflection of the cultural needs of the students. In building up to composing the assignment, students are tasked with studying other memoirs, gaining an understanding of the writing form and its features before employing it to convey meaning for themselves.

SLO 7. "Compose texts that effectively address audience, purpose, style, and content. (This includes: clear focus, structurally unified development of ideas, appropriate rhetorical style, correct use of Standard American Academic English (SAAE), and ethically appropriate use of research.)" The assignment meets this objective by using multimodal composition techniques to consider what to show the audience and how to best convey meaning to an unfamiliar audience. In addition to writing and practicing style, language, and SAAE through writing, the students also create meaningful compositions that help them understand the purpose of communication,

fill their writing with meaningful content, and consider the needs of audiences through a mix of media.

Features Justification:

The traditional part of the composition assignment, the written essay, has the classic designs of a memoir essay. This is to let the students develop skills necessary for composition that they will be asked to use in the formal academic setting. The students are practicing making meaning through communication, using expression through composition to have their ideas be understood by a broad audience; in practicing being understood, the students are also building the basic skills of understanding and analyzing others' meaning with time. Practicing communication raises the students' awareness about *being* writers, allowing them to see that even their everyday communications across a variety of media convey meaning that others must in turn interpret. Understanding how that communication occurs across media to create meaning will raise the students' awareness that their communication in these media and in writing share similar techniques, such as the conveying of topics, themes, and experiences.

In addition, the students are also practicing converting meaning across media, gaining understanding of the differing needs of verbal media compared to non-verbal media. Written details, dialogue, and reflection on personal experience through dialectical writing are features of memoir writing. Asking students to engage with these traditional elements of composition not only gives them practice for word processing written details but also lets them see how these features may be replicated or *not* replicated in transmediation (Potts 93). This is because the audience's expectations and requirements of distinct media are different, and the students should be able to see this clearly in the transmediation process about their own experiences. Photographs, audio clips, a video reenactment, etc. in this assignment are meant to assist the

written text, not replace it (Potts 627). The students' conclusion, the "so-what," which is a reflection and synthesis of the students' ideas throughout their composition, may be similarly enhanced with multimedia. First-year students often struggle with conclusions and synthesis, so the additional media may help them decide on a piece of composition they might not otherwise come by through writing by itself.

Parameter Justification:

For the traditional essay portion of the assignment, students are tasked with using standard MLA formatting for word processing. Again, this is due to the prevalence of this formatting in U.S. academic writing, as well as its relatively few needs when not having students cite outside sources (which they are not required to do for this project). The actual specifics of multimodal composition get tricky to measure through parameter and evaluate, but 3:00 minutes for audio and video were given, since this assignment has likely become too complex to assign at the beginning of a new semester, and even a 3 minute video takes time to compose and edit in place. Students do not always have resources, both linguistic resources (Ruecker 93) and digital resources (Jenkins 12). Images are equally difficult to measure, since there is always the possibility that students will use images that are either irrelevant or unoriginal. However, images are probably the most likely media to be selected, since they are so prevalent online and offline (Kress 143). Therefore, there is no current hard cap on images that the student may select for this assignment. Regardless of the students' chosen media, they *must* compose with at least one other media which will be incorporated into their presentation. This is because the entire point of the multimodal curriculum design is that *multiple* (i.e., more than one) media must be used together in order for one to practice seeing the relationship between the two texts making meaning together. The assignment leaves room for so-called "new media," mainly to cover the bases of

possible changes to media unforeseeable at this time. Multimedia arise and perish often on the digital landscape, such as Vine, a popular video microblogging website and app that was only available for 3 years but which continues to be popular online. The students are also allowed to use remixed media due to its prevalence digitally and due to young students' familiarity with the media (Hafner 486). However, since the students are still practicing composition, which relies on *original* composition, their remixes and media use are likewise required to be original texts, though the form in which they are presented is open-ended.

Final Thoughts: Pitfalls and Possibilities

Theorists in what is becoming the growing sub-field of multimodal-multilingual composition are addressing education not just in curriculum and activities but also in the larger context of education. Several of these theorists have considered multimodal curriculum design or multilingual curriculum design, but restrictions or limitations in the amount of changes that curriculum might be able to handle in short amounts of time have so far limited the complete implementation of these two theories simultaneously, at least substantially. While there have been many shifts in composition education, especially in the last couple of decades, there are still more changes for which educators must be advocates. In the United States, education policy is not getting any younger, but the students that it serves *are*. In particular, there are more Latinx students than ever, despite the many challenges that they face when they decide to scale higher education. Multilingualism is becoming increasingly prevalent as more bilingual students rise through the primary and secondary education system. Culture in the U.S. is likewise not homogenous, and the increasing diversity in education reflects this. And, of course, these young students are bringing with them multimodal composition techniques that are ripe for meaning-making and analysis.

The process toward a composition curriculum that considers the multimodal, multilingual, multicultural is certainly complicated, especially since all of the implications and applications of digital composition tools are still being explored. This project offers just a single assignment as part of such a curriculum, albeit with plenty of analysis and explanation built around it to give a sense of what such a curriculum might look like. Additional texts--of many media--for the students would accompany throughout the semester, several emphasizing culture and language while also giving students the opportunity to practice written composition skills.

However, composition practice is not the only necessity in a completely multimodal curriculum. A curriculum of this type will certainly be a challenge for instructors who are still navigating multimodal theory, let alone any of the other theories. Returning to Peggy Albers' thoughts on multimodal curriculum design demonstrates some of the troubles with a curriculum overhaul. When Albers talks about *Reflective Action Plans*, she mentions that these reflective moments occur both for students and instructors. For the students, their application of multimodal texts developed with purpose to demonstrate their understanding of ideas and media and make connections between media, texts, and their experiences with the composition process *is* reflective (94). Albers does not consider having the students engage with an actual reflective element within the process, considering the application itself to be reflective in nature. However, for the building of purposeful multimodal assignments, perhaps allowing students more room to reflect on experiences within the text is viable and should be considered.

Secondly, the multimodal curriculum allows the instructor to reflect on connections between new media and digital composition. Albers argues that a good multimodal curriculum should have the following:

(1) Engagements must be flexible and serve potentially different functions within a Focused Study; (2) Multimodality takes time, and engagements must be carefully considered, organized, and managed; (3) It must engage students at all levels and experiences; and (4) A teacher needs to know the subject matter and their students in order to make sound curricular decisions. (Albers 95).

The author's considerations may be applicable to all kinds of multimodal curriculum designs. The flexibility of engagements and the service of functions of a focused study refer to instructors' engagement of the students using multimodal texts that demonstrate ways in which the student might compose in their own practice. Determining the texts and their function for use in the classroom is a process not to be taken lightly. Equally important is the idea that "multimodality takes time," returning to the idea that the compositions as well as curriculum design should be built with purpose and with an understanding of the shifting needs of students and the environment in which they are composing. Engaging the student at all levels and experiences refers to being able to apply the curriculum to a broad population of students.

As has already been discussed, the experiences and needs of students are various, determined through sociopolitical and cultural context. However, rather than ignoring these contexts in order to engage students at all levels, *more* levels and experiences must be considered to reach the students who need the most help, such as Latinx and other minority students. Finally, instructors must understand the subject matter, in this case, an acknowledgement that composition is changing linguistically, digitally, culturally, and multimodally. Although the task is daunting, instructors must walk into this process with the understanding that *knowing* the subject matter is no longer a case of merely knowing about one form of composition. Composition is not what it was 20 years ago when Albers was considering these possibilities.

Composition is shifting rapidly, and it will continue to do so. Albers is considering elements of curriculum that could potentially go wrong, but she also takes the opportunity to envision the curriculum's potential to actually help the students explore multimodality.

Likewise, much of the assignment design for this thesis applies possibilities from *Language Arts*'s interview with teachers Troy Hicks and Franki Sibberson in "Conversation Currents: Students as Writers and Composers: Workshopping in the Digital Age" (2015). Here, the authors reveal specific multimodal and digital composition techniques that these primary and secondary school teachers are using in their respective classrooms. However, Hicks and Sibberson are mostly interested in using digital technologies and multimodal theory to facilitate collaborative learning or feedback in writing workshops, whereas this thesis considers their methods for its applications to create multimodal or digital composition *assignments*. Sibberson notes that students younger and younger are using digital tools to read as well as compose in genres such as written and visual blogging (Hicks and Sibberson 225). Their students are asked questions about the consideration of audience in their digital compositions; "What does it mean to use this particular font, or what does it mean to add this transition between my slides or in my movie?" (Hicks and Sibberson 225). They also select mentor texts for teaching their students about **m**odes, **m**edia, **a**udience, **p**urpose, and **s**ituations (MAPS) that are based on videos or texts that their students are discussing, interested in, or are remixing (225). Sibberson describes a situation in which she noticed her students were repeatedly watching a how-to video on YouTube in order to learn how tie a particular bracelet. She then had students consider how the video's composition conveys elements of the how-to and argumentative writing genres (226). The key, both teachers argue, is in having students recognize these elements of style in digital compositions so that they can transfer these skills to other forms of composition. The authors

advocate for having their students compose in digital media (visual blogs, videos, etc.) *before* they begin composing in the written medium, because text-based composition has different expectations, techniques, and principles that are not found in other forms of composition (226).

The authors come to a general agreement that students are composing and practicing digital literacy before they actually do so with direction in the classroom. They add that the difference is that in class, "We need to really get them talking about why they made the decisions they made" (227). These students make decisions both as consumers of digital compositions and as novice composers without the sophistication of advanced technique or awareness of the importance of their skills. Hicks and Sibberson are looking at tools such as GoogleDocs, Wikispaces, and Edublogs to collaboratively workshop students' writing (227). However, the much more important take-away from their lesson plans is that they allow their students to practice genre awareness in new compositions and to practice their own compositions with purpose and intention of building future skills.

Final Thoughts: The Future of this Assignment and Others Like It

This project has addressed the need to acknowledge meaning in student compositions—whether these compositions make use of multiple languages, multiple media, or address multiple discourses and cultures. The assignment developed for this project is merely one instance of multilingual-multimodal composition and its application; other projects might take these combined theories and apply them in other genres of composition, perhaps emphasizing language or media or culture to suit the needs of their student populations. In the case of this project, multilingual Latinx students and their specific needs are addressed both due to the author's familiarity with the needs of Latinx students and the continued challenges that Latinx students face in higher education, despite considerations for culture and linguistics. While some

research is being done into each of the topics addressed—multimodality, digital composition, linguistics, culture, discourse, specifically—few of these fields are being considered simultaneously for the specific needs of Latinx students. To be fair, the needs of many students *should* be considered, and Latinx students are not the only students who face the challenges of shifting language and communication in the face of the Digital Age. However, by studying Latinx students specifically, their multimodal contributions and multilinguistic composition use can offer insight into building a more unified idea about communication and meaning in the digital age.

Future considerations of this project and its potential applications might study, for example, Latinx students in other parts of the United States, where the population density is differently distributed than it is for TAMIU students. Further research might consider the linguistic needs of Latinx students who are not primarily Mexican-American or might focus on second- or third-generation English language users. It might focus on the multilinguistic needs of students who are speaking other non-English languages in college composition. It might focus on the navigational culture challenges multi-ethnic students or for whom culture seems to have less significance on personal experience than this TAMIU population of students. Most importantly, future considerations of this project may emphasize digital and/or non-digital multimodal composition in fluctuating levels, considering the unpredictability of the needs of composition in the still-developing digital landscape. Although digital communication use is only expected to grow after the research of this project, there is still a certain element of unpredictability with digital development and language shifts.

Additional research and application of these theories in a practical setting is the next step for this project. The theorists so far have been used to consider assignment creation and the

potential curriculum for a single composition class. However, one final possibility for these theories is a total shift in *composition* curricula across the board. Realistically, this is completely unwieldy for this project alone. Theorists like Gunther Kress have been considering shifts in language for decades. In *Before Writing* chapter 7, "Teaching Literacy, Learning Literacy" (1996), Kress applies multimodality to the classroom. Kress has four major cautions about the need for multimodal theory in English education. The first is that it should aim for individuals to "have full understanding and command of the meaning-making potentials, the meaning making resources of their systems of communication" (Kress 153). This "full potential" includes a command of the language--in all of its potential media, bear in mind--and all of its capacity for social interaction. Recall that writing is a social act, after all ("Principles"). Second, the media in which students are taught must be taught to have multiple uses. Kress gives the example about the teaching of art for aesthetic purposes, whereas its uses for communication are not taught (Kress 153). The third need is for multimodality (Kress 153). Essentially, it is not enough that many media are taught as being essential aspects of communication; rather, multiple media must be used and taught at the same time both in order to convey meaning and to teach students how to make the best use of their media as tools.

If a completely multimodal-multilingual composition curriculum were to be considered for the ultimate goal of this project, Kress's final characteristic for multimodal curriculum would be an excellent starting point. Kress's fourth characteristic necessary for new curriculum is "*design*" as the essential goal to be learned, as opposed to "*competence in the use"* in the existing system of language. He says, "What is needed is competence in design of new, innovative forms, which are a response to the maker's analysis and understanding, and allow the designers to go beyond the forms which exist" (Kress 155). Kress wrote this in 1997, before the

widespread use of digital tools for composition and communication. However, his work anticipates new media, new analysis and application of this media in *understanding* and conveying meaning, and new curriculum and educational needs. "Design" as a term incorporates several facets of pedagogy, such as analysis (the analysis of texts, regardless of media), and composition (the production of new texts). "It forces us not merely to ask about intention, interest, motivation, but about the *principles of design* which were applied, and which give the text the features it wishes, demands" (Kress 155). Intention, interest, and motivation are all key aspects of understanding the purpose or meaning in texts, as far as Kress is concerned, yet he also claims that design looks beyond these principles, toward an understanding of every aspect of the text. In a broader curriculum, design of media would be considered, teaching students about the choices used in meaning-making through media, as well as giving the students an awareness that media and language are likely to continue to change beyond their education.

Language and media have changed and continue to change, but meaning and communication must still be taught and conveyed, regardless of the forms composition may take in the future. However, this is not to say that language and media have lost their significance in the Digital Age; writing and language remain staples of communication in the 21st century, particularly English composition. Although teaching new media, languages, and composition techniques seems a daunting task in the face of all other considerations that must be made in first-year college composition, their importance is escalating and reshaping English composition in measurable ways. Just as the meaning of "texts" has grown to encompass a variety of meaningful artifacts—video, arts, images, speeches, social media statuses, etc.—the meaning of "writing" and all that it encompasses may grow beyond its current use. Multimodal and multilingual composition are theoretical education fields that will certainly continue to study

trends in these changing ideas, not for the good of academia and its practitioners, but for the needs of the students who are developing these skills.

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i Although some researchers are making use of other terms to define this ethnic population, such as "Latin@" or "Latino/a" for considerations of gender neutrality or "Hispanic" as a general catch-all group term, Latinx was chosen as the term to address this ethnic population for this project for ease of searchability and consistency as well as gender neutrality. Within this thesis, Latinx refers to the ethnic group of individuals whose cultural and ancestral heritage is from countries within Latin American, and it is meant to encompass individuals of all genders and races that meet this definition criteria, as compared with "Latino" to specifically refer to male-identifying individuals or "Latina" to specifically refer to female-identifying individuals.

ii Tactile multimodality is an emergent field of research that mostly focuses on communication in Deaf/Hard of Hearing and composition that might arise in a touch-based medium. Although this project does not intend to focus more on this topic, it is important to acknowledge as an area that requires more research and attention.

iii The elements of these composition modes are often erased or otherwise downplayed when these cultures encounter the dominant cultural in the United States, which favors American English composition in its written and spoken modes. This is, undoubtedly, one reason why students who are still learning English or who are culturally othered by the dominant academic culture continue to struggle with written composition.

iv In chapter 4 of this thesis, beginning Latinx composition students' funds of knowledge for *audience* and *genre* awareness will be considered in their use of multimedia and digital tools. However, this section is focused on the students' perceptions of purpose of composition as multilingual learners first.

v Marc Prensky, who is credited for coining the term "digital native," does not set a clear demarcation of birth years that define this group of digital users. The term encompasses all people who have grown up *using* the established "net" in place at all times in their lives, distinguishing this group from so-called "digital immigrants," who navigate the digital landscape without growing up "in" it. Because Usenet, the precursor to the Internet, has been publicly used since about 1980, digital natives tend to refer to people born after this year. However, because of the digital "participation gap" (Jenkins 12), there are people who have been born during and after the years of mainstream use of Usenet and the Internet who *are not* digital natives because they had limited or *no* access to the Net during their childhood and adolescent years. It is more accurate to think of digital natives not as a clearly defined generation of people and more as a *very* large sub-population whose members are increasing as the participation gap narrows and access to the Net is less and less restricted by age, race, class, and geographical location.

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