

*Interviewer:* Okay. What do you see as the future of multimodality and technology and writing programs, not only here at the University of Findlay, but even perhaps more broadly like at more institutions across the nation? Do you see that writing programs, like first-year composition, will start to move in a direction where they'll include a lot more technology and a lot more multimodal projects?

*Interviewee:* Yeah, there's sort of a two-part thing with that. I don't think we've fully addressed the assessment question, and that's with multimodal projects in general, but at first-year composition, standardization matters so much more. One of the things that – and I think this is probably true for a lot of first-year programs – is that we say when students leave our classes, they have a minimum level of competency.

But if students sort of have these varying levels of how much they engage with multimodal projects and how much they have print texts, and you know, just the skill levels. I mean there's all different kinds of skills associated. Right now, we have this instructor's choice assignment, so somebody could do a video, and they could learn video-making skills on iMovie. Another person that's over in a lab that's only PC learns just Movie Maker.

And yes, they're making movies, and learning visual skills and editing, but the way those movies are put together, in a lot of ways, is completely different just in terms of how you learn to edit and how you learn to think about some of those skills. Those are skills just like learning how to revise a paper or do paragraphing or deciding on a great title or something like that.

So having this idea of, "What do you want at the end?" to have the assessment, I think will answer that question to some extent because when you're deciding, say, a communally assessed portfolio, which is what, right now, I found out from an article I wrote, one-third of composition programs use right now. And it would be something similar where you do a trade-grade situation, where, you know different instructors read different portfolios.

When you have something like that, there's a baseline determination of what standardization is, and then you've got questions of reliability and validity. And with some of these multimodal projects, I think you have to make some determination on, "Well, what can we say is, say, a minimally acceptable video in composition? What's a minimally acceptable podcast?" We're not even to the point to answer that. We're not at that point here to answer it, so I do think that's one.

Another thing that's related is how the heck, if you're going to have a portfolio, how are you going to look at these things? You know, the natural assumption is that you're gonna move to an electronic portfolio because there really isn't another venue to do that. So we have made the transition to an electronic portfolio here in our College Writing II class precisely for that reason.

And so one of the things I have to do is kinda look around and kinda benchmark us with everybody else to see, "Well, what are other schools doing?" And one of the things I found is, still, not that many people use an electronic portfolio in first-year composition. So one of the things that tends to happen is say you had a communally assessed portfolio, and now you wanna do some multimodal stuff, you just scrap the communal portfolio 'cause it's just too much trouble, or you try to get your multimodal stuff to sort of fit into that portfolio, which is hilarious. Like you print out storyboards from a video or transcript from a podcast.

But you know, when somebody gets their hands on their portfolio, it's not the same sort of thing. I mean I've seen some messy scenarios where you've still got the old print folder, and then you throw in a CD, but we've gone to a digital portfolio on Blackboard using the Content Collection system. And Blackboard's got all sorts of issues that I'm aware of, but for us it works really well because it allows us to have the students have three print papers and a video or a podcast or whatever, and we have designed our rubric to accommodate those projects and recognize that that's just another form of communication. Are they rhetorical skills and that sort of thing?

So I think that question has gotta be worked out for some writing programs before they decide to make the leap into multimodality. I mean particularly in this age of assessment where you're sort of fighting to tell people why they still need to take first-year composition. If you don't really know what it is you wanna get out of there, I think you kind of balance that risk of, "Oh, it's kind of a fun class, where you just make some podcasts. And it's not real writing skills, so we can waive it or scrap it, or students could test out of it," or some scenario, so –

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