STARTING THE STUDIO:

CREATING AND OPERATING A MULTIMODAL TUTORING SPACE

By

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Abstract: The following thesis explores the creation and operation of a multimodal tutoring location of the Oklahoma State University writing center. In the first chapter, I shed light on the inspiration behind this project, briefly describe the effects of COVID19 on my research, and discuss my theoretical framework and the reasoning behind the structure of the thesis. In the second chapter I provide of review of relevant literature, focusing on work from writing center studies, multimodal theory and composition, and online teaching and tutoring theory and pedagogy. Chapter three describes a needs analysis study completed in the Spring semester of 2019 that focused on finding evidence of multimodal projects at Oklahoma State as well as identify common technological resources used in the creation of those projects. Chapter four details another study of this project, one that focused on discovering the thoughts and concerns that writing consultants had regarding working with multimodal projects; the aim of this study was to gather data that would inform consultant training and resource materials. In chapter five I discuss the creation of a multimodal tutoring location and the operation of that space during its first three semesters. This chapter details choosing a location, staff training and resources, and the implications of online tutoring. To conclude, I discuss the implications of this thesis, avenues for future research, and give my hopes for the future of The Studio.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Oklahoma State University, like countless other institutions, has been working to incorporate technology across the campus. Today's universities are adapting to effectively integrate technology in order to keep up with the technically driven outside world and to prepare students to acclimate to such after they graduate. This integration has been realized in a variety of ways; at Oklahoma State, it is seen in the creation of places like the Creative Studios and Tech-To-Go program at Edmon Low Library, the increasing advertisement of and enrollment in multimodal composition courses Critical Writing and Analysis I and II, and the increase in multimodal and technology-based coursework.

The campus-wide incorporation of technology and the new types of assignments that it has resulted in push past the boundaries of a standard essay, causing student support services, such as writing centers, to be out of their element when trying to help. Because of academia's move toward technology and new/digital/multimedia, many writing centers are working to expand to accommodate these new assignments, transitioning to "multiliteracy centers" or collaborating on new locations focused on digital or multimodal forms of expression and composition.

Introducing The Studio

Throughout my graduate program at Oklahoma State University, I have been working on how my own writing center can expand to fill this gap in student support. In the spring of 2019, I began with a needs analysis study; the goal of this study was to 1) discover if there was actually a need for this work and 2) get an idea of what assignments students would potentially bring to a writing center space focused on multimodality. I followed up the needs analysis with a study focusing on writing consultants and their perceptions of and concerns about working with multimodal projects. This study was designed to inform the creation of training protocols and resources that would help consultants feel comfortable and knowledgeable and ensure that they were equipped to provide effective help to students. These studies resulted in the opening of a satellite location of the writing center, dedicated to multimodal projects, named The Studio in January 2020.

Inspiration

During the first semester of my graduate program, I was introduced to multiliteracy while doing the reading for a writing center theory and pedagogy course. Immediately, something in me clicked, and I began to explore this area of the field. Through this exploration, whilst reflecting on my undergraduate career, it became obvious that I, as well as almost all of my peers, had been assigned projects that required us to be multiliterate, often under the guise of 'multigenre' or as a 'creative' component turned in with a writing assignment. The more I looked the more I discovered, and it became abundantly clear that 1) multiliteracy has become a key element of education, 2)

students are being asked to communicate through multimodal means (even if they aren't always aware of it), and 3) the student support locations at the time were not taking that into consideration and weren't equipped to handle it.

Although it was clear that multimodality was steadily becoming more popular and was here to stay, that wasn't as apparent in writing center scholarship. While researching, I found that there was a serious lack of literature, especially regarding multimodal tutoring. Until Sabatino and Fallon's publication in 2019, almost no work had been done on tutoring strategies for working with multimodal projects in writing or multiliteracy centers, and there is still next to nothing focusing on the consultant perspective when faced with these projects. Throughout the course of my research, this project evolved from working to fill a need at Oklahoma State to working to add to the field as well as fill a noticeable gap in scholarship.

Effects of COVID 19

The COVID19 pandemic caused a multitude of unforeseen complications for this project as well as for The Studio. When I opened The Studio in the beginning of the Spring 2020 semester, things went better than expected and looked very promising; a wonderful group of writing consultants had agreed to staff the location and had been working on training and finding helpful resources for both consultants and writers. However, when everything moved online after spring break, all of that work seemed to have been in vain as the writing center closed satellite locations for the rest of the semester to ease the transition to online-only appointments. The following two semesters,

the writing center, and most of the campus, continued to be online; The Studio followed

suit and adapted to move online as well; this is detailed later in chapter six.

Theoretical Framework

This project is largely informed and influenced by feminist theory, specifically

that discussed by Royster and Kirsch; in their book *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New*

Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies, they describe "four terms of

engagement" that work "to create new knowledge and understanding."[1] Two of their

paradigms for inquiry, analysis, and interpretation were instrumental in the framework

for this project–critical imagination and strategic contemplation. Critical imagination

"account(s) for what we know by gathering whatever evidence can be gathered and

ordering it in a configuration that is reasonable and justifiable in accord with basic

scholarly methodologies."[2] It also encourages researchers "to understand the self-

authorization of curiosity and imagination as a practical tool and a critical driver in

fashioning a research agenda."[3] Strategic contemplation works to "reclaim a genre of

research and scholarship traditionally associated with processes of meditation,

introspection, and reflection" and prioritizes reflexivity, wonder, and multidirectional

thinking and the articulation of those inward processes in research.[4]

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[1] Royster, Jacqueline Jones, and Gesa E. Kirsch. *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2012.
[2] Royster and Kirsch,
[3] Royster and Kirsch,
[4] Royster and Kirsch,

In addition to Royster and Kirsch's paradigms, Creswell and Creswell's philosophical worldviews were also significant in the creation and organization of this thesis. Like Creswell and Creswell, I believe that the worldviews that resonate with me and that I ascribe to–constructivist and transformative[5]–play a definitive role in both my approach to research and the types of research that I conduct. In line with their discussions of these world views, this thesis works to deepen understanding and create meaning through engagement and searches for multiple meanings utilizing a variety of views; it is also focused on taking action and creating change.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis details the creation of The Studio, focusing on two separate studies–a needs analysis and a small scale study focusing on consultant perceptions–and the pilot semester of The Studio to inform the creation and continued operation of a multimodal tutoring location of the Oklahoma State University writing center. Following this chapter, I will give a brief review of the literature and move on to the two studies and the opening of The Studio–chapters three, four, and five–after which I will address implications, avenues for future research, and possible futures for The Studio. In line with my constructivist and transformative worldviews, as well as with both critical imagination and strategic contemplation, I chose to organize my research this way in an effort to make it easier for others to utilize the work that I've already done. I made it a priority to clearly articulate and thoroughly discuss the steps I took and the reasoning behind those steps in

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[5] Creswell, John W., and J. David Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications, Inc, 2018.

all phases of this project. My intention with this project was not just helping students at

Oklahoma State or pushing the writing center to evolve; I wanted to create something that

filled a gap in the literature and could be utilized by others trying to do this work.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While working on this project, I drew from a large and diverse body of scholarship; in addition to research specifically in writing center studies, I also utilized work from composition and rhetoric focusing on multimodality, design, and online pedagogy.

Writing Center Studies.

As I briefly mentioned, this project truly began as a work of wonder-based inquiry-or "critical imagination" (Royster and Kirsch); wonder inspired by the "The Idea of a Multiliteracy Center: Six Responses" by Valerie Balester, Nancy Grimm, Jackie McKinney, Sohui Lee, David M. Sheridan, and Naomi Silver. In this article from Praxis, the authors share their experiences with the transition from a writing center to a multiliteracy center. These responses were my introduction to multiliteracy and multimodality as an area of research and are embedded into the foundation of this project and The Studio.

Although Balester, et al. was my first encounter with multiliteracy studies in the writing center, their work is neither the first nor the most expansive on the subject. In *The Writing Center Director's Resources Book*, David M. Sheridan creates a foundation for

the transition from a writing center to a multiliteracy center in his chapter "Words, Images, Sounds: Writing Centers as Multiliteracy Centers". In this chapter, he poses four central questions to be considered during the transition from a Writing Center to a Multiliteracy Center. Sheridan uses these questions to look at the relationships "between writing and other modes of communication" and "between technology and rhetoric", adopting multiliteracy pedagogy, and changing the hiring and training procedures for consultants.[6]

Many of the concepts from this chapter are expanded on in his and James A. Inman's book, *Multiliteracy Centers: Writing Center Work, New Media, and Multimodal Rhetoric*. This edited collection discusses the idea of the Multiliteracy Center and then proceeds to introduce and discuss various aspects of creating such a center in subsequent chapters, such as creating the physical space, day-to-day operations, campus connections with multiliteracy, and tutoring practices. Both Sheridan's chapter and his book with Inman have been instrumental in The Studio's creation. In addition to serving as frameworks for this project, they also posed important questions and provided a sort of checklist for everything that needed to be addressed when creating a new tutoring space.

Joy Bancroft's "Multiliteracy Centers Spanning the Digital Divide: Providing a Full Spectrum of Support" gives insight on a different element of multiliteracy centers. She discusses what kind of work should be done in such a center; the focus of that work

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[6] Sheridan, David. M. (2006). Words, Images, Sounds: Writing Centers as Multiliteracy Centers. *The Writing Center Director's Resource Book*, edited by Christina Murphy, and Byron L. Stay, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oks-ebooks/detail.action?docID=331715.

being to bridge the "digital divide" and to teach or develop students' digital literacy.

Bancroft emphasizes that, "if multiliteracy centers are committed to helping students with

all aspects of writing [and] part of the mission . . . is student success" they must "consider

(and implement) strategies to better serve students struggling with basic digital literacy

skills".[7] Although other works have discussed tutoring practice and center policy,

Bancroft is one of the only ones to plainly state that multiliteracy centers cannot claim to

truly help students if they neglect such an essential element of multiliteracy as digital

literacy.

   A cornerstone piece in the creation of The Studio is Lindsay A. Sabatino and

Brian Fallon's *Multimodal Composing: Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing

Consultations*. This edited collection is dedicated to providing writing center

professionals and consultants with the tools and strategies they need to effectively work

with a wide variety of multimodal texts. In each chapter, contributors address a different

kind of multimodal text, discuss their experiences, share strategies, and provide outside

resources that would be helpful during writing center consultations. Sabatino and Fallon's

work has proved to be invaluable while creating The Studio and training tutors; not only

does this collection efficiently and effectively breakdown multimodal composing,

elements of design, and a wide variety of multimodal texts, but it does so in a way that is

easy to understand and apply to training and praxis.

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[7] Bancroft, Joy. "Multiliteracy Centers Spanning the Digital Divide: Providing a Full
Spectrum of Support." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 41, 2016, pp. 46–55.,
doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2016.04.002.

In addition to these works focused on multimodal tutoring, scholarship discussing writing center research (Grimm, Liggett et al., McKinney) and center design (Hadfield et al.) have also been especially useful during different phases of this project.

Jackie Grutsch McKinney's *Strategies for Writing Center Research* is a guide to empirical research in writing center studies; this book discusses how to conduct research, research methods and approaches, and various other elements at play when doing research in the center. In the same vein as McKinney, Sarah Liggett, Kerri Jordan, and Steve Price and Nancy Maloney Grimm, respectively, discuss knowledge-making and methodologies and a future for writing center research.

Liggett, Jordan, and Price's article "Mapping Knowledge-Making in Writing Center Research: A Taxonomy of Methodologies" works to answer to discover "what methodologies does the writing center community employ to make knowledge about writing, writers, and learning to write".[8]

Grimm's "In the Spirit of Service: Making Writing Center Research a 'Featured Character'" discusses utilizing a New Literacy Studies (NLS) framework for research and shifting from an autonomous model of literacy to an ideological model; a shift that calls for writing center professionals to "pay attention to literacies rather than *a* Literacy".[9]

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[8] Liggett, Sarah, et al. "Mapping Knowledge-Making in Writing Center Research: A Taxonomy of Methodologies." *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2011, pp. 50–88. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43442367. Accessed 30 Nov. 2020.
[9] Grimm, Nancy Maloney. "In the Spirit of Service: Making Writing Center Research a 'Featured Character.'" *Center Will Hold,* edited by Michael A. Pemberton and Joyce Kinkead, University Press of Colorado, Logan, Utah, 2003, pp. 41–57. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46nxnq.6. Accessed 30 Nov. 2020.

Although her argument focuses on cultural literacy and literacy as a social practice, it can be applied to the area of multiliteracy, which she mentions, that this project focuses on. She ends the chapter discussing the kinds of research that should be happening in centers and gives strategies for doing that work. Grimm's strategies, as well as the taxonomy created by Liggett et al., were especially useful when I began to design my studies and make choices about my approach and methods.

Utilizing a research team of writing center professionals, tutors, and interior design students, Hadfield et al. discuss the importance of architecture and design in educational spaces, specifically writing centers. In their chapter, "An Ideal Writing Center: Re-Imagining Space and Design", they detail their design process while creating their version of an ideal writing center, taking everything into consideration from the number of people in the center to accent colors. Although my project does not involve the construction of a new space, this chapter proved to be especially helpful when selecting a location, which I will discuss later in chapter five.

Multimodality and Composition.

Although multiliteracy and multimodality are still relatively new topics in writing center studies, scholars in rhetoric and composition have been discussing the implications of multiliteracy and multimodality since the 1990s. One of the first detailed accounts of "multiliteracy" is found in Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis's *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. This book is a collection of the work done by the New London Group, who coined the term in 1994, and other contributors that added to and built upon the original "Pedagogy of Multiliteracies," utilizing theories of design

among many others, that focuses on how the concept of literacy had changed, as it continues to do so. The work of the New London Group paved the way for future scholars to join the conversation; since then, multiliterate and multimodal scholarship has expanded to cover a wide array of topics in the field.

In his chapters from the aforementioned book, *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, Gunther Kress discusses current (as of 2000) language theories in regards to multimodality and multiliteracy. In "Design and Transformation: New Theories of Meaning," he discusses the repercussions of a theory being too focused on one mode; he states that such a theory would "permit neither an adequate nor an integrated description of multimodal textual objects".[10] This is echoed in "Multimodality" where he explains that current theories that focus on only understanding the linguistic mode–language and alphabetic text–cannot be adequate for understanding semiosis.[11] In addition to his critical reading of current theory, Kress offers his idea of what a theory without these shortcomings would look like; one that adequately explains the combination of modes in a text, "explains the changes in use, form, and system"[12], accounts for synaesthesia ("the transduction of meaning from one semiotic mode to

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[10] Kress, Gunther. "Design and Transformation: New theories of meaning." *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. Cope and Kalantzis, pp. 153-161.
[11] Kress, Gunther. "Multimodality." *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. Cope and Kalantzis, pp. 182-208.
[12] Kress "Design and Transformation", 153

another"[13]), and describes "the full range of semiotic modes" and understands their affordances and potentials.[14]

This scholarship has not only focused on theory, as the aforementioned texts do; since The New London Group, scholars have been answering their call and discussing the development and theory and pedagogy that addresses the evolution of literacy, how to teach students to utilize and create multimodal texts, how educators can evaluate such texts, and ways to design spaces conducive for multimodal composing.

In the first chapter of their edited collection, *Multimodal Composing in Classrooms: Learning and Teaching for The Digital World*, Suzanne M. Miller and Mary B. McVee discuss how literacy has moved from "reading and writing print text" to "reading and writing multiple forms of nonprint 'texts' such as images, web pages, and movies".[15] This is echoed in a following chapter, "A Literacy Pedagogy for Multimodal Composing: Transforming Learning and Teaching" where Miller et al. state that "facility with interpreting and designing multimodal texts [emphasis from source] will increasingly be required by human beings to communicate, work, and thrive in the digital, global world of the 21st century".[16] That same chapter proposes a multimodal literacy pedagogy–"a reframing of teaching that connects the literacy identities and practices of our students through purposeful multimodal activities in supportive social

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[13] Kress "Design and Transformation", 159
[14] Kress "Multimodality", 183
[15] Miller, Suzanne M., and Mary B. McVee, editors. *Multimodal Composing in Classrooms: Learning and Teaching for The Digital World*. Routledge, 2012.
[16] Miller, Suzanne M., et al. *Multimodal Composing in Classrooms: Learning and Teaching for the Digital World*, edited by Mary B. McVee, by Suzanne M. Miller, Routledge, 2012.

spaces".[17] This pedagogy focuses on the students and what they know–it works to incorporate their out-of-class identities and their own literacies to embrace and work with multimodality and multimodal texts.

Also discussing the expanded literacy is Frank Serafini, who explains that in order to be literate, people will need to understand all the elements of multimodal texts. In chapter eight, "Curricular and Pedagogical Frameworks", from his book *Reading the Visual*, he discusses his framework for working with multimodal texts that does just that. His three-part framework focuses on supporting students as they are introduced to these texts and begin to work with them. the different parts lead into each other as students work through them; these phases are 1) exposure, 2) exploration, and 3) engagement. In the first phase, exposure, students are introduced to a wide variety of multimodal texts, specifically the ones which they will be working with. "As students read and experience more and more examples [of multimodal texts] in the first phase of a unit of study, they begin to get a sense of what these texts are and what they can do".[18] During the second phase, exploration, students are given the opportunity to deeper investigate multimodal texts, seeing how it is organized and created. Students learn how to understand, work with, and discuss these texts; Serafini states that "one of the key aspects of the exploration phase is the development of a specific vocabulary or metalanguage for discussing and analyzing".[19] In the final phase, engagement, students "make choices

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[17] Miller, et al., 117
[18] Serafini, Frank. *Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Reaching Multimodal Literacy.* Teachers College Press, 2014.
[19] Serafini, 93

concerning the design, production, and distribution of their visual images and multimodal texts".[20] This phase is where students combine all of what they learned and begin to analyze, evaluate, and create multimodal texts.

Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition, by Anne Frances Wysocki, Johndan Johnson-Eilola, Cynthia L. Selfe, and Geoffrey Sirc argue for the inclusion of new media in writing education and effortlessly blend theory and praxis with the use of theory driven arguments and addition of practical classroom activities and detailed sample assignments. In one of her chapters from the book "Towards New Media Texts: taking up the challenges of visual literacy", Cynthia L. Selfe discusses the consequences of excluding multimodality. She states "if our profession continues to focus solely on teaching alphabetic composition–either online or in print–we run the risk of making composition studies increasingly irrelevant to students engaging in contemporary practices of communicating".[21] Additionally, she discusses potential reasons as to why educators and academics avoid including and teaching new media and multimodal texts stating that educators who began teaching composition prior to the inclusion of new media, may feel unqualified or inadequate to teach such. They may feel that they do not have the ability to seriously study or teach these texts and may "realize that they can offer only limited help to students who read new media texts, and

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[20] Serafini, 94

[21] Self, Cynthia L. "Toward New Media Texts: Taking Up the Challenges of Visual Literacy." *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*, by Anne Frances Wysocki et al., Utah State University Press, 2004, pp. 67–110.

they cannot help students who want to compose such texts".[22] Selfe's reasons for neglecting to teach these texts echo many of the concerns I discovered that consultants have about working with them.

Taking a new approach to multimodal composition, James P. Purdy explores the idea of 'design thinking' in his article "What Can Design Thinking Offer Writing Studies?". In this article, Purdy discusses previous scholarship on design thinking and his own content analysis of how a variety of journal articles used the word 'design'–most often to account for the multimodality and materiality in and of texts. Although his study adds valuable information to the notion of design in the field of composition and rhetoric, the highlight of this piece is how he utilizes design to approach writing. Discussing the design thinking framework from Stanford's d.school, Purdy compares and aligns this design framework with a traditional form of the writing process. Ultimately, Purdy states that "design thinking treats composing decisions as deliberate and consequential" and suggests that it gives new perspectives to view work and encourages others to look past the traditional linguistic mode of composition.[23]

In the article "Negotiating Rhetorical, Material, Methodological and Technological Difference: Evaluating Multimodal Designs", Jody Shipka presents a framework for evaluating multimodal designs that "does not focus exclusively on the production and evaluation of digital (new media) texts but attends to a much broader

[22] Selfe, 68

[23] Purdy, James P. "What Can Design Thinking Offer Writing Studies?" *College Composition and Communication,* vol. 65, no. 4, June 2014, pp. 612–641., https://www.jstor.org/stable/43490875

range of texts, technologies, and rhetorical activities".[24] This framework is largely

dependent on the inclusion, and requirement, of a statement of goals and choices (SOGC)

that students are required to turn in with multimodal projects. Although each SOGC

would look different based on its attached project, Shipka gives the core questions that

students are asked to address, questions that would also prove helpful during multimodal

consultations:

1. What, specifically, is this piece trying to accomplish–above and beyond satisfying the basic requirement outlined in the task description? In other words, what work does, or might, this piece do? For whom? In what contexts?
2. What specific rhetorical, material, methodological, and technological choices did you make in service of accomplishing the goal(s) articulated above? Catalog, as well, choices that you might not have consciously made, those that were made for you when you opted to work with certain genres, materials, and technologies.
3. Why did you end up pursuing this plan as opposed to the others you came up with? How did the various choices listed above allow you to accomplish things that other sets or combinations of choices would not have?
4. Who and what played a role in accomplishing these goals?[25]

The purpose of these SOGCs are for students to take agency of their work and their

choices and to be able to articulate the strengths and limits of that work. The rationale

behind SOGCs is similar to that of the tutoring I strive for in The Studio; practices that

not only encourage but require students to critically evaluate their projects and rhetorical

choices.

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[24] Shipka, Jody. "Negotiating Rhetorical, Material, Methodological, and Technological Difference: Evaluating Multimodal Designs." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 61, no. 1, National Council of Teachers of English, Sept. 2009, pp. W343–W366.
[25] Shipka, W354

Similar to the aforementioned text by Hadfield et al., Russell Carpenter argues that "design-oriented composition spaces that facilitate a multimodal invention process" help students "employ elements such as images in ways that are persuasive, creative, and compelling".[26] In his article "Negotiating the Spaces of Design in Multimodal Composition", Carpenter utilizes Joddy Murray's values of non-discursive rhetoric to explore locations of multimodal composing and offers suggestions for creating such spaces. Like Hadfield et al., although in a much different context than the creation of The Studio, these suggestions were helpful when deciding on a location for my multimodal tutoring location.

Online Pedagogy.

Because of the unprecedented effects of the COVID19 global pandemic, it became abundantly clear how important online tutoring was for the writing center. Although a fairly new avenue of research, online tutoring and teaching praxis has been taking the field by storm.

Addressing common fears about and reasons for resistance to online learning among writing instructors, as well as writing center professionals, is Ken Gillam and Shannon R. Wooden's "Reembodying Online Composition: Ecologies of Writing in Unreal Time and Space". They discuss the worry about the decline in education quality that could result from the hasty conversion to online learning; working to ensure that this

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[26] Carpenter, Russell. "Negotiating the Spaces of Design in Multimodal Composition." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 33, no. C, Elsevier Inc, Sept. 2014, pp. 68–78, doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2014.07.006.

does not happen, they utilize concepts of ecology and embodiment to continue to build community and collaboration in online spaces. Although geared toward the re-designing of composition courses for online instruction, some of the ideas discussed, unsurprisingly, proved to be helpful when thinking about the act of online tutoring.

Bourelle et al.'s case study comparing in-person and online education in "Sites of multimodal literacy: Comparing student learning in online and face-to-face environments", focuses on discovering the strengths and limitations of both online and in-person 'classrooms' in regards to multimodal education. After looking at assessment scores comparing the two online sections to the face-to-face section, they found that students gained greater comprehension of multimodal composition in online learning environments; they also addressed a variety of reasons as to why this could be, including the ease of access to instructional assistants and a nonlinear environment. Each of these hypotheses were interesting to consider when contemplating the move to online tutoring in The Studio.

Kathryn Denton addresses the lack of research on asynchronous tutoring in writing center scholarship despite being a topic of conversation among writing center professionals nearly every year. Her article, "Beyond the Lore: A Case for Asynchronous Online Tutoring Research", discusses canonical scholarship, emphasizing that which regards asynchronous tutoring; the work possible when writing centers stop relying on lore[27] alone and start making knowledge through research; and empirical steps she has

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[27] Lore, a common concept in writing center studies, is the experience-based knowledge about what writing center professionals (directors, consultants, etc.) do. It's a form of

taken when exploring asynchronous tutoring. Denton claims, and I agree, that the

negative assumptions about asynchronous tutoring– "that it is a format akin to a drop-off

service . . . without dialogue or interaction . . . 'ineffective' and 'unrewarding' for

tutors"[28] –are largely a result of writing center professionals holding fast to the lore they

have always known rather than exploring new methods. Her study, although small in

scale, dispels common myths and critiques of asynchronous tutoring and leaves the door

open for further research. Denton's work was instrumental in The Studio's move to

online and e-tutoring practices.

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knowledge that is passed from director to director, consultant to consultant, comprised of
tips, tricks, and what has been shared by others as 'what has worked for them'.
[28] Denton, Kathryn. "Beyond the Lore: A Case for Asynchronous Online Tutoring
Research." *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 36, no. 2, International Writing Centers
Association, Jan. 2017, pp. 175–203.

CHAPTER III

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The first phase of this project was a small needs analysis study that utilized an online survey. After the creation of the Creative Studios and the Tech-To-Go program in Edmon Low Library in 2015, it seemed that multimodal assignments were becoming more frequent. My first interaction in the writing center with a multimodal project was trying to work on a PowerPoint presentation with a student during an online session. To say this session was a disaster would be an understatement, almost nothing went well, but I credited this failure to our online platform. However, after overhearing another appointment where a consultant struggled to help on a student working on a flyer, I was thoroughly convinced that it wasn't just the online platform; we were not equipped to help students with these kinds of projects. Furthermore, it became clear that multimodality wasn't isolated to just one class or department. Across campus, courses were steadily incorporating multimodality in the classroom and in assignments; however, students were left unprepared and unequipped to fully engage with and create multimodal texts. Moreover, as was apparent during my writing center appointments, they were being left unsupported by the university with nowhere to go for help except for their instructors and classmates.

Although I believe that if even one student needs help we should do whatever we can to provide that, that is not a sentiment always shared by everyone; especially when 'whatever we can do' includes something as large-scale as implementing new training, new platforms, or rethinking an entire location. The purpose of this initial study was to discover the current, as of the Spring 2019 semester, status of multiliterate[29] projects at OSU and to explore the possible expansion of the campus writing center to better accommodate those projects.[30]

Research Questions. For this study, I sought to explore the following research questions: 1) What types of projects are students assigned at Oklahoma State University? 2) How can the Writing center expand to accommodate multiliteracy projects?

Methodology

I created a two-section, anonymous online survey using Doodle Polls to collect data. Section one was comprised of various multiple choice questions that where aimed at discovering the existence and frequency of multimodal, or multiliterate, projects at Oklahoma State University. This section of the survey also inquired whether or not students had ever wanted or needed help on a project that was not solely based on alphabetic text and, therefore, could not have been fully supported by consultants at the

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[29] When I began this project, I used the terms "multiliterate" and "multimodal" interchangeably; however, after the completion of the needs analysis, I began to steer toward the exclusive use of the term "multimodal". It is important to note that these two words, although sometimes used synonymously as I did in this first study, are not the same.

[30] As discussed by Inman ("Designing Multiliteracy Centers: A Zoning Approach", 22), "the best approach to multiliteracy center design begins with an evaluation of what clients will actually be doing".

current Writing center. Section two utilized short answer questions that were focused on exploring avenues of expansion for the Writing center. These questions asked what projects students were assigned as well as what computer programs or technology they had used for projects. My data collection method was strategically chosen for a variety of reasons: 1) a survey is a simple but effect method to collect a large amount of data and is easily tailored to ask the right questions; 2) an online survey made it not only easy to distribute, but gave the survey the greatest potential to reach the highest amount of participants in my target audience, and 3) anonymous answers would, theoretically, encourage students to be truthful and to fully answer questions. Additionally, due to the ease of access and the short amount of time required, the target population, graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in classes at Oklahoma State University, would be more likely to complete a short, online survey.

To distribute the survey, I posted the following message on Facebook, "Hello everyone! I am currently researching the types of projects that students are assigned here at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. If you are a student at OSU, I would truly appreciate it if you could take the time to complete this quick survey. Also, please feel free to share this post and survey with other OSU students. Thank you!" and included the link to the survey. I also emailed personal contacts from the campus Writing center. This message read "Hello everyone, I am currently researching the types of projects that students are assigned here at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. I would truly appreciate it if you could take the time to complete this quick survey. Also, please feel free to share this survey with other OSU students. Thank you for your time and for your

help!" and also included the survey link. As seen in both the Facebook post and the email, I encouraged participants to share the survey with others in the target population. By encouraging participants to share the survey with others in the target population, I was able to collect data from a fairly wide range of participants. The survey was live for one week; after which I began to analyze data.

Data analysis for this study was fairly straightforward and consisted of reading and coding responses. In total, 76 people clicked on the survey link; however, only 51 of those actually completed the survey. The answers to the multiple choice questions were simply coded as "yes", "no", or "no response". Short answer questions 6 and 7 were coded as "writing-based projects", those that could be fully supported at the campus Writing center, and "multiliteracy project", those that probably could not be fully supported at the campus Writing center. Within these two groups, subcategories were found and utilized to code the responses in more detail. Short answer questions 8 and 9, regarding computer programs and technology, were also coded using three of the subcategories from the "multiliteracy" group. During this analysis, I completed multiple coding passes to ensure that the codes accurately represented the collected data.

Findings

This study discovered that students at Oklahoma State were working on multiliteracy or multimodal projects. Thirty-five participants answered "yes" to "I have had assignments I would label as 'multiliteracy assignments'", and thirty-six participants answered that they needed or wanted help on an assignment that was not writing based. During my analysis, subcategories emerged while coding the types of projects students

were assigned and what computer programs and technology used. The subcategories found in the "writing-based projects" were papers, professional documents, lesson plans, and case studies. The subcategories found in "multiliteracy projects" were oral communication, visual and graphic design, audiovisual production, and web design and digital composition. Three of these categories also emerged in regards to the computer programs, technology, and equipment used for multiliteracy projects: visual and graphic design, audiovisual production, and web design and digital composition.

RQ 1. My first research question focused on the types of projects that OSU students were assigned; these types created the aforementioned subcategories for the two main project types– "writing-based" and "multiliteracy". The "writing-based" projects found were papers, essays, reports and writing assignments (papers); resumés and cover letters (professional documents); lesson plans; and case studies. The found "multiliteracy" projects were presentations, speeches, and debates (oral communication); powerpoint presentations, prezis, handouts, graphic design, infographics, posters, and graphs (visual and graphic design); videos, audio recording, audio analysis, and slideshows (audiovisual production); and designing websites, web portfolios, and online portfolios (web design and digital composition).

RQ 2. My second research question focused on how the current Writing center could expand to accommodate these multimodal or multiliteracy projects. To answer this question, I first focused on previously discussed projects. These projects show what assignments would likely be brought to a multiliteracy tutoring space. In addition to these projects, the computer programs, technology, and equipment identified by participants

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can also provide the Writing center with a sense of direction for expansion. The programs, technology, and equipment found were Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint, and 3D printers (visual and graphic design); Final Cut Pro, video cameras, audio recorders, iMovie, GarageBand, PRAAT, Audacity, Youtube, and Soundcloud (audiovisual); and Wordpress and Wix (web design and digital composition).

In addition to the types of projects, programs, and equipment collected from the survey, I also leaned on a wide variety of scholarship to support this study and to help provide further direction for this proposed expansion. Texts like Sheridan and Inman's *Multiliteracy Centers: Writing Center Work, New Media, and Multimodal Rhetoric* and "The Idea of a Multiliteracy Center: Six Responses" by Valerie Balester, Nancy Grimm, Jackie Grutsch McKinney, Sohui Lee, David M. Sheridan, and Naomi Silver served not only as inspiration for this project, but also as invaluable and foundational insight.

Based on this scholarship and my data, I believe the best answer to my second research question is for Oklahoma State's writing center to open a new satellite location that is specifically designed for multimodal or multiliterate projects and equipped with the technology and tools needed to fully support those projects.

Discussion

By confirming the presence of multiliteracy projects on campus, my findings discovered a true need for multiliteracy tutoring, and, when combined with the literature, they create a solid avenue for Writing center expansion. Creating a new satellite location is a way to fill the need for this type of tutoring without completely restructuring the

current Writing center. Additionally, my findings allowed me to take into account the actual projects, technology, and computer programs students identified in the survey as I created the space and tutor training materials and resources.

These projects, found with survey questions 6 and 7, and the common computer programs, technology, and equipment, found with survey questions 8 and 9, provided me with a solid foundation for the creation of tutor training materials and tutor resources. However, deciding on a physical location was not as straight forward. At the time of this initial survey study, I had in mind two proposed locations for the new satellite: 1) the computer lab in the Paul Miller Journalism and Broadcasting building and 2) the Creative Studios in Edmon Low Library. Both of these locations are fully equipped with the technology and various programs that were identified by survey participants and are in close proximity to two "tech-to-go" programs that allow students to check-out the special equipment used for various multiliteracy projects.

CHAPTER IV

CONSULTANT PERCEPTIONS

After discovering the presence of multiliteracy projects at Oklahoma State University, I moved forward trying to create a space where students can receive help on them and began working with the writing center to create a space specifically for that purpose. In addition to the aforementioned scholarship regarding transitioning to or creating a multiliteracy center; I sought to supplement this literature with an empirical study focused on an area where the literature was underdeveloped and specific to Oklahoma State University.

The purpose of this study was to discover the thoughts and concerns that writing center consultants have when working with multimodal projects and what they think should be prioritized in a tutoring space dedicated to such work. I also hoped to identify helpful steps or strategies that consultants could utilize during multimodal sessions. In addition to using these findings as a starting place for tutor training, participant comments were utilized to address consultant concerns and to create a space where consultants felt comfortable and empowered to work.

Research Questions

For this study, I focused on the following research questions: 1) What concerns do writing center consultants have about working with multimodal projects?; 2) What do writing center consultants think should be the top priorities for a multimodal tutoring space?; and 3) What steps do writing center consultants take when working on multimodal projects?

Methodology

For this project, I utilized three different methods of data collection–observation, interview, and artifact analysis–and completed two rounds of data analysis.

Observation. For this portion of data collection, I observed a mock tutoring session over a multimodal project. At the time of this observation, the participant–henceforth known as Consultant 1–was a consultant at the Oklahoma State University writing center and had over three years of experience tutoring, and one academic year in OSU's writing center. Their tutoring experience was the deciding factor in this consultant being selected for the observation; I wanted to ensure that they were both comfortable consulting and familiar with the practices and policies of OSU's center. Consultant 1 was asked to approach this tutoring session in the same manner that they do with non-multimodal sessions in the writing center. The focus of this observation was to identify any strategies already in the consultant's repertoire that proved helpful when working with multimodal projects and to note any challenges that they experienced during the session.

Interview. Following the observation, I interviewed Consultant 1. This interview sought to answer research questions 1 and 2–"What concerns do Writing Center consultants have about working with multiliteracy projects?" and "What do Writing Center consultants think should be the top priorities for a multiliteracy tutoring space?". Consultant 1 was also asked about their general knowledge of multimodality, what multimodal projects they have seen at the Writing Center, and questions about their mock tutoring session.

This interview was semi-structured with a list of open-ended questions (Appendix D) to serve as a guide and to ensure that I got some of the answers I was specifically looking for. My goal for this interview was to keep it fairly informal and conversational, focusing on gaining a thorough understanding of what Consultant 1 knew and thought.

Document Analysis. For this portion of data collection, I analyzed a variety of multimodal projects that were reviewed by three individuals. One of these participants was Consultant 1 from the observation and interview; the other two–Consultant 2 and Consultant 3–were both working at the writing center at the time of this study and each had at least one year of consulting experience. Each consultant was given the same four multimodal projects to work with and was directed to treat these projects like they would during a normal tutoring session. I encouraged them to take notes and mark up the projects (as they would when editing their own papers) during their review process.

Data Analysis. Unlike the previously discussed study, data analysis was a bit more complicated because of the various types I collected. To begin analyzing my data, I first read through or looked over everything that I had collected. After that initial

introduction to my data, I began my first round analysis; this round focused on establishing codes that grew from data loosely grouping data based on their similarities. The second round of analysis focused on refining those codes and double-checking all my data to ensure that everything had been coded correctly. The codes I discovered, discussed in the findings section of this chapter, were *writing tutoring*, *multimodal tutoring*, *tutoring concerns*, and *priorities*.

Findings

Because of the small number of participants and specific locality of this study, it is important to note that these findings are in no way generalizations for all writing centers or all consultants; however, I do think that these findings can be useful for other writing centers to take into account when considering consultant training and multimodal tutoring. With that being said, this study uncovered a number of things that proved to be instrumental for the creation of The Studio. Although a small study, I gained invaluable insight into the concerns and perceptions that writing center consultants have regarding multimodality and tutoring multimodal projects; this study also helped me identify which aspects of tutoring these projects might require more training and resources.

As a precursor to answering the research questions I posed at the beginning of the chapter, it is important to discuss the codes that emerged from data analysis. These codes revealed patterns in the data and, I think, provide additional insight into the answers to these research questions. These codes were:

Writing Tutoring. Data with this code included comments and notes made by participants and observations from the mock session that would be found in a

standard writing center appointment. As to be expected, this data was focused solely on the written, alphabetic aspects of these multimodal projects; this included things like word choice, grammar, and clarity. This was the most used code during analysis.

Multimodal Tutoring. The second most used code was multimodal tutoring; this included comments and notes made by participants and observations from the mock session that would not be found in a typical writing center appointment. Data coded as "multimodal tutoring" focused on aspects of the various projects that were not solely tied to communication alphabetic text; this included things like, color choices, graphics and images used, and layout.

Tutoring Concerns. One of the less prominent codes was tutoring concerns; this included comments and notes made by participants and observations from the mock session about the consultant being uncertain about multimodality or about how to approach such projects. Data coded this way contained quotes from Consultant 1 such as "I've never worked on something like this before", "I'm not sure", and "I don't have much experience with this, so I don't know".

Priorities. Another less prominent code was priorities for a multimodal tutoring space; this included comments made by Consultant 1 during the interview about the most important things for The Studio. The data with this code focused on creating a space that can fully support students working on multimodal projects, is equipped with the technology needed, and in the proper location; this data also focused on the need for adequate tutor training.

RQ 1. My first research question focused on the concerns that writing consultants have when working on multimodal projects. This study found that most of these concerns are based on unfamiliarity. In both the mock session and the interview, Consultant 1 mentioned that they had no prior experience with the medium, weren't sure of the standard conventions, or were just unsure of how they should approach or respond to something. This research question was directly connected to the code "tutoring concerns". Although not overtly obvious in most of the data, the uncertainty of what to do and how to do it was apparent through the body language, tone, and word choice of Consultant 1 throughout the observation and interview, as well as in their stress on the need for tutor training.

RQ 2. Research question 2 sought to discover what consultants thought should be prioritized in the creation and operation of a multimodal tutoring space. In addition to the aforementioned emphasis on adequate tutor training, the priorities that were discussed, as indicated by the code, also included finding a location that is able to house The Studio and is equipped with a wide range of technology to fully support the variety of projects that the location would see.

RQ 3. The final research question for this study focused on finding out how consultants approached working on multimodal projects. Utilizing data from both the observation and document analysis, I found that Consultants 1, 2, and 3 all focused mostly on the alphabetic elements of the four different multimodal projects they made comments on. Most of their comments addressed issues like grammar, syntax, and word choice, all coded as "writing tutoring". Although most of the comments solely addressed

the linguistic mode of these projects, some were made regarding the organization, arrangement, and the use of visuals; these comments were coded as "multimodal tutoring".

I believe that the findings pertaining to this research question speak to the necessity of proper tutor education and training when it comes to working with multimodal projects. It was clear that Consultants 1, 2, and 3 were not familiar with the different modes in play while working with these projects, and, as a result, they did not know how to accurately or effectively provide feedback for them.

Discussion

Building on the previously discussed needs analysis, this study was a vital element of starting The Studio. It revealed a true need for multimodal training for consultants and provided a foundation for planning training and tutoring resources. After seeing the lack of attention paid to the nonlinguistic modes in the sample projects and during the mock session, it was clear that consultants did not have a lot of experience working with other modes of communication and simply chose not to address them. Although I knew that tutor training would be necessary, this finding was the inspiration behind the creation of tutor resources, something I will discuss in the following chapter.

In addition to training, resources, and insight into the actual creation of The Studio, such as priorities for the space and ideas about physical location, the data collected also shed light on an area of the field that is not discussed as often as it should be, and not at all yet in regards to multimodal tutoring–the perspectives of consultants, specifically what they value, think is important, and are concerned about. It is absolutely

essential that writing centers listen to consultants and take their thoughts, concerns, and

ideas into consideration when it comes to center practice, policy, and design.

CHAPTER V

STARTING THE STUDIO

While completing the previously discussed studies, I was also working on the behind the scenes elements of The Studio; this included finding a location; developing consultant recruitment, training, and resources; and ensuring that everything was ready for operation in time for the location opening in January 2020.

Creating the Space.

During data analysis of the needs analysis study, I began to scour Oklahoma State University for a possible location for a multimodal tutoring location; based on the findings of that study, my main priority was finding a location that was already equipped with the technology that students indicated using for projects in my survey. I chose to seek out a space with the technology and computer programs already ingrained in the location in an effort to avoid having to add those essential, and costly, components later. In addition to my own data, the aforementioned works of Carpenter, Hadfield et al., and Sheridan and Inman were exceedingly useful during this stage of the project.

Utilizing a design process modeled after the one discussed by Hadfield, et al.,

I began to make a list of what students would be doing there, how many people might occupy the space, and what would be expected from a space.

As I previously discussed, the survey used in my first study discovered the types of projects, technology, and computer programs that students were using; this data gave me a starting place to think about what students might be doing. Looking past the specific technology and software, I found that most of the projects seemed to be individual projects, meaning that most consultations would be the standard one-on-one that we have in the writing center. However, although I do not know specifically from the data because I did not ask whether or not the project was completed alone or in a group, there was a chance that a group of students would need to utilize The Studio for a group assignment, creating a need for a larger space and table where a group of 3 or more could sit and work comfortably. After thinking about this, I decided that the best option for this space would be to have individual break-out rooms where a student and a consultant could work one-on-one with minimal distractions and some degree of privacy as well as an open area with larger tables where groups can work together on their projects.

This information helped me think about the number of people that could be expected to be in the space at any given time. As standard with the other satellite locations of our writing center, I planned for two consultants to work at time. Also, assuming that groups are no larger than five students and both consultants have appointments, there could be two to ten students in the space as well. Because this is a satellite location, consultants are trained to organize the space, greet students, and set up appointments, so there would not need to be any additional staff.

One of the most important elements to think about was what would be expected from The Studio. I envisioned this space being more than just a place for students to visit to get feedback; I wanted to create a place "where [people] are happy, productive, creative, and social"[31] and felt free to truly work together and create projects that they were excited about and proud of. Like Hadfield et al., a goal for the physical location "was to create a non-threatening, comfortable environment that generates–rather than inhibits–conversation"[32] that encourages students, as well as consultants, and empowers them to be proud of the work that they do.

After working through this design plan, I found two locations on campus that could be suitable as a site for a multimodal tutoring space–the Creative Studios in Edmon Low Library and a computer lab in the Paul Miller Journalism and Broadcasting Building. Each of these sites were already equipped with computers and a wide enough range of software to encompass all of the digital projects that were discovered with my survey; additionally, they both were in close proximity to a large selection of technology (cameras, microphones, etc.) that were available for students to check-out and use. However, upon consideration of three of the concepts Carpenter suggested for creating multimodal composing spaces:

- Offer students the flexibility to move furniture to fit design-oriented composing activities. Spaces help students view composition as a set of design-oriented activities that benefit from structured or spontaneous collaboration. . .

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[31] Hadfield, Leslie, et al. "An Ideal Writing Center: Re-Imagining Space and Design." *Center Will Hold*, edited by Michael A. Pemberton and Joyce Kinkead, University Press of Colorado, Logan, Utah, 2003, pp. 166–176. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46nxnq.13. Accessed 11 Nov. 2020.
[32] Hadfield, et al., 171

- Offer low-tech spaces where students can visualize and prototype projects. Students tend to cluster in small groups near dry-erase boards as a space for invention. Students use these visual spaces to design prototypes of multimodal projects–often reinventing throughout the process–by creating maps, doodles, and storyboards about complex issues not easily expressed through words. At times, this invention process becomes a kinesthetic experience. . .
- Create spaces where students are free to experiment, play, and fail. All spaces are designed to allow students the flexibility to play with multimodal projects. . . [33]

the Creative Studios became almost an ideal location for The Studio. It had a large, open area with tables and chairs that were perfect for collaborating in a group setting and easy to move as well as multiple smaller study rooms to give privacy to one-one-one sessions; access to a wide variety of visual spaces, both high and low-tech, for brainstorming and creating; and fun, high-tech devices that made working new and exciting.

When working with Edmon Low Library about opening a new tutoring space, I leaned on Ferer's article, "Working Together: Library and Writing Center Collaboration", which reviewed literature regarding the collaborations between writing centers and libraries since 1999, for some guidance on how to approach this partnership. There was no mention of any collaboration like the one I was proposing, but Ferer discussed how libraries and writing centers have collaborated on professional development and instructional tools; although The Studio was not going to be a professional development activity or an online instructional tool, it had the potential to offer both of those things to Oklahoma State's students. I also utilized Sheridan and Inman's work when discussing

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[33] Carpenter, 76

what technology the consultants would ideally have access to and how the space could be utilized. In terms of technological resources, the Creative Studios allowed us access to a range of software and equipment[34] that more than encompassed the breadth of those indicated in my study. In terms of space, because of the amount and options offered in the Creative Studios, I was able to utilize Inman's zoning approach that focuses on uses, or what will be happening during different consultations, informing different "zones" in a location. Because my survey indicated visual, audio, and video projects, it was important to designate spaces of The Studio for the creation of such. As it was already in the design plan to include one-on-one study rooms, The Studio utilized the McCasland Foundation Data Visualization Studio and the Recording and Presentation Studio as both the designated visual, audio, and video areas and the one-on-one areas. Additionally, The Studio had access to one of the large study tables in the open, common area[35].

Staffing, Training, and Resources.

Sheridan states that "*multiliteracy centers should be staffed by consultants who have the rhetorical, pedagogical, and technical capacities to support this diversity of semiotic options[36]* . . . recruited from a range of backgrounds and experiences"[37] from a wide variety of fields. A sentiment that I agree with; however, that can not always be the

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[34] In his introduction, Sheridan discusses the necessity for multiliteracy centers to "invest in the technological resources that citizens as media producers increasingly exploit".
[35] This layout is reminiscent of the design plans and blueprints given by Carpenter (pages 71 and 72) and Hadfield, et al. (pages 172 & 174), as well as that discussed by Fishman (pages 63 & 64).
[36] Emphasis is original
[37] Sheridan, David M. "Introduction: Writing Centers and the Multimodal Turn." *Multiliteracy Centers: Writing Center Work, New Media, and Multimodal Rhetoric*, edited by David M. Sheridan and James A. Inman, Hampton Press, 2010, pp. 1–16.

case. This is where the implementation of effective training proved to be absolutely essential.

Fishman's discussion of and extensive training for "studio associates" created a starting place for shaping this training. She describes "a semester-long course during which [studio associates] read about the history and theoretical positions of literacy centers, role-play various scenarios in which they help (each other) with real writing and technology issues, and engage in research related to the studio".[38] Although it was not plausible for multimodal consultants to take a semester-long pedagogy course, the training I developed was loosely based on goals set in Fishman's course: "to familiarize them with literacy center theory and practice, to ease them into their new roles as student tutors, and to make sure they have all the necessary technical skills to help students solve their problems".[39] It is important to note (and something also discussed by Fishman) that the students' will likely have a decidedly different idea of what 'problems' are. "Typical visitors to a multiliteracy center come in and ask for help fixing problems that they identify as technological or even mechanical" while consultants "ask them questions like 'Why did you choose this application?' . . . and 'How does the multimedia aspect of your project enhance your message?'".[40]

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[38] Fishman, Teddi. "What It Isn't Even on the Page: Peer Consulting in Multimedia Environments." *Multiliteracy Centers: Writing Center Work, New Media, and Multimodal Rhetoric*, edited by David M. Sheridan and James A. Inman, Hampton Press, 2010, pp. 59–73.
[39] Fishman, 60-61
[40] Fishman, 63

During the pilot semester of The Studio[41], staff included current consultants in the writing center that were interested in exploring the option of multimodal tutoring; although consultants with multimodal and design experience were encouraged to work at The Studio, extensive experience was not required. All of the multimodal consultants were required to complete a very condensed training that, like the one discussed by Fishman, required them to read pieces of literacy theory and pedagogy, practice using various technological resources in the physical location, and research other possible resources that could prove to be helpful for the consultants working and the students making appointments.

To be effective, the multimodal consultants needed "to understand the particular material forms that rhetorical compositions can take, as well as the material contexts in which they circulate . . . which means (in part) helping clients negotiate the technical processes demanded by the specific material forms within which they [work]" and "pedagogical literacies . . . [or] knowing when to ask a question and when to provide direction".[42] The materials selected for training were also meant to be utilized not only to help consultants accomplish those tasks or to ensure that they were well informed, but also as resources for consultants to easily return to if they needed a quick refresher, or if they wanted to return to and share a specific piece of information during an appointment.

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[41] At the time of the completion of this thesis, this is still current practice.
[42] Sheridan, David M. "All Thing to All People: Multiliteracy Consulting and the Materiality of Rhetoric." *Multiliteracy Centers: Writing Center Work, New Media, and Multimodal Rhetoric*, edited by David M. Sheridan and James A. Inman, Hampton Press, 2010, pp. 75–107.

One of the most helpful texts to utilize as a resource was Sabatino and Fallon's; their collection was "designed to prepare consultants to offer feedback on [multimodal] projects by providing them with an overview of visual and audio design principles, the rhetorical nature of multimodal composing, and a variety of multimodal genres".[43] Each chapter details a different multimodal genre, breaking down basic principles and conventions, and offers practical strategies for working with that genre.

Another helpful resource for consultants was Robin Williams' book *The Non-Designer's Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*. In this text, Williams details four principles that indicate something is designed well–contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity. These principles, and Williams' discussion and examples of each of them[44], helped provide consultants with basic elements of design knowledge that could be utilized in all appointments, from brainstorming to editing a final draft.

Pilot Semester.

The pilot semester of The Studio was the Spring semester of 2020. There were seven consultants who agreed to take on the challenge of multimodal tutoring, despite the amount of uncertainty that surrounded the space. Although I had been working toward

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[43] Sabatino, Lindsay A. "Introduction: Design Theory and Multimodal Consulting." *Multimodal Composing: Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing Consultations*, by Lindsay A. Sabatino and Brian Fallon, Utah State University Press, 2019, pp. 3–22.
[44] along with other elements of the book such as a mini-glossary, tips for specific multimodal texts, a detailed discussion of the elements of designing with type, and additional outside resources.

the grand opening for over a year, there was no way of knowing for sure what would happen; we did not know for certain what projects students would have, what software or equipment they would need to use, or what they would expect from the consultants. From the time of the semester starting to the grand opening two weeks into the semester, the multimodal consultants were spending time completing the condensed training that I previously discussed; the hours that they would normally have spent working with students in appointments were spent reading theory, acclimating themselves to the space and becoming familiar with the different technological resources available to them, and compiling helpful resources.

Following the opening, there was smooth sailing in The Studio; although the consultants were not always booked with appointments, they were continually learning more about multimodal texts and how to help the students that visited. However, all of that changed in March when campus closed for the rest of the semester as a result of the COVID 19 global pandemic. Although the early closure of The Studio, accompanied by the closure of all the other writing center satellite locations, was a devastating blow for the research that I had planned, it opened up another avenue that I had not intended to explore for quite some time–online tutoring.

Incorporation of Online Learning.

Throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, the writing center still only offered online services, but some of the satellite locations, including The Studio, were able to open again. These were incredibly difficult semesters for everyone and every entity on

campus, and The Studio was no different. Having only been open for less than two months the previous semester, consultants and myself were still hanging in a space of uncertainty; we simply did not have enough time to discover what students would actually be utilizing the space for, so trying to prepare for working online was a challenge. Throw in the devastating emotional, mental, and physical effects of trying to live and work in the midst of a global pandemic, and it became even more difficult.

Although the writing center had already been utilizing synchronous online tutoring before the pandemic and swiftly incorporated asynchronous appointments when we went fully online in March, there were still numerous difficulties trying to move The Studio online. Like the faculty discussed by Gillam and Wooden, I was exceedingly worried "that the quality of [consulting] may be diminished by the very transition to a virtual learning space" and that over a year of hard work would crumble into nothing.[45] Additionally, the move online meant that neither our consultants nor students would have access to the physical space of our location in the Creative Studios or to the technological resources housed there; some of the most wonderful elements of The Studio would be gone in an online setting.

Over the summer, I worked on devising a plan for The Studio to move online yet still utilize the space and resources of the Creative Studios. When we returned to campus in the Fall, despite the Creative Studios being closed to the general public, consultants

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[45] Gillam, Ken and Shannon R. Wooden. "Re-Embodying Online Composition: Ecologies of Writing in Unreal Time and Space." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 30, no. 1, Elsevier Inc, Mar. 2013, pp. 24–36, doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2012.11.001.

working in The Studio were still allowed access to the two one-on-one rooms, the

McCasland Foundation Data Visualization Studio and the Recording and Presentation

Studio, to ensure that they would have access to a specialized software that would be

helpful for a variety of different multimodal projects. Additionally, students utilizing The

Studio were able to use one of the desktop computers in the common area that was also

equipped with a variety of software. Like with "standard" appointments, multimodal

appointments were held on our online platform WCOnline; this allowed consultants to

interact with students both through an online chat feature and through video chat.

However, only one consultant was interested in working at The Studio during the Fall

2020 semester, which severely limited the hours of operation and the number of

appointments that were possible. Although the resources offered at the Creative Studios

were ideal for a multimodal tutoring space, I do think that prioritizing the inclusion of

them was a mistake for that semester. Although campus was "open", many consultants

were still only in virtual classes, which made coming to campus for a couple of hours for

tutoring a major inconvenience; the same can be said in regards to students that would

have potentially visited The Studio.

As a result of the low engagement and interest experienced in the Fall, I began to

consider including asynchronous appointments[46]. However, like many other writing

center professionals, I had more than a few concerns. In addition to the critiques noted by

Denton,

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[46] These are referred to as e-tutoring appointments at our writing center.

- Tutors are forced to do most of the work, contrary to the ideology of non-directive tutoring so valued in writing center literature.

- Asynchronous online writing tutors are forced to deal with the text only, leaving aside the writer. . .

- Asynchronous online writing tutoring is akin to a drop-off service, failing to engage the student, and is a stretch on tutors' time, and the students who submit papers asynchronously don't benefit from this form of tutoring.[47]

I was also concerned with the fact that multimodal tutors are not, nor are they expected to be, experts at using the different software and devices that some students might be using for assignments. In the Creative Studios, consultants have direct access to at least one person that works there with knowledge about the technical resources offered there. Despite the advantages of asynchronous tutoring, like that discussed by Bourelle, et al.[48], I could not shake these reservations, especially those regarding the lack of face-to-face and real-time interactions. However, as also noted by Denton,

> The tutor's role in face-to-face interaction is to come together with a student to discuss a piece of writing. The tutor engages the student in discussion, using the paper to help the student reflect on writing-related issues that are applicable beyond the paper. The tutor's objective, in essence, is to shape a tutoring interaction that responds to North's call for

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[47] Denton, 195

[48] The ease of access to instructional assistant (in the case of The Studio, these would be our multimodal consultants) and the nonlinear environment that accompanies online learning are strengths of an online classroom that are also evident in a virtual writing center location.

better writers, writers that walk away with strategies and insights that they

can apply beyond their current piece of writing.[49]

This role does not change by moving the appointment online to a nonlinear environment;

"even though communication is asynchronous in nature, this change in context does not

have to preclude or exclude interaction"[50], nor does it change the goal of creating 'better

writers' and providing students with strategies to carry beyond their appointment.

  With this in mind, the Spring 2021 semester saw drastic changes from Fall 2020

including the inclusion of asynchronous appointments and the (temporary) end of The

Studios time in the Creative Studios. Currently, there are nine multimodal consultants

holding both synchronous and asynchronous tutoring appointments.

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[49] Denton, 188-199
[50] Denton, 189

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Implications

Despite the early closure of The Studio in March of 2020 and the drastic change in

operation since then, this project is still a source of valuable information about

multimodal tutoring and creating an effective multimodal tutoring space. Also, this

project[51] works to fill a notable gap in literature regarding the perspectives and concerns

of consultants. In the field of writing center studies as a whole, there has not been much

work done focusing on how consultants and writing center staff feel about the work that

they do and their responsibilities. However, if we are to responsibly and ethically do the

work of writing centers by making better writers[52], it is absolutely essential that we take

the thoughts of consultants and staff into consideration and work to alleviate any

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[51] specifically, chapter four

[52] as well as the other work done in centers focusing on a variety of topics such as
community and campus engagement, social justice, and professional development

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concerns. Although I only conducted a small scale study regarding this issue, I hope that it can open the door to future research.

Additionally, I believe this project speaks to the importance of both writing center work and multimodality across the disciplines. Although much of my research and the literature I utilized throughout this project focuses on composition, rhetoric, and the writing center; multimodality is not exclusive to English Departments. This is evident through my research, as well as reflection on my own past coursework and the observation of the coursework of former peers.

Returning to my goal for this project that I discussed in the introduction, I truly believe that this is work that can be easily utilized and adapted to help other writing centers and entities of writing instruction to better incorporate multimodality and teach multiliteracies. My intention with this project was to create a sort of guide for others to do this work, and I believe that has come to fruition.

Future Research

At the time of the conception of The Studio, I planned to continue this research with an analysis of what work was actually being done in the space–what projects were being brought in, what software and technology was being use–and compare those findings to my original needs analysis. I also wanted to study the success of The Studio by looking at student and instructor satisfaction and students' self perception of their projects before and after appointments as well as a larger scale study, based in The Studio, of the one described in chapter four.

Because of the derailment of that research by COVID19, all of those avenues are still open for future research. Additionally, I would like to look at the difference in synchronous and asynchronous appointments in terms of tutoring strategies, success, and student and consultant perceptions of the two as well as how The Studio can work for and with the whole campus in terms of writing and composing across disciplines.

Future of The Studio

Because my tenure in Oklahoma State's writing center is coming to a close, I am uncertain what the future of The Studio holds. However, I am hopeful that The Studio will not only continue to serve the students at Oklahoma State, but to thrive and grow into a fully realized tutoring space. Ideally, The Studio can move back to its original location in the Edmon Low Creative Studios and once again utilize the wonderful resources of that space while still offering both synchronous and asynchronous appointments. As I discussed, the Creative Studios are an ideal location for The Studio, especially when compared to the physical space of the writing center. The physical writing center does not have the space or the tech to fully encompass everything that comes with multimodal meaning making; that space is specifically structured for one-on-one session over alphabetic projects, and there is not the room for technology updates or larger conference tables for group projects. Also, having face-to-face as well as virtual appointments offers support in every format that are already available for students to learn in; this ensures that no student is left without a viable option regardless of situational constraints.

I also hope that the future of The Studio sees an expansion of consultant recruitment and of the resources utilized by those consultants and provided to students. Sheridan discusses the value, and near necessity, of having multimodal consultants that come from varying backgrounds and experience. Currently, the writing center is mostly staffed by English graduate students with the exception of some undergraduate students and graduate fellows from other departments; although many of these consultants have some experience with multimodality and design, very rarely are they already comfortable jumping into the role of multimodal consultant. By recruiting consultants to be multimodal consultants from fields known for working with art, technology, and graphic design, the writing center would not only have a stronger presence on campus but The Studio would have highly skilled consultants requiring minimal training while providing exceptional support to students. These consultants would already be comfortable working with multimodal projects and with a variety of technological resources (such as devices and computer programs), making it easier for them to not only provide feedback to clients but to also truly collaborate and work with clients to create meaning. In terms of expanding the resources offered and utilized, I think that looking to the multimodal scholarship I discussed in chapter 2 is an excellent place to start. The field of rhetoric and composition is rich in theory of multimodality, multiliteracy, and utilizing design as well as in pedagogy for teaching design, new media, and multimodal texts; looking beyond the realm of writing center studies would offer an innumerable amount of additional resources for consultant training.

I also think that The Studio could expand the services that it offers. One of these services could be the creation and distribution of easily utilized student resources regarding different multimodal texts as well as basic elements of multiliteracy and design, similar to the various resources found in the main writing center. This distribution could also grow into multimodal consultants creating workshops and classroom presentations over a wide variety of topics like those offered by the writing center. In addition to these resources for students, The Studio could also provide help to faculty. In my personal experience, I have noticed that the assignment sheets and descriptions for multimodal projects are not as clear[53] or as easy for students to understand as some of those for "traditional" writing assignments. I think that there is a wonderful opportunity for The Studio to help with professional development regarding the rethinking of objectives and outcomes and the construction of multimodal assignments.

Ultimately, I hope that The Studio can grow into itself and reach its full potential, whatever that may look like. This project grew out of a need that I saw on campus and then quickly adapted to continue to work to fill that need. I hope that The Studio is a space that continually adapts and evolves to always be something that truly supports the needs of Oklahoma State University and its students–a space of knowledge, innovation, creativity, and wonder.

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[53] It is important to note that this observation is strictly my own and not backed by any research. Before working on any professional development program/resource, this would be another avenue of research to explore.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Survey Questions

Multiple Choice
1. I have had assignments that do not involve or focus on writing. *(evidence of multiliteracy projects)*
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No response
2. I have needed/wanted help on an assignment that was not writing based. *(need for multiliteracy tutoring)*
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No response
3. I have had assignments that required special computer programs. *(evidence of multiliteracy projects)*
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No response
4. I have had assignments that required special technology or equipment. *(evidence of multiliteracy projects)*
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No response
5. I have had assignments I would label as "multiliteracy assignments". *(evidence of multiliteracy projects)* *("need" for multiliteracy tutoring)*
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No response

Short answer
1. Describe the types of assignments you have completed for classes at Oklahoma State University. *(WC expansion/evidence of multiliteracy)*
2. Describe some of the multiliteracy assignments you have completed for classes at Oklahoma State University. *(WC expansion)*
3. What are some computer programs have you used for classes at Oklahoma State University? *(WC expansion)*
4. What different kinds of technology and equipment have you used for classes at Oklahoma State University? *(WC expansion)*

APPENDIX B: Multiple Choice Responses

Question	Yes	No	No Response
I have had assignments that do not involve or focus on writing.	40	11	0
I have needed/wanted help on an assignment that was not writing based.	36	14	1
I have had assignments that required special computer programs.	40	11	0
I have had assignments that required special technology or equipment.	36	15	0
I have had assignments I would label as "multiliteracy assignments".	35	12	4

APPENDIX C: Short Answer Responses

Questions 6 and 7:

Writing Based Projects	Multiliteracy Projects
- Papers - Professional documents - Lesson plans - Case studies	- Oral communication - Visuals and graphic design - Audiovisual production - Web design and digital composition
Projects to be aware of:	- Presentations, speeches, debates - Powerpoint, prezis, handouts, graphic design, infographics, posters, graphs - Videos, audio recording, audio analysis, slideshows - Designing websites, web portfolios, online portfolios

Questions 8 and 9:

Programs, tech, and equipment to be aware of: *visual and graphic design*	- Adobe suite: Photoshop, Illustrator, inDesign - Microsoft: Excel, PowerPoint 3D printers

Programs, tech, and equipment to be aware of: *audiovisual production*	- Final Cut Pro - Video cameras - Audio recorders - iMovie - GarageBand - PRAAT - Audacity - Youtube - Soundcloud

Programs, tech, and equipment to be aware of: *web design and digital composition*	- Wordpress - Wix

APPENDIX D: Consultant Perspectives Interview Questions

- Tell me about your tutoring experience.

- What does a typical tutoring session look like for you?

  o Is there anything you do every single session?

  o What do you tend to prioritize during sessions?

- Talk to me about multimodality. What do you know about it?

  o What comes to mind when you think about it? Any specific projects?

- Talk to me about multimodality in the writing center. What are your experiences with it?

  o If no previous experiences, why do you think that is?

  o Do you think that the current writing center is fully equipped to handle multimodality? Why or why not?

- Talk to me about the mock session.

  o What were some general thoughts about it?

  o How do you think it went?

  o What were any struggles you had?

    ▪ How did you overcome those struggles?

  o Reflecting on that session, is there anything you would do differently?

- Based on what you know about multimodality and your experience with it, let's talk a little bit about a multimodal tutoring space.

    o How do you feel about such a space?

    o What do you think is absolutely essential for such a space?

    o What should the top priorities of such a space be?

APPENDIX E: IRB Approval

Approval of Exempt IRB Application AS-19-52

irb@okstate.edu <irb@okstate.edu>
Tue 4/23/2019 3:50 PM
To: Shryock, Ashlee <ashlee.shryock@okstate.edu>; Sicari, Anna <anna.sicari@okstate.edu>; Shryock, Ashlee <ashlee.shryock@okstate.edu>

Dear Ashlee Shryock,

The Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the following application:

Application Number: AS-19-52
PI: Ashlee Shryock
Title: Multiliteracy Tutoring: Need and Implementation at Oklahoma State University
Review Level: Exempt

You will find a copy of your Approval Letter in IRBManager. Click IRB - Initial Submission to go directly to the event page. Please click attachments in the upper left of the screen. The approval letter is under "Generated Docs." Stamped recruitment and consent documents can also be found in this location under "Attachments". Only the approved versions of these documents may be used during the conduct of your research.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

- Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted for IRB approval before implementation.
- Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period.
- Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair within 5 days. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
- Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete by submitting a closure form via IRBManager.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Best of luck with your research,

Sincerely,

Dawnett Watkins, CIP
Whitney McAllister, MS
_____
Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board
Office of University Research Compliance
223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078
Website: https://irb.okstate.edu/
Ph: 405-744-3377 | Fax: 405-744-4335| irb@okstate.edu

Approval of Exempt IRB Application AS-19-138

irb@okstate.edu <irb@okstate.edu>
Tue 12/3/2019 5:38 PM
To: Pilcher, Ashlee <ashlee.shryock@okstate.edu>; Sicari, Anna <anna.sicari@okstate.edu>; Pilcher, Ashlee
<ashlee.shryock@okstate.edu>

Dear Ashlee Pilcher,

The Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the following
application:

Application Number: AS-19-138
PI: Ashlee Pilcher
Title: Multiliterate and Multimodal Tutoring: Consultant Training, Concerns, and Practices
Review Level: Exempt

You will find a copy of your Approval Letter in IRBManager. Click IRB - Initial Submission to go
directly to the event page. Please click attachments in the upper left of the screen. The approval
letter is under "Generated Docs." Stamped recruitment and consent documents can also be found
in this location under "Attachments". Only the approved versions of these documents may be used
during the conduct of your research.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

- Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research
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- Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period.
- Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair within 5 days. Adverse events are those which are
  unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
- Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete by submitting a closure form via
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Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office
has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have
questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB
office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Best of luck with your research,

Sincerely,

Dawnett Watkins, CIP
Whitney McAllister, MS
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VITA

Ashlee Pilcher

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: STARTING THE STUDIO: CREATING AND OPERATING A
MULTIMODAL TUTORING SPACE

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in English at Oklahoma
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2021.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in English at Oklahoma
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2018.

Experience:

Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, OK) Graduate Teaching Assistant

Oklahoma State University (Stillwater, OK) Writing center Assistant Director

Spark: A 4C4Equality Journal Graduate Editorial Assistant

SCWCA Exec Board Member, South Central Writing center Association

Professional Memberships:

Rhetoric Society of America
South Central Writing Centers Association